



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1880 ~ Absalom's Army Defeated.**

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

When news came to King David of Israel that his Crown Prince, Absalom, had declared himself to be king in the city of Hebron in Judah, David and his family fled from the capital city of Jerusalem. David didn't want Absalom bringing into God's sacred city weapons of war that would cause destruction and death there. Most of his household, servants and soldier bodyguards went with him towards a wilderness plain on the west side of the Jordan River. All the people of Jerusalem wept aloud as David left and some joined in his retreat.

Zadok the high priest, Abiathar the priest and the Levites attending God's Tabernacle tent, followed David, carrying the Covenant Box. However, David sent them all back, saying that he hoped one day that the Lord would let him return to Jerusalem. When David reached the top of the Mount of Olives, he was met by one of David's most trusted friends, Hushai. David asked Hushai to go back to Jerusalem and oppose Ahithophel's advice to Absalom. He could send messages back to David through the priests.

Absalom and his advisor, Ahithophel, arrived in Jerusalem at the same time as David's friend, Hushai, arrived. When Hushai called out, "Long live the king!" Absalom asked him why he hadn't gone with David. Hushai replied that he would stay with the one the Lord and the people of Israel had chosen. He would serve Absalom now as he had previously served his father.

Absalom asked Ahithophel what their next step should be to prevent David from taking back the throne. He replied that Absalom should sleep with 10 secondary wives of David, who'd been left to take care for the palace. This was considered an unforgivable act, but it would show everyone that Absalom had successfully replaced David as king, and would encourage his followers to remain loyal. Ahithophel also asked Absalom for permission to choose 12,000 warriors to go after David straight away, so as to catch him unprepared. Ahithophel promised Absalom that he would only need to kill David and then he'd be able to bring back all the rest of David's household to support Absalom.

Absalom first wanted to hear what Hushai thought of the idea. To delay Absalom's pursuit of David while getting words of warning to David, Hushai thought that a better plan would be for Absalom to call all the warriors from Israel together and Absalom lead them out himself. This appealed to Absalom's pride. Hushai also told Absalom that they wouldn't catch David as easily as Ahithophel had suggested. When Absalom decided to follow Hushai's plan, Ahithophel saw that Absalom would lose and his advice was at an end. So he returned home, put his affairs in order and then hanged himself. He didn't want to go through the disgrace of being punished as a traitor.

In the meantime, Hushai told the priests to tell David's party to quickly cross the Jordan River. The priests send a servant girl with a message to their sons who were waiting outside the city. However, the priests' sons were seen there and this was reported to Absalom, who sent men to catch them. By that time, however, the priests' sons had moved to another house to hide. The wife hid them down a well, covered it over and spread grain on top until Absalom's men had gone. Then the sons went quickly to David with Hushai's message. David and his party crossed the Jordan River during the night and travelled on to the fortified city of Mahanaim, which had been King Ish-bosheth's stronghold.

David and his people were safe there. Friends brought them much needed provisions and as time went by, David's army of soldiers started to grow.

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Absalom and his forces followed and camped close to Mahanaim. Since Joab, the former commander of Israel's army, had remained loyal to David, Absalom chose a new commander called Amasa, who was another nephew of David and a cousin to both Joab and Absalom.

While in Mahanaim, David organised his forces under his three most loyal and capable commanders: Joab, Abishai and Ittai. He wanted to lead them out into the battle himself but he'd been advised not to go. David gave orders that his son Absalom was to be treated gently. He still had great affection for Absalom, in spite of his evil behaviour. When David's army marched out to fight Absalom's army, Absalom had the most men, but David had the most experienced soldiers.

The armies met in a dense forest and David's men completely defeated Absalom's army. Toward the end of the battle, Absalom realised that he had lost the war. He decided to flee on his mule but as he did so, his long hair got caught in some low hanging branches of an oak tree. His mule charged on, but Absalom was left hanging there. One of David's men reported the situation to Joab, who asked him why he hadn't killed him. But the man said that it wasn't worth it, because David wanted him to be protected. So Joab went himself and killed Absalom. Then Joab blew the trumpet to end the war. Joab's men threw Absalom's body into a deep pit and piled rocks over it; then they went back to Mahanaim.

Joab was a ruthless man but his action in killing Absalom saved many lives on both sides. Joab knew that if Absalom was dead, the rebellion against David would soon end. David himself, however, could never look upon Absalom as an enemy, but only as a son.

The defeated Israelites fled back to their homes. Joab sent a non-Israelite messenger back to the city to carry the news to David that the war had been won. The priest's son also persisted in asking if he could be a messenger too. Joab knew that David would be more interested in the fate of his son Absalom, so Joab delayed him for a bit but finally, he let him go.

When David understood the message that his son was dead, he was overcome with grief. He would have given up his throne, even his very life, to save his son. As David's soldiers arrived back, they entered the city quietly, because they heard that David was mourning the death of his son. Joab, however, went to David and rebuked him for his selfishness. He told David that David wasn't showing the appreciation that his men deserved for risking their lives for his sake. He also warned David that unless David went out and encouraged them, they would all forsake him, because his actions showed that he thought more of his enemy Absalom than he did of them. He would then be more worse off than ever.

Outwardly, David took Joab's words to heart and so he went down and sat near the city gate, where his men gathered around him. But inwardly, David could well have resented Joab's rebuke and his obvious disregard for the king's orders about Absalom. Soon afterwards, David removed Joab from being his army commander.

David had loved his son Absalom and possibly hoped that Absalom would grow out of his rebellious ways. Absalom had three sons but it seems from Bible records that all three had died at an early age, to which Absalom had built himself a monument. Absalom would have known what grief was, but it didn't seem to change his attitude towards his father. David had four years to observe what Absalom was up to, but he did nothing about it. David wanted love without justice. Joab, on the other hand, wanted justice without love. Only at the cross of Jesus Christ do love and justice meet. Christ satisfied God's justice and He did it willingly in great love for all those who would repent and ask for forgiveness of their sins. Those Christians who have experienced this, know with assurance and certainty that God loves them.

All types of love are accompanied by showing loyalty and doing good, and not from just saying nice words. David's love for his son Absalom was spurned and rejected, yet Absalom's heart may have been badly affected by King David not punishing Amnon for his disgraceful treatment of Tamar. Tamar living in Absalom's house would have reminded him daily that justice hadn't been served.

Throughout the centuries, God sent the Israelites a long line of prophets to teach them what God wanted them to do. The last of the Old Testament prophets was Malachi. God sent Malachi to call the people to repentance and bring to their minds His gracious favour and underserved mercy towards them, even while they treated Him with total ingratitude. At that time, the people of Judah were questioning if God still loved them.

In Malachi, Chapter 1, the Lord told the Jewish people that He loved them. In return, they asked God why He loved them. He responded that He had chosen them above all other nations of the world. In the epistle of 1<sup>st</sup> John, Chapter 4, it says: "We love Him because he first loved us." In Psalm 103, it says: "Praise the Lord, O my soul! And do not forget how kind He is. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He keeps me from the grave and blesses me with love and mercy. He fills my life with good things, so that I stay young and strong like an eagle."

God's daily provision of food, clothing, shelter and His care for people, applies to all human beings. The Lord can still say to those who forget Him and care nothing for Him these words: "I have loved you." Great numbers of people live in the world as if there is no God. If God was really dead, it wouldn't make the slightest difference in their thoughts, feelings and behaviour. They are dead to Him and act as though He is dead. Many people fail to recognise all of God's benefits to them. They and often their parents have failed to keep the knowledge of God in their minds. Well might God look at the atheist and socialist, and then say to them, "I have treated you with love, yet this is the only return I receive from you."

Unbelievers do not know the verse of Scripture in Jeremiah, Chapter 29, where God says: "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." Don't wait another day to call on the Lord sincerely for His free salvation.

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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