

# 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** (וְמִצְאָ בָּהּ אִישׁ מַסְקָן חָכָם) — '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** (וְמִלְּעַט־הָוֹא אֶת־בָּבָעֵיר בְּחַכְמָתוֹ) — literally 'and he delivered the city by his wisdom,' using malat (to escape, save, deliver). **Yet no man remembered that same poor man** (וְאֵין לְאֵין, זָכָר אֶת־בָּבָעֵישׁ בְּמַסְקָן הַהָוֹא).

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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וְמִצְאָה	בְּהַמִּסְכָּה	בְּאִישׁ	מִצְמָלֵט	וְאֵת
Now there was found	in a poor	wise	delivered	H1931
H4672	H376	H4542	H2450	H4422
אֶת־בָּבֶן־חַכְמָתִים	בְּעֵדֶן	לֹא	זָכָר	אֶת־
the city	and he by his wisdom	yet no man	remembered	H853
H5892	H2451	H120	H2142	
בְּהַמִּסְכָּה	בְּאִישׁ	בְּהַמִּסְכָּה		
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 forgat 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.