

Twelve Preludes To National Ruin

2 Samuel 14

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 9-29-2013

Introduction

Rick Brown tells the story of a father who was trying to keep his daughter from getting out of her seatbelt while he was driving. She kept standing up in the back seat. So he yelled at her to sit down. And she would sit down and then stand up again. But she knew just how far to push him. She knew that if she stood up one more time that he would pull over and give her a spanking. So she stayed seated, but under her breath she said, "But I'm still standing up inside." I think we would have to say that her rebellion had not been dealt with. If one of our kids said that in the car, it would be pull over time. But there were a number of things going on in that family that would almost guarantee further outbreaks of rebellion in the future.

And that's sort of what is going on in chapter 14 – a dozen preludes to the rebellion of chapter 15 can already be seen simmering under the surface. You can think of chapter 14 as containing the roots of rebellion and chapter 15 and following as containing the fruits of that rebellion. And actually, in an earlier chapter we saw that the seeds of Absalom's rebellion had started when he was quite young due to the permissive parenting of David and Absalom's mother, Maacah. And I won't repeat all the bad seeds that had already been sown into his life, but I have labeled one of those – that blood was thicker than justice.

I. When blood is thicker than justice (13:37-14:1)

In other words, David's family was allowed to get away with things that nobody else could. Over time his family gained a stronger hold on his heart that God's Word did. He somehow lacked the will to discipline his own children, so there was no justice being manifested in home. He failed to discipline Amnon. 1 Kings 1 indicates that he never disciplined Adonijah - ever.

A. On his mom's side (13:37-38)

And in the previous chapter we saw that Absalom literally was allowed to get away with murder because blood relations were thicker than God's justice. That was certainly true on his mom's side. His mother, Maacah, was the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. Let's read 13:37-38.

2Sam. 13:37 But Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. [That would have been his maternal grandfather.] And *David* mourned for his son every day.

2Sam. 13:38 So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

By harboring a criminal, Absalom's grandfather showed that his relationship to his grandson was more important to him than his calling as a king to administer civil justice. He was harboring a murderer. He probably wouldn't have done that with anyone else, but because Absalom was his grandson, he was willing to cover for him.

Now, here's the problem: Numbers 35 is quite clear that with premeditated murder there could be no mercy, no lesser penalty, no ransom, and no exception whatsoever for the death penalty. Deuteronomy 19 says the same thing. There was flexibility on penalties with other crimes, but not for murder – if the requisite two or three witnesses were present. Failure to execute a murderer defiled the land. Now, there were checks and balances that had to be in place before a prosecution could happen. That's why Cain was not prosecuted, and why David was not prosecuted. Neither one could be prosecuted legally. But all of those preconditions were met with Absalom and he should have been tried and executed.

B. On his dad's side (13:39-14:1)

Of course, David was not much better than his father-in-law on this score. He had already showed an unwillingness to punish Amnon according to the principles of God's justice, and when Absalom murdered Amnon and then fled to Geshur, David could easily have insisted that his grandfather hand him over for trial and execution. It is clear that extradition could have been forced. But he decided to not rock the boat any further than it was already rocked. Maacah's pleading may have factored into that – we are not told. But I'm sure there would have been tension with his wife and further grief brought to Absalom's sister Tamar if he had executed Absalom. So we can sympathize. And grandpa Talmai no doubt realized that things would cool off in time and he gave Absalom sanctuary. And they did cool off in verse 39:

2Sam. 13:39 And King David longed to go to Absalom. For he had been comforted concerning Amnon, because he was dead.

He was no longer angry. He wished he could be reunited to Absalom. And so blood was thicker than justice. His paternal instincts of wanting to be around his son made him treat his son differently than the rest of society.

Now, on a personal level such forgiveness is good, but he still had responsibilities as a magistrate.

When this kind of favoritism is true of any society, it is ripe for God's judgment. When members of Congress are not judged by the same standard that you or I would be judged, there is going to be trouble. It's one of the seeds that almost guarantee a country's ruin. And once we get to chapter 15, we will see that Absalom's rebellion was indeed used by God to discipline David – for this and other reasons.

But since all of these national issues flowed out of David's family, let's apply it to our own families. If, because you "love your children," you fail to give consistent discipline to them for infractions of the law, you are raising rebels. And most parents do struggle with this. I always struggled with disciplining my kids; I didn't like doing it. But knowing the evil fruits of failing to discipline, I did it anyway. Too many parents get green when they think of administering strict discipline. It makes them feel too bad. They just don't have the heart to hurt their children's feelings. And so the first seed of rebellion is nicely stated in 1 Kings 1 to explain the rebellion of yet another son – Adonijah, when it says, "And his father [David] had not rebuked him at any time..." (1 Kings 1:6). And we have already seen that the literal Hebrew is that he had not brought pain to him at any time. It's referring to discipline. God's law mandates justice in the home, and when it is lacking, it not only guarantees problems in the children, it produces lack of justice in society at large. As goes the families of a society, so goes the civil government.

II. When others are more concerned with your favor than with justice (14:1ff)

The second seed of national ruin relates to Joab. We've already seen that David did not deal with Joab's murder, probably because he didn't feel strong enough to do so. So earlier, when David had ordered Joab to get Uriah accidentally killed, Joab jumped at the opportunity. It was perfect for him because it put him on an even playing field with David. David no longer had the high moral ground over Joab. David could no longer hold the death of Abner over Joab's head. However, when David publically repented of his sin and almost risked his throne in doing so, he removed that leverage point from Joab. And so, Joab is vulnerable to criticism once again. And the reason is that Joab did not repent. It was lack of repentance that made him emotionally capable of doing this kind of stuff.

So now he sees another opportunity. Verse 1 says,

2Sam. 14:1 So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* concerned about Absalom.

He could tell that blood was thicker than justice with David (just as it had been with him), and it made him take a gamble and to try to get David to bring Absalom back. He would once again have high moral ground if David did so, because Joab's killing of Abner was in some ways superior to Absalom's killing of Amnon. So you can see why Joab would be pushing for this. I think that hugely factors into why Joab would do this.

But in any case, Joab is more interested in regaining David's favor than he is in promoting justice. In fact, he blurts out that admission in verse 22 when he says, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord, O king, in that the king has fulfilled the request of his servant." He longed for David's favor so much that he was willing to overlook murder.

In America, politicians like Joab are not beholden to a king, and so they don't look for a king's favor. But they do make compromises that will advance their position and bring them into favor with lobbyists, voter base, the Iron Triangle managers, and the other rulers behind the rulers. So the second seed of a country's ruin is when public officials are more interested in gaining favor and position than they are in promoting justice. It's a seed that will produce bitter fruit.

And the reason I am bringing these points up is that God is giving us clues ahead of time so that we can prepare for disaster. Proverbs 22:3 says, "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished." If all twelve of these seeds of disaster that we are going to be looking at this morning are present in America, then I would say that it would be wise to use a bit of prudence in protecting your family. I am convinced that we are headed toward national ruin apart from God's miraculous intervention, repentance of the church, or repentance at a national level.

III. When a "good" idea is pursued with deceitful means (14:2-3)

The third seed of national ruin is when Joab pursues what he thinks of as his "good" idea, but he does so with deceitful means. He believes that David will eventually be happy with the idea, but he needs to sneak it up on him. He can't be honest and have an open sunshine policy. But the very fact that he has to hide what he is doing and use sneaky methods shows that his "good" idea is not really good. Verses 2-3

2Sam. 14:2 And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, “Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead.

2Sam. 14:3 Go to the king and speak to him in this manner.” So Joab put the words in her mouth.

It’s remarkable how much deceit has had to be practiced over the past 150 years to get bad policies foisted on the American public in the name of good. If politicians have to use secrecy, be skeptical that there is any good there. If politicians have to use deceit to bring about “good” things, be skeptical that there is any good there. When bills are voted on without Congressmen or Senators having even read the bills, be skeptical that there is any good there. In fact, when the deceit that happens in DC is far more pervasive than the deceit that was happening in Jerusalem, I would say we are in even deeper trouble.

Of course, the same principles apply in the family. When wives use deceit to get their way with husbands (even if what they are promoting is good), and children use deceit to get their way of with parents, seeds of future ruin are being planted. We always disciplined deceitfulness far more severely in our family than most sins. You cannot progress on any level if there is not a trust relationship in the family. In Psalm 5:6 David admitted, “You shall destroy those who speak falsehood; the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.” If deceitfulness sets up a country and families for destruction, then there are a lot of countries and families who have already set themselves up for ruin. If God abhors deceitfulness and bloodthirstiness, then He abhors America. It is hypocritical to sing, “God bless America” without calling for repentance. You can pray, "God bless America *with* repentance." But without repentance America can expect nothing but God’s destruction and abhorrence.

IV. When sympathy gets in the way of justice (14:4-11)

The fourth seed of national ruin is liberal mercy that goes beyond Biblical mercy and sympathy that clouds justice. We see this throughout the story, but it is especially pronounced in her made-up story in verses 4-11:

2Sam. 14:4 And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, “Help, O king!”

2Sam. 14:5 Then the king said to her, “What troubles you?” And she answered, “Indeed I *am* a widow, my husband is dead.

2Sam. 14:6 Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and *there was* no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him.

2Sam. 14:7 And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, “Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.’ So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband *neither* name nor remnant on the earth.”

Now, it is a sad, sad story that she presents to David. In one fell swoop she is going to lose all of her children, and she will have nothing left. She admits that the second son had murdered the first, and that the rest of her family wants this second son dead, but she is asking David to have mercy on *her*, and have sympathy with *her* plight.

2Sam. 14:8 Then the king said to the woman, “Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you.”

2Sam. 14:9 And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, “My lord, O king, *let* the iniquity *be* on me and on my father’s house, and the king and his throne *be* guiltless.”

2Sam. 14:10 So the king said, “Whoever says *anything* to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you anymore.”

2Sam. 14:11 Then she said, “Please let the king remember the LORD your God, and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son.” And he said, “*As* the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.”

Well, David's judgment is injustice, pure and simple. He is refusing to follow the clear mandate of God’s law that there can be no mercy for a murderer. David vows to protect her son from the avenger of blood, despite the fact that there hasn’t even been a fair trial; despite the fact that he has not heard the testimony of the avenger of blood or the other relatives who want him dead. They obviously didn’t think it was an accident. Instead, he has only heard one side of the story, and even there she has already admitted that her son had indeed killed his brother. It is purely a squishy liberal sympathy that is driving him. Deuteronomy 19:12-13 says,

Deut. 19:12 then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.

Deut. 19:13 Your eye shall not pity him, but you shall put away *the guilt of* innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you.

God commanded that he not show pity, yet contrary to God’s law, David does show pity. He is playing right into Joab’s hands by once again stooping to a lower moral ground. Is it understandable that anyone would feel sorry for this woman? Of course it is. But liberals allow such feelings to

make them do away with Biblical justice and in the process they bring more misery on the country. Prisons are just one example of many of this liberal mercy, and we are far worse off with prisons than we would have been if the death penalty had been speedily applied like it used to be. And there are hundreds of examples like that of American leniency and supposed mercy that almost guarantees disaster in our own nation. Liberal kindness, generosity, mercy, and social justice is anything but mercy and anything but justice. It's yet another seed for national ruin.

V. Misdirection: when the “will of the people” becomes interpreted as the will of God; national disaster promised if he doesn’t compromise; God’s prolife positions used to undermine His justice; and when grace is substituted for justice in the state (14:12-17)

The fifth seed of ruin was misdirection. Football players use it all of the time - and I believe legitimately so. It's legitimate in warfare. But it is not legitimate in politics or in our daily life. In this case it is a form of speech where good is painted as bad and the bad decision is painted as being good. We are having this kind of misdirection all the time in America. Those who oppose homosexuality are vilified as unjust, spiteful, and unloving, and painted so horribly that it is tempting for godly Christians to cave in. Notice the clever way that this woman words things in verses 12-17:

2Sam. 14:12 Therefore the woman said, “Please, let your maidservant speak *another* word to my lord the king.” And he said, “Say on.”

2Sam. 14:13 So the woman said: “Why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty, *in that* the king does not bring his banished one home again.

This is just remarkable. She is calling his failure to bring Absalom back as a sin against the people. The people want him back, and you are sinning against them. You are guilty if you don't bring him back. Now, that would be a pretty stupid thing to accuse David of if he didn't already wish that he could bring Absalom back. She could get in real trouble for those words. But she's giving him reasons why he can do what he wants to do. Still, I am amazed by her boldness. Verse 14:

2Sam. 14:14 For we will surely die and *become* like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.

She is claiming that this will be a disaster to the nation if David doesn't bring Absalom back. It's actually the exact opposite of what is going to happen. It's by bringing Absalom back to Israel that Israel will die and

become like spilled water on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Being soft on Absalom would cause disaster to fall upon Israel. But she claims the opposite. Failure to bring Absalom back will cause death and disaster. And we see liberals doing this all the time – they paint their disastrous programs as if they are the only solution, and the Constitutional positions as if they are destructive to freedom and to our nation. They can get away with it because the Biblical concepts of justice have been muddled in America. She could get away with this speech because she is giving David reasons to do what he already wants to do. It's easier to deceive David because he wants to be deceived. But she uses misdirection to do it. She goes on:

...Yet God does not take away a life; ...

God's prolife, right? He doesn't want sinners to die! That's what she is claiming. She goes on:

but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him.

What she is doing is speaking about God's grace. She is saying, "Yes, there are lots of things that deserve death in this world, but God has provided the means of forgiveness and reconciliation. You shouldn't fight against God's grace by failing to forgive and restore Absalom.

I find it odd that one commentary totally missed the problem and said that she was doing a good thing – she was forcing the king to forgive and apply God's grace and mercy. But here is the point - the state is not the instrument of grace and mercy. It is the instrument of justice. She is giving misdirection by applying theology from one jurisdiction (that of the church) to the state jurisdiction, where it doesn't apply. And bleeding heart liberals do this all the time. And they do it rather effectively. If you don't want your children to grow up deceived by the rhetoric out there, you've got to teach them how to think critically, and logically, and how to recognize manipulation, and how to have consistent worldview. Verse 15:

2Sam. 14:15 Now therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid...

There is a subtle hint here that David too should be afraid of what the people think. "There's rumblings out there among the people, and it's made me really afraid. That's why I have come, David. You could be in trouble with the people." That's in effect what she is saying. But she also makes it clear that she is afraid on *David's behalf* and she has come to try to fix the problem. It's more misdirection.

...And your maidservant said, "I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant.

So she has now switched to speaking for the entire population. She's coming on their behalf to fix the problem. And of course, liberals do this all the time too, don't they? In fact, almost every commie, fascist, Democrat, and Republican has gotten used to bringing their votes on behalf of the people. It may only benefit a few, but it on behalf of the people! Verse 16:

2Sam. 14:16 For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the inheritance of God.' She is now tying it together with her first story and showing how the two are identical. And she is saying that Israel will face ruin just like she will face ruin if both of her sons are destroyed. Verse 17:

2Sam. 14:17 Your maidservant said, "The word of my lord the king will now be comforting ["I know you are going to do the right thing." And then she gets really spiritual -]; for as the angel of God, so *is* my lord the king in discerning good and evil. And may the LORD your God be with you.' "

Isn't it amazing how deceit can be spoken in the name of God, and how people can pronounce "God bless America" or "God bless David" even when America and David are violating God's laws? There's nothing new under the sun, and nations continue to be led to ruin when these twelve principles are undermining them. But this issue of misdirection happens all the time in family, church, and state. It is something to be guarded against. And the only way you can do it is by teaching your children to think critically, and to not be pressured because people are painting your actions poorly and making you feel bad. Recognize manipulation wherever it occurs.

VI. When Davids and Joabs are guilty of the same crime (14:18-22)

The sixth seed of ruin that is hinted at in this chapter is that both David and Joab have been guilty of the same crime as Absalom. We've already talked about this, but verses 18-22 say,

2Sam. 14:18 Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you." And the woman said, "Please, let my lord the king speak."

2Sam. 14:19 So the king said, "*Is* the hand of Joab with you in all this?" ... By now I think you can see that the hand of Joab was indeed all over this. Joab has taken a risk by comparing his situation to David's, but he was in effect saying, "Hey, I'm not going to criticize you if you bring Absalom back. In fact, I am willing to take some of the blame by making it my request, not yours." He is giving David an easier way to bring Absalom back, and David catches it. Continuing in verse 19:

And the woman answered and said, “*As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. [Flattery will get you everywhere in her estimation.] For your servant Joab commanded me, and he put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant.*

2Sam. 14:20 To bring about this change of affairs your servant Joab has done this thing; [In other words, Joab is doing this for your benefit.] but my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that *is* in the earth.”

2Sam. 14:21 And the king said to Joab, “All right, I have granted this thing. Go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom.”

I think David knows full well what he is doing. He wants to show mercy to Absalom, but he knows he can't do it legally. But by making this Joab's request, he shifts the blame a little bit. And Joab quite willingly takes it.

2Sam. 14:22 Then Joab fell to the ground on his face and bowed himself, and thanked the king. And Joab said, “Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord, O king, in that the king has fulfilled the request of his servant.”

Joab had no idea of how poorly this would all turn out. But the main point is that when David refuses to apply Biblical justice to his own son, his judgment elsewhere becomes a little skewed. He joins the ranks of Joab in playing politics instead of in being a statesman. And when the country is full of politicians instead of being full of statesmen, it is evidencing one of the seeds of national ruin.

VII. When humanistic penalties are substituted for Biblical penalties (14:23-24)

The seventh seed of ruin is that humanistic penalties are substituted for Biblical penalties. Are you beginning to get the idea that this is a pretty good description of modern America?

Because this is such a flagrant violation of God's law, David can't look like he is *too* eager to receive Absalom, even though he longs to, and God Himself says that he longs to. So he imposes a penalty on Absalom – it wasn't quite house arrest, but Absalom was given limited movement and was not allowed to eat at the king's table. It makes David not quite so subject to the accusation of favoritism. He could say, “Hey, I've penalized Absalom. He is being punished.” Verses 23-24:

2Sam. 14:23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

2Sam. 14:24 And the king said, “Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face.” So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king’s face.

Whatever other issues are involved here, it is crystal clear that a humanistic penalty has been substituted for the one and only penalty allowed in the Bible. And in America, virtually every Biblical civil penalty has been replaced with something else. When that happens, it is just a matter of time before other compromises happen and a nation ends up ruined. You cannot throw off God’s civil laws without suffering. Now, it may take awhile. After all, seeds do take a while to germinate and become large vines that choke out a nation’s life and produce bigger and bigger disasters. But you don’t have to study America’s judicial system very much to realize that it is already in a state of absolute disaster. Even the humanists are writing about it; they don’t know what to do. Dangerous criminals are being let out of the prison in several states because of prison overcrowding and financial woes. And the courts are bogged down. And penalties vary widely across the nation. Rapists often get out on parole sooner than homeschoolers who spank. Even liberals are recognizing that we need to fix the system, but no solutions have been found because they hate God’s law. Ezekiel 20:25 guarantees that when God’s civil laws are rejected, God will give that nation over to statutes and rules that are miserable and that are impossible to live by. It *is* a seed of national ruin that has been growing for decades in America. Each agency has so many rules that nobody can keep up with them. This bureaucratic America is the fulfillment of Ezekiel 20:25.

VIII. When public opinion is contrary to justice (14:25)

The eighth seed of ruin is the pressure that comes to government officials when public opinion is contrary to justice. Verse 25 says,

2Sam. 14:25 Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom [but notice what he is praised for – it is pretty shallow] for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

The reasons the people like him are so shallow, you would think that David was living in modern America. And today, political popularity is rarely based on the Constitution, statesmanship, faithfulness, or other Biblical qualities. It’s just as shallow today. People come into positions of influence because of superficial reasons, not because they are qualified.

But here is the problem: during those three years, Absalom undermined the current administration and won the hearts of the people, and

it became increasingly difficult to oppose Absalom without also making the people upset. David talks about that in one of his Psalms. And when public opinion favors an incredibly corrupt candidate, the country is on the brink of ruin. We will see in the next chapter that Absalom later capitalizes big time on public opinion and turns it into a successful campaign against David and for his own kingship. It was brilliant political strategy, but it was corrupt.

IX. When wicked men are thought to be righteous for superficial reasons (14:26)

The ninth seed of ruin is when wicked men are thought to be righteous for superficial reasons. Verse 26 says,

2Sam. 14:26 And when he cut the hair of his head—at the end of every year he cut *it* because it was heavy on him—when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king’s standard.

Ordinarily Jewish men always kept their hair trimmed fairly short. The only exception was when a man took a radical Nazarite vow to God for a short period of time. And what made it so radical was that it was so humiliating. Not very many people were willing to take that kind of a vow because your hair grew long and at the end of the period your hair was completely shaved off. The long hair was humiliating for the man and the shaved head was humiliating for the woman. Such people were thought to be very devoted God to take such a humbling vow. The only person previously who was a Nazarite for life was Samson. And I am convinced that Absalom presented himself as a person who would yearly devote himself to God in this most radical form of submission – the Nazarite vow. And he seemed to want to make a big show of his Nazarite vow by weighing his hair when it got cut off. That would have made me think even more poorly of him, but apparently there were a lot in Israel who admired him. One commentator pointed out that the text shows that his *real* reason for cutting his hair had nothing whatsoever to do with his Nazarite promises to God. Instead, it says, “at the end of every year he cut it because it was heavy on him.” He no doubt would have kept his hair indefinitely like Samson did, if it hadn’t been for how heavy and uncomfortable the hair was. Two hundred shekels was about five pounds, so that’s pretty heavy. But back to the point, this wicked man was probably thought to be righteous for very superficial reasons – that he took a Nazarite vow every year. He claimed to be devoted to God.

And in similar fashion, modern politicians can be called “good men” despite the fact that they are thieves who promote socialism, murderers who promote abortion, liars who perjure themselves after vowing to uphold the

constitution, blasphemers who take the name of the Lord in vain, adulterers and perverts, Sabbath breakers, etc. Their righteousness is a superficial image that covers their rebellion just like Absalom's long hair was a superficial image that covered his murder, lying, and rebellion. It amounts to a few public statements and a few visits to church. I remember the last time that adultery ruined a candidate's chances of winning. It was a long time ago. Apparently the population held to higher standards back then. But now, so long as candidates give some superficial image of doing good for the nation, they can get away with anything. Like Absalom's Nazarite photo op (and it was clearly designed to be like a photo op because he weighed his hair publically), so too, modern politicians may get photo ops coming out of a church, but their character doesn't match up, and the population doesn't seem to care. So when the wicked breakers of God's law are considered to be good by the population, a nation is in trouble. That's the point. I am trying to convince you through these twelve reasons to start preparing for potential national ruin. Think through how the financial system might be impacted, or the judicial system, and other agencies and how they impact life.

X. When popularity makes justice difficult (14:25-28)

Point X deals with how popularity makes justice difficult. Verses 25-28:

2Sam. 14:25 Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

2Sam. 14:26 And when he cut the hair of his head—at the end of every year he cut *it* because it was heavy on him—when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king's standard.

2Sam. 14:27 To Absalom were born three sons [who, by the way, died before Absalom died], and one daughter whose name *was* Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful appearance.

2Sam. 14:28 And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face.

But he was popular. Chapter 15 says that he stole the hearts of the people. When a populace could care less about justice, yet another seed of ruin has been planted.

XI. When manipulation actually works (14:29-32)

The eleventh seed of ruin is when manipulation actually works. Verses 29-32:

2Sam. 14:29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

2Sam. 14:30 So he said to his servants, “See, Joab’s field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire.” And Absalom’s servants set the field on fire.

2Sam. 14:31 Then Joab arose and came to Absalom’s house, and said to him, “Why have your servants set my field on fire?”

2Sam. 14:32 And Absalom answered Joab, “Look, I sent to you, saying, ‘Come here, so that I may send you to the king, to say, ‘Why have I come from Geshur? *It would be better for me to be there still.*’ ’ Now therefore, let me see the king’s face; but if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me.”

This is manipulation pure and simple. Commentators point out that there *was* iniquity in Absalom, so he is not being honest when he says, “if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me.” He is forcing a decision to be made, and knows it will be made in his favor. He knows that his dad does not have the stomach to execute him. So it was manipulation. And as we will see in the next chapter, Absalom was expert at manipulation. There are times when people are not successful at it, but when manipulation actually works in a family, church, or culture, it is a sign that moral backbone is lacking and that in turn signals danger for the future.

XII. When enemies are treated as friends (14:33)

The twelfth seed is when enemies are treated as friends. Verse 32 says,

2Sam. 14:33 So Joab went to the king and told him. And when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king. Then the king kissed Absalom.

Even if the law of God had not mandated Absalom’s execution (which it did), he had already shown signs that he was a dangerous person. And this problem on the part of David wasn’t simply lack of evidence. Even after Absalom took over the kingdom (thus guilty of treason), and after he sought to annihilate David’s army (thus declaring himself a military enemy), and intending to kill David himself (thus guilty of both attempted patricide and regicide), after having committed adultery with David’s concubines, and after a war that cost thousands of Israelite lives, David still had a hard time doing anything against him. It's crazy. Joab had to go contrary to David’s orders and kill Absalom because he knew that otherwise it would be a disaster. And in chapter 19 this led Joab to very rightly say to David, “...you love your enemies and hate your friends... for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased

you well.” (19:6). But especially that phrase, “...you love your enemies and hate your friends...”

And we live in an age when America loves its enemies and hates its friends. Just look at whom we have sided with in so many of the world conflicts and you will see that we love our enemies and hate our friends. We have given trillions of dollars away to the international banking cartel (probably the worst enemy that America has ever had) and we heavily tax America’s citizens and so heavily regulate businesses that we drive them away. America defends abortionists and punishes homeschoolers. We fund Al- Qaeda while claiming to be against terrorism. We give law abiding American citizens a hard time through NSA while giving millions of dollars to Syrian rebels who slit the throats of Christians. It’s almost a demonic blindness upon our nation. So that’s the last seed of ruin that we see starting in this chapter.

Conclusion

Will any *one* of these seeds lead to a nation’s ruin? Not likely. But when you have a compounding of these things in a nation’s life, that nation is seriously headed to disaster apart from repentance. And it is foolish to ignore the symptoms and treat things as if they will always go on like they have in the past. To assume that America will continue on without any major problems is to ignore the Biblical laws of harvest. We have chapters like this to give us a heads-up that we ourselves are headed toward danger.

Of course, you could apply these same principles to your family as well since it was David’s family that was the source of the trouble. When parents get soft and stop disciplining their children, trouble is brewing. When children can get out of discipline through deception and misdirection, trouble is brewing. When parents are guilty of the same sins that they are troubled over in their children, they had better take speedy actions to correct their own sins – to take the log out of their own eyes. When we parents substitute man-made disciplines for what the Bible calls for, it is a sign that things are not heading in a good direction. When public opinion guides our family behavior more than God’s law does, there will be bitter fruits from such seeds. When we are easily manipulated we are evidencing the same problems within the kingdom of our family that the broader culture is manifesting. So even though we have only been able to skim over this chapter quickly, there are applications that you should be able to easily make to your own individual heart, to your family, and to the church culture as

well. And as we do so, may God give us grace to pluck up any seeds and growing weeds of potential ruin and to adjust our lifestyle once again to His holy law. Amen.

Twelve Preludes To National Ruin

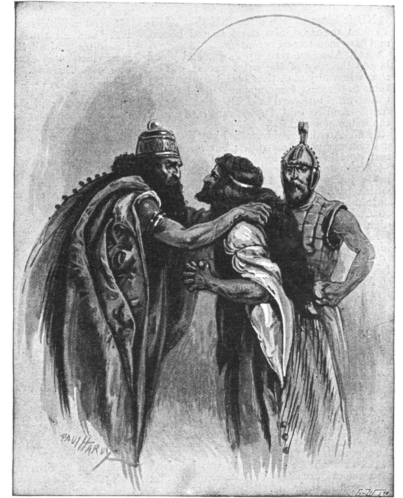
2 Samuel 14

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 9-29-2013

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- XII. When enemies are treated as friends (14:33)

Conclusion



"And the king kissed Achish."—2 Sam. xiv. 33.



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