

1 **THE RISE OF ABSALOM**

2 Samuel 14-15

2 **WARRIORS & POETS**

- *So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. And the king said, "Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence." So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence. (2 Samuel 14:23-24)*

3 **WARRIORS & POETS**

- Two years after the rape of Tamar, Absalom murdered his older brother, Amnon (the heir to the throne).
- He then spent three years in exile, in the court of his grandfather, king of the Syrian city of Geshur.
- Finally, Joab cleverly confronts David with his hypocrisy and convinces him to bring Absalom home. But David still refuses reconciliation, and Absalom is still banned from David's presence.

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4 **WARRIORS & POETS**

- David is in a self-perpetuating cycle of passive inactivity. His reluctance to confront Absalom immediately has led him to put off reconciliation longer and longer, until inaction is easier than action.
- But the issues with waiting for your problems to go away is that very often, they don't.

5 **ABSALOM**

- *Now in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he cut the hair of his head (for at the end of every year he used to cut it; when it was heavy on him, he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the king's weight. (2 Samuel 14:25-26)*

6 **TAMAR**

- *There were born to Absalom three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a beautiful woman. (2 Samuel 14:27)*
- There is a brief parenthesis in the narrative to tell us two important things about Absalom:
 - He is a handsome, charismatic, popular leader
 - He named his daughter after his sister, Tamar

7 **FIRE!**

- *So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, without coming into the king's presence. Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but Joab would not come to him. And he sent a second time, but Joab would not come. Then he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire. (2 Samuel 14:28-30)*

8 **OUT OF FAVOR**

- Absalom spends another two years in Jerusalem without being allowed to come before the

king.

- His inability to come before the king would have signaled that he was still out of favor – he would have had little to no political clout, and likely would not have been performing the usual responsibilities of his role as prince.

9 **“PRIESTS”**

- David’s sons served as “priests” – here, this terminology refers to their role as adjudicators of the Law among the people of Israel:
- *...and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and David’s sons were priests.* (2 Samuel 8:18)

10 **FIRE!**

- Absalom tries to get Joab’s attention. After all, it was Joab who had managed to get David to bring him back from exile in the first place. But Joab (who is probably a little sick of all of this by now) is having none of it.
- So to get Joab’s attention, Absalom sets his stuff on fire.

11 **NOW THAT I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION**

- *Then Joab arose and went to Absalom at his house and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent word to you, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to ask, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still." Now therefore let me go into the presence of the king, and if there is guilt in me, let him put me to death.'*" (2 Samuel 14:31-32)

12 **ABSALOM’S REQUEST**

- Absalom does, in fact, get Joab’s attention. He asks him to take a simple message to the king: Either punish me completely, or restore me completely.
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13 **ABSALOM IS RESTORED**

- *Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.* (2 Samuel 14:33)
- Seven years after the rape of Tamar, Absalom is finally reconciled with his father – but Absalom, as it happens, is long past the point of reconciliation.

14 **SUBVERSION BEGINS**

- *After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate. And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And when he said, "Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel," Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you." Then Absalom would say, "Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice."* (2 Samuel 15:1-4)

15 **STEALING THE HEARTS**

- *And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take*

hold of him and kiss him. Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. (2 Samuel 15:5-6)

16 **STEALING THE HEARTS**

- Restored to his full status as prince (either first or second in the line of succession – Chileab, David’s second son, is only mentioned once in Scripture and may have died young, or been otherwise disqualified) Absalom takes up his role as an adjudicator of the law, and begins working to undermine his father’s rule.
- Charismatic, energetic, and handsome, Absalom “steals the hearts” of Israel from his recently passive father.
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17 **THE DULLED EDGE**

- David’s sin blunts his ability to lead effectively, and as a result he loses not only the hearts of his children, but of his nation.
- Sin – even secret sin – will weaken your ability to lead and discern effectively. If you have secret sin in your life, you are much more likely to miss it in the lives of your children.

18 **THE GAME’S AFOOT**

- *And at the end of four years Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron. For your servant vowed a vow while I lived at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the LORD.'" The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron. (2 Samuel 15:7-9)*

19 **HEBRON**

- After four years of undermining his father’s rule, Absalom asks for leave to go to Hebron on a pretense.
- Hebron is significant in that it is the city where David was originally crowned king after Saul’s death, while Ishbosheth was still king of the northern tribes.
- Now, Absalom begins his revolt in the same city where his father was first crowned king.

20 **AT THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET**

- *But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, 'Absalom is king at Hebron!'" With Absalom went two hundred men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their innocence and knew nothing. And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh. And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing. (2 Samuel 15:10-12)*

21 **AT THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET**

- Word goes out to the network of partisans that Absalom has been building over the last four years: At the appointed signal, they are to announce Absalom’s kingship.
- At Hebron, Absalom has the makings of his own court – Ahithophel, David’s chief councilor and probably the grandfather of Bathsheba.

22 **THE TRAPPINGS OF ROYALTY**

- He also has 200 courtiers who, although not in on the conspiracy, would have no choice

but to join the new regime once Absalom made his announcement.

- These would have added legitimacy and continuity to the reign of the new king.

23 **DAVID FLEES**

- *And a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom." Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword." (2 Samuel 15:13-14)*

24 **DAVID FLEES**

- When David receives word of the revolt, he gives orders to those in his court who have remained with him and who have remained loyal to him to flee Jerusalem.
- At this point, David is despondent about his chances of withstanding a siege against the force his son is raising – even though he may or may not have an accurate idea of just how strong Absalom's army is.

25 **JESUS IS A BETTER KING**

- The saga of the rift that forms between David and Absalom (and all the destruction it causes) stands both as a reminder of our own rebellion and in contrast to the perfect unity between Jesus and His Father.
- God is a better father than David: He is not slow to seek to reconcile us to Himself.

26 **JESUS IS A BETTER KING**

- Jesus is a better son than Absalom, because where Absalom turned subjects into traitors, Jesus turns traitors into sons.
- Reconciliation is the work of sons:
- *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:43-44)*

27 **1) SOW LOVE**

- *There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him... one who sows discord among brothers. (Proverbs 6:16,19)*
- What you sow, you will eventually reap.
- Purpose to sow love and forgiveness rather than discord.

28 **2) BE A GOOD SON**

- It is the role of obedient sons and daughters to bring other men and women into reconciliation with their father.
- Be careful not to be an Absalom within your church family.
- As disciple-makers, we must be careful that we point others toward Christ, not make them reliant upon ourselves for the sake of our own egos.