

## Axing Accountability 2 Samuel 13:36 - 39

Nutshell: The repeated phrase in our passage is “Absalom fled.” He avoided responsibility for his deed. He had two kinds of interlocking arrogance: one that demanded revenge and one that *refused accountability* for it. These would soon fester into a third arrogance of usurping the throne of Israel.

I. Context: Absalom killing Amnon for the rape of Tamar .

II. Text

2 Sam 13:36 And it happened *that*, as he [Jonadab] finished speaking- see, the king's sons came.

And they lifted up their voice and wept. And also the king and all his servants wept with a very great weeping.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

### Review

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel’s kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
  2. **Saul** demonstrated *man’s* kind of rule. God previewed *His* version of king through **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 says David kept God’s commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. This provides a ‘game-changer’ hermeneutic.
- C. David was God’s chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for later kings of Judah, 2 Kings 14:3
1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5.
  2. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- D. **DAVID’S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING\***
1. Conquer Jebus (Jerusalem), where Goliath’s head was, 1 Sam 17:54
  2. Retrieved the Ark from its ‘wanderings’, 6:1-19;

- tragically wrongly, 1 Chron 15:2; then rightly & joyfully
3. Build a permanent form for the Tabernacle, the Temple.
  - ★ 4. God chose **Abraham** to bless all nations. Now He chose **David's** line to bring forth the King of all nations
  5. 1 Sam 20:14 oath in 2 Sam 9. \*OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.
- E. David's sin and its consequences
- ★ 1. David murdered to cover adultery, Ch 11. Now David, though forgiven, *would see continued violence*, ch 12
  2. David's son died, *not*, per Deut 24:16, as a cohort. He was 'replaced' by Solomon/ Jediah, "adored" by God.
  3. Chap 13, Amnon was lovesick over his half-sister Tamar
    - a. He deceitfully lured her to his bedroom
    - b. Tamar refused his demand, giving 7 disincentives
    - c. Amnon raped her, then hated her greatly, telling her to leave. Tamar said that was worse than the rape.
    - d. She mourned aloud. Her brother Absalom took her in.
  4. Absalom's 2-yr. hidden rage found its occasion to kill Amnon
    - a. Absalom talked David into sending all 19 of his brothers to his sheep-shearing celebration
    - b. Absalom ordered his servants to kill Amnon on his command

**Kid-speak:** Last time we read about somebody with an "A" name killing somebody else with an "A" name. Who killed whom? Absalom killed Amnon.

- c. The other 17 sons lit out, taking the longer route
  - d. A confused messenger arrived first, reporting *all* the king's sons dead
  - e. Jonadab (who had counseled Amnon, but not for rape) pieced it all together in his mind and knew that only Amnon was dead
  - f. They saw the king's sons coming the other direction, and Jonadab said, in effect, "Ah, just as I suspected!" But it wasn't surely them until today's verse.
- F. In our section: 2 Sam 13:36-39, Jonadab's wisdom will be vindicated and probably absolved. Then David will begin what will be a long period of frustrated longing towards Absalom.

## Outline:

- I. Jonadab's better word comes good, 13:36
  - II. David grieves a runaway son, 13:37-38
  - III. David's wish to comfort Absalom for dispensing justice upon Amnon was unfulfillable, since the justice was inflicted unjustly, 13:39
- G. 2 Sam 13:36, "And it transpired that, as he [Jonadab] finished speaking- voila! The king's sons came."
1. In v 35, it only said that "many people" were coming from the other direction
    - a. Jonadab concluded through sheer wisdom that they were the king's sons or that the king's sons were among them
    - b. It only comes good now in v 36
  2. The chronicler highlights Jonadab's prescience
    - a. Last time, Jonadab was using reason to keep David from despair
    - b. Perhaps the chronicler is helping us see Jonadab's goodness:
      - i. either that his intentions were far from malicious in what he had counseled Amnon, or
      - ii. that the rape had made him regret the trick he had suggested for Amnon to 'break the ice' with Tamar (or both)
  3. If, on the other hand, Jonadab was altogether mercenary and self-seeking, he was trying to climb the political ladder with this advice
    - a. Which seems less likely since we don't hear about him anymore
    - b. Comparing his two appearances that we have, the previous scenarios seem more likely

**Kid-speak:** Jonadab didn't want Amnon to hurt Tamar, so God gave him a chance to make up for it by giving David good news when he thought that all his sons were dead.

- ☞ 4. This is a good example of following the Sufficiency of Scripture as an interpretive guideline
- a. That is, assume that we're given the info we need to

draw the intended conclusions

- b. We must, however, beware of reaching for conclusions not addressed
  - c. Why is the go-to interpretive principle nowadays “We *don’t know* x... or y,” as though the Scripture writer had no intention of giving a definitive word!
  - d. That either erases the inspiration of Scriptures or affirms that God is purposely inconclusive.
  - e. Rejecting that wrong approach forces the faithful expositor BACK to the wording to find **THE MEANING THAT WAS INTENDED**
- H. “And they lifted up their voices and wept”
1. Poor fellows! Witnessing the murder of one of their brothers and probably wondering if they were targets also!
  2. Or if they noticed that it was Absalom’s servants attacking Amnon, they were shocked at this eruption of hidden hatred
  3. We can only imagine that this was the first disaster that had penetrated their circle
    - a. The sons had probably been a group of friends in the main
    - b. And now things would *never be the same*

**Kid-speak:** When God had people who wrote the Bible, did those people forget anything that they should have said? N-O.

- I. “And also the king and all his servants wept, weeping very greatly”
1. And here’s the broader circle beyond the sons. Probably all these folks are on good terms to this point, expecting only good prospects for the future.
  2. Again, things had gone dim in a way that they could not see the sun coming out again. Murder is a ‘can’t-take-it-back’ proposition.

**2 Sam 13:37** Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihur, the king of Geshur. *David* mourned over his son all the days.

- J. From 3:3, Talmai was Amnon’s grandad through his mom
1. Geshur was east of Lake Galilee
  2. (where Jesus later met Legion)

- K. “Absalom fled,” a *second* record of his flight, noted first in v 34
1. Notably, Absalom could *not* flee to one of the six Israelite cities of refuge (Num 35 and Josh 20), since this had been a purposeful killing
  2. Nor could Absalom hope for a pardon
    - a. He had forgone legal recourse by advising Tamar to keep the matter private
    - b. His intention seems to have been murder from the outset
  3. Might David have pardoned him anyway?
    - a. *Joab* had been in an in-between area in avenging the blood of his brother upon Abner, since Abner had killed Asahel in battle, 2 Sam 2-3
    - b. David abhorred Joab and his act, disassociating himself from him vehemently, 2 Sam 3:29
    - c. But Joab reentered David’s service, gaining honor at the next opportunity, 1 Chron 11:6
  4. *Absalom’s* murder doesn’t seem to be in a similarly in-between area LEGALLY, though it was, in one sense, absolutely just, for he had killed a rapist

**Kid-speak:** After Absalom killed Amnon, Absalom **ran away** to another country. Should he have done that? No.

- L. “He [David] mourned over his son all the days.”
1. “All the days” sounds funny to us. It’s fairly common (46x). “Every day” is probably our closest equivalent. It has the idea of “continually.”
  2. David didn’t mourn over Amnon. He was glad Amnon was gone, v 39.
    - a. An interesting place to consider, for instance, Ps 15:4; 31:6; 139:21
    - b. When the wicked are in Hell, God won’t regret it, nor will we, though we will take no joy in it either

2 Sam 13:38 And Absalom fled, and had gone to Geshur, and was there three years.

- M. “Absalom fled,” a *third time*
1. The emphasis suggests that the chronicler saw this as a key development

2. If Absalom had stayed, whatever justice he had faced would have factored in Amnon's rape of Tamar
- N. Literary-wise, our author is doing a *back-and-forth*, juxtaposing snapshots of David and Absalom
1. In v 37, he shows us *Absalom*, then *David*
  2. Now in v 38, he goes back to *Absalom*; then in v 39, he'll return to *David*
  3. Scene changes like this are familiar to us in cinema. They are effective in seeing one character in the light of another.
- O. The added info here is the time period he stayed with his granddad: 3 yrs.
1. So as we pan back on forth, we can now better empathize with David's longing (however prudent it may be)
  2. Absalom's absence will receive very extended attention in the next chapter

2 Sam 13:39 And King David was consumed with going forth to Absalom, for he had been comforted about Amnon, because he had died.

- P. Grammatically, "consumed" (feminine) doesn't match "David" (masculine) in gender
1. A grammatical subtlety sometimes employed to show mom-like caring in *men* or militance in *women*, as with the verb "sing," masculine, in Exod 15:21
  2. Thus connoting a doting on David's part; something akin to Paul's team in 1 Thess 2:7
  3. Though some translators assume that "soul" or "spirit," both feminine, are implied, so they supply one or the other in 2 Sam 13:39
- Q. "He was consumed with going forth to Absalom"
1. To communicate with him face-to-face in Geshur, that, though he had handled it wrongly, it was good that Amnon was dead
    - a. David identified with Absalom the fugitive from his own fugitive days, though in differing circumstances
    - b. A written communication would not serve the purpose, for he needed to 'read' Absalom. Did Absalom blame David for not taking matters in hand?
  - c. If David feared that, he did so rightly, for that's what Absalom would try to correct as he progressed towards

revolt, 2 Sam 15:3-6

D. (And, by the way, David's "desire" was *not* to go out to fight Absalom. Where did folks get that idea?)

**Kid-speak:** King David wanted to visit his son Absalom, even though Absalom had killed Amnon. David wanted to say, "I know why you thought you had to do it."

- R. "For he had been comforted about Amnon, since he had died"
1. Not comforted after mourning over him
    - a. The word "comforted" *is* used that way, but not with the phrase "because he had died"
    - b. "Comforted" (same form) is "grieved" in Gen 6:6 and other places
    - c. Our verse uses the word as in Isa 1:24 ("rid" NKJV), to be relieved due to *recompense having been made*
  2. There had been a hole in David's heart while an impenitent rapist not only lived but was his heir apparent!
    - a. Now that problem had been alleviated
    - b. He wished he could express at least that much to Absalom
    - c. *Besides* the fact that Absalom would have otherwise been the *next* heir to the throne

**Kid-speak:** King David was glad that his son Amnon was dead, because Amnon had hurt David's daughter Tamar REALLY bad.

- S. Does David have an improper affection for Absalom?
1. Eventually, Joab will accuse David of that after Absalom's death, 2 Sam 19:5-7
  2. But Joab will have just disobeyed a direct order to try not to kill Absalom

❖ T. *This is the decisive moment* leading to Absalom's irredeemable corruption of character

1. "He fled" shows that the *seeming* decisiveness in his character was really only hatred manifested through his position + his skill set
- ◆ 2. Absalom *insisted* on justice concerning Tamar, but he was unwilling to *accept* justice concerning himself
3. In a word, Absalom was **arrogant**
- ✦ 4. It is all too easy for any of us to fall into sin due to an

overestimation of our own rightness/character, Rom 12:3;  
1 Cor 10:12 (, 13)

IV. How does this relate to Christ?

Christ will have revenge on all who remain His enemies, but He will *wait* for the right time. We should ‘borrow’ from Christ’s *patience*.

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”)

Those who are hobbled can’t run as quickly into impulsive trouble.

VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?**

**How have I lost righteousness?**

How forthright am I in accepting full responsibility for my misdeeds?

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):

**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**

Lord, help me see where pride deceives me into thinking I’m *fundamentally* worth vindication.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**

Humility demands that I always be *open to accusation*, hopefully always from my own conscience first.

Wrap-up: Arrogance upon arrogance. One kind invites another, which is why we must search it out (= accountability) in ourselves in all its forms and all its connections.

There’s a place in the Model Prayer just for this: “Don’t lead me into temptation.” When my heart agrees with sin, God is just to clear my path to get to it. “Deliver me from evil” guides my thoughts to my own estimation of myself. Am I self-important, Rom 12:3, 1 Cor 10:12?

Since Col 3:5 names fornication first, note its connection to arrogance in Prov 22:14 with Prov 6:16-17 (God hating “a proud look”).