

Bible Stories

DAVID and ABSALOM

2nd Samuel 12:10

December 17, 2022

Years went by... Absalom (3rd son) had a sister, Tamar. Amnon (1st son) "loved" Tamar – so much so that he made himself ill because he couldn't have her. Amnon's friend, Jonadab suggested that he pretend to be ill and ask Tamar to bring him some food.

- **2 Samuel 13:11-13** - But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." ¹² She answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me; for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile! ¹³ As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the scoundrels in Israel. Now therefore, I beg you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you."

After Amnon raped Tamar, the Bible says that he hated her with as much passion as he had loved her.

- **2 Samuel 13:15-17** - Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!" ¹⁶ "No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me." But he refused to listen to her. ¹⁷ He called his personal servant and said, "Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her."

Tamar told Absalom what happened and he told her to keep quiet about it. From that moment, Absalom hated Amnon.

David was also told of Amnon's sin, yet he did nothing:

- **Ellen White {PP 729.2}** - With the memory ever before him of his own transgression of the law of God, David seemed morally paralyzed; he was weak and irresolute, when before his sin he had been courageous and decided. His influence with the people had been weakened. And all this favored the designs of his unnatural son.

It would seem that Amnon had got away with it.....

2 years went by... Absalom invited all his brothers, including Amnon, to join him in sheering the sheep.

Absalom instructed his servant to get Amnon good and drunk and then kill him. Amnon died and the rest of David's sons ran away. It was reported to David that Absalom had killed **ALL** his sons. David was so upset that he tore his robe and fell on the ground, but was then told the report was not accurate - only Amnon was dead.

Meanwhile, Absalom fled to Geshur – home of his mother's family – and remained there for 3 years.

David grieved more for Absalom than he did for his dead son, Amnon.

When Absalom finally returned to Jerusalem, he was not permitted to see David for another 2 years.

5 years have gone by since Absalom killed Amnon.....

- **2 Samuel 14:25** - Now in all Israel there was no one to be praised so much for his beauty as Absalom; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

In time, father and son were reunited, but the damage was irreparable. Absalom began to intentionally court the people of Israel and he "**stole away the heart of the people**" – he was plotting for the throne.

- **Ellen White {PP 730.1}** Fomented by the artful insinuations of the prince, discontent with the government was fast spreading. The praise of Absalom was on the lips of all. He was generally regarded as heir to the kingdom; the people looked upon him with pride as worthy of this high station, and a desire was kindled that he might occupy the throne. "So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." Yet the king, blinded by affection for his son, suspected nothing. The princely state which Absalom had assumed, was regarded by David as intended to do honor to his court--as an expression of joy at the reconciliation.

He asked his father for permission to sacrifice to the Lord, but it was all a ruse:

- **2 Samuel 15:10-12** - Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then shout: Absalom has become king at Hebron!" ¹¹ Two hundred men from Jerusalem went with Absalom; they were invited guests, and they went in their innocence, knowing nothing of the matter. ¹² While Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh. The conspiracy grew in strength, and the people with Absalom kept increasing.

Absalom was now coming for David. He wasn't content with **A** throne; he wanted **THE** throne and that meant Jerusalem.

A messenger got word to David in time for him and his household – except for the 10 concubines he left behind - to leave the city before Absalom arrived.

Meanwhile, Absalom entered Jerusalem. His advisor, Ahithophel, told him that David was gone, but that he left some of his concubines behind. Then Ahithophel, went a step further and advised Absalom to take David's concubines and sleep with them.

- **2 Samuel 16:22** - So they pitched a tent for Absalom upon the roof; and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

(2 Samuel 12:11 - Thus says the LORD: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun).

- **Ellen White {PP 735.3}** And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." Again David was forced to recognize in his calamities the results of his own sin. The defection of Ahithophel, the ablest and most wily of political leaders, was prompted by revenge for the family disgrace involved in the wrong to Bathsheba, who was his granddaughter.

When David evacuated Jerusalem, his friend, Hushai, wanted to join Him. David asked him, instead, to return to Jerusalem to *"advise"* Absalom – hopefully disrupting his efforts. Hushai went back to Jerusalem.

Ahithophel counseled Absalom one way and Hushai counseled him another. Absalom decided that Hushai's counsel was better - Hushai sent word to David:

- **2 Samuel 17:16** – Do not lodge tonight at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means cross over; otherwise, the king and all the people who are with him will be swallowed up.

So, David and all the people with him crossed the Jordan river.

Ahithophel was distraught. Absalom wasn't following his advice and now he was certain that David would ultimately triumph, so he went home, puts his affairs in order and killed himself.

David, when given a moment to breathe, discovered that he had thousands of soldiers at his command. He divided them into 3 groups and just before sending them to fight, told them to deal gently with Absalom.

WAR! Scripture says that David's army slaughtered 20,000 of Absalom's men that day. Now Absalom was on the run! He had long beautiful hair and when his mule went under a tree his hair caught in the branches. The mule continued on its way, leaving Absalom dangling in midair by his hair. A soldier reported this turn of events to Joab:

Joab: *Why didn't you kill him?*

Soldier: *I would not kill the king's son, because David requested that his son be dealt with gently.*

Joab took 3 darts and thrust them through Absalom's heart. Absalom's body was taken down and thrown in a pit then stones were piled on top.

- **Ellen White {CC 184.4}** Thus perished the instigators of rebellion in Israel. Ahithophel had died by his own hand. The princely Absalom, whose glorious beauty had been the pride of Israel, had been cut down in the vigor of his youth, his dead body thrust into a pit, and covered with a heap of stones, in token of everlasting reproach. During his lifetime Absalom had reared for himself a costly monument in the king's dale, but the only memorial which marked his grave was that heap of stones in the wilderness.

When told of Absalom's death, David was inconsolable. He went alone to the chamber above the gate and wept, *"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"*

David' army – who had just won a great victory for their king - quietly went to their homes as if they had lost the war. Joab was incensed:

Joab: *What is wrong with you?! Today you have dishonored those who remained faithful to you and risked their own lives to save your life and the lives of your family. You love Absalom, who hated you, more than you love us. You have made it clear that our loyalty means nothing to you. I have a feeling that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead, you'd be okay with that. Go immediately and speak kindly to your servants, because if you don't - I swear by Yahweh - not a man will stand by you and this will be the worst disaster you have ever faced!*

David got up and went to the city gate, but this was not the end of the trouble. He would not have peace in his kingdom for the rest of his life.

- **1 Kings 2:10** - Then David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David.

What do we do with this story?

Because of what he had done to Bathsheba and Uriah, David didn't believe he could correct his children or instruct them on moral behavior, for fear of being questioned regarding his own sins. So, he kept quiet. By the time Amnon decided to violate Tamar, it was too late for David to start being a good father, but I imagine if David had punished Amnon, Absalom's course of action might well have been turned aside.

David's silence only increased Absalom's need for *"justice."*

David's judgment was clouded because Absalom was his favorite. Absalom was a good looking and popular kid, but all that beauty hid a dark and exceedingly wicked heart. A heart full of ambition and bent on revenge. David's inability to discipline and his clear favoritism only fueled Absalom's plans to declare himself king.

God did not do this to David – He simply did not intervene as David's choices inevitably led to the rape of one child, the murder of another child, and the coup attempt by yet another child. David reaped the terrible consequences of his own choices.