Lesson 81 – The Rebellion of Absalom Part I

Based on 2 Samuel 13-15:30.

1) What was David's punishment for the man who stole the poor man's lamb?
2 Samuel 12:6 And he shall restore the lamb _____, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

This was in reference to Nathan the prophet coming to David because of his sin with Bathsheba. David had lain with Uriah the Hittite's wife and tried to hide his high crime. According to his own sentence he was to be judged. Four of his sons must fall, and the loss of each would be a result of the father's sin.

His son Amnon had committed a very heinous crime against his half-sister. The shameful crime of Amnon, the first-born, was permitted by David to pass unpunished and unrebuked. The law pronounced death upon the adulterer, and the unnatural crime of Amnon made him doubly guilty. But David, self-condemned for his own sin, failed to bring the offender to justice. For two full years Absalom, the natural protector of the sister so foully wronged, concealed his purpose of revenge, but only to strike more surely at the last. At a feast of the king's sons the drunken, incestuous Amnon was slain by his brother's command.

2) What word got back to David?
2 Samuel 13:30 And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath _____ all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.
3) What was his reaction?
2 Samuel 13:31 Then the king arose, and _____ his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.
4) And then…
2 Samuel 13:32 And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain _____ the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.
2 Samuel 13:33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for _____ only is dead.
2 Samuel 13:36-37 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore. But Absalom _____, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David _____ for his son every day.

Twofold judgment had been meted out to David.

Like other sons of David, Amnon had been left to selfish indulgence. He had sought to gratify every thought of his heart, regardless of the requirements of God. Notwithstanding his great sin, God had borne long with him. For two years he had been granted opportunity for repentance; but he continued in sin, and with his guilt upon him, he was cut down by death, to await the awful tribunal of the judgment.

The evil results of David's unjust indulgence toward Amnon were not ended, for it was here that Absalom's alienation from his father began. After he fled to Geshur, David, feeling that the crime of his son demanded some punishment, refused him permission to return. And this had a tendency to increase rather than to lessen the inextricable evils in which the king had come to be involved. Absalom, energetic, ambitious, and unprincipled, shut out by his exile from participation in the affairs of the kingdom, soon gave himself up to dangerous scheming.

5) Did David love his sons?
2 Samuel 13:39 And the soul of king David _____ to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

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2 Samuel 14:1 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's _____ was toward Absalom.

6) What plan did Joab cook up?
2 Samuel 14:2-3 And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, _____ thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time _____ for the dead: And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

With this object in view, he secured the services of a woman of Tekoah, reputed for wisdom. Instructed by Joab, the woman represented herself to David as a widow whose two sons had been her only comfort and support. In a quarrel one of these had slain the other, and now all the relatives of the family demanded that the survivor should be given up to the avenger of blood.

7) Deeply touched, how did David reply?
2 Samuel 14:10-11 And the king said, Whosoever saith ought unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not _____ thee any more. Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the LORD liveth, there shall not one _____ of thy son fall to the earth.

8) What did she hit him with right after his promise?
2 Samuel 14:13 And the woman said, Wherefore then hast _____ thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again _____ banished.
2 Samuel 14:14 For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not _____ from him.

This tender and touching portrayal of the love of God toward the sinner—coming as it did from Joab, the rude soldier, is a striking evidence of the familiarity of the Israelites with the great truths of redemption. The king, feeling his own need of God's mercy, could not resist this appeal.

9) After some discussion, what did he command Joab to do?
2 Samuel 14:21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, _____ the young man Absalom again.

Absalom was permitted to return to Jerusalem, but not to appear at court or to meet his father. David had begun to see the evil effects of his indulgence toward his children; and tenderly as he loved this beautiful and gifted son, he felt it necessary, as a lesson both to Absalom and to the people, that abhorrence for such a crime should be manifested. Absalom lived two years in his own house but banished from the court. His sister dwelt with him, and her presence kept alive the memory of the irreparable wrong she had suffered. In the popular estimation the prince was a hero rather than an offender. And having this advantage, he set himself to gain the hearts of the people.

10) What was in Absalom's favor in his quest?
2 Samuel 14:25 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his _____: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

11) How long had David not seen Absalom?
2 Samuel 14:28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and _____ not the king's face.

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His personal appearance was such as to win the admiration of all beholders. It was not wise for the king to leave a man of Absalom's character, ambitious, impulsive, and passionate, to brood for two years over supposed grievances. And David's action in permitting him to return to Jerusalem, and yet refusing to admit him to his presence, enlisted in his behalf the sympathies of the people.

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.

Through the influence of Joab, Absalom was again admitted to his father's presence; but though there was an outward reconciliation, he continued his ambitious scheming.

12) What did Absalom do next?

2 Samuel 15:1-2 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to _____ before him. And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for _____, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

2 Samuel 15:4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made _____ in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

2 Samuel 15:6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom _____ the hearts of the men of Israel.

The influence of David's listlessness and irresolution extended to his subordinates; negligence and delay characterized the administration of justice. Absalom artfully turned every cause of dissatisfaction to his own advantage. Day by day this man of noble mien might be seen at the gate of the city, where a crowd of suppliants waited to present their wrongs for redress.

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.

13) What else did Absalom do?

2 Samuel 15:10 But Absalom sent _____ throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

The minds of the people being prepared for what was to follow, Absalom secretly sent picked men throughout the tribes, to concert measures for a revolt. And now the cloak of religious devotion was assumed to conceal his traitorous designs.

14) What lie did Absalom use to cover his plan to usurp the throne?

2 Samuel 15:7-8 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my _____, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will _____ the LORD.

The fond father, comforted with this evidence of piety in his son, dismissed him with his blessing. The conspiracy was now fully matured. Absalom's crowning act of hypocrisy was designed not only to blind the king but to establish the confidence of the people, and thus to lead them on to rebellion against the king whom God had chosen.

15) Who went with him to Hebron?

2 Samuel 15:11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew _____ any thing.

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These men went with Absalom, little thinking that their love for the son was leading them into rebellion against the father.

16) Who did Absalom get to join his conspiracy
2 Samuel 15:12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

Ahithophel, one of the chief counselors of David, a man in high repute for wisdom, whose opinion was thought to be as safe and wise as that of an oracle. Ahithophel joined the conspirators, and his support made the cause of Absalom appear certain of success, attracting to his standard many influential men from all parts of the land. As the trumpet of revolt was sounded, the prince's spies throughout the country spread the tidings that Absalom was king, and many of the people gathered to him.

17) What did David do when he got the news of the insurrection?
2 Samuel 15:13-14 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The _____ of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us _____; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

Meanwhile the alarm was carried to Jerusalem, to the king. David was suddenly aroused, to see rebellion breaking out close beside his throne. His own son, the son whom he had loved and trusted, had been planning to seize his crown and doubtless to take his life. In his great peril David shook off the depression that had so long rested upon him, and with the spirit of his earlier years he prepared to meet this terrible emergency. Absalom was mustering his forces at Hebron, only twenty miles away. The rebels would soon be at the gates of Jerusalem.

18) What happened?
2 Samuel 15:17 And the king went _____, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

Should he call to his help the subjects still loyal to his throne, and make a stand to hold his capital? Should he permit Jerusalem to be deluged with blood? His decision was taken. The horrors of war should not fall upon the chosen city. He would leave Jerusalem, and then test the fidelity of his people, giving them an opportunity to rally to his support. In this great crisis it was his duty to God and to his people to maintain the authority with which Heaven had invested him. The issue of the conflict he would trust with God.

19) Who marched before the king as they were about to leave?
2 Samuel 15:18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from _____, passed on before the king.

The people followed in long, sad procession, like a funeral train. David's bodyguard of Cherethites, Pelethites, and six hundred Gittites from Gath, under the command of Ittai, accompanied the king.

20) What did David tell them?
2 Samuel 15:19-20 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

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21) Did they leave?

2 Samuel 15:21-22 And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in _____ or life, even there also will thy _____ be. And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

22) Who else marched with David, ready to leave the city?

2 Samuel 15:24 And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the _____ of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

The followers of David looked upon this as a happy omen. The presence of that sacred symbol was to them a pledge of their deliverance and ultimate victory. It would inspire the people with courage to rally to the king. Its absence from Jerusalem would bring terror to the adherents of Absalom.

At sight of the ark joy and hope for a brief moment thrilled the heart of David. But soon other thoughts came to him. As the appointed ruler of God's heritage, he was under solemn responsibility. Not personal interests, but the glory of God and the good of his people, were to be uppermost in the mind of Israel's king. God, who dwelt between the cherubim, had said of Jerusalem, ***"This is My rest" (Psalm 132:14);*** and without divine authority neither priest nor king had a right to remove therefrom the symbol of His presence. And David knew that his heart and life must be in harmony with the divine precepts, else the ark would be the means of disaster rather than of success.

23) What did David order?

2 Samuel 15:25-26 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry _____ the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation: But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth _____ unto him.

2 Samuel 15:27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer? return into the city in _____, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

As the priests turned back toward Jerusalem a deeper shadow fell upon the departing throng. Their king a fugitive, themselves outcasts, forsaken even by the ark of God, the future was dark with terror and foreboding.

24) What did David leaving Jerusalem look like?

2 Samuel 15:30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head _____, and he went _____: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, _____ as they went up.

Things looked very bad for David, what would happen next?

Can you see that our choices affect everyone around us?

Would you like to know God is in charge no matter what?

When is it time to humbly seek the LORD for guidance?

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