

“And the king said, ‘Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence.’ So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king’s presence” (2 Samuel 14:24).

Here we see a partial reconciliation between Absalom and David. David’s guilty son is allowed to return to the Jerusalem but not actually appear in his father’s presence.

God does not deal that way with sinners who are reconciled through the blood of Christ. Jesus said to the thief on the cross, “I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.” He did not say “Today you can begin your stint in purgatory to atone for your sins,” or “You need to get down from the cross and get baptized into a church so you can work on getting into heaven.”

No, our reconciliation with God is immediate, complete, and irreversible. We are not brought partway to God then

told to wait at home like Absalom. “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and **raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places** in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:4-6).

Poor Absalom, waiting impatiently for the summons to the king’s palace. Not us. “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us ... let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Notes

14:11 See Numbers 35 for more on the “avenger of blood.”

Questions for study and discussion:

1. How is Joab a picture of Christ in this passage? In what ways does he come short?
2. Joab sends a woman to David with a fictitious tale to get what he want from David. What does this remind us of?
3. What does verse 14 mean?

4. The woman addresses David with flattering words that come close to making him divine. How does David resemble God in this passage?
5. What do we learn about justice and mercy from this chapter?
6. Does Joab act selflessly or in his own interest?
7. Does David receive Absalom like a subject or like a son? How does God receive us?