

Lie Down and Sleep

They were hungry and thirsty; weary from a narrow and frightening escape. Having left the comfort of their homes in Jerusalem the household of King David, many friends, and an army crossed the Kidron brook east of the city and set up camp in a wilderness area somewhere north of the Dead Sea. Absalom, David's son, was in pursuit of David and the throne of Israel.

Absalom's hatred was originally aimed at his half-brother Amnon who had fallen in love with Tamar the beautiful sister of Absalom. Tamar refused Amnon knowing that his intentions were sinful. Amnon raped Tamar and then in a fit of anger sent her away. Tamar confided in her brother Absalom but he encouraged her to be quiet about the matter. He had nothing to say to Amnon, good or bad.

Two years later Absalom saw an opportunity to resolve his hatred. He invited all his brothers together for a celebration during the shearing of the sheep. During the party, when everyone was *merry* with wine, Absalom gave the command and his men killed Amnon. Absalom ran to the land of Geshur where his mother's father was king. There he stayed three years.

David mourned daily for Amnon, his firstborn son until Joab, the commander of David's army, humbly requested that David send for Absalom. However, upon Absalom's arrival David refused to see him face-to-face.

Having no interaction with his father Absalom sat at the entrance of Jerusalem and greeted people as they came to the city. He assured everyone that he would render justice if only he had the authority to judge their complaint. He endeared himself to all of Israel, but at the same time he was calculating a secret plan to overthrow King David.

Absalom had had many reasons to be angry with his father. However, his anger grew into hatred so that he wanted to kill David and assume the throne of Israel.

However, no evil plan is without fault and a messenger informed King David that "the hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." David understood and immediately evacuated his family, close friends, and his loyal army. While fleeing from Absalom he wrote the third Psalm which begins:

**O Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him." (Psalm 3:1-2)**

David had victoriously faced the giant, Goliath; but now it was his own son. How could he fight his own son? With Absalom enthroned what would be the fate of Israel? What could he have done or said to bring about a better result? Before going into battle he told his men to deal gently with Absalom. Could they follow his command? Would they?

David: deposed king; one son lost to death, one son lost in life; leader of family and friends, leader of an army, leader of a nation; chosen by God.

What an enormous burden weighed on David's shoulders. Yet David stands as a tremendous example of dependence and confidence in God:

I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. (v 5)

**You are a shield around me, O Lord (v3)
From the Lord comes deliverance. (v 8)**

David *knew* that his God was greater than his problems. Even with impossible circumstances he was able to prepare a place of rest and peacefully **lie down and sleep.**

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