

CHAPTER 9

REBELLIOUS ABSALOM

What does it mean to be rebellious? What does it mean to be a rebel? A rebel is one who opposes and resists and disobeys one who is in authority. A rebel is one who refuses to bow before one who is in authority (assuming that the authority is legitimate and is acting responsibly, reasonably and rightly). Can you think of a word that means the opposite of **rebellious** (it is a word that is found in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 22)?

_____ A person can either rebel against a King or the person can be S_____ (compare Ephesians 5:24; 1 Peter 2:13,17) to the king. God wants us to take our proper place under those who are in positions of authority, remembering that the greatest Authority of all is God Himself.

As we study the life of rebellious Absalom we want to learn about the rebellion that is in each of our hearts!

Who Was Absalom?

Read 2 Samuel 3:2-5. Did David have many wives? _____ In the beginning, did God want man to be married to many wives (Matthew 19:4-8; Genesis 2:24)? _____ Many wives led to many problems for David, and in this chapter we are going to study one of those problems: **ABSALOM!**

Who was David's oldest son (2 Samuel 3:2)? _____ Who was Absalom's mother (2 Samuel 3:3)? _____ The name **ABSALOM** means "father of peace" (AB=father; SHALOM=peace). As we shall see, Absalom should have been called the opposite: the son of **WAR!** Who was Absalom's father (2 Samuel 13:1)? _____

Absalom Gets Revenge

Absalom had a sister whose name was _____ (2 Sam.13:1). She was fair or beautiful. Who loved her (2 Sam 13:1)? _____ Tamar was Amnon's half-sister (same father but different mother). Amnon's love for her was actually **LUST**. He wanted to use her for his own pleasure. His lust was so great that he actually became _____ over her (2 Samuel 13:2).

Finally Amnon had an opportunity to express his ugly lust and his craving for sinful pleasure (2 Sam. 13:10-11). Tamar was a good example of a virtuous woman. She was a virgin (2 Sam. 13:2). She utterly refused his advances and resisted him (verse 12). She knew that such a thing ought not to be done and that it was utter folly (verse 12). She knew that this was a shameful thing and wanted no part in it (verse 13). She warned Amnon that he would be a fool to do such a thing (verse 13). She even gave Amnon the option of marriage (verse 13). She said something like this: "Amnon, all you need to do is ask David your father and he will give me to you to be your wife." But even this did not satisfy Amnon because **LUST** says: "I WANT HER AND I WANT HER NOW!" Lust never wants to wait. It wants what it wants **RIGHT NOW** (if not sooner).

After Amnon had "used" his half-sister, what happened to the love he had for her (verse 15)?

_____ According to the law of Moses, what was the punishment for adultery (Deuteronomy 22:22)? _____ If a man should lie with an engaged woman, what was the punishment (Deut. 22:25)?

_____ If a man should lie with a virgin who is not engaged (like Tamar), was this man put to death (Deut. 22:28-29)? _____ Amnon's sin was terrible and very serious, but it was not punishable by death.

Absalom was not very pleased when he learned what Amnon had done to his sister. Absalom wanted to kill Amnon, probably for two reasons: 1) for revenge, because of what he did to his sister; 2) Amnon was David's oldest son and probably the heir to the throne. Already Absalom had his eyes toward the throne and he did not want any competitors. How did Absalom kill Amnon (2 Sam. 13:28-29)?

After this Absalom fled and went to _____ (2 Sam. 13:38). This was a small district near the Sea of Galilee where Absalom's mother was from (2 Sam. 3:3). Absalom had royal blood on both sides. His father David was king of Israel and his grandfather on his mother's side was king of Geshur (2 Sam. 3:3). It wasn't enough for Absalom to be the son and grandson of kings. He had to be king himself!

Even though Absalom had murdered David's oldest son, did David still have a heart for Absalom (2 Sam. 13:39)? _____

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

After spending three years in Geshur, Absalom is finally allowed by David to return to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 14:21). But what was Absalom not allowed to do (2 Sam. 14:24)?

_____ He was denied access before his father the king. After two full years of not seeing the king's face, Absalom finally sent for Joab to have him send a message to the king. Joab was David's general. But Joab ignored Absalom (see 2 Sam. 14:28-29). What did Absalom do to get Joab's attention (2 Sam. 14:30)?

_____ This seemed to work and Absalom was brought before the king. Did Absalom pretend to submit and bow before the king (2 Sam. 14:33)? _____ In his heart do you think he was submissive or rebellious?

Absalom's Appearance

According to 2 Samuel 14:25-26 Absalom was a perfect physical specimen. He was handsome. He had no bodily blemish. Was there anyone in Israel that could even compare with him? _____

We are also told something about his hair (the word "polled" means "cut"). Absalom did not get a haircut very often. He would let a long time go by before cutting his hair. In fact, the only time he got a haircut was when his hair got too heavy for him! He would even weigh his cut hair and it weighed _____ shekels (2 Sam. 14:26), which was perhaps as much as three or four pounds! According to the Bible (1 Cor. 11:14) Is it noble or shameful for a man to have long hair?

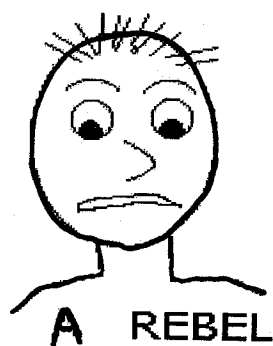
Absalom Steals the Hearts

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-6. Absalom was trying to steal the hearts of the people so that they would be loyal to him and not to David. He acted like a candidate for office! He did everything he could to impress the people (see verse 1). He made some amazing campaign promises: " If I were the king I would straighten things out in a hurry!" Did Absalom succeed in stealing the hearts of the people (2 Sam. 15:13)? _____

The Great Rebellion

In 2 Samuel 15:7-8, Absalom told David about a vow he had made. Do you think he really made such a vow? _____ Was he really serious about serving the Lord (verse 8)? _____ He only cared about serving himself. Why did Absalom really want to go to Hebron (2 Sam. 15:10)?

Absalom rebelled against his own father. David was in a position of authority over Absalom for two reasons: David was Absalom's F _____ and David was Absalom's K _____. But all Absalom cared about was being his own king! He did not want anyone to rule over him--not David and certainly not God! This is the essence of rebellion. The following illustration shows the rebellion that is in each of our hearts:



I WANT TO BE MY OWN KING. I do not want anyone ruling over me! I do not want anyone else telling me what to do. I'll do what I want to do. I do not want God or any man giving me orders. **I WANT TO BE MY OWN KING!**

THIS IS WHAT REBELLION IS ALL ABOUT!

David Flees

Absalom's revolt was so successful that David was forced to flee from the city of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 15:14). The prophet Nathan once told David that this kind of thing would happen as a result of David's sin of adultery and murder (see 2 Sam. 12:9-11). If David had been content to have one wife and one family he would have been spared many problems!

The Death of the Rebel

David crossed the Jordan River and was able to organize an army. Absalom also crossed the Jordan to attack his father. He was even willing to kill his own father so that he could be king alone. Was David willing to kill his own son (2 Sam. 18:5,12)? _____

Absalom's death is described in 2 Samuel 18:9-14. As he was riding on his ass, his head suddenly got caught in the branches of an oak tree (perhaps he ran into a forked branch). What happened to the ass (verse 9)? _____ Absalom was suspended in mid-air between heaven and earth and unable to free himself from the branches. It is thought that his hair contributed to his downfall by becoming tangled in the branches. Thus Absalom became an easy target for David's general Joab (see verse 14). The rebel was then given a shameful burial (verse 17). Absalom's glorious reign did not last very long. Did David rejoice in the death of his son (2 Sam. 18:33)? _____

The Third Psalm

The third Psalm says "A Psalm of _____ when he fled from _____ his son." The Psalm talks about the trouble David had because of Absalom's revolt.

Because of his pride and ambition and rebellion, Absalom threw away his life. Instead of lusting after power and fame, he should have been thankful for what he had. For example, he had a godly father. Can you think of other blessings Absalom had for which he should have been thankful? What do you have to be thankful for?
