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Description automatically generatedLesson 95

Absalom's Demise

**Story Elements**

* **Text**: 2 Samuel 18:1-31
* **Setting**: approx. 990 B.C.
* **Main Characters**: God, David, Absalom, and Joab
* **Plot**: David's men meet Absalom in battle and Joab slays him mercilessly.
* **Key word(s)**: “the **young** man”
* **Climax**: *“...And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away*.” (18:9)

Review(2 Sam. 15:1-17:29)

1. As David and his people fled from Absalom, he set up a network of loyalist spies within Jerusalem, including the priests Abiathar and Zadok, their sons, and the famed counselor **Hushai**.
2. David and his followers holed up in **Mahanaim** while Absalom, per the advice of Hushai, amassed an army and prepared for battle in Gilead.

The End of the Rebellion(2 Sam. 18:1-8)

1. (18:1-2) David prepared his men for battle by dividing them into three bands with Joab, Abishai, and **Ittai** the Gittite commanding each.
   1. (18:3-4) David’s men pleaded with him to not go into battle, reasoning that he would be the sole focus of the battle and that if he was absent, they had a better chance of **victory**.
   2. (18:4-5) David commanded his generals to spare **Absalom’s** life – an order the entire army was privy to.
2. (18:6-8) As the battle commenced in the forest of Ephraim, David’s relatively small army won a huge victory; Israel lost 20,000 soldiers, most of which were “devoured” by the forest? What do you think is meant by the forest devouring soldiers? **Probably that in their hasty retreat, they were caught by the thickets and impaled or trampled so that the devouring was an indirect action of the forest.**

The End of the Rebel(2 Sam. 18:9-18)

1. (18:9-10) As he retreated, Absalom’s infamously thick hair was snagged in a low-hanging branch. As his mule continued the retreat without its rider, Absalom was left **dangling** helplessly.
2. (18:11-15) The news of Absalom’s predicament was shared with Joab by a soldier who was reluctant to defy the king’s orders and kill his rebellious son. Joab, on the other hand, had no qualms about killing Absalom, and he put **three** spears into the rebel as he dangled from the tree.
   1. Joab’s **armor bearers** followed suit and Absalom was thoroughly struck down and killed.
   2. His body was put in a deep **pit** and a great mound of stones erected atop of it.

Application

1. 2 Sam. 18:18 says that Absalom erected a memorial to himself because he said, “I have no son to keep my name in remembrance,” yet 2 Sam. 14:27 says that Absalom had three sons. How do we make senses of this? **Absalom’s sons were not named in 2 Sam. 14:27, so we can assume that they must have died in infancy.**
2. Though not explicitly stated, it’s hard not to recognize God’s providential hand in David’s victory over Absalom. (18:8 – “and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.”) Can you think of other battles that were won by the direct intervention of God? **Two examples: The Red Sea Crossing (Exo. 14); The Battle against the Amorites (Josh. 10:1-28)**
3. Absalom’s reign was short. In the brevity of the rebellion, we can discern the mercy of God on David. Though God chastises his children, his discipline is gracious and merciful; and compared to his eternal salvation, it is **brief**.

*Psa. 30:5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life:*

*weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*

**Notes**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Answer Key:** Key word(s): young • 1. Hushai • 2. Mahanaim • 3. Ittai; a) victory; b) Absalom’s • 4. Probably that in their hasty retreat, they were caught by the thickets and impaled or trampled so that the devouring was an indirect action of the forest • 5. dangling • 6. three; a) armor bearers; b) pit • 7. Absalom’s sons were not named in 2 Sam. 14:27, so we can assume that they must have died in infancy. • 8. Two examples: The Red Sea Crossing (Exo. 14); The Battle against the Amorites (Josh. 10:1-28) • 9. brief

**How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study**: (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. Keep in mind that some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.