

A Study of 2 Samuel 14

I. OUTLINE.

1. Joab schemes to get Absalom back to Jerusalem (1-3).
2. The intercession for Absalom made by the woman from Tekoah (4-20).
3. The message had its intended effect and David sends Joab to bring back Absalom, but David would not allow him in his presence (21-24).
4. Absalom's charms are described and his children mentioned, one of which he named TAMAR (25-27).
5. For two years Absalom was allowed no access to the king, and Joab unwillingly is caused to intervene with David to allow Absalom to come to him (28-33).

II. SUMMARY.

In this chapter we find information related to how Absalom is allowed to get back into a position where he can lead a rebellion against his own father. He obviously fled to Geshur because he sought safety and security and after he had broken the law of God. Had he stayed in Israel, he should have been put to death because of his murder of his own brother, Amnon. Joab knows how negatively the separation from King David of his beloved son Absalom had been. David obviously wanted and didn't want Absalom's presence. He loved him and wanted his son with him; however, he must have considered the possibility that his presence could threaten his own power. He must have sensed the possibility of, or have been warned of, a possible rebellion led by Absalom. So Joab uses a WISE WOMAN from Tekoah to convince David to allow Absalom back into Jerusalem. Coffman suggests that maybe Absalom had a scheming heart, thinking that if Absalom was the next king, this action would benefit himself, ultimately. David does allow Absalom back, but he does not allow him to come before him. Determined Absalom, however, manages to see his father.

III. CHRONOLOGY/LISTS/LINKS.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the United Kingdom.

*If you are not familiar with the **15 Bible Periods**, please click here: <https://tinyurl.com/wl79hp7>*

LISTS:

SEVEN PARTS TO JOAB'S PLAN TO GET ABSALOM BACK...

1. Joab sent to Tekoah (a city about 12 miles south of Jerusalem and about 7 miles south of Bethlehem) for a wise woman who would be actress enough to deceive David and get from him an expression of willingness to pardon Absalom (2 Sam 14.2).
2. She was to play the part of a widow; her condition of life was designed to excite compassion in David.
3. She was to come before the king and speak the words Joab put into her mouth, and make a plea for Absalom under the guise that it was actually her own experience (2 Sam 14.3).
4. She was to be far enough from Jerusalem to make it hard to inquire into the circumstances of her case, so as to avoid detection of referring to Absalom until David had committed himself (2 Sam 14.4-12).
5. Her case was to be similar enough to that of David's experience to awaken in the king a desire to act quickly to save her son—before the story was applied to him (2 Sam 14.5-12).

6. After David gave his word to spare the murderer the application was to be made to himself and Absalom (2 Sam 14.13-20).
7. The whole case was not to be plain or visible enough to David to be discovered before he gave his word to spare the murderer (2 Sam 14.13-20).

--Dake's Study Bible

LINKS: Use with discernment based on Scripture—not all are from brethren.

1. Burton Coffman on 2 Samuel 14: <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/2-samuel-14.html>
2. Wayne Jackson, "O Absalom—My Son, My Son!": <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/37-o-absalom-my-son-my-son>
3. Jon Quinn, "The Absalom Complex:" <http://www.bible.ca/ef/expository-2-samuel-14-25-18-18.htm>
4. "2 Samuel 14.27—Why Does this Passage say Absalom had three sons when 2 Samuel 18.18 says he had none?": https://defendinginerrancy.com/bible-solutions/2_Samuel_14.27.php
5. John Gill on 2 Samuel 14: <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/geb/2-samuel-14.html>
6. David Guzik on 2 Samuel 14: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/2-samuel-14/>

IV. THOUGHTS ON THE TEXT...

1. **Joab schemes to get Absalom back to Jerusalem (1-3).**

THE KING'S HEART WAS TOWARD ABSALOM... this expression is somewhat ambiguous. It seems to mean that Absalom was on David's mind. Likely Joab was working on a strategy regarding his own future. He felt like Absalom would be the next king. If he could get Absalom back to Jerusalem and if everything went well between David and Absalom, perhaps Absalom would remember Joab's deed and allow him to keep his job. Perhaps Joab had been impressed by the approach that Nathan, the prophet, had taken in getting David to acknowledge his sin from chapter 12. So Joab plans a presentation which he will assign to a wise woman of Tekoah. It is sort of like Joab hiring an actress to come before David with a performance to convince him to allow Absalom back to Jerusalem.

2. **The intercession for Absalom made by the woman from Tekoah (4-20).**

Evidently the woman from Tekoah did her job well and was a good actress because the sought for remedy was agreed to by the powerful king. So often we read about close advisors of powerful men finding ways to manipulate their leaders. Of course what is being asked of David would be a violation of the Law about the avenger of blood, but David has already broken three of the Ten Commandments, so that is not going to be a hindrance here. David has a tender heart and the fake story has him wanting to substitute his plan for what the Lord has set forth in the Law.

3. **The message had its intended effect and David sends Joab to bring back Absalom, but David would not allow him in his presence (21-24).**

So the actual result was not exactly what Joab had hoped for, but he is probably thinking that there will eventually be a change in the relationship between father and son. He is feeling like he has won a great victory and is genuinely thankful to David.

4. **Absalom's charms are described and his children mentioned, one of which he named TAMAR (25-27).**

The naming of his daughter demonstrates how close he was to his sister, Tamar. He was taking care of her now and providing what she would have eventually received from a husband (13.20). After two years, of course, Absalom flees out of the country. Whether or

not he took Tamar with him is not revealed. Two Tamars in one household. Appearance, as all know, is a great advantage. Absalom had that blessing of being an attractive man. He would be able to charm the people into following him in rebellion to his father. He misused a blessing that God had provided as many unfortunately do. Verse 27 mentions Absalom having 3 sons, but 18.18 indicates that he had no sons. Is this a contradiction? NO, all it means is that Absalom's sons preceded him in death. He built the monument mentioned in 18.18 to be remembered in the future and perhaps partly as a tribute to his sons (cf., CSB Study Bible).

5. For two years Absalom was allowed no access to the king, and Joab unwillingly is caused to intervene with David to allow Absalom to come to him (28-33).

There is more than one way to get a message across. In this instance Absalom was willing to destroy the property of another in order to gain an audience. He orders Joab's field to be set on fire and reckons that Joab will find out who did it and be coming to him for a confrontation. Joab might have been wiser to meet with Absalom at first request, knowing he was used to getting his way, as the spoiled son of a king.

V. LESSONS & APPLICATIONS.

- **14.1... THE KING'S HEART WAS TOWARD ABSALOM**—Other versions read: “concerned about,” (NKJV); “went out to” (ESV); “longed to see” (NET). “**Toward Absalom**—Not *against* him, as several interpreters explain the sense, for that would contradict chap. 13:39, and render inexplicable the later conduct of the king towards Absalom. Chap. 18:5, 12, 33. Besides, if Joab had known that the king was bitterly hostile to Absalom, we cannot see his object in interceding for him.”¹ There is no question that David loved his son Absalom—read his haunting cry at learning of Absalom's death (18.33). He loved his son, but also allowed his son to avoid justice. Having the power of rule in Israel, no one was going to question the king's decision. Rightly, under the law, Absalom's life was to be forfeited for the life of his brother Amnon, whose life he had taken. Allowing him to get away with murder was not something that was TOWARD his ultimate good. There are surely many who have known right from wrong and the requirements of justice, but when family is involved, somehow justice seems to “take a backseat.” If we truly love someone, our concern for our loved one will be more about that person's eternal destiny than for present comforts. Consider Matthew 10:37 *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*
- **14.7... AND WE WILL DESTROY THE HEIR ALSO**—Some see in this expression the idea that the relatives were more interested in the financial or property increase than in enforcing justice. If such a scenario as is presented were genuine, and if they were so motivated, it would be sad, indeed. But, nonetheless, the law is to be obeyed. What this would mean is that this widow would have no means of support and would lose all that her husband had provided for her. Certainly, we can understand how David's heart would go out to the pleading woman in such a case. The words that Joab had put into this woman's mouth were calculated to produce this very effect. The trickery of Joab is inexcusable here. Perhaps a wealthy king should have thought of some way he could take care of providing for her rather than rendering the ruling he

¹ D. Steele and M. S. Terry, *Joshua to II. Samuel*, ed. D. D. Whedon, vol. III, Commentary on the Old Testament (New York; Cincinnati: Eaton & Mains; Jennings & Graham, 1901), 509.

did. Opportunities to do good, often are not seized upon, maybe this is one of those times for King David.

- **14.11... THE REVENGER OF BLOOD**—“The Hebrew phrase avenger of blood joins the term sometimes translated kinsman redeemer to the word for blood. The kinsman redeemer is the protector of family rights. Here, the protector of the family would be expected to bring vengeance on one who had taken the life of a family member. Cities of refuge had been established under Moses for protection from the blood avenger in cases where the killing was **accidental** (see Num. 35:9–34). In this case, the woman pressed David to the limit with respect to her son. David promised that not one hair of her son’s head would fall to the ground” [NKJV Study Bible]. Verse 6 indicates that this fictional murder was not ACCIDENTAL, so the cities of refuge provision would not have been applicable here, nor in the case of Absalom deliberately and with malice killing his brother. David’s ruling here, is thus not according to the Law. He has exceeded the royal prerogative (cf., JFB). So, the breaking of the Law in chapter 12 was just the beginning of even more violations of it. How easy it is for man to add sin to sin. Satan rejoices as power is abused in such ways as this. How vital it is to our own spiritual welfare to recognize sin as sin and IMMEDIATELY REPENT of it, rather than cover it up by continuing to sin.
- **14.14... AS WATER SPILT UPON THE GROUND**—Kitto wrote concerning these words of Joab delivered by the woman of Tekoah: “*What could be better calculated to gain the attention of a poet like David than the beautiful images which she employs, and which are fully equal to any that he himself ever uttered; with our comparatively dull intellects, are impressed by the exquisite beauty and pathos of this expression, how keenly must it have been appreciated by him—the great master of solemn thought and poetical expression? We conceive that we behold him start upon his throne when these words fall upon his ear, and he feels at once that no common woman is before him.*” What was being asked for would involve disobedience of the Law, but the carefully selected words of Joab were quite persuasive. This is one of Satan’s most powerful approaches to God’s people: **make disobedience appear different than what it actually is!**
- **14:29–31** “Why did your servants set my field on fire?” (v. 31). ... **Omitting the sin of the deed, we have here a picture of what is often done by our gracious God with the wisest and best design. Often he sends for us not for his profit but for ours. He would have us come near to him and receive a blessing at his hands, but we are foolish and coldhearted and wicked, and we will not come.** He, knowing that we will not come by any other means, sends a serious trial—he sets our barley field on fire, which he has a right to do, seeing our barley fields are far more his than they are ours. In Absalom’s case it was wrong; in God’s case he has a right to do as he wills with his own. He takes away from us our most choice delight on which we have set our heart, and then we inquire at his hands, “Why do you contend with me? Why am I struck with your rod? What have I done to provoke you to anger?” And thus we are brought into the presence of God, and we receive blessings of infinitely more value than those temporary mercies the Lord had taken from us.²

² Spurgeon, *The Spurgeon Study Bible: Notes* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 406.

VI. QUESTIONS.

True or False

- 01. ____ Absalom had a daughter named: TAMAR.
- 02. ____ Absalom never received much praise.
- 03. ____ The woman of Tekoah used the word BANISHED to describe her son.
- 04. ____ Among the words Joab put into the woman’s mouth was included information about a son who killed his brother.
- 05. ____ The woman of Tekoah was genuinely in mourning over the loss of her son.

I Found it in Verse(s)

- 06. ____ David asks a question.
- 07. ____ David is told to REMEMBER THE LORD THY GOD.
- 08. ____ David figured out that Joab had sent this woman.
- 09. ____ Weight of the hair cut from Absalom’s head.
- 10. ____ Command to set a field on fire.

Short Answer

11. This chapter tells us how long Absalom dwelt in Jerusalem without seeing David...

12. The place to which Joab traveled to bring back Absalom:

13. Finish this statement: For we must needs die, and are:

14. The woman asked David permission to speak one word and David said:

15. Before the woman spoke to the king, she did these two things:

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to 2 Samuel 13 Questions... **01**—True (7); **02**—True (12); **03**—True (16); **04**—True (30); **05**—False (37); **06**—4; **07**—12; **08**—20; **09**—28; **10**—39; **11**—Jonadab (3); **12**—Bring the meat into the chamber (10); **13**—Tamar put ashes on her head (19); **14**—Why should he go with thee? (26); **15**—The king’s sons and all his servants (36).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL 5.82Wx6.32H

H O U S E R V A N T F H
 S L A A P R A Y E H I A
 H M C I F A C E K E E N
 I M S D I C L A I R L D
 A B R O M O U R N E D M
 T E F C U T E S G F R A
 I F J O A B S A L O M I
 Y W O M A N S W E R E D
 A O L E A N F S P E A K
 G R O U N D E S T R O Y
 A D R P N R T H E R E G
 I S D A G I C T H E N J
 N Y S E N T H I N G C T

ABSALOM	AGAIN	ANSWERED	COME	DESTROY
FACE	FETCH	FIELD	GROUND	HANDMAID
HOUSE	JOAB	KING	LORD	MOURNED
PRAY	SAID	SENT	SERVANT	SPEAK
THEN	THERE	THEREFORE	THING	WOMAN
WORD	YEARS			

