

TAMAR REMEMBERS

*Tamar put ashes on her head
and tore the ornamented robe she was wearing.
She put her hand on her head and went away,
weeping aloud as she went
(2 Samuel 13:19)*

They used to envy me, the other girls;
my beauty and the glances it provoked
from Amnon and his doltish fellow-churls
were seen by them as charms to be invoked.
Would God that He had blasted me with pox
or scars or ugliness or leprosy!
It could not have been worse than comeliness.
Now desolate and crushed with memory
of shame and restless, helpless bitterness,
I yearn to live again that aching, pointless day,
to change the lines, to redirect the play,
to batter down the door, break through the locks
that keep me from the past, in misery.

'Forget it now,' says Absalom. 'He got
what he deserved. It's time to live again.'
But Amnon's death cannot retie the knot -
the cord is cut, my future preordained.
I have been used.

Some years ago, when songs
danced from his lips, my father wrote these lines:
'Create in me the heart for which my Spirit longs,
O God, Who washes, cleanses and refines
the sin-scarred soul.' If only God would do
the miracle I need and make me new!

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About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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