

Absalom Kills Amnon

Notes for 25 Jan

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Read: [2 Samuel 13:23-38](#)

Recap: Could I ask you to read 2 Sam. 15 to 22 again?

Tamar was raped by Amnon. "Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred". He threw her out of his house. Her status as a virgin had been destroyed.

Irrespective of the circumstances her loss had a profound psychological impact on her. A maiden having her honour intact was of extreme importance on her marriage night. To demonstrate this standing and the degradation she felt, she put ashes on her head and ripped off her robe denoting both her royal and virginal status. "Weeping aloud as she went". These texts are harrowing. Her situation was caused by male lust, uncontrolled male emotions.

- Do you think Absalom's statement to her, "don't take this thing to heart", was helpful or insensitive?
- "When David heard all this, he was furious". What made him furious?

It is clear both in terms of Absalom's relationship to Tamar and the fact that Tamar resided in his home, that he was her protector.

"He hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar."

This is the emotional context for verses 23 to 38.

Crime and Punishment

Unfortunately, I have not read any of Dostoevsky, but I have read plenty of the Old Testament to understand there is a relationship between crime and punishment. Inevitably, because of this tragic story, much of our discussion will centre on the place of punishment.

- Verses 23-33: What does this passage inform us about Absalom's character? Did David understand Absalom?
- Verse 34: "Meanwhile, Absalom had fled"
- Verses 34-36: I assume the weeping was for Amnon. What would your reaction have been?
- Verse 39: "And the spirit of the king longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon's death."

In view of certain passages in chapter 14, do you think David's emotional state was very much in flux?

We had a marvellous [session last week on forgiveness](#). From a Christian perspective:

- Do you think there is a place for punishment?
- Do you think it should have a purpose?
- Do you think in all circumstances it should have limits?
- Do you think the punishment of hanging at Nuremberg was justified in 1946?