

Suggested Questions for Study and Discussion

1. What does this meditation teach concerning the divinely instituted place of woman?
 2. Was it Biblical for Saul to visit a witch?
 3. Was her revelation from God or the devil?
 4. May we as Christians have our fortunes told (using the common phraseology)?
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THE PEASANT WOMAN OF BAHURIM

And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon, and the thing was not known.—II SAM. 17:19

READ—II SAMUEL 17:18-21

In a crucial moment a woman of Bahurim, a village near Jerusalem, saved David's life, David's army, David's kingdom, and, if you choose, saved the future of Israel and of God's Kingdom.

Absalom had rebelled against his father. David had been compelled to flee from his own son. And Ahithophel was a designing man who was bent on David's destruction. Everything depended upon whether or not David could retain communication with Jerusalem, upon whether or not he could remain conversant with Absalom's plans. Only in that way could he and his small group of men hope to escape from Absalom's much larger army.

This was the situation. David had stationed two of his most faithful servants at the well of Enrogel. He had arranged with Hushai, his friend, who had remained at Jerusalem, that he should send a message to the men at that well, and thus keep him acquainted with the situation at Jerusalem. In order to avoid

all suspicion, Hushai had selected one of his maid-servants instead of a man to be his emissary to Enrogel. She left Jerusalem's gates inconspicuously, and, looking as innocent as she could, she went to the well. There she gave Jonathan and Ahimaaz the indispensable information which alone could save David's army from complete annihilation.

But this strategy failed. Naturally, close watch was being kept from every wall and watch-tower, lest any communication should reach David from his friends at Jerusalem. A young soldier detected that maid-servant, kept a close eye upon her, observed that she had spoken to two men at Enrogel, and that those two men had thereupon hastily run away. He sounded the alarm. Jerusalem's gates were opened to a troop of Absalom's fastest runners, and these started in pursuit of their enemies.

Everything, therefore, hung suspended by a very frail thread. If Jonathan and Ahimaaz had been overtaken, no information would have reached David from Jerusalem. Then Absalom would have succeeded in unexpectedly pouncing upon David's handful of soldiers in unprotected country. Judging by human standards, David's army would in that event have been completely routed, and Absalom would not have hesitated to take his father's life.

But this is what actually happened. Jonathan and Ahimaaz happened to look back and they noticed that they were being pursued. They ran as fast as they could but in a long run they could impossibly have escaped their pursuers. Thus they came to the village of Bahurim and noticed a garden in their way in which there was an empty well. As it seemed to them, noth-

ing better could be done than to conceal themselves in that well before those who pursued them should arrive. But that would have availed them nothing, for it could be easily seen from the road that they were concealed in the pit. They would most certainly have been detected and captured if David had not had unknown friends in that village, and if a woman of Bahurim had not been devoted to David's cause with her whole heart and soul.

It happened that the garden in which the well was located belonged to a man whose wife was as faithful to David's cause as she was handy in her actions. She had seen, perhaps through her window, that those two men had come running down the road and that they had jumped into the pit. She understood at a glance what it was all about, and sensed immediately that those men had to be saved. She knew that they would meet with certain death if they were to stay in the well as it was. Her actions were as rapid as her thought. In less than no time she seized a cloth from her house and covered the mouth of the well with it. Then she snatched a basket of corn from her doorway and spread it over the cloth. Nothing could then be seen of the pit, and to all appearance there was merely a heap of corn, drying in the sun.

Then, before the runners arrived, she ran to the gate of the yard, and nonchalantly awaited their coming. Sure enough! They stopped a moment to ask if she had seen two men running past that way. In a twinkling of an eye she had replied that they had long gone on their way. Thus she diverted the pursuers' course in a wrong direction, so that these had, after a time, to give up in defeat, and to return to Jeru-

salem empty-handed. In this way David's life was saved.

The Lord achieved this thing. He directed matters so that Jonathan and Ahimaaz detected that particular well in that particular garden. He had done that because he knew that it was owned by a woman who was devoted to David's cause. He planned that that woman should be there at that moment, and that she should see what was going on. He saved her from becoming "rattled" in those exciting moments, and enabled her to work energetically and skillfully to the end. And He prevented her face from betraying any tremor which might have excited any suspicion.

Very likely David had never before heard of or seen that woman. She was one of those inconspicuously faithful ones, whom the Lord had attached to David's cause. She must have been a quiet prayerful woman, who had prayed especially frequent since David's exile. And this woman was chosen by God to induce Absalom's runners to follow a blind trail. She was chosen to save the life of her king, and to thwart Absalom's strategy against David.

In great movements the strength of a hero is not always found among his mighty friends and allies. A simple peasant woman was selected in a crucial moment to save David's whole cause, and thus, to save the cause of God's kingdom.

Suggested Questions for Study and Discussion

1. How did God save David and his cause?
2. Does God use inconspicuous people to attain His end? If so, isn't there a place for us in His work now? Mention some things we can do.
3. Is a lie ever justifiable?

THE REAL MOTHER OF THE
ILLEGITIMATE CHILD

Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.—I KINGS 3:27

READ — I KINGS 3: 16-28

WE shall not at this point focus our attention upon Solomon's verdict, but shall instead center it entirely upon the two women depicted by the Scriptures in relation to it. It is the intent of the Scriptures that we study them not merely at plaintiffs at court, but that we also observe their character as women.

Every human heart has praised Solomon for his just and wise decision in his suit at law. But each of us should rejoice as well because of the noble material affection which the real mother of the living child displayed, in spite of her previous reprehensible conduct, when she opposed Solomon's first proposition. She had been a wicked woman; she had reveled in sin; had induced another woman to join her in her illicit practices; and had profaned the city of God by having set up a public house of prostitution in one of its byways or alleys. To this extent she is a revolting figure and causes us to turn away in disgust.

But she also illustrates how even the most degenerate can retain a remnant of genuine worth. The other mother, she who could have enjoyed seeing the little creature cut in two, was a much baser woman than she who loved it too much to permit it to be killed. Compared with the real mother, that first brutal woman recedes into the dark background. Even in her, however, there is something that appeals to