

# A Prioritizing Among God's Laws

## 2 Samuel 14:5 - 11

Nutshell: With the Law covenantally inscribed on our hearts, we can appreciate its depth, its life, and its '3-dimensional' quality. It lives and breathes as we do (just as it kills the spiritually dead).

Our passage provides an exploration into the depth of the Law, making a case for the priority of our togetherness in Christ.

I. Context: Joab sending a wise woman to teach David about restoration .

### II. Text

2 Sam 14:5 And the king said to her, "What *shall be* to you?" And she said, "Indeed, I *am* a widow woman, and my husband died. 6 And your servant had two sons. And the two of them fought in the field, and there *was* no deliverer between them. And the one struck the other, and he killed him."

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

### III. Teaching

#### Review

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
  1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
  2. **Saul** demonstrated *man's* kind of rule. God previewed *His* version of king through **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 says David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. 2 Chron 17:3 indicates a better pre-sin David.
- C. David was God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for later kings of Judah, 2 Kings 14:3
  1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5.
  2. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- D. **DAVID'S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING\***
  1. Conquer Jebus (Jerusalem), where Goliath's head was, 1 Sam 17:54

2. Retrieved the Ark from its ‘wanderings’, 6:1-19; tragically wrongly, 1 Chron 15:2; then rightly & joyfully
  3. Plan a permanent form for the Tabernacle, the Temple.
  - ★ 4. God chose *Abraham* to bless all nations. Now He chose *David*’s line to bring forth the King of all nations
  5. 1 Sam 20:14 oath in 2 Sam 9. \*OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.
- E. David’s sin and its consequences
1. David murdered to cover adultery, Ch 11. Now David, though forgiven, *would see continued violence*, ch 12
  2. David’s son died, *not*, per Deut 24:16, as a cohort. He was ‘replaced’ by Solomon/ Jediah, “adored” by God.
  3. Chap 13, Amnon was lovesick over his half-sister, Tamar
    - a. By deceit, he raped her, then appallingly dumped her
    - b. Tamar was a heroine of the faith
    - c. Absalom took her in but advised silence
  4. After 2 yrs., Absalom killed Amnon, then fled
  5. After 3 more years, Joab could see that David’s heart was on Absalom, 14:1-4
    - a. So he gave a wise woman props and a script
    - b. She showed us good prayer posture in her obeisance

**Kid-speak:** Last time, we saw that Joab wanted to help David bring his son back who had run away. Which son was that? Absalom.

F. *In our section: 2 Sam 14:5-11, The wise woman uses Joab’s story to bring David to see the need to restore Absalom.*

### Outline:

- I. 14:19, Joab Put “All” these Words in her mouth
- II. Making a 3-Phase argument
  - A. Phase 1: Present the basic case with an *unstated* appeal
  - B. Phase 2: Clarify the legal give-and-take
  - C. Phase 3: Secure David’s pledge of maximum enforcement
- III. Observations on the Law
  - G. In 13:39, David was “consumed” with “going forth” to Absalom
    1. In 14:1 (same time frame), this is translated into Joab’s perception that “the king’s heart was upon Absalom”

2. The combination of “heart” and “upon” this way *never* speak of *opposition*; only consideration, Job 1:8, or reconciliation, Mal 4:6
3. David felt ‘stuck,’ fearful that restoring Absalom was only a personal preference
4. Joab will now show him that restoring Absalom is just

H. 2 Sam 14:5-6 (see front page)

1. The woman has approached as a protracted mourner and pleaded for help
2. David now asks what concerns her
3. Thus ensues Phase One of the woman’s appeal
  - a. She’s a widow with two sons
  - b. The two fought in the field and one killed the other
  - c. Now the story continues

**Kid-speak:** Who was it that sent a lady to tell a story that would help David decide to bring back his son Absalom? Joab.

2 Sam 14:7 “And, behold, the whole family has risen against your servant, and said,

‘Give *up* him who struck his brother, and we will kill him for the soul of his brother whom he has assaulted. And we will eliminate the heir as well.’

But they will extinguish my coal which is left, to prevent the setting of my husband’s name and remnant on the face of the land.”

I. The stages of the woman’s story are important

1. She wants to procure a response at this level first; then she can move on to phase two and three
2. First, then, the whole family asking for strict justice per murder laws, e.g., **Num 35:16-24**
  - a. It wasn’t accidental. They fought. There was enmity, v 22.
  - b. They have a just claim
  - c. Capital punishment for murder was (and is) a good law
3. It is unclear whether the family hopes to eventually gain the remaining son’s inheritance *or* if they feel that his name deserves to die out (or both)
  - a. But the effect either way will be end of the **husband’s**

- name and family line
- b. There was **strong precedent** for keeping a family line alive, **Num 27:1-11**; (Deut 25:6 less so)
  - c. Preserving a family line in Israel was also a good law
4. The tension between these two good laws was *not a confusion* in God's Law, but simply two good ends, both of which could not be carried out together
  - ❖ 5. In this case, one good law would have to take its naturally higher precedence
    - a. Jesus recognized this embedded hierarchy when He used the phrase "the least of these commands," Matt 5:19
    - b. There is an **ORDER** to God's commands. *All* are vital, only some naturally more so.
  6. The parallels with David's case are not fully developed yet, but there was also a legal tension in Absalom's case
    - a. We've already seen one legal tension when Joab avenged his brother's death, *but* off the battlefield, 2 Sam 3:27; 1 Kings 2:5.
    - b. Worthy of a 'curse,' but not death, 2 Sam 3:28-29.

**Kid-speak:** The lady told David a story of *one* of her sons killing the *other* one, and now all the rest of her family wanted to kill her son who was still alive. But what did she want King David to do? Save her son.

2 Sam 14:8 And the king said to the woman,

"Go to your house, and I myself will command concerning you."

- J. We gather that the case was not hard to decide!
  1. Not only so, David ruled *emphatically*, "I myself"
  2. It appears that the son *needed* be protected.
  3. Consider some additional factors:
    - a. The remaining son had apparently harbored no ongoing grudge, Exod 21:12-13, though, again, it was intentional, Deut 4:42; 19:4
    - ★ b. The case for a family name in Israel, then, *was* effectively a life-or-death issue: **a family line dying out**
    - c. But especially for a widow, Exod 22:22-23; Prov 15:25
  4. David's decision included all these factors

2 Sam 14:9 And the woman of Tekoah said to the king,  
"On me, my lord the king, *be* the iniquity and on my father's house; and the king and his throne shall *be* clean."

- K. Phase two: Ensure it is understood that this was a 'split decision'
1. There was "iniquity" in countermanding the death penalty, at least technically
  - ☆ 2. But *equally importantly*, there would have been iniquity in *ignoring an Israelite's inheritance rights*
    - a. She was not requesting nor was David creating a loophole
    - b. These were two aspects of the Law that each had a say in the matter. Both could not be implemented.

**Kid-speak:** King David decided that since the lady's son was her only one left, her family would not be allowed to do *what?* Kill him.

3. Was *she* asking to suffer the death penalty herself or with her father's household?
  - a. No, for David wasn't offering to be executed in the boy's place either in the 'iniquity being on him'
  - b. It was the "iniquity" of bypassing the death penalty
4. Nor does her request mean there was any available procedure for her to actually bear the iniquity of countermanding the death penalty
  - a. Since *she* had no *authority* to countermand it
  - b. Rather, she spoke *in deference to David's standing* before God and his reputation before men
  - c. As though to say, "Isn't there some way to shield your uprightness in the matter?"
  - d. Something like Paul's wish in Rom 9:3
5. *Could* David have even said, "And this woman's house will bear responsibility for the contravention"?
  - a. It is hard to see how they could have
  - b. Again, she spoke *in deference to David*
6. Abigail had said the same thing in 1 Sam 25:24
  - a. But her case was different. She was saying that she, not her husband, was the *morally responsible party* in the family. He was a real *nabal*.

- b. I.e., if anyone would have ensured just compensation to David's men, countrymen, it would had to have been her
- c. But *to this point*, it had not been her place to step into that role in place of her husband

2 Sam 14:10 And the king said,

"The one having words with you, bring him *here* to me as well, and he will not continue to bother you any more."

L. David indicates that in his choice to favor *continued heritage* over *capital punishment*, anyone who questions his decision will be accorded equal time in his presence...

- 1. ... but it might not be pretty
- 2. Perhaps an adversary might be asked about his own legacy?

**Kid-speak:** The lady made sure that David was OK with letting her son live. Was David OK with it? Yes.

2 Sam 14:11 And she said,

"Please let the king remember Yahweh your God, concerning the avenger of blood's magnification to bring ruin, and that they may not exterminate my son."

M. Phase Three

- 1. With the king's reassured willingness to shoulder the full responsibility for his gracious decision towards her, she adds one further element:
  - a. The clan might rise up in strength and seek to kill her son while David's edict was 'settling in'
  - b. That is, the king's messenger might come to inform the clan of David's decision, but they might arrogate, "What can the king say against the law of the avenger of blood? We'll kill first and answer questions later."
- 2. She is effectively asking for a show of force *or* a specific warning to the avenger of blood

And he said,

"The living Yahweh *hold me to account* if a hair of your son falls to the earth."

- N. Maybe David was already planning to show muscle in communicating his decision. If not, now he is.
1. Now the message will probably double down on the *inviolability* of the king's edict
  2. But to the woman's purpose: this is as firm a decision as could be rendered
- O. Now, starting in v 12, the woman will apply the king's decision to *himself*
1. This has all been a "parable"
    - a. A "parable" is a story "cast alongside" reality to elucidate reality
    - b. Jesus was good at parables
    - c. But this had to be a 'live parable,' one in which David would have to issue a decision
  2. The point of the woman's parable: SHOULD N'T DAVID RESTORE ABSALOM?
  3. Yes, one part of God's Law would yield to another,
    - ✧ but David was presently subjugating the *other* part
      - a. There was a tension, but David *could* and (by his own decree for her) *should* favor the return of an outcast
      - b. *That* was the aspect of the Law he was presently ignoring

**Kid-speak:** Next time, we'll see the lady telling David that just like he brought back *her* son who was kicked out, David should bring back his *own* son, \_\_, who had been kicked out. Absalom.

4. Leithart sees the "widow" being portrayed as Israel,
  - a. and Absalom was the widow Israel's outcast son
  - b. (The husband being God. But not every facet of a parable has to line up with a facet of reality.)

- P. Observations on the Law
1. David deemed the Law exceedingly **beautiful, broad, deep,** and **pleasurable**, Ps 19:7-10\*; 119:24, 48, 54, 72, 96, 97, 142, 143, 144, 152, 167
  2. Joab knew David would appreciate the explication of the Law brought out by the woman's situation
  3. 1 Tim 1:9, the Law's target audience is the *lawless*
    - a. When it has \*converted (Ps 19:7) the lawless, then it

informs our longing to do good

- b. A “lawful” use of the Law (1 Tim 1:8) is to avoid unjust harm: to **protect**
- c. Where two laws compete in offering protection, the one offering greater protection:
  - i. is not always right
  - ii. but has a ‘leg up’

IV. How does this relate to Christ?

Christ kept the Law in order to take its curse, then to embed the Law in His people.

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) God naturally *seeks* ways to help us.

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VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong? How have I lost righteousness?**

How much do I care about the unity of Christ’s body?

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”): **How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**

I will consider Christ’s efforts behind **our togetherness**.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?** Lord Christ, healer of wounds by Your wounds, let me be patching potential breaches *ahead of time* with encouragements and love.

Vision: The Law’s natural ‘order of concession’ teaches us the proper value to put on the togetherness of the body of Christ. Active harmony is more important than being vindicated as in the right or the offending brother to be shown wrong.

Family seems to have trumped the sixth commandment in our passage, but actually only exposed the more vital side of the sixth commandment: Family life.

Let us treasure and our unity IN Christ by treasuring and guarding our unity WITH one another, Eph 4:3-4.