

Demise of the Iconoclasts; A Jocular Review, 2 Samuel 13:20-29

Ahithophel's counsel to Absalom during the revolution was undermined by David's CIA agent, Hushai the Archite. Realizing that the *coup d'état* would fail as a result, Ahithophel's problem-solving device was suicide.

2 Samuel 17:23 - When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and arose and went to his home, to his city, and set his house in order, and strangled himself.

Absalom's vanity contributed to his undoing during the Battle of Ephraim Forest. In that battle over 20,000 men in his revolutionary forces were killed. As Absalom rode under a large oak, his hair got caught in its branches leaving him dangling helplessly.

2 Samuel 18:9 - Absalom was riding on his mule and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. And his head caught fast in the oak so he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going.

Here is an excellent reason why neither women nor hippies should be in military academies, much less warfare—in addition to sanitation and grooming problems, long hair can get you killed in a number of ways. We see one example here.

2 Samuel 18:9 is translated accurately when it says Absalom caught his “*head*” in the branches, but his hair was a contributing factor. We know this from:

2 Samuel 14:25 - Now in all Israel was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him.

2 Samuel 14:26 - And when he cut the hair of his head (and it was at the end of every year that he cut it, for it was heavy on him so he cut it), he weighed the hair on his head at 200 shekels by the king's weight.

32. Later Joab, the commanding general of David's army, discovered Absalom all caught up in his hairy set of circumstances and summarily ran him through.

2 Samuel 18:14 - (Joab) took three spears in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

33. The strain of three spears in his chest turned out to be more than Absalom could bear. His demise was punctuated by an inglorious burial in an unmarked grave in the depths of Ephraim Forest.

2 Samuel 18:17 - They took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and erected over him a very great heap of stones.

34. And thus ended the Absalom/Ahithophel Revolution and the end of two fatal forays into the chaos of rattlesnakes, mustangs, and mules, better known as Iconoclastic Arrogance.

E. A Jocular Review, 2 Samuel 13:20–29

In what will hopefully be a humorous conclusion to our study of Iconoclastic arrogance, let's compare our cast of characters in 2 Samuel with the beasts we encountered on the Santa Fé Trail.

Our study emerged from Josiah Gregg's description of a skirmish involving several hundred rattlesnakes, a mustang colt, and two mules which was ultimately quieted by the execution of the mustang by a wagoner.

In the historical account we have just studied, who are the rattlesnakes, who is the mustang, and who are the two mules?

The "*rattlesnakes*" are the unidentified citizens of Israel who have developed a mental attitude of hatred for their nation Israel and disrespect for their leader David. David's failure at properly adjudicating the rape of Tamar by Amnon ignites a sequence of events that causes the identity of these rattlesnakes to later become obvious as revolutionaries.

Gregg's "*loose stock*" refer to all the women of Israel who are the potential victims of undisciplined and licentious men.

The "*wild mustang colt*" is obviously Amnon who selects his half-sister Tamar as his target.

The "*first mule*" is Israeli justice which comes to the defense of Tamar in the person of Absalom who argues her case before David.

The "*second mule*" is David who unexpectedly ignores the wrongs of the mustang and in effect attacks the system of justice assigned to him.

The "*wagoner*" who self-righteously seeks to restore order to the realm is Absalom who ordered the assassination of the wild mustang, Amnon.

The wagoner, Absalom, eliminated the culprit, avenged his sister Tamar, and, in his mind, restored justice to Israel. With Amnon out of the way he is now able to focus his attention on the second mule who sided with the mustang, in this case David. He goes into league with the rattlesnakes in order to destroy the second mule, David. This is the Absalom/Ahithophel Revolution.

In the end the second mule, who is David, is the lone survivor, but not without a reckoning for his miscarriages of justice. From this and other applications of installment discipline, David learns his lesson and becomes the greatest king in all of Jewish history.

Bork, Robert H. "The Vertical Invasion of the Barbarians." In *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, 21-25 passim. New York: Regan Books, 1996.