

Lesson 84

Absalom Rebels

Absalom tried to take the kingdom from his father, David.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 83 Theme Poster. In the last lesson, we learned how David gave in to temptation and committed terrible sins. He wanted a beautiful woman named Bathsheba, but she was already married to one of his fighting men, Uriah. David ordered the death of Uriah to cover up his sin, and then he took Bathsheba as his wife. God was very displeased with David and sent Nathan the prophet to tell David a parable.

What was the parable that Nathan told? A rich man with many flocks took and killed the pet lamb of a poor man to feed a traveler.

David was angry at the rich man in the story and said he deserved to die. Then Nathan said, "You are the man!" David understood that he had sinned just like the rich man in the story. He confessed his sin and begged God to forgive him and cleanse him. God forgave David, but David still faced consequences for what he did.

What was a consequence of David's sin? His baby with Bathsheba died. His family would have trouble.

David and Bathsheba's baby son died. God also told David that the sword would not depart from his house and evil would come upon him from his own family. Today we'll see how God's judgment happened through one of David's own sons named Absalom.

Absalom's Rebellion

Absalom was David's third son, and his mother was a princess, the daughter of the king of Geshur. When Absalom was a young man, he became angry at his oldest brother, Amnon, for hurting his sister. But when David did not punish Amnon as he should have, Absalom decided to do it himself and plotted against Amnon to have him killed. Absalom didn't want to be punished for murder, so he ran away from Israel and lived in Geshur with his mother's relatives.

Do these sins of Absalom sound familiar? Who else did we learn about that had someone killed for selfish reasons? David had Uriah killed.

Absalom committed the same sin as his father, who ordered the death of Uriah. In a sense, David had lost two sons. He mourned for Amnon, but as the years passed, he missed Absalom, too, and wanted him to come home. Finally, he decided to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem.

Who thinks this was a good idea to bring Absalom back? Raise your hand. Show of hands.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. We'll find out in just a few minutes if this was a good thing or not. Turn in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 15 where we'll be reading in a moment. While you're turning there, let's learn a bit more about Absalom.

Absalom Interview Option: Prepare assistant, if available, to play the role of Absalom. Have two copies of the script and costume/wig ready.

If doing the Absalom Interview, have Absalom enter here and follow the script. Continue with the lesson at the paragraph that begins "Absalom was probably like the famous movie stars we have today."

If not doing the Absalom Interview, read the passage and ask the questions below.

2 Samuel 14:25–26

Slide #4

Listen to this description from chapter 14. Read 2 Samuel 14:25–26.

How did Absalom look? He was handsome with no blemish. What did he cut at the end of every year? His hair.

Absalom looked like a king. He was the most handsome man in all Israel. He let his hair grow long and only cut it once a year when it started to feel heavy. When he had his yearly haircut, his hair weighed about 5 pounds. That's a lot of hair! It sounds like he was pretty proud of his hair since he took the time to weigh it after it was cut.

Pick up here after the Absalom Interview. Absalom was probably like the famous movie stars we have today. He was good-looking and wealthy. He was the son of a famous king. He might have had a bit of a "bad boy" image since he'd killed his own brother and gotten away with it.

2 Samuel 15:1

Slide #5

Let's see what Absalom did once he was back in Jerusalem. Who will read 2 Samuel 15:1? Assign a reader.

What did Absalom get for himself? A chariot and horses and 50 men to run ahead of him.

What does this show us about the kind of man Absalom was? Does he seem proud or humble? Allow discussion.

Absalom also worked on getting people to like him more than his father. He would sit at the gate and wait for those who were coming to speak to the king about a problem they had. But Absalom would stop them and say, "The king doesn't have anyone to listen to you. But if I were king, I would make sure everyone gets justice."

2 Samuel 15:5–6

Slide #6

Skip down a few verses. Let's read some more about Absalom's actions.

Who will read 2 Samuel 15:5–6? Assign readers.

Absalom acted very friendly to others. Whenever someone came before him, he would stop them from bowing to him. Instead, he would take hold of them and greet them like a brother. How do you think that made the men of Israel feel? Good. Special. They liked being recognized and noticed by the king's son.

What did Absalom do by greeting and talking to all the men who came to see his father, King David? Look at the end of verse 6. He stole their hearts.

So why did Absalom do all these things? Allow discussion.

Absalom was up to something, and it wasn't something good! He continued to turn the hearts of the men of Israel to himself. Then he decided it was finally time to make his move against his father. Absalom wanted to take the throne!

First, Absalom tricked David into letting him go to Hebron. He brought 200 men with him from Jerusalem, but they didn't know he wanted the throne. While he was in Hebron, he sent secret messengers throughout Israel to tell people that he would be king. Finally, his plan was in place to steal the kingdom from David!

2 Samuel 15:13–14

Slide #7

Let's read what happened next. Look in 2 Samuel 15. Who will read verses 13–14? Assign a reader.

Who told David that the men of Israel were following Absalom?

A messenger.

What did David decide to do? Flee from Absalom.

Yes. David didn't want Absalom to ruin Jerusalem by fighting a battle there, so he decided to pack up his household, including his wives, children, and servants, and leave the city. David and all those with him cried as they left.

This was a sad and scary time for David. He was forced to leave his home and his city and had to worry about Absalom and his men chasing him and killing them all.

Even though this was a hard time for David as his own son was trying to kill him and take the throne, David relied on God. He prayed for help, and God protected David and those with him as they escaped over the Jordan River.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Look at your Class Notes now. Let's do the first few before we find out what happens next. You will circle the correct answer for each sentence.

Slide #8

Slide #9

Slide #10

Slide #11

Slide #12

Slide #13

Who will read #1 and answer it for us? Choose a reader. B. Absalom.

What did the Bible say Absalom was like? Someone read #2 for us.

Choose a reader. C. handsome.

Absalom seemed to be proud of his hair. Who will read about that in #3?

Choose a reader. A. once a year.

Let's do #4. What did Absalom say to the people who needed the king's help? Choose a reader. C. "If I were king, I would make sure everyone has justice."

And #5. How did the people feel about Absalom? Choose a reader. B. stole their hearts.

Someone read #6 for us now. What did David have to do? Choose a reader. B. fled from Jerusalem.

Absalom's Defeat

Several of David's friends stayed in Jerusalem as spies, pretending to be on Absalom's side so they could report everything to David. God used these men to help David by sending him messages and giving Absalom bad advice.

Meanwhile, David had time to gather an army. He had a lot of experienced soldiers who had fought with him since he was a young man fleeing from Saul and living with the Philistines. These men were known as "mighty men," and they were loyal to David, promising to stay with him. David wanted to go with his men into battle, but they didn't want him to get hurt or killed. So they insisted David stay behind.

David's three commanders led his men out to battle as Absalom led his army across the Jordan River to fight against his father.

Who thinks Absalom and his men will win the battle? Show of hands.

Who thinks David's men will win? Show of hands.

2 Samuel 18:6-9

Slide #14

Slide #15

Let's see who's right! Turn to 2 Samuel 18, and we'll read verses 6 through 9. Assign readers or read the passage while students follow along.

Where was the battle fought? Look in verse 6. Forest of Ephraim.

Who was defeated? Men of Israel were defeated by the servants of David.

The men of Israel who followed Absalom lost to David's men. How many soldiers died? Look at the end of verse 7. 20,000 men.

What does verse 8 say killed more people: the sword or the forest? The forest.

This forest was so thick that more men died trying to ride through the trees than were killed by other soldiers.

What happened to Absalom during the battle? He was riding on his mule, and his head got caught in an oak tree.

Slide #16

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. Remember we talked about how Absalom only cut his hair once a year? Well, his long hair probably caught in the branches of a great oak tree (or possibly his neck got caught), but his mule kept running, leaving Absalom hanging there helplessly!

One of David's men saw Absalom and ran to tell Joab, one of David's commanders. Joab hurried to the tree with his armor-bearers, and they killed Absalom. Then Joab blew the trumpet to call David's men back from chasing Absalom's army. The battle for the throne was over. God saved David from Absalom's evil plans and gave his men a great victory.

Slide #17

Slide #18

Go back to your Class Notes now. Who will read #7? Choose a reader.

A. a forest.

What happened in the forest? Will someone read #8? Choose a reader. C. got caught in a tree and was killed.

Application

Slide #19

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Do you see how God's promise of punishment on David was fulfilled? He had trouble in his own family. The sword was used by Absalom to kill his brother Amnon and then to attack his own father and family!

Absalom's desire to be king came to a very sad ending. His plan failed, and he ended up caught in a tree while his mule ran away. God restored David to the throne, and David returned to Jerusalem to rule.

This account shows us that there are consequences to sin. We may think we're getting away with something, but God sees everything we do.

Does God punish his children because he wants to be mean? No. Why does God punish and discipline those who love him? So they will repent and want to stay away from sin.

When David sinned, he was repentant and begged for God's mercy and forgiveness. He understood that God would punish him for his own good.

But Absalom was not like David. He didn't repent or ask God for mercy. Instead, he let sins like coveting, pride, and hatred lead him to murder and rebellion. Many Israelite lives were lost because of what Absalom did. Absalom wanted what his father had—the throne. He used his good looks,

position, and popularity to turn the hearts of people against his father so they would want Absalom to be king.

What are some ways we may be tempted by the same things as Absalom? Do we ever let things like good looks, brand new clothes, being popular, or owning lots of stuff become too important? That can be easy to do. People all around us care a lot about outward appearance. Commercials on TV and ads everywhere you look are all about how to get fit, look good, choose the right makeup or perfume, or wear the best clothing brands to be popular.

When do these things become sin? Allow discussion. When we care more about them than God and his Word. When they cause us to have wrong attitudes like pride, greed, selfishness, etc.

Do you care more about being popular and having lots of friends than you care about loving Jesus and obeying God? Are you tempted to look down on others who aren't popular, rich, or especially good-looking? Are you jealous or covetous of things your friends have?

If these kinds of thoughts and attitudes are a problem for you, be like David and ask God for forgiveness. God will forgive you and help you become more like Jesus.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Three chairs set out for bases
Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions (included in lesson)
- Medium-sized cardboard box
- Scissors or knife
- Four beanbags
- Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

Materials

- Review Questions (included in lesson)
- One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)
- Pencils or white board markers
- One die

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board

in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

6 = body

5 = nose

4 = whiskers

3 = eyes

2 = ears

1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)

Masking tape

Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
Rolled up socks
Masking tape
Ten sheets of paper
Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Small paper strips
Cup or basket

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
White board or chalkboard
Markers/chalk
Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.),
tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions (included in lesson)
- A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards
- One beanbag
- Masking tape
- Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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