

## Absalom, the demagogue.

---

The Lord speaks to his own every moment. Those who have ears hear him and take counsel to know what to do and what not. More often he uses the context of the environment to reach the heart of His people. As Bereans, therefore, we ought to reflect on each passing moment and allow God to speak to us, expressly. The bible is a complete book and the Holy Spirit is there to fill the gaps when understanding is scarce. We learn by using the bible as a mirror to judge situations and take counsel (Ps119:11, 105). Yesterday, the Lord spoke about Doeg, a vile person in the bible. Today, we shall take another. We should learn in examining their lives.

He started out poor and in a disadvantaged region, but was determined to be successful. He worked hard and would not stand anything on his way to success. Once he made up his mind where to go, he manipulated his way to achieve the goal. It does not matter who is hurt or destroyed in the process. He also has a long memory and does not forgive and would in every opportunity try to destroy those he perceives are his adversaries or stand on the way of his success. As I ruminated on what I have seen, I remembered a bible character, worthy of review. The name is Absalom.

Absalom was the third son of David, born to him in Hebron, by Maacah, the daughter of the king of Geshur. Absalom was handsome and pleasant, at least on the surface (II Sam 14:25). His hair was unique and stood him out in the kingdom. It was the hair that accelerated his demise in the twilight of his life. He was unforgiving. He killed his elder half brother for raping his younger sister, Tamar. This happened two years after the incident, when the offender had forgotten, in an unguarded moment. He was banished from Jerusalem and the presence of the king, his father, King David, but worked his way back to Jerusalem and to the presence of the king. He also manipulated his elder cousin, Joab, the army commander of David to help him. Fathers should learn to chastise children who misbehave. David did not rebuke or correct Amnon, when he raped his half-sister, Tamar. The outcome of his error of commission was fratricide, though it fulfilled Nathan's prophesy that the sword will not depart from David's house (II Sam 12).

Absalom wanted to be king. He capitalized on the weakness of his father, King David. He used demagoguery and rabble-rousing (II Sam 15:2-6, 13) to warm himself to the heart of the people, especially the people north of the kingdom (II Sam 15:1-6), who felt marginalized in his rule. He sought permission to visit Hebron, four years after he returned to Jerusalem from exile in Geshur and there declared himself the king, while his father was still on the throne. David, the king had to run away from Jerusalem. He sent his counselor, Hushai to counter the advice of Ahithophel, the most famous of his counselors, who had aligned with Absalom, his rebellious son. That bought him some time to strategize and cross the Jordan and organize himself for the battle, which was fought in the forest of Ephraim. He prayed for God to turn the counsel of Ahithophel to foolishness and so it was. Absalom's army was defeated and he was eventually killed by Joab. David had hoped, his son would be spared. He mourned him, to the surprise of all.

Absalom went so far as to rape his father's wives on the roof top of the palace on the advice of Ahithophel. Was Ahithophel revenging what David did to Uriah? Absalom lost his three sons, leaving only a daughter, who he named Tamar, after his younger sister. He would not have his name to be forgotten! He therefore raised a pillar to his name, so that he will be remembered (II Sam 18:18), no matter how ingloriously. His superfluity destroyed him.

There are Absalom's in the house. Some are in the pulpit, some are on the congregation, the Nicolaitans and the Laity, who desire to have the best of the world and God. These two cannot go together. They manipulate everyone, every situation to achieve their goal of ungodly greatness. Their appetites for power and fame cannot be compared. Like Absalom, they overblow their gifts. They are pushed by their egos and have no limit to how deep low, they would go in sin in the name of "grace" to achieve their goals.

Father, have your way in me (Ps 51:23). I am yet a captive; deliver me from the pit. Lower your hand upon me (Ezk 1:3). Free me and fill me. Purge me of greed, pride, unforgiveness, vaunted ambition and dead conscience, if there is any left. Shake out anything superfluous (like Absalom's hair that might hang me) in my life. Separate me by your holy spirit from poisonous characters and men who may advise me wrongly. Renew your spirit in me. Unless a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides, alone. Let me die to the self that you may be glorified. Amen. Good morning, Holy Spirit.