

Absalom: The Son Who Seeks Power – 2 Samuel 13:23-14:33

Introduction:

In chapters 12 and 13 the consequences of David's sin start to be made known. First he loses the baby birthed by Bathsheba, and then one of his sons rapes his half-sister. God had warned David that violence and sexual sins would plague his family as a consequence of his sin, (2 Samuel 12:10-12) and we see that starting to unfold in these chapters.

In chapter 13 we are introduced to David's son, Absalom, and he will be the central figure in the next few chapters. When Absalom learns of the rape of his sister he decides to take matters into his own hand. This is where we pick up the story in this study. One wonders, if David had taken charge, had disciplined his son, Amnon, would the story have turned out differently?

Absalom's Revenge – 2 Samuel 13:23-29

1. How long did Absalom sit on his anger and plot his revenge (v. 23)?
2. What event prompted Absalom to organize a banquet for the king and his officials (vss. 23-24)?
3. What was David's response to the invitation of Absalom (v. 25)? What do you think about the response of the King?
4. Absalom has a "Plan B." If the King cannot come, he can send a son to represent him. Which of the king's sons does Absalom specifically invite?
5. What indication is there that Absalom and Amnon have not had a good relationship (v. 26)? What is the King's final word on the matter (v. 27). Why might he give in to the request of Absalom?
6. What is Absalom's plan according to verse 28? Why is he taking this action against his brother?
7. According to verse 29 what happened at that banquet?

David Hears of the Murder – 2 Samuel 13:30-39

8. What report does David first receive from the coup (v. 30)?
9. How did David respond when he thought all his sons were dead (v. 31)?
10. Who do we meet in verse 32 who gives council to the king? What was his role in the affair? What message does he give to King David (vss. 32-33)?
11. How did Absalom react after the deed was done (v. 34)? Why?
12. The watchman sees something approaching the city (v. 34-36). What does he see? What is the scene in the King's chamber that day (v. 36)?
13. In verses 37-38 we read of what became of Absalom. Why did he not stay in Israel, say at a city of refuge? Where did he go, and why there? How long did he stay there?

Background: Absalom's mother is Maacah, a wife of David not often mentioned. She was the daughter of the king Talmai of Geshur. This was a political marriage for alliances. Her name means "oppressed."

14. According to verse 39, what was the felling of David towards Absalom despite the coup?

Joab Puts Pressure on the King – 2 Samuel 14:1-21

15. Joab devises a plan to get Absalom back into the life of the king. Why does he do this according to 14:1? What might we learn about King David in this?
16. What does Joab tell the woman of Tekoa to do (vss. 2-3)?
17. In verse 4 the woman makes the story about herself at first. How does she do this?

18. In verses 5-7 the woman presents her story to the king. What does she tell him? What does she want the king to do for her?
19. What is King David's response to the woman according to verse 8?
20. What is the woman doing in verse 9?
21. In verse 11 the woman makes plain her request. Who is the avenger of blood? What is she requesting the King do? How does the King respond?
22. Now the woman shifts the conversation towards the actions of the King and his family in verse 12. How do you interpret the statement, "Why have you devised a thing like this against the people of God?"?
23. Look at verse 14. What is the woman saying here? Is it true?
24. Quickly the woman shifts back to her original problem, a story of murder in her family between her sons. What is she doing in verse 17?
25. King David senses someone else is behind this. So David confronts the woman. Who does David suspect is behind this plot to get Absalom back to Jerusalem?
26. In verses 19 and 20 the woman confesses it was the work of Joab. How does she protect herself and maybe Joab in these verses?
27. In the end, what does the king decide to do (v. 21)?

Joab's Support of Absalom – 2 Samuel 14:22-33

28. In verse 22, what is the attitude of Joab?
29. Absalom was allowed to return to Jerusalem, but was everything back to normal (v. 24)?
30. Verses 25-27 seem to be out of place. Why would the chronicler of David's life mention Absalom's appearance, and family?
31. How long did Absalom live in the city without seeing his father (v. 28)?

32. In order to see the King Absalom needed someone who was frequently in the presence of the King. Who does Absalom try to send a message through to the king? How does this person respond? (v. 29)
33. How does Absalom get the attention of Joab so he will talk with him (v. 30)?
34. When Joab goes to Absalom, what message is he given (v. 32)?
35. Look at the attitude of Absalom. At the end of verse 32 what is his opinion of his guilt or innocence? Compare this with the attitude of the Prodigal Son who wanted to return to his father's house. Which attitude honours God?
36. Joab does pass the message on to the King that Absalom feels he is being treated unfairly. How does Absalom act before the king? What is the King's response (v. 33)?

Conclusion

David has shown that he is able to overcome any threat to the throne that comes from outside forces. Now the threat is coming from within his own family.

Absalom not only takes the law into his own hands, but starts to position himself as the people's choice for the next king. Like Israel's first king, King Saul, Absalom commanded the people's attention by his good looks. He also has his own family so he will have an heir.

What is also obvious is that Absalom is ambitious and willing to push the boundaries to see how far he can go. He finds that his father, David, can be manipulated and controlled. David loves his family – all the family – and Absalom uses that to his advantage.

When Absalom killed Amnon he killed the King's first born. The second born, Daniel, is from Abigail, the former wife of Nabal. Absalom was third in line to the throne. His ambitions will come out in the next chapters.

Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." It appears Absalom is setting himself up for a fall, another blow to David's family.