

Church of God Sunday School

ABSALOM'S REBELLION

2 Samuel 13:1 — 19:8

David had repented of his great sin before God, but the Prophet Nathan had told David that "the sword shall never depart from thine house" (2 Samuel 12:10). David's reaping for his sin would be great trouble in his own household, among his family. Oh, the terrible price of sin!

David's third son was named Absalom. Absalom was a handsome, charming young man, but he did not have a heart that wanted to do what was right. When one of Absalom's brothers sinned against another member of the family, Absalom waited two years to get his revenge.

Then, Absalom had a feast, and he invited all of his brothers. Absalom instructed his servants to kill his brother during the feast, which they did. When King David heard the news, he and all his servants "wept very sore."

Absalom fled to Geshur (*GESH-uhr*) and stayed there for three years. After that, King David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, but he refused to see his son for "two full years." Finally, Absalom came before his father, who kissed him. (We do not read of Absalom asking for forgiveness nor saying that he was sorry.)

Absalom began to think of how it would be if he were king instead of his father. He got up early in the morning and stood at the city gates. There he spoke with the people who were bringing their problems to King David. Absalom told the people if he were the king, he would make sure that they had justice! In so doing, Absalom "stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

Time passed, and Absalom continued working against the king, his father. David knew nothing of this. So, when Absalom asked to travel to Hebron "to pay my vow," David told him to "Go in peace." Absalom then sent spies to all of Israel, saying, "As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron."

When David heard that the "hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom," he, his servants, and his household fled from the city. What a sad time this must have been for David! His own son was trying to steal the kingdom and take David's life. Surely, David



must have remembered the words of Nathan, but he could never have imagined trouble such as this.

David and all the people that were with him walked with their heads covered and barefoot (signs of mourning), "weeping as they went." This was a sad day for Israel!

When Absalom and his men reached Jerusalem, they found one of David's trusted advisors, Hushai (*HOO-shi*), had stayed behind. (Absalom did not know that David asked Hushai to give Absalom advice that would actually help David.) Hushai spoke against the advice of Absalom's counselors, trying to give David more time to escape.

When Absalom took Hushai's advice, Hushai sent two messengers to tell David. The messengers were seen, but when Absalom's soldiers came to look for them, they could not find them. The messengers were hiding in a well, which was covered with a cloth and ground corn. Once the soldiers returned to the city, the messengers safely fled to King David.

Absalom and his men began to pursue David. Soon a battle would take place. David was worried about his son. Even though Absalom had treated his father terribly, David begged his captains to "Deal gently for my sake with the young man." David's servants would not let their king go with them to fight, so he stayed behind, waiting at the gate of the city.

"So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim [*EE-free-uhm*]." Twenty thousand men died that day. As Absalom was riding a mule through the woods, his head caught in the branches of an oak tree. The mule

ran away, and Absalom was left hanging from the tree.

When word of this came to Joab (the chief captain of David's army), Joab asked the man why he had not killed Absalom. But "all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge [instructions] concerning Absalom." This man would not kill Absalom because of David's words.

However, Joab did not heed the words of King David. He took three darts and "thrust them through the heart of Absalom," killing him. Joab and his armorbearers threw Absalom's body into a big hole and covered it with many stones. Then Joab blew the trumpet so that the people would not chase Absalom's men any longer.

King David knew nothing about this as he waited between the city's two gates. The watchman told David that two messengers were running toward the city. The first messenger told David, "All is well," but he did not speak of Absalom. David told him to stand aside.

Then David asked the second messenger, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The messenger tried to break the bad news gently to the king, saying that it would be well if all the king's enemies were as "that young man is."

David knew what that meant—Absalom was dead! He went up into his chamber, which was over the gate, and wept, saying, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" There was no joy that day. The people could see the great grief of their king.

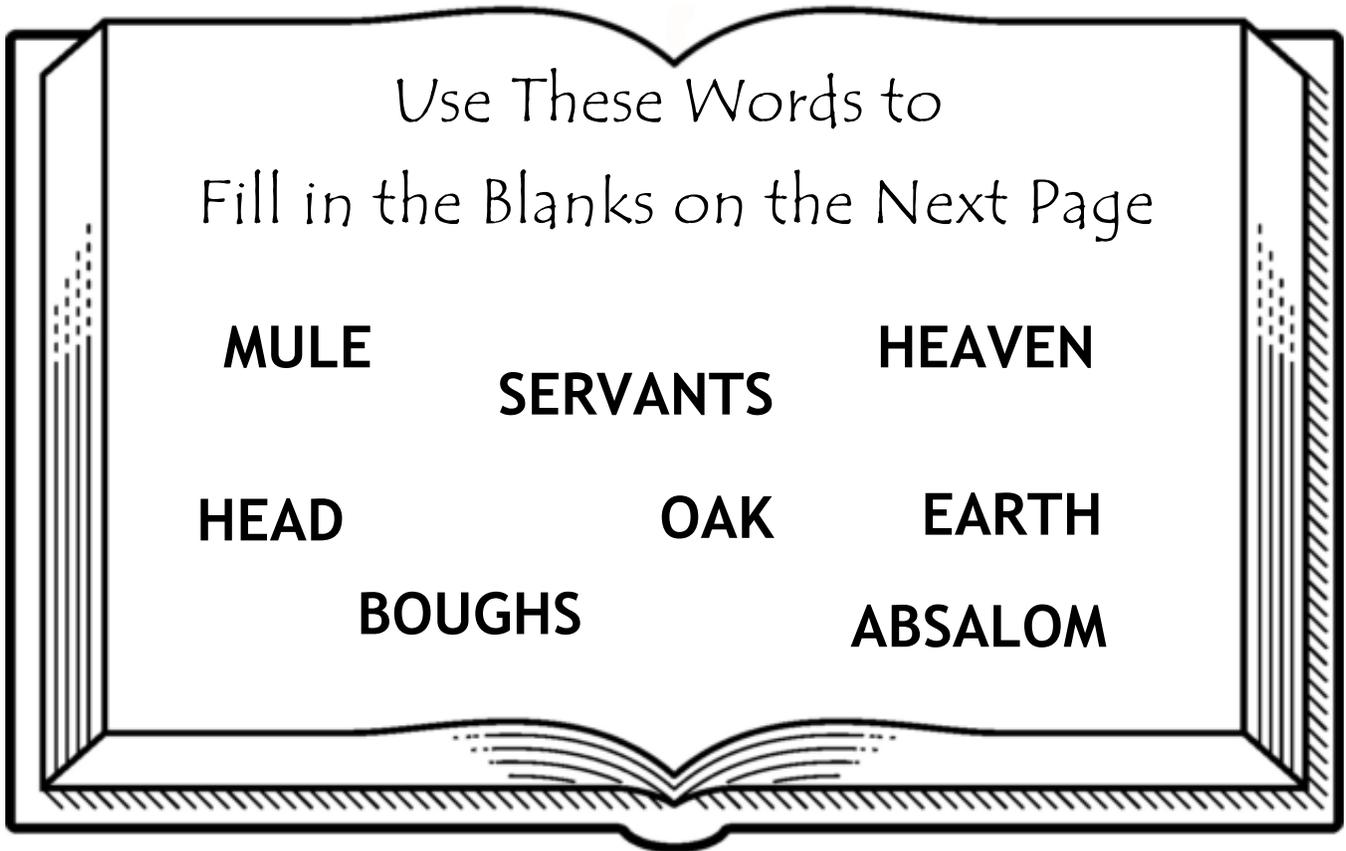
Finally, Joab went to the king and told him that his people would think he loved his enemies more than he loved them. He told David it was important that he speak to his loyal, brave servants. They needed to see a strong leader. David rose up and sat at the gate. "And all the people came before the king."

Soon David and all his servants returned to Jerusalem again to live. David's life was spared, but he had lost his son; and twenty thousand men were dead because of Absalom's rebellion! Sin costs a high price! Truly the sword had come to David's house.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee . . ."*

—2 Samuel 18:33  
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2 Samuel 18:9



"And Absalom met the _____

_____ of David. And _____



_____ rode upon a mule,

and the mule went under the thick _____



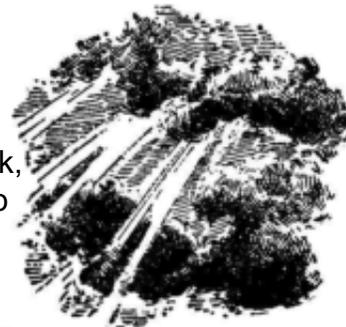
_____ of a great _____



_____ and his _____



_____ caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the _____



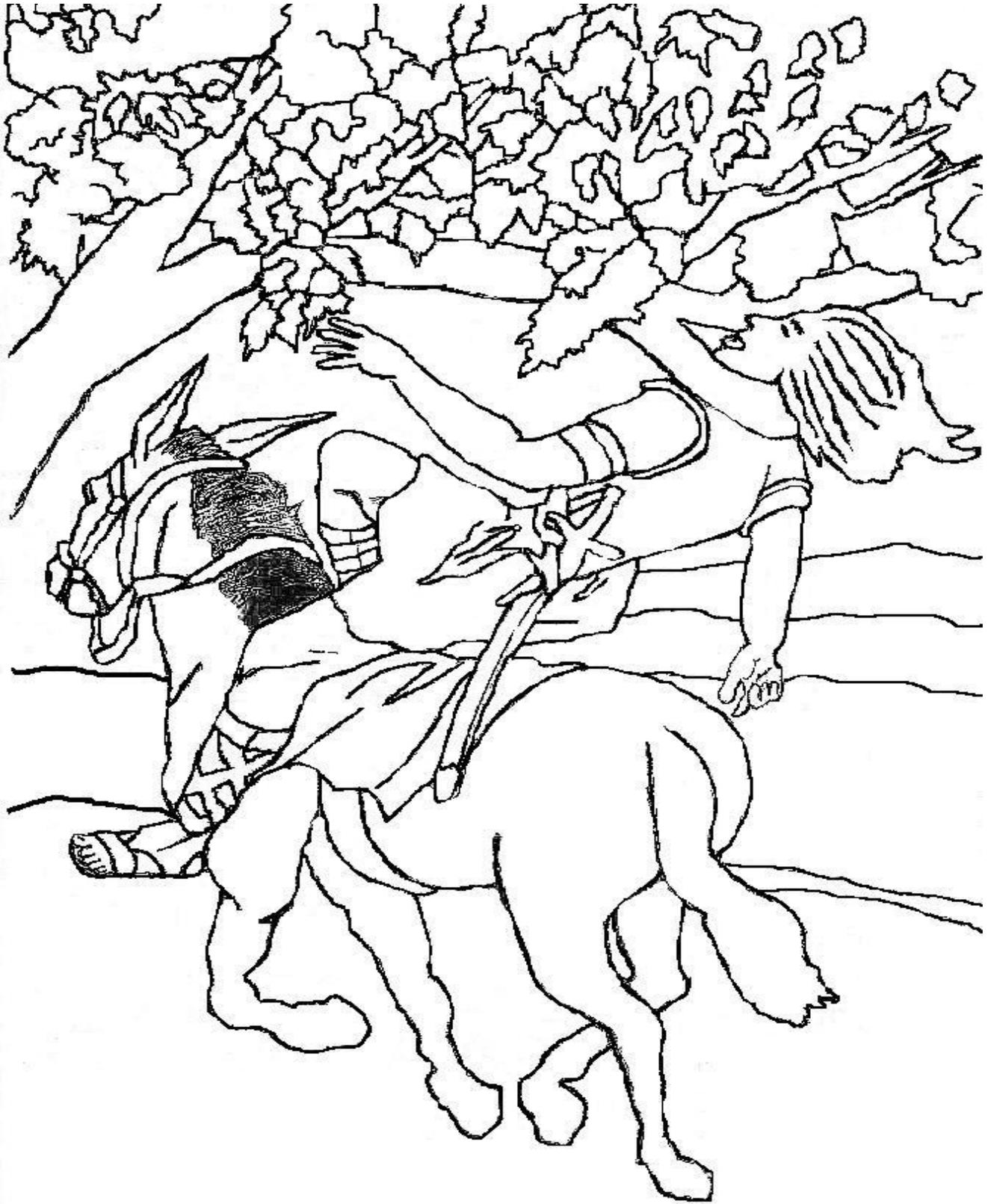
_____ and the _____



_____ and the _____



_____ that was under him went away."



Absalom Is Caught in the Oak Tree