

# Ecclesiastes 9:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.

## Analysis

**Now there was found in it a poor wise man** (וּמָצָא בָּהּ אִישׁ מִסְכֵּן חָכָם, umatsa vah ish misken chakam)—'and there was found in it a poor wise man.' The adjective misken (poor, humble, of low status) contrasts with chakam (wise). **And he by his wisdom delivered the city** (וּמִלֵּט־הוּא אֶת־הָעִיר בְּחָכְמָתוֹ, umillat-hu et-ha'ir bechokhmato)—literally 'and he delivered the city by his wisdom,' using malat (to escape, save, deliver). **Yet no man remembered that same poor man** (וְאָדָם לֹא זָכַר אֶת־הָאִישׁ הַמִּסְכֵּן הַהוּא, ve'adam lo zakhar et-ha'ish hamisken hahu).

The dramatic reversal: a misken (poor, insignificant) man achieves what military might couldn't—deliverance (malat) through chokhmah (wisdom). Whether through clever diplomacy, strategic counsel, or innovative tactics, wisdom succeeded where strength failed. Yet the tragedy: lo zakhar (none remembered) the deliverer. The Hebrew zakhar means to remember, commemorate, honor—total social amnesia about the savior. This anticipates Christ, the ultimate 'poor wise man' (2 Corinthians 8:9) who delivered humanity yet was forgotten, denied, abandoned (Mark 14:50). The world credits power and status, forgetting humble wisdom—yet 'God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise' (1 Corinthians 1:27).

## Historical Context

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Specific historical referents are debated—some suggest siege of Abel Beth Maacah (2 Samuel 20:14-22) where a wise woman saved the city. The pattern repeats throughout history: unsung heroes whose wisdom averts disaster yet receives no recognition.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How does this parable challenge cultural assumptions about who deserves credit and recognition?
2. In what ways might you be overlooking 'poor wise' people whose counsel could prove invaluable?
3. How should Christians respond to serving faithfully even when recognition or gratitude never comes?

## Interlinear Text

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וְנִמְצָא	הָיָא יִשְׁבָּח הוּא	הַמְסִיךְ	חָכָם	וּמָלִיט	הָיָא
Now there was found	H0	man	in it a poor	wise	delivered
H4672		H376	H4542	H2450	H4422
אֶת	הָעִיר	בְּחָכְמָתוֹ	וְאֵדָם	לֹא	זָכַר
H853	the city	and he by his wisdom	yet no man	H3808	remembered
	H5892	H2451	H120		H2142
יִשְׁבָּח	הַמְסִיךְ	הָיָא יִשְׁבָּח			
man	in it a poor	H1931			
H376	H4542				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ecclesiastes 4:13** (Parallel theme): Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.

**Genesis 40:23** (Parallel theme): Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

**2 Samuel 20:22** (Parallel theme): Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.