

## Absalom Murders Amnon

Call to Worship: Psalm 145:1-7

1st Scripture: 2 Samuel 13:1-22

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 13:23-33

Hymn #216- *Crown Him With Many Crowns*

Hymn #772- *Deliver Me From Evil*

Hymn #70- *Praise My Soul the King of Heaven*

### Introduction:

Although God continues to show Himself gracious toward David, and although David could never sin his way out of the grace of God, last time, we began to see how the temporal consequences of David's sin with Bathsheba, were beginning to unfold. Adversity was being raised up against David, from within his own house.

Amnon, David's firstborn son, lusted after his half sister, Tamar, leading to his violating her, and then casting her out of his home, ruined and desolate. And Absalom, Tamar's full brother, then took her into his own care, while developing a strong hatred for Amnon, for what he had done to his sister. And Absalom then bides his time, waiting two years, before exacting revenge against his brother, Amnon, the subject of which, we will be considering for this morning.

### I. Absalom Murders Amnon

"And it came to pass, after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal Hazor, which is near Ephraim; so Absalom invited all the king's sons" (vs. 1).

And so, again, two full years have past, probably bringing Absalom beyond the scope of any suspected desire of vengeance against Amnon, but now he will make his move. Up to this point, he has hidden his intentions well, keeping his peace, while avoiding breathing out any threats toward his brother. In verse 22, we read, "And Absalom spoke to his brother Amnon neither good nor bad." Obviously, he would have been affected by what had happened to his sister, but he held his peace, not wanting any to suspect a motive of vengeance in his heart, hoping that as time passed, all would believe that he had gotten over the matter. And when all guards were down, in a context of seeming peace and reconciliation, he would strike.

And what better time to strike; what more "least expectant time" to exact revenge, than at an event that was known to be saturated with great joy and celebration, a "sheep shearing feast!" In the countries of the east, it was a common thing to hold a celebratory feast, when your flock

was ready to be sheared, providing valuable wool, which could be both utilized and sold for a profit. Friends would be gathered together, to drink and to eat, so as to celebrate with the owner of the sheep. You might recall, earlier on in our study of "the life of David," when he was a fugitive on the run (from Saul), with several hundred men, that, it was during such a feast that David had sent some of his young men to Nabal (the husband of Abigail), requesting sustenance for him and his men, since they had offered protection for Nabal's servants, while they cared for the sheep, in the open fields. No doubt, David had thought Nabal would especially respond kindly, because he was in the middle of throwing such a feast for his servants, during the time that his sheep were being sheared.

And so, Absalom, who had a flock, which was being cared for, about eight miles northeast of Jerusalem, was preparing to hold one of these feasts, as his sheep were to be sheared. And this, being a time of celebration, drinking and feasting, would be the last place, one would suspect an act of vengeance to occur. Indeed, inviting Amnon to this feast, was a very clear act of kindness and a public offering of healing, peace and reconciliation, in light of past events. To use such an opportunity; a reaching out of the hand in supposed unity and peace, as a premeditated means of revenge, would have been unknown to the mind and heart of David, and more in line with the thinking of a Joab.

Needless to say, Absalom goes to the king, and requests his presence and the presence of his sons at this celebratory feast, more than likely, knowing that the king himself, would not attend, but nonetheless, inviting him, so as to further alleviate any suspicion the king might have, of Absalom's hidden intentions. And so, David, not wishing to add a great burden to Absalom's cost for the feast, excuses himself from the offer. David well knew that the expense would be multi-fold, should he go, because he would have to take his entire bodyguard with him, thus requiring the use of additional resources, perhaps well beyond the profit of the wool, which Absalom was celebrating. It would just not have been worth, so great an expense for Absalom. And so, after refusing further pleas from Absalom, David offers his son his blessing, and sends him off to the occasion.

However, Absalom makes one additional request. "If you will not go, please let my brother Amnon go with me" (vs. 25). More than likely, Amnon, the king's firstborn son and natural successor to the throne, would have been kept from going as well. And so, David asks, "Why should he go with you?" (vs. 26). Perhaps, David was a little surprised here, and even a

bit suspicious at this point, particularly because of what had happened two years before. Why would Absalom desire Amnon to be at this feast, after what he had done? Very clearly then, Absalom was attempting to present this special invitation, as a means of reconciliation and peace, in light of what had happened in the past. In other words, it were as if he were saying, "Father, the past is in the past. I want us to be a family again. Please let Amnon come and celebrate with me. Let this be an opportunity for me to show him that I still love him and care for him, and that I am willing to move on now." And so, after Absalom had urged the king, concerning this specific request, David let Amnon go, along with the rest of his sons (vs. 27). No doubt, he had high hopes that this would repair the breach in the home, leading, once again, to peace and unity. And perhaps, with the rest of his sons present, he felt an additional sense of security, in the matter.

Following this, we are then brought into Absalom's private quarters, where he arranges the "hit" on Amnon, as it were. He orders his servants to kill Amnon, when he is good and drunk, and when Absalom gives them the cue. [Read verse 28]. What is even more frightening about Absalom's command, is that he speaks in the way, in which, God often speaks to His people, calling for their total trust in, and allegiance toward him, under the assumption that he will protect and shield them from any presumed consequences. But when Absalom, later finds himself fleeing for his own life, he proves the Word of God to be true, which cautions us against putting our trust in the arm of the flesh. Man can never provide the security and stability, which God alone can provide. All of mankind combined, is but a drop in the bucket, dust on the scales, and a basket of empty words, in the sight of our all-Sovereign God!

And so, when all of the king's sons, were gathered around the table, eating, drinking and celebrating, suddenly, against all expectation, right in the presence of them all, Absalom's servants carried out his order, and they slew Amnon. Thinking that they were also in danger, the rest of Absalom's brothers quickly got up, mounted their mules, and fled.

News then got to David, before his sons had returned to him. Only, the messenger, who obviously had gotten away, before any of Absalom's brothers did, presumed that all of David's sons, were killed together. And so, the report, which David had immediately received was, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and not one of them is left!" (vs. 30). David, who had once rejoiced to hear the evil news, that Uriah the Hittite had been killed, had now been overcome with utter grief, hearing the news, that all of his sons were murdered!

And so, we are told in verse 31, "So the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn." Naturally, David immediately thrust himself into a state of humiliation and mourning, and his servants followed suit, so as to sympathize with their broken king. No doubt, as David lie there on the ground, he reflected on his past sin with Bathsheba, and he would have recognized this to be a consequence of that sin, in accordance with the pronounced judgment of God, declared through Nathan. And so, living under the weight of a heap of remorse and regret, he cast himself, face down, before the only One, who could provide him with the strength to go forward.

But as he lay there, his "very crafty" nephew, Jonadab, the one who had provided Amnon with the wicked counsel, which had provoked the present travesty, came forth with a very viable suggestion, which might help alleviate some of David's sorrow, while further unveiling the carelessness of his own heart, concerning the matter. [Read verses 32-33]. "O king, don't worry so much about this. I can assure you that only your son, Amnon, is dead, and the rest are alive. Absalom had determined to avenge his sister, Tamar, from the time that Amnon had forcefully violated her. And so, don't fret that all of your sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead." Now, while this would certainly alleviate some of the pain, which David was feeling, you would think that Jonadab himself, would have expressed a bit more grief over Amnon's death. Not only was he, "in theory" at least, a close friend (and cousin) of Amnon's, but he was the one, who laid out the blueprint for Amnon's actions, which now led to his death! Where is the guilt and remorse in his heart, for the essential way, in which, he has played a part in all of this? Notice, when David's other sons do then arrive, how Jonadab responds (in verse 35), "And Jonadab said to the king, 'Look, the king's sons are coming; as your servant said, so it is.'" "See that, David, I was right! Your sons are still alive. Only Amnon has been killed. Only one life lost here! Don't you feel better now?"

In verse 34, we are told that Absalom had fled, and David's sons had appeared on a road, near the hillside, probably indicating that, out of fear, they came home, by some "around the back" way. This would also explain why the messenger, who had given the wrong report to David, had arrived, well in advance. But Absalom, having committed an act of pre-meditated murder, having no hope of protection from the law (fleeing to a "City of Refuge," was only allowed for acts of killing that were *not* "premeditated"), had fled to the city of Geshur, where he would have found refuge, under the protection of "Talmi, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur"

(vs. 37). He would have found refuge there, because Talmai was his grandfather, his mother Maacah's father (2 Samuel 3:3).

And so, when David's sons had returned from witnessing the horror, that had invaded their joyful celebration, we are told that they (along with David and his servants) had wept very bitterly (vs. 36). Again, the hardship of such contention and suffering in the family, was overwhelming, and no doubt, deep regret had flooded the heart of David. His daughter, having been violated by his son, was left desolate. His firstborn son was now dead, out of an act of vengeance from his brother. And his son, Absalom, was now a murderer, and a fugitive on the run, barred from his father's presence. And all of this, and more to come, is inextricably woven, to the sins, which David had committed with Bathsheba, and against Uriah, her husband. Notice, we are told in verse 37, that David had, "mourned for his son every day." How many books could be written, in an attempt to expound those few short words, describing the agony that David had continually experienced, over the loss of his firstborn son? And see all of the "players," directly involved in the tragedy: David and Bathsheba, Amnon himself, Jonadab, and of course, Absalom (along with his servants, who feared man, rather than God).

After a significant period of time had passed (three years), when David's mourning for his son, Amnon, had finally subsided, he began to concern himself, again, about Absalom (vs. 39). Next time, Lord willing, we will see how Absalom is brought back to Jerusalem. And from there, we will encounter further grief, which David will experience, still as a consequence of his great sin, and in fulfillment of the remainder of the judgment, previously pronounced against David and his house, through Nathan.

## **II. Closing Thoughts and Applications**

Brethren, having worked through the general content of the text, let us then close, by considering a few relevant, concluding thoughts and applications:

1) What if David had properly administered justice, in response to the sin of Amnon? The indication, seems to be, that beyond being very angry, David did nothing to properly administer justice, for the crime, committed by Amnon (against Tamar). In fact, here again, we will find that David does not administer justice against Absalom either, though he has committed an act of premeditated murder. In both cases, additional problems; indeed, serious problems ensue, because of David's seeming failure to administer proper justice.

And so, brethren, there are times, I believe, that one of David's greatest strengths, serves to be his greatest weakness, as well. David was a gracious and merciful man; indeed, a reflection of God's heart, to this end. But, one can be gracious and merciful to a detriment as well, failing to properly administer justice, when the law properly requires it. And, aside from the obvious attachment of these tragedies to David's sin with Bathsheba, I wonder if his failure to properly discipline and chastise his children, did not significantly contribute to the great problems, which have arisen as a result of this neglect. To that end, brethren, let us strive to learn from this, the importance of maintaining proper balances in life. Take note of the ways in which you excel. Take note of the gifts that you have, and recognize that you might also have to take great pains, in seeking to properly balance those gifts. Joab was a great military leader. He fought well and strong, but he had, hardly a gracious or compassionate bone in his body. David was exceedingly gracious (remember how he had spared King Saul, on two occasions, though Saul was in the process of pursuing his life), but I believe that, at times, this led him to neglect a proper exercising of justice, especially when dealing with his own children. In some regard, he might have reflected Eli, the priest, in this regard. And so, brethren, take note of your strong points and your weaknesses, and prayerfully strive to locate a proper biblical balance in life, lest by being utterly "one-sided," you provoke much harm, even when having good intentions. [Parents can over-discipline and under-discipline their children...all of us tend to lean one way or the other, in this regard.]

2) Young people, take note of the true colors of Jonadab, Amnon's close friend and cousin. Do you think that those, who encourage you to do things that are ungodly, are really committed to your well-being? True friends will lead you in the way of truth, and they are willing to correct you and to lovingly rebuke you, when you go astray. True friends are not those who support you, when you are running head long into the fire. Jonadab was not a "true" friend to Amnon. Notice, though he had aided Amnon, in the pursuit of his wicked desires; though he had some responsibility in the death of his supposed "close friend," he had very little concern for him, after he was murdered. You see, the world loves the world; the world will love you, only in so far as you do whatever makes it happy, and then, it will leave you out to dry, when your so-called "misfortunes," threaten their own happiness and security.

And the reason for this is quite simple. Those who love the world, do not, and cannot, have the love of God in them. It is impossible! Jonadab is a good picture of the depth of

"Friendship" that is most often obtained in the world. You cannot possibly find the bond that existed between David and Jonathan, or that exists between Christ and His people, in the world! It is impossible. And so, see beneath the idle chatter; see beneath the flattering words, of those who remain closest to you, when they have not the life of Christ, in them. Choose your close friends, wisely! Jonadab seemed so concerned for Amnon, when he was depressed about his ungodly desire, but when the rubber met the road, and Amnon was now dead, what do we find, to be the substance of the friendship they had, when considering Jonadab's response to Amnon's murder?

3) Note that while Absalom had every right to be angry about what Amnon had done to his sister, he took matters into his own hands, rather than seeking a godly means of dealing with the great offense and crime. He hid and nurtured a hatred for Amnon, and in due time, exercised a form of vigilante justice, rather than pursuing proper justice, through the God-ordained means. And although his father failed to exercise proper justice, Absalom ought to have committed the due vengeance, to the Lord. Let us be careful, brethren, even when wronged; even when the victim of evident corruption and deception from our own government, to commit it all to our sovereign God, who ensures us, that He will recompense everyone, according to their works, be it, in Christ, or in their own person. Taking matters into our own hands, is to attempt to rob God of His right and privilege, as God. Absalom's actions were sinful, wicked, and inexcusable, in the sight of God. While we can sympathize for the great suffering that he had endured, for his sister, we also must recognize that he could have chosen a better way.

4) Finally, friends, ask yourself again, "Are the fleeting pleasures of sin, really worth it?" Would David tell you that his sin with Bathsheba was, in any way, worth the many, life long, consequences, which sprung out of it?

Unbeliever, non-Christian; you, who are presently strung up in the web of your unfulfilling, short lived sins, let me ask you, "Was Amnon's sin worth it? Not only did he ruin the life of his sister, but two years later, when he least expected it, he took his last breath, because of his "very short lived" sin. A few moments of relief; a few seconds of appeased lust...all for what? And the last thing he remembered, in this life, was being filled with food and wine, laughing and celebrating with his brothers, until he was unexpectedly thrust through by the servants of his brother...and it ended; it all ended right there! Was it worth it? Do you not see; will you not ponder the ongoing theme of "regret," dispersed all throughout the Scriptures, which

plagues all of those, who pursue the temporal dreams of this life, and have not Christ?! Have you not learned from King Saul, from Abner, from Ishbosheth, from the man, who had taken credit for Saul's death, and those who had killed Ishbosheth, attempting to win David's favor...have you not learned here from Amnon; do not the many characters, from within even this one study on "the life of David," cry out aloud to you, pleading, "Seek the Lord, before it is too late! These things; the world's riches and lusts are so, so, so temporal!" Will you wind up like the rich man, who built bigger and bigger barns for his goods, and yet failed to be rich toward God? Will you hear the words, "You fool, today your life is required of you!" And what of the rich man, who neglected to care for Lazarus; who had an abundance of wealth and material things, for the whole of his short, brief life, only to find himself in the torments of hades, wishing he could come back to warn others of that horrible place?

Friends, God is not playing around! Such short lived, quick fix fulfilling of fleeting desires, are securing for you, an eternal world of hurt! Do you see that? Learn from Amnon! Learn from the lives of those, who live before us, in the pages of Holy Scripture! Learn from the very clear teachings of Scripture! Seek the Lord, now, before it is too late! Seek reconciliation with God; full pardon for all of your sins, in, by and through, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into this world, for the very purpose of saving sinners, like you and me!

AMEN!!!

The Lord's Supper!