

The Product of Indecision

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[0:00] 2 Samuel chapter 14, the title of this is the product of indecision.

! So Joab put the words in her mouth.

When the woman of Tekoa came to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and paid homage and said, Save me, O king. And the king said to her, What is your trouble?

She answered, Alas, I am a widow. My husband is dead. And your servant had two sons. And they quarreled with one another in the field.

There was no one to separate them, and one struck the other and killed him. And now the whole clan has risen against your servant. And they say, Give up the man who struck his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother, whom he killed.

[1:29] And so they would destroy the air also. They would also quench my coal that is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth.

Then the king said to the woman, Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you. And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, On me be the guilt, my lord the king, and on my father's house.

Let the king and his throne be guiltless. The king says, If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall never touch you again.

Then she said, Please let the king invoke the lord your God, that the avenger of blood kill no more, and my son be not destroyed. He said, As the lord lives, not one hair on your son shall fall to the ground.

Then the woman said, Please let your servant speak a word to my lord the king. He said, Speak.

And the woman said, Why have you planned such a thing against the people of God?

[2:37] For in giving this decision, the king convicts himself. Inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again. We must all die. We are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.

But God will not take away my life. Or God will not take away life. And he devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast. Now I have come to say this to my lord the king, because the people have made me afraid.

And your servant thought, I will speak to the king. It may be that the king will perform the request of his servant. For the king will hear and deliver his servant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the heritage of God.

And your servant thought, The word of my lord the king will set me at rest. For my lord the king is like the angel of God to discern good and evil.

The lord your God be with you. Then the king answered the woman, Do not hide from me anything I ask you. And the woman said, Let my lord the king speak.

[3:52] The king said, Is the hand of Joab with you in all this? The woman answered and said, As surely as you live, my lord the king, one cannot turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has said.

It was your servant Joab who commanded me. It was he who put all these words in the mouth of your servant. In order to change the course of things, your servant Joab did this.

But my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of an angel of God. To all are to know all things that are on the earth.

Then the king said to Joab, Behold now I grant this. Go bring back the young man Absalom. And Joab fell on his face to the ground and paid homage and blessed the king.

And Joab said, Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord the king, in that the king has granted the request of his servant. So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

[5:03] And the king said, Let him dwell apart in his own house. He is not to come into my presence. So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence.

Now in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he cut the hair of his head, for at the end of every year he used to cut it, when it was heavy on him he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head, 200 shekels of the king's weight. But there were born to Absalom three sons and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a beautiful woman. So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem without coming into the king's presence.

Then Absalom sent for Joab to send him to the king. But Joab would not come to him. And he came a second time, but Joab would not come. Then he said to his servants, See, Joab's field is next to mine and he has barley there.

[6:11] Go and set it on fire. So Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose and went to Absalom at his house and said to him, Why have your servants set my field on fire?

Absalom answered Joab, Because, or behold, I sent word to you. Come here that I may send you to the king to ask, Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still. Now therefore, let me go into the presence of the king. And if there is guilt in me, let him put me to death. Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

This is a very interesting chapter. One that there's a lot of different ways to look at it. But, in one sense, it kind of had to happen.

[7:20] It was inevitable. We have a chapter where, you know, after all of the things that David did, even though he repented, he does have the chicken coming home to roost type issue.

The fourfold penalty that he was to pay. The idea of four of his sons dying. Of course, one of them died before chapter 13. The second one was killed by Absalom.

And so you have all of these things that are going on. And, of course, Absalom, knowing that he has murdered his brother, he has sent his servants to kill his brother, and that was certainly something that he did.

And he knew that, and he knew he was going to be killed for that, executed. That he decided to go to Geshur, to his other family, and to be with him, be with them, and to be under their protection. But at the same time, there's something else going on. Amnon was the crown prince. Amnon is now dead. The crown prince after Amnon, as we can surmise from this book here, is Absalom.

[8:33] There is another brother, but we don't know where he is, and with the fact from silence, we just kind of say, it may have very well been Absalom, who would have been the crown prince.

The other brother may have been out of the picture at this point. So, with the idea that there is no crown prince that is in Jerusalem. And also the idea that chapter 14 talks about how popular that Absalom is.

So even if David died, and we have to remember that David is about 60 years of age at this point. 60 is not like 60 of today. 60 then was old.

Like really old, old. Like 100 old. And so, it was rare for someone to live to be that old. And not to mention, the warriors did not, you know, in Israel, the regular men did not have to fight up to that age either.

So, you know, the idea that he would stay home for some battles and such, well, he is of that age, that it could, it would make sense. And so, we have to remember that those types of things, with David being that old, natural things can happen, such as death.

[9:52] And with death, the Davidic line is now the king line, and there has to be a son of David who takes the throne, and the crown prince at this time now is Absalom, and if Absalom is stuck in Syria and cannot come back because he would be executed, then what?

Well, I mean, there's a lot more sons, of course, and there would pretty much be civil war, be what would be going on. And so, to prevent that from happening, the smart thing to do, the wise thing to do, if you will, would be to bring Absalom back.

And Joab, was quite a shrewd fellow. We've seen that time and time again throughout this book and in 1 Samuel as well. He really knew what he was doing.

And he made sure that he was going to figure out a way to bring Absalom back for there to be this popular person that could be the crown prince to David when David passes away. And this is what he does. He brings in wisdom. And we see the word wisdom in here a lot or wise or something along those lines in here a lot to describe not just Joab, but also to describe this woman that he brought in from Tekoa.

[11:20] Tekoa is south of Jerusalem, kind of out in the middle of the woods. Joab grew up not far from there and so he may have known this woman even in a younger age.

And so, brought this woman here. She knew, you know, even though he put the words in her mouth, she had plenty of words for herself and definitely knew how to handle those words. even David has shown to have some shrewdness even after all of these things or after this lady says what she says, he can definitely tell something is going on.

Did Joab, is Joab behind this? And she told him the truth that yes, he is behind all of this. And so even David showed some shrewdness as well and some sharpness as well.

And then his son Absalom is showing some sharpness at the end of this chapter when he's trying to get Joab's attention. And he doesn't get his attention and he burns his barley fields.

[12:28] Well, that'll get your attention right there. You burned my crop. Yep. What are you going to do now? And that got his attention as well. So even Absalom knew how to get some things done.

Now remember from the last chapter there's a guy named Jonadab. He knew how to get things done. And he was considered to be a sharp fellow and he was able to do all kinds of things, two different things in chapter 13.

But of course one of those happened to be to get Tamar into a place where she was alone with Amnon. And that was his thing that he decided that he was able to do.

he was able to find out the way to make that happen and to happen within the law. Even King David got involved in that. So he was known to be wise.

And all these people are also known to be wise and show some wise things going on in here. But is it really wisdom? I mean, is it really honestly wisdom?

[13:32] Yes and no. Yes and no. Yes, as in there are definitely ways that we may see things that are considered to be wise, that are considered to be a sharp thing to do.

We may look at politics and we see people that know how to get things done. And we want those guys to be on our side because they really know how to get things done. They may not necessarily get things done in the best way possible or in the most ethical way possible, but they do know how to get things done.

You know, President Bush had Karl Rove. He knew how to get things done. You may not have liked how he got things done, but he got them done. Barack Obama had David Axelrod. He knew how to get things done.

Yeah. Donald Trump has Steve Bannon. I mean, we got, they have these guys that really know how to handle Washington, D.C. and the politics and these things going on, but of course the media gets a hold and they're going crazy because they're seeing what they're doing and how they're handling things behind the scenes and they know something is not right about that.

But that's wisdom at the same time. At least that's a worldly way of looking at wisdom. That's kind of the point about that. This last Friday we got to go to prison ministry and got to share these words with the inmates there from James chapter 3 and it talks about wisdom but it talks about there are two different kinds of wisdom and one of those wisdoms is the idea of wisdom that is earthly and actually the verse not just says it's earthly wisdom but it kind of goes in a descending pattern.

[15:13] It is earthly unspiritual demonic wisdom that is those things and what kind of wisdom is that? It's wisdom that is driven by selfish ambition and it's wisdom that is driven by envy as well.

So bitter jealousy and selfish ambition. And yet there's a lot of different kinds of wisdom out there that is driven by that kind of thing. You might see that right here in this chapter.

Joab for instance well more than just this chapter the entire time he's pretty much been here he's been power hungry and he's been trying to vie for that power in a great way.

He killed a man who did exactly what he is doing and actually exactly what he was doing even then.

You know Abner the reason he killed Abner was because Abner was trying to get Saul's family into the throne and really get Abner into the throne as well and Joab was doing that very thing as well.

And so yeah he killed him well he deserved to be killed well so do you. I mean so it's pretty much the kind of wisdom was going on right there.

[16:27] So he's it's a vain wisdom it is a wisdom of vanity a wisdom of envy as well and ambition greed power hungry and you can see from Absalom as well anybody who is going to do something as vile as burning down someone's barley field and back in this day that was their livelihood it'd be like robbing a bank with a you know all kinds of guns I mean it'd be about as violent as that and yet someone is willing to do such as that there must be some selfish ambition there there must be some envy there in some way and it's certainly not the kind of the wisdom that comes from God but in James 3 17 it tells us about this great wisdom the wisdom that is from above is first pure then peaceable then gentle then open to reason full of mercy and good fruits impartial and sincere it is not self-righteous it is not compromising on anything on any truth it doesn't hold any grudges and so we see all kinds of wisdom in this chapter but we don't see this kind of wisdom from James 3 17 the wisdom from above it's wisdom from the earth at best so let's look at some of this wisdom in verse 4 this woman comes and appears to

David David is a judge he is the ultimate judge of Israel as part of his task so he does listen to people even just normal old people that come to him Israelites and such so here he is and she's bringing in some very fine words she knows what she is saying here but she brings him this story and it seems like a story that could happen two brothers are in a field they quarrel one brother is able to overpower the other brother and since nobody is there to stop them that other brother dies it happens it happens today it makes sense reminds you of Cain and Abel in some regard and so here she is telling this story and now she's when David finally gets to the point where he's like yes you have a point he is the heir to your property this property will be given to relatives that are greedy being selfish about this as well and so they don't need to receive this you need to keep this your husband needs to have an heir it doesn't make sense for this to happen so yes

I will be on your side and she even has him give an oath about it I mean what does she say right there in verse 11 you know please let the king invoke the lord your god and the king does he's able to do that we may talk about that in a minute but nonetheless she takes that even after an oath and compares it to the situation that's going on right here okay well let's see how it compares there are two sons she has two sons well David has two sons in this case Amnon and Absalom that makes sense okay one of these sons kills the other son brother killing brother well Absalom had his servants kill Amnon so yes that happened okay how did it happen well let's see in the parable here this story that's going on

I call it a parable it's not really a parable like Christ's parables but it's fictional as we can tell this man overpowered this other man and killed him it was not something he thought about five days earlier according to these ladies terms and her words of course but didn't think about that earlier didn't think about that you know maybe a year or two before that as far as we can tell it was just it was just something that happened it was not premeditated the guy did not want to kill him per se but he killed him at least that's the way the lady says it but Amnon and Absalom as it says in scripture the last verse of chapter chapter 13 chapter 13 chapter 12 Absalom is angry with Amnon for good reason too but that anger lasts for years years and years and from that it's all built up it comes to a boil and he kills

Amnon in cold blood even after devising a way to bring him out into a place where he can murder him those are two very different situations you know one situation is manslaughter the Israelites had a way to handle manslaughter cities of refuge there were places all over Israel that you could go and you can stay if you killed someone but it wasn't in cold blood it was and I can't call it innocent necessarily but definitely accidental you know you could go to the city of refuge and they would protect you generally Levitical cities and they would protect you and they would protect you from those who want to come and avenge your death and here are these people that were wanting to avenge this man's death he could have gone to one of these cities of refuge it was a way to handle that if Absalom would have gone to the city of refuge David's people would just come right in taken him and brought him back to Jerusalem because there was no way to protect him from that he killed in cold blood that's not for the purpose of the cities of refuge that's execution purpose and so there's already something that's different right here and if there would have been something to thought about some way to think about this if David would have slowed down and thought through with this for instance he gave an oath to this lady after hearing only one person's testimony not hearing all the other testimonies not hearing all the sides

[23:28] I mean David is a judge here that's not the proper way to do to do any kind of judicial work at all any judge knows that and so so already he's not he's not being wise in this way he's not

being a proper judge by not hearing all of these sides and so he goes into a quite a rash oath and you know rash oaths have consequences and you see in scripture where rash oaths have consequences Jephthah had a rash oath terrible consequence happened there there's something about David throughout this entire chapter too and even before that that it just doesn't seem like that he's being decisive enough that he's not making proper decisions as well I mean before that you know that after Amnon raped Tamar he was angry he was mad but that anger didn't take him anywhere he had a way to use that anger to bring justice to his son to bring justice to give justice to Israel but he didn't do that and he's had an opportunity to even show some justice and show some opportunity to bring justice and to bring proper a proper view of

God's law to the people here as well and he's not doing that he's allowing people to manipulate him and that's what happens when people are not decisive others come in and they have opportunity to take from them they have opportunity to take advantage of them and get what they like from this and Joab's doing that and this lady is being used for the purpose to do that and is doing it just fine on her own as well and now Absalom even more so close to the end in verse 12 David gave an oath she asked him to speak just to have a point of privilege and she says this why have you planned such a thing against the people of God for in giving this decision the king convicts himself in as much as the king does not bring his banished one home again you've taken something away from

Israel you've taken away pride from Israel the crown prince is some in any nation in any kingdom that there is actually a king or a queen the crown prince is celebrated!

It's always something that's generally something that's very much celebrated and he's taken that away from Israel this is really what's the point that she's trying to make not saying she's right or wrong at this point then says in verse 14 we all must die we're like water spilled on the ground you can't take it back once you spill it once we die we can't get back again and even says that God devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast even God is merciful why are you not showing mercy here David even God shows mercy in these situations now there's sometimes what we have to understand when we read things like this there are things that are true very much true yes God is a merciful God yes we are all going to die and yes that's a pretty good illustration for death you pour water on the ground you're not getting it back up once we're once we die that's the end of it those are true in many ways but what's the motive behind all of this

I mean the fact is David had a choice to make he could have brought justice to Absalom and he brings Absalom back brings justice and Absalom is executed he could have done that or he could have shown mercy mercy in a great way and in a loving way really in a way like the father did to the prodigal son like we heard this morning and there's a lot of people that like to take this story and relate it to the prodigal son but it's not the prodigal son the prodigal son repented the father was loving but David didn't do either and so he got he could have in that way and this whole thing just seems like just doesn't know what's going on and it's setting up something else because of that and then basically with the idea that this lady is telling

[28:51] David about Absalom and relaying her story to the story of Absalom to what's going on there David really kind of had an idea of what was going on he had some wisdom there did you I bring you to this and she gave him quite an answer in a nutshell it's yes but there's still some things that are worth reading here and worth looking at verse 19 kind of in the middle as surely as you live my lord the king one cannot turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has said it was your servant Joab who commanded me it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your servant and then verse 20 says something that's kind of stinging in order to change in to change the course of things your servant Joab did this but my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God to know all things that are on the earth these are not just flattering words she's basically saying

David has the power in Israel to make these decisions! make these worthwhile decisions that are being made Joab was bringing this in order to hope to bring things back to what should be the way things ought to be Absalom coming back Absalom taking his place back on the throne or at least to the right of David as crown prince Absalom coming to a place where he needs to be not into a foreign land where there could be possible war starting in verse 21 he finally goes to Joab and says okay bring back Absalom I don't know why he didn't do this three years prior or two years prior so he brings back Absalom and Absalom repents and David sees him from afar off and goes and runs to him no none of that happened that was what we did this morning unfortunately it would have

been great if it did happen

I think things would have worked out differently in chapters 15 and following but no he brought Absalom back Absalom had a place he's going to be locked right here he's under house arrest he is to stay in his own land his land is not going to be where David's land is so Absalom is not living in David's household Absalom is going to live in his own household household and his household happened to be next to Job's household that was interesting but so he's right there in that place nonetheless he may be under house arrest he may be in trouble in some ways you would think that somebody who has done this kind of thing they're going to have a reputation for being evil or have a reputation for being someone you want to stay away from you want to at least keep at arm's length but no no what's his reputation now in all

Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom and look at these great qualities all of these wonderful handsome qualities his hair can you imagine that's like five pounds of hair so he's known for being handsome and having a really nice head of hair is he known for his ethics morality is he known for the decisiveness that he has no he's not known for any of that but boy he'd be a great king wouldn't he I mean honestly that's kind of what they thought anyway back in the day well before David when Samuel was still judging they went to Samuel and they saw Samuel's sons and they weren't going to be very good judges I guess they weren't good looking enough and they said we need a king we need a king and well

God gave granted them an opportunity to have a king even allowed for the law to be laid out hundreds of years before that during the time of Moses well the stipulations would be for a king and we talked about that back in when we talked about chapter 11 and so they see that and they see an opportunity for a king and what do they go after they go after a guy that is head and shoulders above the rest and what's he known for he's known for that he's pretty much known for that and so and you know he was a good king maybe for a little!

[34:04] while but he really got quite vile after a while as well because of something that is described about David back when David was younger man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart it also described in that same chapter that David was ruddy and handsome and rugged you know it's not that he was an ugly guy but that wasn't the point the point was that man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart and God is looking at the heart of Absalom!

and we get an opportunity to look at the heart of Absalom through these pages of scripture and we see something that is not like what he is on the outside now I'm sure we can find all kinds of illustrations to describe this as being true in today's day and age I mean we can look back at past presidents I can think of one in particular back in the 60s when the first televised debate was on between John F Kennedy and Richard Nixon and of course Nixon got to be president eventually but why did Kennedy win that debate why did he win because of the policies because of what he said versus what Nixon no no they both spoke well I think no it was his smile it was his appearance the fact that he just seemed to relate well to the people that's even possible through a screen but even still but that's how he won that's what happened and even a lot of people say because of course that election was very close one of the closest elections

America's ever had and there are a lot of people that actually say that he won because that debate put him over the top to actually win now we don't have the we don't know for sure whether that actually happened whether that's the reason or not but that's what people say and people loved Kennedy and people followed Kennedy because he was younger he had good looks and yet what we know about him now just reading stories just understanding the fact that he was a womanizer and he did all kinds of other things I guess it doesn't really matter to many people we look at President Clinton he was the guy that people liked the way he decided because he decided in many ways like how the people wanted to decide it's like it's interesting it's like it just seems that he was clicking with the people he decided in ways that you know that like wow he seems more conservative than

President Bush before him it's amazing that he's deciding in this ways but what is he doing well he's looking at the polls and he's deciding by the polls and you know this can go on and on and you know we can say this Republican Democrat doesn't matter I mean you know there's there's it goes on and on the list like this but the fact is how often do we look at our leaders and we look at something as being as being a prerequisite for being a leader that has nothing to do with leadership I mean these debates we talk about the ones that win are the ones that connect we say the same

thing too in pastors per se leaders in the Christian world why on earth is Joel Osteen so popular is it possibly because of his smile is it possibly because of his positive words that he says is it possibly because of something that has nothing to do with what scripture says a leader ought to be I would suggest that yes that's the case it has something to do other than what scripture says and we can go down the list with that we want to make sure that when we have leaders in the church that they do follow scripture our leaders do follow scripture I need to follow scripture and so this is a chapter of scripture that's very odd and it's hard to look at it sometimes but the fact is it's there because of what happened before and what happened after and Absalom is being brought into a place where he can finally come back into being the crown prince at the end of it David reluctantly kissed him and that kiss signified he is brought back into full sonship he is brought back into his place very similar to what the prodigal son was about he brought back into this but he was not like that father and the prodigal son in open arms he didn't want to do it but he did it because it just kind of got put in the spot and he's going to be placed in the spot for a while now and it's not going to actually be placed in the spot we're going to find out when we get to this point [39 : 52] I guess in a couple weeks he's not in a spot he's actually going be running but the product of indecision ultimately leads to dark days you