

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading for May 29:

2 Samuel 14:1-15:22:

In chapter 14 we learn that Joab (the captain of David's army and also his nephew) has a wise woman from Tekoa (10 miles south of Jerusalem, near Bethlehem) come to David to convince him to let Absalom return. We are not sure if "wise woman" was an official title that suggests she was well-known for imparting wisdom and/or proverbs (a sage), or if she was a woman whom Joab knew to be wise and could pull off what he wanted. We also don't know what was motivating Joab to work so hard to bring home Absalom. Perhaps as part of the family and the captain of the army he could see there was a rift in the family and potentially in the nation and thus wanted to keep David's enemies close, believing it prudent to keep an eye on Absalom. Once Absalom returned, he did not have an audience with the king for two years, at which time the king kissed him to demonstrate reconciliation.

Yet, in Absalom's heart there was brewing rebellion. In 15:1-12 we learn that Absalom would daily position himself at a gate in Jerusalem where people would often meet for business and to settle disputes (cf. Ruth 4). He would inquire about the origin of the person with a dispute and then tell them there was really no one assigned to deal with their disputes. In essence, he said, "too bad I am not a judge in Israel!" In other words, he could handle their disputes. By doing this he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (6) for they began to think, "David is doing nothing to help us, but Absalom is!" After four years of this Absalom devised a plan to send men secretly throughout Israel to recruit backers, then he went to Hebron, to plan for a *coup d'etat*. Because of the secret plan he had carried out, he had enough men willing to follow him for this to happen.

The result of the *coup* was that David needed to flee Jerusalem (15:13-37). Yet, God was already working to protect David and to return him. The LORD supplied Hushai who would stay in Jerusalem to serve as a "secret agent" to make sure Absalom had poor counsel and also to make sure David was able to be informed of all that was happening.

The *coup* by Absalom and David's flight comprise the events which stand behind Psalm 3. In that psalm we learn of the mature, God-centered manner in which David dealt with all this—showing that in spite of his sin and its subsequent pain, David truly is a man after God's heart and the right king for Israel! We would do well to learn by David's example.

John 18:1-24:

In these verses we read of Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane, Peter cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant (whose name we learn is Malchus), Jesus being led to Annas before he would be led to Caiaphas, the high priest, who questioned Him, and we also read of Peter's first denial of Jesus. Most of this ground we have covered in the first three Gospels. Spend time meditating upon the revelation of what Jesus suffered for us, then praise and thank Him for it.

Psalm 119:97-112:

Some key points of application in these sixteen verses include: (1) We should learn to love, delight in, and enjoy the Word of God (97, 104, 111). Don't let anyone convince you that love for the Word of God is somehow not right (see also Psalm 56:4 where the psalmist says he praises God's Word)! (2) We should realize there is a wisdom in God's Word that transcends any wisdom we can glean from other sources (98-100). (3) The word enlightens the way God wants us to go in all we do (105).

Proverbs 16:8-9:

Here we are reminded once again that God's blessing for righteousness is better than having great riches without righteousness. Also, we are reminded that our ultimate blessing and stability do not come merely by our own plans, but by God's providence.