

The Dormant Volcano of Revenge

2 Samuel 13:21 - 29

Nutshell: Revenge easily settles in our craw and awaits opportunity. In the meantime, it denies God and poisons us.

I. Context: Amnon forcing Tamar.

II. Text

2 Sam 13:21 And King David heard all these things, and it intensely infuriated him.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

Review

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
 1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
 2. **Saul** demonstrated *man's* kind of rule. God previewed *His* version of king through **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 says David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. This provides a 'game-changer' hermeneutic.
- C. David was God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for later kings of Judah, 2 Kings 14:3
 1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5.
 2. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- D. **DAVID'S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING***
 1. Conquer Jebus (Jerusalem), where Goliath's head was, 1 Sam 17:54
 2. Retrieved the Ark from its 'wanderings', 6:1-19; tragically wrongly, 1 Chron 15:2; then rightly & joyfully
 3. Build a permanent form for the Tabernacle, the **Temple**.
 - ★ 4. God chose **Abraham** to bless all nations. Now He chose **David's** line to bring forth the King of all nations
 5. 1 Sam 20:14 oath in 2 Sam 9. *OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.

E. David's sin and its consequences

1. David murdered to cover adultery, Ch 11. Now David, though forgiven, *would see continued violence*, ch 12
2. David's son died, *not*, per Deut 24:16, as a cohort, but was 'replaced' by Solomon/ Jedediah, "adored" by God.
3. Chap 13, Amnon was lovesick over his half-sister Tamar
 - a. He deceitfully lured her to his bedroom
 - b. Tamar refused his demand, giving 7 disincentives
 - c. Amnon raped her, then hated her greatly, telling her to leave. Tamar said that was worse than the rape.
 - d. She mourned aloud. Her brother Absalom took her in.

Kid-speak: Tamar was a girl who loved God. Who's the man who treated her very badly? Amnon.

F. Our Section: 2 Sam 13:21-29, David is furious at Amnon's vile act, while Absalom sets his heart on revenge. Allaying suspicions, Absalom succeeds in his revenge.

Outline:

- I. David's fury at Amnon, 13:21
- II. Absalom's stoic hatred, 13:22
- III. Absalom creating a possible venue, 13:23-27
- IV. Absalom satisfies his vengeance, 13:28-29

G. 1 Sam 13:21, "And King David heard these matters, and it intensely infuriated him"

1. The same catch-22 seems to be binding David as bound Absalom
 - a. The laws obligating Amnon to marry Tamar were voided by the restriction of brother marrying sister
 - b. The law that would have executed Amnon for rape was complicated by its occurrence within the city; specifically, Tamar didn't call out.
2. Hypothetically, might Solomon have devised a means for Amnon to incriminate himself? Hard to say.
3. But it was indeed a legal conundrum, like Joab avenging Asahel, but outside the battlefield, 2 Sam 2
 - a. David knew very well from recent experience that God is an active judge. He knew God would take care

- of it one way or another.
- b. Will Messiah be able to solve what even Solomon could not? When He returns as Judge, yes, as God, He'll see and uncover what mere men cannot.

Kid-speak: Could King David punish Amnon for the bad thing he did? No, the way it happened, the law didn't cover it.

- H. The two-word phrase (attached preposition making it three) "It infuriated him" also occurs in Neh 3:33 and Jonah 4:1, but only here with "very" ("intensely")
1. "Intensely" + "infuriated" (without our phrasing) occurs 13x, including Cain's reaction to his unaccepted offering
 - a. God in Num 11:10, 33
 - ★ b. Gen 34:7, of Dinah's brothers' reaction to Shechem forcing her
 - ◆ c. Of David's reaction to Nathan's story picturing his own deed, 2 Sam 12:5
 2. David's anger is deep-set. Even two years later, he will be relieved to hear of Amnon's death, 2 Sam 13:39

2 Sam 13:22 But Absalom did not speak with Amnon *anything ranging* from negativity to good, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had subjugated his sister Tamar.

- I. "*Anything ranging* from negativity to good"
 1. "Negativity" here is unusual in the Hebrew
 - a. It's only here and Dan 11:27
 - b. In both places, it has an attached preposition
 2. "Good" is the usual Heb. word for good
- J. Here is Absalom's veil. Complete silence towards Amnon.
 1. It was partly the refusal to interact with a repugnant person
 2. But it was partly an intentional camouflage to make the best of his opportunity for revenge when the moment arose
- K. Prov 10:18 tells us that if the subject of Amnon arose with someone else, Absalom obfuscated. Prov 26:24-26 doesn't apply directly to Absalom, since he didn't speak kindly (or otherwise) to Amnon.
- L. "Subjugated": same word Tamar used in v 12 and used to describe Amnon's act in v 14
 1. The same word in Gen 34:2 of Shechem's subjugation of

Dinah

2. And the same murderous hate in Levi and Simeon's heart was in Absalom's heart, Gen 34:24
 - a. Absalom didn't take that lesson to heart, Gen 49:5-7
 - b. If any of his counselors reminded him of it, his camouflage would have guided him to sincerely agree—murder was not a righteous retribution
3. And now a whole spiral of events leading to a civil war would ensue!

Kid-speak: Absalom wanted to kill Amnon for what he did to Tamar, but Absalom **hid** his hatred. He didn't say anything at all to Amnon.

2 Sam 13:23 And after two years of days it happened that Absalom had shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim. And Absalom called upon all the sons of the king.

- M. The king's sons were expected to be enterprising leaders. Here was at least one of Absalom's enterprises.
1. The king's sons are invited to Absalom's festival accompanying the shearing of his sheep
 2. A shearing was when David had politely requested Nabal for generosity, 1 Sam 25. A celebration of prosperity.
- N. Some translate "two years of days" as "two full years," which is probably the right idea; i.e., every day of a full two years.
1. Two years of Absalom hiding hatred
 2. Any fear that he might avenge Tamar had doubtless faded
 3. (There will be another 2 full years that Absalom will be in 'no man's land', 14:28)
- O. "Baal-hazor." Baal wasn't just the name of a false god. Its general meaning was master, possessor, or husband.
1. Mr. Baal-Chanan's name meant "possessor of grace," 1 Chron 27:28. "Baal of wings," in Eccl 10:20 = bird.
 2. We don't have other mentions of this place, but it was likely a commercial center, 15 miles N of Jerusalem
 3. "Called upon," as in invited

2 Sam 13:24 And Absalom came to the king and said, "Please consider, your servant has shearers. Let the king and his servants now go with your servant."

- P. Absalom calls himself a servant. The other servants of the king he names would be his other sons, v 23
- Q. Absalom probably has no solid plans to do Amnon in on this occasion
1. He almost certainly would do no harm if David actually came
 2. But he may be hoping that David refuses

Kid-speak: Two years went by, and Absalom waited. Then he had a party where he thought he could maybe kill Amnon.

2 Sam 13:25 And the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go now, so we won't be burdensome to you."

But he pressed him, yet he was not willing to go; but he blessed him.

- R. It would have been a crowd
1. David oversaw his sons' activities
 2. Absalom apparently required David's OK
- S. Absalom removes all suspicion by pressing David to come. Again, if David came, it simply would not have been the right occasion for Absalom's revenge.
1. Absalom's hatred was perfectly patient
 2. Man's evil is his more natural character

2 Sam 13:26 And Absalom said, "But won't you let my brother Amnon go with us?"

And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?"

- T. Having presumably removed possible suspicion, Absalom gambles a bit with a specific request for Amnon
1. Amnon was the oldest, so perhaps the request had the affect of an honorary presence on the king's behalf
 2. But David, still harboring anger towards Amnon, wonders why he should be so honored
 - a. We assume that Absalom's deadpan interactions with Amnon had removed suspicion of harmful intent
 - b. And it had been two years

2 Sam 13:27 But Absalom kept pressing him, so he sent

Amnon with him and all of the king's sons.

- U. Absalom doesn't answer the question, but his continued pressure is to good effect. David relents and sends all his sons.
1. Probably wishing to deflect any undo honor from Amnon
 2. But possibly having an intuition that Absalom and Amnon alone might spark ill will

Kid-speak: Absalom got David to send all of his 19 sons to Absalom's party. Now Absalom knows he can kill Amnon.

2 Sam 13:28 And Absalom commanded his young men, saying, "Now watch when Amnon's heart is glad with wine, and I will say to you, 'Strike Amnon', and you will kill him.

Do not fear. Is it not I myself commanding you? Steady yourselves, and be sons of valor."

V. Absalom has a good grasp of **command**

1. Joshua had also said, "I have command you," Josh 8:8, as well as "Don't fear," 10:25 (25x total)
2. David had used the phrase "and be sons of valor" to the men of Jabesh Gilead who had rescued Saul's body, 2 Sam 2:7

W. Absalom has developed rapport with his servants, such that they would obey even this extreme order.

1. Perhaps he has hinted or told of his resentment towards Amnon. But the servants probably shared it naturally.
2. His servants are trained men, one of their duties being bodyguards to royalty
3. Absalom takes full responsibility: "I myself commanding"
4. We'll see Absalom's gift of persuasion further, 15:1-6, to even deadlier effect

2 Sam 13:29 And Absalom's young men did to Amnon that which Absalom commanded. And all the king's sons rose, and they each mounted his mule and fled.

X. Doubtless a horrifying scene.

1. How could any of the other sons know that this was not a general assassination plot?
2. They each got a taste of their father's well-honed (from years

of evading Saul) skill of escape!

Kid-speak: Absalom had his own servants. He told them to kill Amnon, and they did.

3. Except Absalom. We'll follow his story next time.

Y. Consider Absalom's hatred.

1. The easy lesson here is: Don't hate.

2. But that's not the full Biblical perspective.

Z. God certainly hates, Ps 5:5; Prov 6:16, 19; 13:5; Mal 1:3

1. Including those who purportedly worship Him, Hos 9:15 (qualified by Lev 26:44); Isa 1:14

2. But God is uniquely qualified with unbiased hatred of evil, Rom 2:2

Φ. *We* are commanded to hate:

1. To hate **evil**, Ps 97:10; 119:128, 163; Prov 8:13; Amos 5:15

2. And, yes, even, in a qualified sense, evildoers, Ps 139:21-22; 31:6; 119:113

3. Remembering, of course, that Jesus tells us to **love** our enemies, Matt 5:44.

Ξ. Perhaps we're being told to love *our* enemies and hate *God's* enemies

1. And when they're the same person, to do both

2. But each has its own domain

Ψ. God's hatred of those who love and embrace evil and who harm the just will eventually have *eternal* expression in the Lake of Fire

Ω. Partly for this very reason (Prov 24:29; Rom 12:19), for those in Christ, general hatred is in our past, Titus 3:3

1. Even when we are justly indignant, it has a timer, Eph 4:25-27

2. We cannot be like Absalom, ruled by hate, 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9

3. Hating our *own* sin will 'spend' that emotion in its proper sphere, Col 3:5, Job 42:6, leaving comparatively little for the sphere mentioned above (III.Φ.2.)

IV. How does this relate to Christ?

Absalom hated evil, but not like Christ. He didn't speak or think in terms of God's justice, only satisfying his own hatred. Christ as King will execute just vengeance.

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) Don’t let infirmity of soul fester into hate.

VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): *What have I done wrong? How have I lost righteousness?*

Upon whom are my grudges keeping me from praying their blessing from God? Matt 5:44.

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”): *How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?*

I will not let unforgiveness rule my soul.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: *How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?* Lord, I commit to daily emptying the ‘prison’ in which I hold prisoners of ill will. “Forgive us (me), just as we (I)...”

Wrap-up: The Jews had taken the verses we considered in III.Φ.2. and come up with this summary: “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy,” Matt 5:43. That was not a legitimate summary. (Is our summary in III. Ξ. correct?) Jesus corrected it, giving, as in the other five instances in Matt 5 (“You have heard...”), the **original** Old Testament meaning. The Scribes and Pharisees had left out critical data in their formulation, e.g., Prov 24:29

It’s life-or-death- whether we have and follow the correct operating procedures, Matt 5:21-26. The first OT misinterpretation Jesus corrected makes exactly that point, just that seriously.

We can’t give ‘extra’ to God to get an exemption from this. If our case against someone is just and should not be dismissed, we must resolve it. We cannot hide hatred and expect the Spirit’s fruit of peace to rule us, nor expect the deeds connected to peace, Jms 3:18.