

Absalom Kills Amnon

Second Samuel 13: 23-33

DIG: Why did Absalom ask David, his officials and all his sons to join him? What is the "big deal" about sheep shearing (First Samuel 25:7-8)? What part of David's bad example might have influenced Absalom in his act of revenge? Why is revenge still on Absalom's mind? What is significant about his timing? His tactics?

REFLECT: What long-term grudges have taken their toll on your family? When have you gotten really bad advice from someone that got you in trouble? With whom are you not now on good speaking terms? How can you "bury the hatchet" instead of using it? Why is revenge never the solution? In what ways is Yeshua the perfect example for us regarding revenge?

980 BC

The Murder: Two long years went by. Two years of humiliation for Tamar, two years of anger for David and two years of brooding vengeance for Absalom.³⁶³ But he was a patient man, and very capable of long range planning as subsequent events will show. When Absalom's sheepshearers were at Ba'al Hazor about fourteen miles north of Yerushalayim near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king's sons to come there because sheep shearing was a time of feasting (First Samuel 25:2-13) and inviting all of the king's sons would decrease suspicion. Therefore, Absalom went to the king and said: Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his attendants please join me (Second Samuel 13:23-24)? Absalom's words were well chosen in terms of both politeness and protocol. But Absalom already knew that David would decline to avoid showing any favoritism to any particular son. Once, again, this was part of Absalom's evil plan to avoid any suspicion.

As expected, the king replied, "No, my son. All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you." Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go but gave him his blessing. Then Absalom said: If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us. As David's first-born, and heir apparent, he could go as the king's representative. The king asked him as a polite refusal: Why should he go with you? But Absalom urged him, so David sent Amnon and the rest of his sons with him (Second Samuel 13:25-27). The tactics used by Absalom and Jonadab were exactly like the ones used twenty-four months earlier when Amnon raped Tamar. He invited his victim to the place of his intended crime, and then perpetrated the assault. I am sure Absalom loved the irony.

Absalom was having a **sheep-shearing** party - it would be the perfect time to **shear sheep** and butcher **Amnon**! **Amnon** was crown prince representing the king. **Absalom** ordered his men, "**Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine** (not drunk, but no longer in total control of his senses, he would be totally taken off guard) **and I say to you, 'Strike Amnon down,' then kill him.** It was understandable, therefore, that the assassins needed extra assurance. So **Absalom** reassured them by saying: **Don't be afraid. Haven't I given you this order? They would not suffer any consequences. Absalom took full responsibility for the murder. Be strong and brave?"** So **Absalom's men did to Amnon what Absalom ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules** (an animal of royalty in those days) **and fled** because they feared that they might also be victims of an assassination plot (**Second Samuel 13:28-29**).

The Report to David: Before the guards on the wall could clearly see men riding furiously toward Tziyon and recognize them as **the king's sons**, a messenger from Absalom's house took a garbled account of the events to the palace. **The report came to David, "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons; not one of them is left."** The king, however, took the report at face value and was overwhelmed by grief. **He stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his attendants stood by with their clothes torn. But then Jonadab son of Shimeah** (who was the one who came up with the sinister plan for **Amnon** to rape Tamar in the first place), **David's brother** said: **My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. He seems to have knowledge of Absalom's assassination plot to kill Amnon. This has been Absalom's plan ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. Absalom had revealed to his confidant what he planned to do. But Jonadab, David's own brother, who knew that one nephew was going to kill another one of his nephews, said nothing! The sword was still at work. My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead (2 Sam 12:30-33).** The members of **the king's court** mourned with their prostrate king. Sin always takes you further than you wanted to go and costs you more than you wanted to pay - and this is where **David's sin** has brought him: lust, rape, murder and hate!