

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

© ASK, May 2015 • Telephone: 503 292 4352

Webpage on the Internet: <http://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: askoffice@askelm.com

Dear Associates and Friends,

May 2015

This month's article is part 9 of the series. It is titled "[Israel and Judah: 9. Rape and Murder](#)." It deals with relationships within King David's family. As presented in the Book of Second Samuel, these problems result from God punishing David for his adultery with Bathsheba and David's murder of her husband Uriah the Hittite.¹ David repented and God showed mercy, but God still imposed punishments upon him.

Amnon, son of David and heir to the throne, rapes his half-sister, Tamar. This act begins a series of actions involving David's son Absalom for an extensive story arc. The arc begins in this article and concludes with the next article. Tragedy and heartache affect everyone involved, beginning in Second Samuel chapter 13 and going through to the end of chapter 19. There is no parallel account in Chronicles, but there is Psalm 3 which deals with part of this tale of woe.

The narrative begins with a sexual sin committed by David's first-born son, Amnon. As you read, notice the following parallels between King David's sin with Bathsheba (and Uriah the Hittite) and that of his first-born son Amnon in 2 Samuel chapter 13:

- **"both commit immoral acts outside of marriage with beautiful women (v. 1; 11:2) in the privacy of their own residences (v. 7; 11:4).**
- **"Both women experienced great grief (v. 19; 11:26) because of the men's actions.**
- **"Ultimately, both transgressions brought about death for sons of David (v. 29; 12:18)."²**

Understand also, according to the Law of Moses both were liable to death. David did not die because God had mercy on him, but Amnon died because he was murdered by his half-brother Absalom. This was done because David did not punish Amnon. Nor did David punish Absalom for murdering his brother. Absalom escapes punishment — at least he escapes punishment from David — who, as king and his father, was supposed to defend injured victims (his daughter) and punish the guilty (his first-born son Amnon, and his third-born son Absalom, both guilty). What an outrage to morality, civil law, and to criminal justice!

David received mercy from God. Why? Because David repented. YHWH did not kill David for his crimes, nor did God remove the kingdom from him (as He did so to Saul). But God did punish David severely (as told again in the first page of the article).

David shows mercy to Absalom, giving him opportunities to return to a loving relationship with his own father. David's trust was betrayed each time he showed mercy to Absalom. David, however, did not betray God's trust and each time he sinned throughout his life, David was truly repentant and accepted God's judgments against him.

Baruch Halpern points out that God arranged circumstances so that David unwittingly assisted YHWH in order for God's punishments to happen when and how God wished. This may seem somewhat convoluted, but the biblical text bears out Prof. Halpern's analysis. Here is how David helped God punish himself,

1. **"By pronouncing the death sentence when Nathan fools him by disguising the identity of the killer and victims [in Nathan's fictional story, 2 Samuel 12:5, David ordered death for the evildoer];**

¹ That account from Second Samuel is told in "[Israel and Judah: 8. Bathsheba and Rabbah](#)."

² Robert Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 379.

2. **“By sending Tamar to Amnon when the latter feigns illness [2 Samuel 13:6–7];**
3. **“When Absalom fools him, by [David] keeping silent and then pretending nothing is amiss, into sending all the sons to Absalom’s feast [2 Samuel 13:23–26];**
4. **“When Joab’s plan and the Wise Woman of Tekoa’s imposture of a suppliant fool him into allowing Absalom’s return home [2 Samuel 14:1–24]; and**
5. **“When Absalom fools him into thinking that he means to go to Hebron to worship, rather than revolt [2 Samuel 15:7–9].”³**

You will find this article and the story arc about David’s son Absalom to be tragic to everyone involved. And remember, thousands of people were affected in a war that eventually broke out. I suggest you reread this Newsletter after you read this month’s article. You may better understand what I have written here.

Side Note on David’s “Missing Son”

In this saga of Amnon (David’s first-born son) and Absalom (David’s third-born), there is a son missing. We are told that David’s wife Abigail gave birth to a second-born son, named “Chileab” in 2 Samuel 3:2–3 and “Daniel” in 1 Chronicles 3:1. Other than his mention (with two different names) in these passages as being born to David’s wife Abigail, there is no further mention of him at all in the Old Testament.

What happened to Chileab/Daniel? Did he die young? Was he incapable of ruling as king due to some malady — physical, emotional, or psychological? We have no idea. He disappears from the biblical narrative of Second Samuel and Chronicles with no comment. Perhaps he died as a child. Whatever the case, his fate was not important enough to mention.

Thank You

David’s saga of mercy from God and Absalom’s mercy from David and Absalom’s betrayal of that mercy are examples to us in Scripture. They tell us that God’s mercy is available to all of us. However, mercy is not what those of us in the Body of Christ, the *ekklesia* of God (and eventually all human beings) should desire most as a gift from God. We have been given an even greater gift.

What we possess now from God is qualitatively different, and much more than mercy. It is nothing less than YHWH’s Holy Spirit. His Spirit is the medium by which He gives us Christ’s righteousness. His righteousness gives us inclusion into the family of God and brings us legally — now — into the very presence of YHWH (Ephesians chapter 1). Within that family we cannot sin. It is not that we do not sin, it is that the righteousness we have from Christ is counted as our righteousness. This is not because of who we are, but because of who Christ is. His righteousness makes us righteous, even when we sin.

Is God fooling Himself? Is He lying to Himself? No. A full explanation of this seeming contradiction can be found in Dr. Martin’s book with a title that seems to be superficial: *The Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*. It presents biblical information that is profound and more significant than you can imagine.

This book is free online, along with Charlie Corder’s reading of the book (as a free audiobook) for you to download and listen at your leisure. In addition, my shows on *Essentials* with GeorgeAnn Hughes are also online for free for you to listen to while you read along in your own home. ASK’s function is to make known and make clear your glorious possession of knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and realization of God’s gifts to us through Christ. We want you to understand all that God has to teach you. Thank you for your financial support. We need your help to continue operations.

David W. Sielaff
david@askelm.com

³ Baruch Halpern, *David’s Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), p. 31 n.30. The information presented reflects its title. Clearly, Halpern is not a fan of King David.