



## **“REASONS TO REJOICE”**

*“Your Words were found, and I ate them,  
and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” Jeremiah 15:16*

### ***I and II SAMUEL Lesson 20***

*We ended our lesson last week with Absalom returning to Jerusalem after a three-year exile from his dad. David was tricked into letting Absalom come home after killing his other son, Amnon, for raping Tamar. For two years David allowed him to live there, but he didn't want to see him. Finally David changes his mind, and chapter 14 ends with the embrace of David and Absalom.*

*In chapter 15 we find Absalom devising a new plan to take the throne away from his dad. Notice the craftiness and cleverness of Absalom as he moves everything around like he's playing a chess game. This is one, scary man.*

#### **First Day**

*1. Let's begin by reading chapter 15:1-37. After that, list the facts you find in each section. What new characters do you meet? What is the main point of the section?*

*A. Verses 1-6*

*B. Verses 7-12*

*C. Verses 13-37*

2. *Briefly describe Absalom's plan.*
  
3. *How did he win the people's hearts? Why do you think people responded to him?*
  
4. *How would you describe Absalom's personality? What do you think he was like?*

*Absalom was building an army, and, at the same time, drawing the people to himself, trying to win their loyalty. ("Runners" were those who served as traffic police, clearing the path before the chariot of an important person. They also announced their names, drawing much attention to the person.) He probably stood at the busiest gate of the city, trying to cause dissension within the people of Israel. People would come to the king and present their case, seeking justice. Absalom would intercept them at the gate, getting them more aggravated, making them feel that the king was too busy, or too incompetent to hear them out. He claimed that if he was the king, he would certainly do a better job. It also seemed like he was trying to start some tribal competition to further confuse matters. The people were probably flattered that the king's son would come out to hear them. This is why Absalom was successful in "stealing the hearts" of the people of Israel. Irving Jensen describes it this way: "Imagine many in Israel looking upon this handsome young prince with his attendants in glittering uniform and his prancing horses saying, 'This is the kind of king we should have now that we have become such a great nation, a king that looks the part, not an old man like David riding on a mule, unpretentious, old-fashioned, and far too religious.'"*

5. *Read Romans 16:18-19, Colossians 2:4, and Jude 16. How do these Scriptures describe Absalom?*

6. *As a Christian, how can we guard against being deceived by flattering words, etc.? How can we believe all things (1 Cor. 13:7), without being gullible?*
  
7. *What do Proverbs 26:28 and 20:19 say about those who use flattering words?*
  
8. *Are you guilty of using the tactic of “buttering someone up” to get what you want? Why is this so wrong? What’s another name for this?*

*We must beware of wolves in the church who seek to devour and destroy the work of the Lord, turning one against another. Unfortunately, there are many. Jesus says in Matthew 7:15-16, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruit.” We need to continually pray for wisdom and discernment as we serve the Lord. Don’t let yourself get caught up in gossip or backbiting about others, because it will divide a church. Just ask Absalom. It works.*

*We’ll end here for today. Tomorrow we’ll see Absalom’s next trick. Poor David. He loved his son so much. Again, David reaps the consequences for his actions.*

**Memory Verse of the Week:** *“But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head. I cried to the Lord with my voice, and He heard me from His holy hill.” Psalm 3:3-4*

## Second Day

***Practice your memory verse. David wrote this Psalm when he fled from Jerusalem. The Lord did hear his cry.***

1. *Read II Samuel 15:7-12. Where did Absalom ask to go? Why? What was his plan?*
  
2. *David believed him again, asking no questions. What were David's parting words to him?*

*It seemed strange that Absalom would ask to go to Hebron to make his vow to the Lord since the Ark was in Jerusalem, the center of religious activity for the Israelites. Hebron was the capital city where David first reigned, being the king of Judah for seven years. It was also Absalom's hometown. Absalom pretended to be religious, and David fell for it.*

3. *Were the 200 men that followed Absalom aware of what was going on? What does that tell us about Absalom?*
  
4. *Whom did Absalom send for? Who was he? Why do you think he went with him?*

*As Absalom's support grew in numbers, David had to make a decision on what to do. Verse 13 tells us that a messenger came to break the news to David. What does this man of God decide to do?*

5. *Read 13-37. Why do you think David decides to flee from Jerusalem? Why does he leave 10 women to watch the house?*

6. *Not everybody deserted David. He found great support in a few people. Answer the following questions about his friends:*

**A. Ittai**

1. *Where was he from?*
2. *Why do you think he supported David?*
3. *What did David ask him to do?*

**B. Zadok and Abiathar**

1. *What was their role?*
2. *Where did David tell them to go?*
3. *How did he ask them to help him?*

**C. Hushai**

1. *Where was he from?*
2. *Why didn't David want him to go with him?*
3. *What did David want him to do?*

*David loves the city of Jerusalem. Perhaps this is one reason that he left the city, not wanting to see it destroyed by becoming a battlefield. David seems to understand that this judgment is from the Lord, just as Nathan had said (II Samuel 12:10-12). Instead of taking the Ark with him to try to assure his victory (I Samuel 4-5), he trusts that God's will is going to be done, and he's willing to accept that. Even though he's making a plan, he's ready to accept whatever God deems best.*

7. *How did David feel about his counselor, Ahithophel, defecting and joining Absalom?*

*David used Zadok and Abiathar as spies. He seemed to be devastated when he heard about Ahithophel and sent a prayer up to the Lord in verse 31. Hushai appears and seems to be the answer to that prayer. David makes a comment about Hushai being a burden to him. Most scholars*

*believe that being a burden to him meant that he considered him too old for the job ahead. Instead, he asked Hushai to pretend to be a traitor, offering advice to Absalom contrary to Ahithophel's. Hushai accepted the job willingly.*

*Many of David's friends joined ranks with Absalom, but his loyal ones stuck by his side. It's so good to have friends that you can count on.*

*Charles Swindoll paints the picture of what's happening in a contemporary way. "Imagine that you are the successful president of a Fortune 500 corporation. After a falling out with your son, he forms a rival company and begins stealing your clients. One day, your staff tells you that all your customers have closed their accounts and the company is bankrupt. A few days later, your creditors attach liens to your property and bank accounts. You are left penniless. But ruining you is just the beginning; your son has determined to kill you. Now you must run for your life."*

**8.** *This may be exaggerated, but has anything similar to this story ever happened to you? How did you feel? What did you do? How did David cope with this situation?*

**9.** *Do you have friends that stick by your side, showing extra loyalty? Take time today to thank the Lord for them. Drop one of them a note, thanking them for being that friend who's willing to stand in the gap for you.*

**10.** *Are you a loyal friend? In what ways?*

*It must have all looked hopeless to David, yet he seemed to trust God. He doesn't go after Absalom, ordering his army to kill him. He doesn't want to take his life either, trusting that God would come to his rescue if it was His will.*

- 11.** *Are you the "King's friend"? Are you loyal to Jesus no matter what? When the world tells you one thing, do you cling to Him instead? Will you stand up for Him, no matter what the consequences? Can you echo Ittai's words in verse 21, "As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be"? Think about it ...*

### **Third Day**

#### ***Are you practicing your verse?***

*Absalom may be physically attractive, but his character is despicable. Matthew Henry said about him, "in his body there was no blemish, but in his mind nothing but wounds and bruises."*

- 1.** *Read II Samuel 16:1-14. List the facts you find. Whom do you meet? What's the main point of this section, so far?*

*David wrote many Psalms during this sad period of time. (Psalm 3; 4; 62; 63) Although he was going through a bitter trial, God was his strength.*

- 2.** *Read Psalm 3:1-8. How was he feeling at this time? Have you ever felt like that?*

3. *Read Psalm 4:1-8. List some phrases that minister to your heart. What verses show that David's confidence was in God?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. *Did David sin while he was angry? What application do you see in that for yourself?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. *Back to II Samuel 16:1-4, why does Ziba bring all the supplies?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. *According to Ziba, where is Mephibosheth? Read II Samuel 19:25-28. Was he telling the truth? What, do you think, were his motives?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. *Was David right in believing Ziba so quickly?*

*David acts impulsively and gives Ziba what rightfully belongs to Mephibosheth. On his journey, David comes to a town called Bahurim, which is associated with Michal in II Samuel 3:16. He meets an angry man by the name of Shimei, who was related to Saul.*

8. *Besides throwing rocks and kicking up dust, what accusations was he hurling at David?*



9. *How does his right-hand man Abishai respond? (Remember that he, Joab, and Asahel (who was killed by Abner) were David's nephews, sons of his sister Zeruah (1 Chronicles 2:12-16).*

10. *What did David do? How does he explain his response?*

*David endures the unjust criticism coming from Shimei. He didn't murder Saul, or steal his throne. He didn't give Absalom the throne; he took it. But one statement that Shimei made was true. He called David a "man of bloodshed." He knew this was true. He had killed Uriah, and those words must have felt like a dagger in his heart. Although Abishai wanted to take his head off, David felt like he deserved this punishment. He said that since he couldn't keep the love and respect of his own son, he had no right to expect it from a member of Saul's family. Also, if he endured this with the right heart, maybe God would somehow make it right.*

11. *David showed great restraint in the way he handled this situation. How do you handle unjust criticism? (Do you check your heart to see if there is any bit of truth in it?) How should you handle it?*

*David was able to act this way for two reasons. He kept his focus on the Lord, instead of Shimei, and he was keenly aware of his own failures.*

12. *Why is it so important to remember our failures as we respond to people and situations? How does knowing what our own hearts are capable of help us to forgive others?*

*Let's end here for today. Our hearts go out to David as he travels away from Jerusalem, the home he loves so much. His heart is breaking over what is happening, but yet, we'll soon see, he still has a deep love for Absalom. Oh, how it hurts to be betrayed by someone you love and trust. I'm sure we've all been there. I pray that we can learn to keep our eyes on the Lord as people hurt us, remembering that we have made many mistakes ourselves. I also pray that as people throw rocks at us, we duck, instead of throwing them back!*

### **Fourth Day**

#### ***What's your verse?***

1. *Begin today by reading II Samuel 16:15-23. What are the facts? What's happening in the "meanwhile"?*
  
2. *How did Hushai deceive Absalom? What excuses does he give for leaving David to support him? Did it work?*
  
3. *What counsel did Ahithophel give to Absalom?*
  
4. *Why do you think Ahithophel gave Absalom that counsel?*
  
5. *How do you think Hushai felt as he watched this happen?*

*This tragic event was the fulfillment of Nathan's prediction in II Samuel 12:11-12. This act was more than just a way to get back at his father. In those days, every new king would take over his predecessor's harem. This would show that he was assuming leadership, declaring that*

*David's rights had ended, and everything he owned now belonged to his son. The "tent" he pitched can be compared to the bridal tent used in Jewish wedding ceremonies. This was a way for Absalom to publicly declare he was now in charge.*

*The words of Ahithophel were very highly regarded. Absalom obeyed them just as if it had been a command from God.*

*6. Who are your counselors? Do you think they "always" give the right counsel? What should you do with all advice given to you?*

*7. What application do you see in this section for yourself?*

*See you tomorrow. This is another sad chapter. I don't think there are words to describe how David must have felt when he heard what Absalom did to his women. He must have been overwhelmed with pain and grief, not only at what was done to his concubines, but the fact that his son could actually loathe him that much. And yet, David still knows that because of his sin, he deserves it all.*

### **Fifth Day**

***Write your verse from memory. God was definitely the One who lifted David's head. Is He lifting yours?***

*Today we're going to review some things we've learned in these two chapters. I pray that you would take time with each question, allowing the Holy Spirit to search your heart.*

*1. What do these chapters teach us about revenge?*

2. *What do these two chapters teach us about jealousy?*

3. *What do they teach us about love?*

4. *What do they teach us about forgiveness?*

*David dodged the spears that Saul threw at him, and now he ducks to avoid the stones and accusations thrown at him by Shimei. This is good advice.*

5. *Is there anyone “throwing stones” at you? Maybe stones of insults, or stones of accusations. Perhaps they’re hurling unfairness, or unkindness. What example can you glean from David on how you are supposed to respond?*

6. *Is God asking you to forgive anyone right now, maybe for the “stones” they’re throwing? Are you willing?*

7. *Search your heart on this one. Are you “throwing” any kind of stones at anyone right now? What has God shown you about that this week?*

***Aren’t you glad that God forgives us? That’s a “Reason to Rejoice” alright!***