

 General Church Education



Absalom's Treason

2 Samuel 15:1-15

Lesson 29

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is Our King

For ages 10-11

Absalom's Treason

2 Samuel 15:1-15

Teacher Background

David's third son, Absalom, was a handsome and ambitious man. He spent three years in exile after arranging the murder of his brother Amnon and then David asked him to return to Israel. Absalom aspired to become the king and started campaigning for kingship by undermining David's authority. He stole the hearts of the nation by promising justice to those who complained. After gaining popularity he tricked David into letting him go to Hebron and from there sent a message throughout the land claiming to be king. On hearing this news David, his family, and his faithful supporters fled Jerusalem and went into the wilderness.

Absalom's treachery was wrong on many levels. He betrayed his father, lied about his activities, created a false impression to gain power, and declared himself king even though he had not been chosen by the Lord. These actions were not subject to love of the Lord and love of the neighbor but stemmed from love of self and love of the world. Absalom was disrespectful of his father's position. He was willing to undermine his family and showed no desire to follow the Lord.

Focus Points

- King David's handsome and ambitious son Absalom planned to overthrow his father.
- Absalom undermined David's authority to make himself popular.
- Absalom tricked David, went to Hebron and declared himself king, forcing David to flee.

Readings from the Writings

"A person is in a state of self-love when in his thoughts and deeds he does not pay regard to the neighbor, so not to the public, much less the Lord, but only to himself and his own people; and consequently when he does everything for his own sake or for the sake of his people. If he does something for the sake of the public, it is only for show; and if he does it for his neighbor's sake, it is to win his favor." *True Christian Religion* 400.2

"When Absalom had smitten his brother Amnon, and the tidings came to David that Absalom had smitten all the king's sons, David "rent his garments and lay on the earth, and all his servants stood by with their garments rent"; this also was done for the sake of representing that truths from the Divine were destroyed, these being signified in the internal sense by the king's sons. So when David fled before Absalom he was met by Hushai the Archite with his tunic rent; for in the Word by a king, especially by David, is represented Divine truth." *Arcana Coelestia* 4763.5

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

“The words of his mouth were smoother than butter,
But war was in his heart;
His words were softer than oil,
Yet they were drawn swords.” (Psalm 55:21)

Projects and Activities (see back of lesson for answers)

Absalom's Motives

Match something each person said with the person they were speaking to and their motive.

Absalom Treason Poster

Absalom committed a serious crime called treason. Treason means betraying your country. Create a treason poster about Absalom. It will look like a “wanted” poster.

Additional Project and Activity Choices

Admirable Qualities

Some people admired Absalom's good looks and promises. But many of the things he did were wrong. Think about qualities you admire in people. Are they outward signs, like good looks, or inward qualities, like friendship? Choose five people you admire. Write their name on a star and write a quality you admire about them underneath.

Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-admirable-qualities-2samuel15.pdf>

Discussion: Speaking about Others

Absalom spoke badly of David behind his back. Discuss the effects of talking behind someone's back. How can this hurt others? How can it hurt you? What can you do if someone starts doing this when you are talking to them? What might do to avoid this situation, or to avoid adding to the conversation?

Absalom's Treason

2 Samuel 15:1-15

Vocabulary

exile—to send someone away from their country

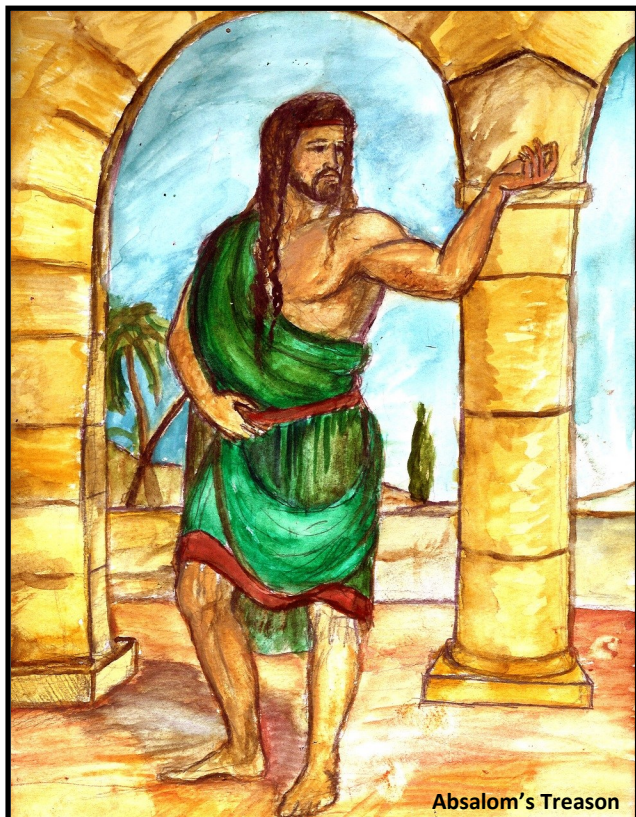
treason—crime of betraying your country, especially to overthrow the ruler

betrayed—to be disloyal to someone or give information to an enemy

David was a successful king for as long as he obeyed the Lord. But once David disobeyed the Lord's commandments he had many troubles, especially with his sons.

David let his sons become involved in great evils and did nothing to stop them. He did not punish Amnon when he did something terrible. And when Absalom murdered his brother and ran away David did not try to bring him to justice. In fact, he mourned for Absalom and eventually sent for him to come home.

Fathers who love their children do not let them get away with doing wrong. They teach them what is right and good, and even punish them so that they turn away from their harmful behavior. They know that protecting their children from the consequences of bad behavior will not help them to become good people.



Absalom Wants to be King

Absalom was David's third son. He was very handsome.

"Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his feet to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." (2 Samuel 14:25)

Absalom wanted to become king of Israel and was willing to overthrow his father to get the throne. He began to look for ways to become more powerful. First, he collected chariots and horses, and found fifty men to run in front of him as he traveled through the country. Next, he worked on weakening people's trust in their king, and on making himself more popular.

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In those days, settling disagreements was part of a king's responsibilities. However, Absalom stood at the city gate early each day and when anyone came to bring their problem to the king, he would call out to them in a friendly voice. He would tell them that David didn't care enough to provide judges to help them, which was not true. Absalom wanted people to think that king David would not serve them justly. Then he told them that if he was in charge things would be different. He would make sure that they would get justice. Gradually, he stole the love and loyalty of Israel from his father David.

Absalom's Treason

After carefully preparing his plan, Absalom was ready to seize the throne. It is hard to imagine a son acting with so much deceit, especially towards his father.

To carry out his plan, he would go to Hebron, the southern city that was David's old capital city when he was king of Judah and before he moved to Jerusalem.

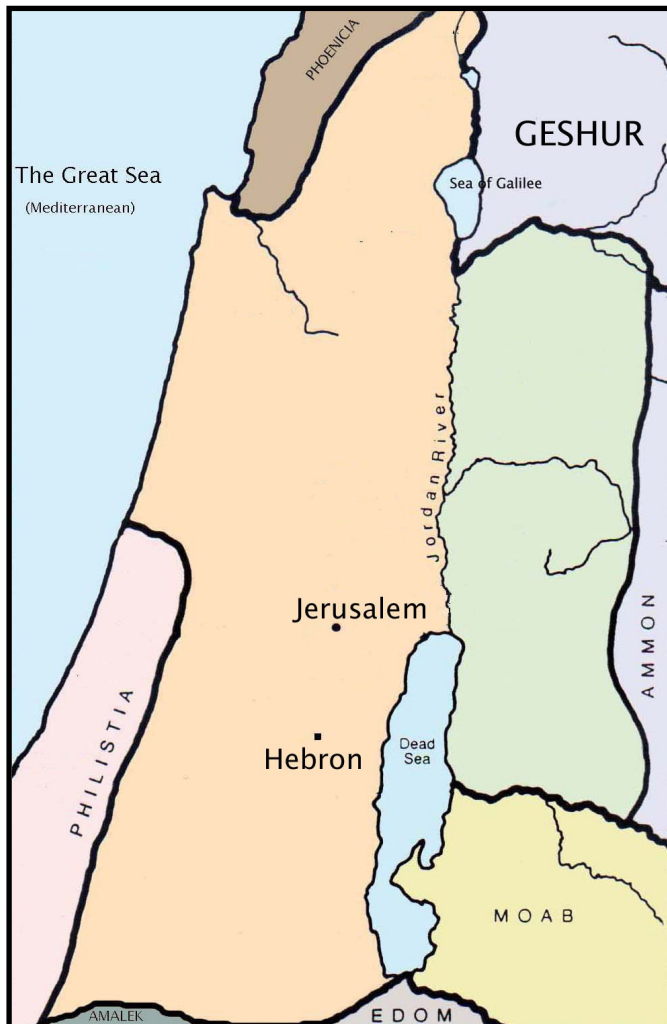
Absalom needed David's permission to leave Jerusalem and go to Hebron. He would have to

come up with a good reason so that David would not be suspicious. He even used the Lord's name as part of his deceitful plan. He told his father that while he was exiled in Geshur he had made a promise to the Lord. He said that if he was ever allowed to return to Israel he would go to Hebron to pay his vows to the Lord.

With David's permission, Absalom went to Hebron with 200 men. The men had no idea what Absalom was planning. However, far away from Jerusalem, Absalom was free to put his plan into action. He had himself made king. He sent messengers to all the tribes of Israel, with a signal to declare their allegiance to him as king instead of to David:

"As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'" (2 Samuel 15:10)

More and more people joined Absalom, including David's own counselor, Ahithophel.



David Escapes

David soon heard about Absalom's treason. Now that people were loyal to Absalom, David knew he was not safe in Jerusalem. Absalom and his men would soon arrive to take over the city.

So David, quickly left Jerusalem with his wives, his children, and his faithful followers. They crossed the Kidron River and went into the wilderness. David was in exile again, but this time he was not fleeing from Saul, he was fleeing from his son Absalom.



David Flees Jerusalem

Betrayal

Absalom betrayed his father in many ways. He was not grateful for his father welcoming him home. He did not acknowledge his father as the king. Instead, he used his charm to weaken David's authority and deceived people into turning away from him. At the same time, he made himself look better and wiser. Absalom lied about his father behind his back, and made it look as if he was a bad king. He did this because he wanted his father's power and position.

At times we may want power. We might want to be popular, to win a competition or to make others do what we want them to do. When we feel this strongly, we may forget that the Lord wants us to be kind and humble. We might look for ways to gain power like Absalom.

We might tell stories or lies to make others look bad. We might give gifts to make people like us. We might brag about things we can do and criticize what others can do. We might say hurtful things so people are afraid to do things with us. We might even do something dangerous to impress others.

This kind of behavior may make us popular for a short time, but it will not last. Most people stop being impressed by someone who tries to become popular by tricking others, being mean or doing careless things. These selfish actions can also lead to serious consequences such as punishment or injury.

True strength comes from trying to do our best and treating others with kindness and respect. While some people may choose not to include us, we can walk proudly knowing that we have not let dreams of power and popularity lead us astray.

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“The words of his mouth were smoother than butter,
But war was in his heart;
His words were softer than oil,
Yet they were drawn swords.” (Psalm 55:21)

Projects and Activities (answers are at the back of this lesson)

Choose one or two.

Absalom's Motives

Match something each person said with the person they were speaking to and their motive.

Absalom Treason Poster

Absalom committed a serious crime that is called treason. Treason means betraying your country. Create a treason poster about Absalom. It will look like a “wanted” poster.

Absalom's Motives

2 Samuel 15

Absalom said many treasonous things against his father, David. Each of the quotes below was spoken by him at some point in this story. Identify who he was speaking to and what motive he had when he was saying it.

1. When Absalom said:

“Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you.”

He was speaking to:

His motive was:

2. When Absalom said:

“Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice.”

He was speaking to:

His motive was:

3. When Absalom said:

“Please let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I made to the Lord.”

He was speaking to:

His motive was:

4. When Absalom said:

“As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, ‘Absalom reigns in Hebron!’”

He was speaking to:

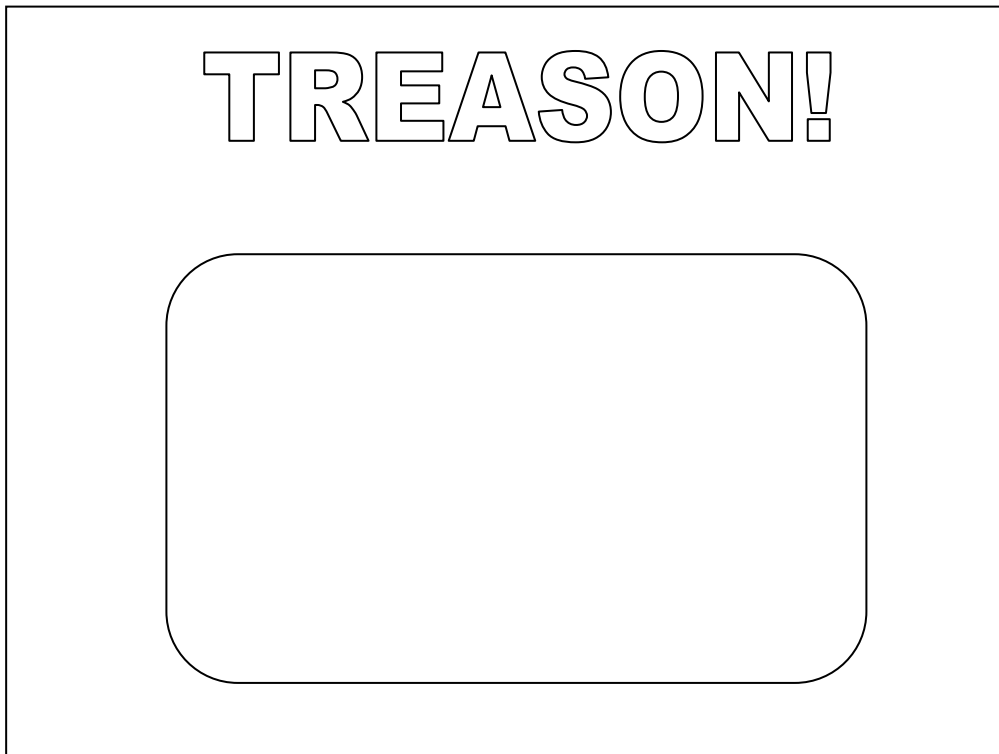
His motive was:

Absalom Treason Poster

2 Samuel 15

Absalom committed a serious crime called treason. How did Absalom betray his country?

Create a 'treason poster' for Absalom. Color the title, draw a picture of Absalom in the box, and write up his crime.



Name: _____

Last seen with: _____

Last known location: _____

Description of the crime:

Answers

Lesson 29

Absalom's Motives

1. any person who came to Jerusalem to seek justice; to make people dislike King David. 2. any person who came to Jerusalem to seek justice; to make people like him, 3. King David; become king of Israel. 4. spies; become king of Israel.