

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 this 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 ended up ordering the death of Uriah to cover up his sin, and then he took Bathsheba as his wife. God was 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. God had given him many blessings but instead of being content, he wanted another woman. David repented and begged God to forgive him and cleanse him from his sin. God forgave David, but David still faced consequences.

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. Sin always has consequences. Even though David was forgiven, he was punished for his actions. Today we'll see how God's judgment came to pass through one of David's own sons.

Absalom's Rebellion

Wait to pass out the Class Notes until the end of the lesson.

Let's learn a bit about David's son Absalom. The young man Absalom was David's third son, and his mother was a princess, the daughter of the king of Geshur. Absalom became angry at his oldest brother Amnon for hurting his sister. David did not punish Amnon as he should have, so Absalom plotted against Amnon and eventually had him killed. But Absalom didn't want to be punished for murder, so he fled from Israel and lived in Geshur with his mother's relatives.

Do these sins of Absalom sound familiar? Who else had someone killed for selfish reasons? David had Uriah killed.

Absalom committed the same sin as his father, who ordered the death of Uriah. Several years passed, and David mourned for Amnon. But David also missed Absalom and wanted him to return home. Finally, he decided to forgive Absalom and bring him back.

Raise your hand if you think this was a good idea. Show of hands.

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

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.

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 handsome and let his hair grow long. When he had his yearly haircut, his hair weighed about five pounds. That's a lot of hair! It sounds like he was pretty proud of his hair if 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 15:1–6

Slide #5

Slide #6

Slide #7

Let's see what Absalom did with his popularity once he was back in Jerusalem. Who will read 2 Samuel 15:1–6? Assign readers.

Absalom had the perks of royalty: 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 wanted attention wherever he went with his chariot and horses and personal guards.

What did Absalom do at the gate when people came to get justice from the king? He said that the king didn't have anyone to hear them. But if he were king, he would make sure everyone had justice.

Absalom also made the men feel like his equal when they went to bow to him; 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.

At the end of verse 6, what does it say Absalom did by greeting and talking to all the men who came to see his father? He stole their hearts.

Absalom continued to turn the hearts of the men of Israel to himself for years. Then he decided it was finally time to make his move against his father.

He tricked David into letting him go to Hebron. Absalom brought 200 men from Jerusalem who didn't know he wanted the throne. While he was in Hebron, he sent messengers throughout Israel to tell people that he would be king. He was planning to steal the kingdom from David!

2 Samuel 15:13–14

Slide #8

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.

This was a sad and scary time for David. He was forced to leave his home and city. He and all those with him wept as they left. He also had to worry about Absalom and his supporters chasing him and killing them.

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 deliverance, and God protected him and his supporters so they could escape over the Jordan River.

Absalom's Defeat

Several of David's friends stayed in Jerusalem and pretended to support Absalom so they could report to David. God used these men to help David by sending him messages and giving bad advice to Absalom.

Eventually, Absalom gathered a big army and crossed the Jordan River to fight against his father. Meanwhile, David also 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 were his "mighty men," and they were loyal to David. David wanted to go with his men into battle, but they didn't want him to get hurt or killed. So David stood by the city gate as his three commanders led his men out to fight.

Raise your hand if you think Absalom and his men will win the battle. Show of hands.

Raise your hand if you think David and his men will win. Show of hands.

2 Samuel 18:6–9

Slide #9

Slide #10

Let's see who is right! Turn to 2 Samuel 18, and we'll read from verse 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 killed more people: the sword or the forest? The forest.

This forest was so thick that more men died running 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 #11

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. Absalom was riding through the forest on his mule. 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 else his neck, and his mule kept running, leaving him hanging there helplessly!

One of David's men saw Absalom and ran to tell Joab, one of David's commanders. Joab hurried to the oak with his armor-bearers, and they killed Absalom. Then Joab blew the trumpet to call David's men back from chasing Absalom's men.

God delivered David from Absalom and gave his men a great victory. You would think David would be happy and relieved, right? But go to 2 Samuel 18:33.

2 Samuel 18:33

Slide #12

Who will read what David did when he heard the news of his victory and his son's death? Assign a reader.

What did David do? He wept.

David was overcome with grief. He cried and said he wished he had died instead of Absalom. How do you think that made his men feel?

Allow discussion.

This wasn't a good response because it made his men feel bad for winning! When Joab returned from the battle, he told David to put aside his personal sadness and go speak kindly to his servants. If he didn't, they

would all leave! David listened to Joab and went and sat in the gate with his people. They needed to know that David cared about their lives as much as his rebellious son's.

Do you see how this account fulfilled God's promise of punishment on David for his sin with Bathsheba? 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!

What sins did Absalom commit in this account? Allow discussion. Hatred, murder, greed, coveting, pride, lying, deceit, rebellion, disobedience and dishonor to parents, etc.

Absalom was not a good son; he ignored God's laws. But David kept hoping he would change. Instead, Absalom got worse and led an entire army against David to try to take the kingdom away.

David cried out to God for help, and God answered. He protected David and his followers and gave them victory over Absalom. David returned to Jerusalem, but the fight caused divisions among the tribes of Israel.

David's Census

We've seen how David endured some terrible consequences in his own family because of his sin with Bathsheba. The trouble with Absalom caused David personal grief as he lost two sons and had to deal with divided loyalties among his own people.

God restored David to the throne, but many years later David decided to number all the fighting men among the tribes of Israel. The Bible makes it clear that this decision was a sin. It doesn't tell us why. It may have been because David was proud of his large army or was putting his trust in the strength of his army rather than God or because he wanted to take over more land than God wanted him to. Whatever the reason, David ordered Joab to go count the men. This was called a census.

Joab knew it was a bad idea and tried to talk David out of it, but David refused to listen. He overruled Joab and sent him out. Joab returned to Jerusalem after almost 10 months. He had counted 800,000 fighting men in Israel and 500,000 fighting men in Judah.

Then David realized he had sinned by ordering the census. He prayed and asked God to forgive him. He admitted he had acted foolishly.

This time God sent a prophet named Gad to David. Gad gave David three choices as the punishment for his sin: 1) three years of famine, 2) three months fleeing from enemies, or 3) three days of pestilence. A pestilence is a plague from the Lord. These three punishments were common in Old Testament times: famine, sword, and plague.

That's a tough choice, isn't it? What would you choose between those three options? Allow answers.

2 Samuel 24:14–17

Slide #13

Slide #14

Slide #15

Let's read David's choice in 2 Samuel 24:14–17. Assign readers or read the passage.

What punishment did David choose? Three days of pestilence/plague. Why did David choose that one? What did he say in verse 14? He'd rather fall into the hand of the Lord because he is merciful. Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Who will read the definition of merciful from the Attributes of God Poster? Choose a reader. Kind to those in misery; withholds deserved punishment. David knew his enemies would not show mercy like the Lord, so he chose the plague. How many men of Israel died in the plague? 70,000. What happened when the angel was about to bring the plague on Jerusalem? The Lord relented and told the angel to stop.

David was sad that his sin caused the death of so many Israelites. He asked God to punish him and his house rather than the people. God listened to David's plea and stopped the plague. Then Gad came to David and told him to build an altar to the Lord where the angel stopped.

David obeyed and went to the owner of the land. The landowner wanted to give the land and animals for the offering to David, but David refused. He said he wouldn't offer sacrifices to God that cost him nothing. So David bought the land and the oxen. He built an altar and offered the sacrifices to God. This land David bought was important because it would be the future location of the temple, the house to worship God.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Let's review with the Class Notes. You will circle the correct answer for each question. I'll give you time to complete them then we'll review the answers together.

Slide #16

Slide #17

Slide #18

Slide #19

Slide #20

Slide #21

Slide #22

Slide #23

Allow students to complete the Class Notes individually or in pairs. Review answers by choosing students to read each question. Verify answers with the answer key.

Application

Slide #24

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Absalom met a sad and humiliating end, getting caught in a tree while his mule ran off. But Absalom's rebellion weakened the kingdom by dividing the loyalty of the tribes of Israel.

God did restore David to the throne, and David returned to Jerusalem to rule. Years later, David sinned by counting all the fighting men with a census. But David repented and asked God for forgiveness.

This account of David and his sins, along with Absalom's, shows us that there are consequences to sin. We may think we're getting away with something, but God sees everything we do. God will punish his children so they will repent and want to avoid sin.

When David sinned, he was repentant and begged for God's mercy and forgiveness. He often sought the guidance of God's prophets and priests. David would obey what God told him to do, like when the prophet Gad told David to offer sacrifices to stop the plague.

But Absalom was not like David. He sought man's counsel over God's. He let sins like coveting, pride, and hatred lead him to murder and rebellion. Many Israelite lives were lost because of Absalom.

Absalom used his good looks, position, and popularity to turn the hearts of people against his father. What are some ways we may be tempted by the same things as Absalom? How may we place too much emphasis on looks, popularity, or status? Allow discussion.

Our culture cares a lot about outward appearance. Commercials on TV and ads 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? When we care more about them than God and his Word. When they cause us to have wrong attitudes like pride, greed, selfishness, etc.

Think about how much time, energy, and money you put into these things. 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, you can be like David and ask God for forgiveness. He 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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