

November 12

Scriptures: Read 2 Samuel 13 & 14

Key Verse: “And King David longed to go to Absalom. For he had been comforted concerning Amnon, because he was dead.” (2 Samuel 13:39)

Overview

Chapter thirteen begins the unfolding of the judgment of God upon David in a series of tragedies which show the results and punishment for his sin with Bathsheba, in fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy (12:10-12). David began to suffer from many domestic problems which later led to civil strife and rebellion against him.

The first tragedy was with Amnon, the first-born son of David by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess (3:2), who wickedly schemed the rape of his half sister Tamar. Although he said he loved her (13:4), it was obvious from his abusive treatment of her and his harsh words that it was only unbridled lust (13:14-17). His sinful act destroyed Tamar’s life (13:20), since no one would henceforth want her as a wife. It was impossible for her to marry Amnon, since it was strictly forbidden in the Law of Moses for half brothers and sisters to marry (Leviticus 18:9). Tamar and her full brother Absalom were both children of David by Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur (3:3). Absalom gave his father ample time to punish Amnon. When no punishment came, he resolved to take the matter into his own hands. David’s weakness in administering justice and disciplining his children caused him much trouble and heartbreak from this time until the end of his life.

For two years, Absalom silently harboured hatred in his heart and yet showed no sign to anyone of his desire for revenge; so David reluctantly permitted Amnon to go to Absalom’s sheep shearing party. Absalom took vengeance on his half brother in a deliberate, premeditated murder, thus killing the heir to the throne, he then fled for refuge to his maternal grandfather in Geshur, where he remained for three years (13:38). In Israel, there were no cities of refuge for this type of crime; it demanded the death penalty (Numbers 35:21).

David mourned Amnon’s death but once again did not take any overt action against his son Absalom other than keeping him banished. However, it was apparent, as Joab perceived, that all this turmoil in his family brought David much despair (14:1). Joab attempted a scheme to reconcile him to his estranged son Absalom. He probably did this in order to be favoured by David and to obligate Absalom to him. By employing a woman to act out a part, Joab hoped that David would judge mercifully in his decision about her pretended problem. He felt David would then realize that he also would be wronging the people if he did not show mercy, as God does, and bring Absalom back from banishment (14:13-14).

Joab’s plan worked. Absalom returned to Jerusalem where he gained the favour and friendship of all people. David, however, in a weak attempt to execute justice, would not see Absalom. After two years had passed, Absalom could not tolerate the situation with his father any longer. He insisted that he either be pardoned and restored to favour or be punished (14:32). Once he finally got Joab’s attention, Absalom asked him to arrange an audience with the king. Again Joab’s intercession was successful and David fully pardoned his son, but Absalom’s motives were not

pure, for he was already planning a rebellion. Though he was outwardly very pleasing to look at and praised for being the most handsome man in the kingdom (14:25), his heart was not pleasing to God, who only looks upon the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

Prayer

Lord, even though You forgive our sins as You did for David, we must still face the results of our sins in this life. Give us grace to go through the consequences if we must and deliver us from evil.