

## A MEMORIAL

The ancient world was well-acquainted with memorials. Dozens of them are recorded in the Old Testament. One of the strangest was a stone pillar called “Absalom’s Monument.” You remember Absalom, don’t you? The son of King David – vain, ambitious, conniving Absalom, who was so greedy for power, he rebelled against his own father – instigated a civil war – and died a terrible death.

How in the world did a scoundrel like Absalom get a memorial? Easy – he built it himself!

2 Samuel 18:18

“During his lifetime Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it to himself, for he thought, ‘I have no son to carry on the memory of my name. He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom’s Monument to this day.’”

Like so much else in his life, Absalom’s Monument was an act of extreme self-centeredness. Yet his vain-glorious action backfired. Oh, he was remembered, all right – but not in the way he imagined. The original monument didn’t survive, but hundreds of years later a pillar outside Jerusalem came to be known as “Absalom’s Monument.” Residents of Jerusalem would bring their unruly children to the site to teach them what became of a rebellious son. And for centuries it was the custom among passersby – first Jews, then Christians, and later even Muslims – to throw stones at the monument to express their contempt.

Years after Absalom’s death, his half-brother Solomon wrote in Proverbs 10:7 “The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot.”

Unlike wicked Absalom, Jesus was completely unselfish and genuinely worthy of our praise. So today, as we participate in a memorial meal to remember him (1 Corinthians 11:23b-25), we are indeed blessed, because these simple elements remind us just how much Jesus loves us – and just how grateful we are to have the salvation his sacrifice bestows.

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