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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2292 ~ David Flees from Absalom.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

King David of Israel had committed adultery with Bathsheba, another man's wife, but when she found out she was pregnant, King David arranged for her husband, Uriah, to be killed in battle to cover up his own sin. As a result, Nathan, the prophet of God, warned David that although God had forgiven him his sins, there would be consequences for them in his own household. And those consequences started with his oldest son, Amnon and his third son, Absalom.

Like his father, lust overtook Amnon in Chapter 12 of the Bible book 2nd Samuel. Amnon lusted after his beautiful half-sister Tamar but he had no access to her and it was illegal for him to have sexual relations with a half-sister. So Amnon made a big pretence of being ill and got access to her by playing on his father's sympathies that he needed Tamar to nurse him. When Amnon got Tamar alone with him, he tried to persuade her to get into bed with him. She, however, tried her best to change his mind, as it would cost him his father's throne and leaving her in disgrace for the rest of her life, with no possibility of ever getting married or having children of her own.

But Amnon wouldn't listen. He violated Tamar sexually and then threw her out of his house. Tamar was the full sister of Absalom and she went to Absalom's house in the palace compound, weeping and mourning. When Absalom heard what had happened, he tried to get her to calm down and told her not do anything for the present time. Absalom, himself, however, was plotting revenge. There may have been political ambitions in his mind even at that point.

Absalom was very angry at what Amnon had done, and when he heard too, so was King David, but David didn't take any action against Amnon. David's own sexual sin with Bathsheba made it difficult for him to discipline his son for the same kind of sin. Whenever we ourselves sin, we lose some of our moral and spiritual authority, and thus, become less effective in God's service. Amnon must have realised that he now had no chance of becoming king if his father had any say in the matter. However, David already knew that Solomon was God's choice to be the next king.

Two years later, when Absalom's men were shearing Absalom's sheep about 34 km north of Jerusalem, he invited David and his officials to attend the festive occasion. David refused, because it would mean a lot of extra preparation work for Absalom. So Absalom asked if his brothers, including Amnon, could go instead, and eventually David gave his permission.

At the festivities, Absalom gave orders to his servants that when Amnon had drunk too much wine, they should kill him. When they did so, David's other sons fled away on their mules, fearing that Absalom would kill them too.

Meanwhile, Absalom had fled across the Jordan River to the king of Geshur, who was his mother's father. Both Absalom and his brother, Amnon, had followed in the sinful footsteps of their father. Let parents take heed: their influence in the lives of their children is enormous, either it is for good or for evil.

As it was three years after Amnon's death, David sent Joab to Geshur in Syria to bring Absalom back home. Joab believed that Absalom was the rightful heir to the throne of Israel, and reasoned that while Absalom was in exile, if David died suddenly, there would be no royal successor to assume leadership. As a result, Israel could end up in political chaos. However, David decreed that on his return, Absalom couldn't be accepted back into the royal family because of his sin and his need for punishment. For a further two years, Absalom lived in Jerusalem without seeing his father. He wasn't happy about this arrangement and sent for Joab twice. But Joab didn't come. Absalom then told his servants to set fire to Joab's crop of barley, which was in a field next to his own.

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David didn't act wisely in the matter of bringing Absalom back from exile. David didn't forgive or reinstate Absalom either. This left Absalom angry and living in Jerusalem where he could stir up trouble for his father, which he proceeded to do very well. If Absalom had stayed in exile, he couldn't have caused David trouble. And if David had brought Absalom back home and forgiven him, then Absalom wouldn't have wanted to cause David trouble either. David chose the worst choice: to bring Absalom back but not to forgive him. David as a king was strong, but as a father, he was weak.

During his two years back in Jerusalem, Absalom's anger may have grown and grown. Although his cousin, Joab, ignored his requests at first to take a message to the king on his behalf, finally Joab came and Absalom told him to go to the king and ask his father to either punish him or forgive him. After this length of time, Absalom could fairly safely assume that the king would forgive him and restore his status as Crown Prince. And this would be a stepping stone to his attempt to seize David's throne.

David did accept Absalom back into the royal family. However, Absalom never repented of killing Amnon and King David never administered justice. During the next four years, Absalom did his best to convince the people of Israel as they arrived in Jerusalem that he was a much better judge for them than what the king would be. As Absalom was a very good looking man, in time, he won the people's support and turned them against his father David.

After those four years, Absalom evidently thought that he had enough support to overthrow his father. He secretly sent messengers throughout the nation to tell the people that when they heard the sound of the trumpet, they should announce that Absalom had become king. Absalom then asked David if he could travel to Hebron to fulfil a vow that he'd made to God while in exile in Gershur. He took 200 men with him who were unaware of what he had planned to do. He also sent for one of David's most trusted advisors, Ahithophel, Bathsheba's father. This advisor may have decided to support Absalom out of revenge on David's adultery. But when David heard this news of Ahithophel's betrayal, he asked the Lord to turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness.

The first part of Absalom's plan worked. He was crowned king of Israel in Hebron.

When David was told that the men of Israel supported Absalom, David chose to flee from Jerusalem rather than subject the city to a destructive attack by Absalom's forces. David, his household and his servants left Jerusalem so they wouldn't become trapped there.

What can we learn from these three chapters of 2nd Samuel? Firstly, the Bible is brutally honest. Talking about sexual sins usually isn't done in polite society. Secondly, a king's weakness isn't normally recorded and shown up. In fact, all the pagan kings ruling around that time kept records of all the good things they did, but never the battle defeats that they'd had.

But Absalom's plan failed in that he became a pretender, or claimant, to the throne of Israel while it was still occupied by his father. This act of foolishness shows the character of Absalom. He didn't have the support of the priests or David's army or even God Himself. Absalom's life had turned into a self-absorbing life where he only thought of his own ambitions and how to reach them. As a result, he made an attempt in Hebron to make something that was not the case appear as though it were true. It was simply a case of false pretences. But how long could this pretence last before the people woke up that they had been deceived?

Why is it that many people like to pretend that situations are different from what they actually are?

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most incredible gift God has given us. God did this to show us how great His unconditional love is. When we live knowing that we are loved by God so much, our lives are completely changed; we have hope for the future.

If we live our lives to please everyone around us, we cannot live to please God. Anyone can plaster a look of calm pretence on their face and attend church services faithfully each week but not have surrendered to doing God's will in their lives. We might be able to deceive other worshippers but we can't fool God. He knows where we are spiritually. If there's any sin separating you from God, pray to Jesus, confess it to Him and then forsake it. This is the only way our relationship with God can be mended.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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