

I. Introduction.

II. Absalom returns to Jerusalem – though trickery. 14:1-33

A. Joab Manipulates David to allow Absalom to return. v. 1-20

1. Why does Joab intervene on behalf of Absalom? v. 1
2. Joab's plan is very shrewd. v. 2-3 Ps. 68:5
3. Joab's use of a parable is similar to Nathan's story of the ewe lamb, but with some important differences. 12:1-7
 - a. Gaining David's sympathy through a story.
 - b. Calling upon David to bring justice to the oppressed.
 - c. Maneuvering David into pronouncing a verdict on himself before declaring that "he is the man" under judgment. 12:7 14:13
 - d. What are the differences?
4. The woman seeks mercy for her son who accidentally killed his brother. v. 4-7
5. David is persuaded to pronounce the verdict she sought. v. 8-11
6. Then the woman springs the trap and reveals her real purpose. v. 12-14
 - a. She accuses David harming God's people by keeping Absalom away.
 - b. "If you can show mercy to my banished one, who is unknown to you, why won't you show the same mercy to your banished son?"
 - c. "Since God finds a way to mercifully bring back the banished, so can you."
7. She makes her final flattering appeal to King David. v. 15-17,19b-20 Pr. 29:5
8. David discerns the hand of Joab in seeking the restoration of Absalom. v. 18-19b

B. Absalom manipulates Joab to persuade David to receive Absalom. v. 21-33

1. David allows Absalom to return to Jerusalem. v. 21-23
2. Why does David refuse to receive Absalom? v. 24
3. Why are we told here about Absalom's good looks? v. 25-27 I Ki. 16:12 17:42
4. Absalom resorts to arson (terrorism) to get Joab's attention. v. 28-31 Judg. 15:3ff
5. Absalom forces the issue. v. 32 I Sa. 20:8
6. Why was Absalom so eager to be received by David? v. 33

C. Application:

1. Learn from Absalom who is becoming a monster.
2. Learn from David who has become a weak, indecisive and indulgent father.
I Sam. 2:29 I Kings 1:6 Lu. 14:26

III. Absalom conspires to steal the throne from David – treachery and treason. 15:1-12

A. Absalom manipulates the people and steals their hearts. v. 1-6

1. He creates the image of the king the people want. v. 1 14:25f I Sa. 8:11 I Ki. 1:5
2. He acts like a king and undermines David's authority. v. 2-4 Pr. 31:9
3. He gains the affection of the people through flattery. v. 5-6 Pr. 29:5 26:28
4. Doesn't David see what Absalom is up to? I Ki. 1:6

B. Absalom manipulates the masses to acknowledge him as king. v. 7-12

1. Absalom is very shrewd, taking his time. v. 7a
2. Absalom's plot begins with the pretext of religion. v. 7-9
3. Absalom's agents dispersed throughout the land proclaim that he is king. v. 10
I Ki. 1:34,39 II Ki. 11:14
4. Absalom brings two hundred (unsuspecting) noblemen with him. v. 11

5. Absalom enlists the wisest man to be his counselor. v. 12a 11:3 23:34
6. Absalom's conspiracy continues to grow stronger. v. 12b
7. His determination to seize the throne means that he has resolved to kill his father and any other potential heirs. I Sam. 24,26

C. Application:

1. Politics hasn't changed much in three thousand years.
2. This also applies to church politics. II Tim. 4:3-4 II Pe. 2:1ff Acts 20:28ff
3. We, too, may experience betrayal. Don't put your ultimate trust in men. Jer. 17:5-8 I Pe. 4:12 II Tim. 4:16-17
4. Beware of those who would flatter you. Pr. 29:5
5. Though the wicked may seem to prosper for a season, the LORD has ordained their end – destruction. Ps. 73

IV. Conclusion: Where is Christ in this passage?

A. God had a dilemma similar to that of David. 14:14

1. The woman, like Caiphas, may have said more than she knew. 14:14 John 11:50
2. Mankind, like Absalom, was banished from God's presence because of sin. Gen. 3 Ro. 3:23 Eph. 2:12
3. Because our heavenly Father loves us, He seeks to bring us back to Himself.
4. Because He is a righteous King, justice must be satisfied. Ro. 3:26
5. God succeeds where David failed.
 - a. In His love He brings us back to His holy presence without compromising His justice – the cross of Christ. I Pe. 3:18 II Co. 5:21 Eph. 2:13
 - b. He not only forgives us, He changes our very nature so that we can have joyous fellowship with Him. II Co. 5:17 Rom. 6:1ff
6. We now have uninterrupted access to Him. Eph. 2:18 3:12 Heb. 7:25 10:22
7. He is our dwelling place. Ps. 90:1 23:6
8. We who were once banished are invited to His Supper. Luke 22:19
9. The LORD invites sinners to come home.

B. Jesus went through what David endured. Ps. 41:9 Mt. 26:23 John 1:11 13:18

C. Jesus is more beautiful than Absalom. Song of Solomon 5:10

D. Declare that He is King. 15:10 Isa. 52:7ff

Discussion questions

1. How is the woman's story like Nathan's story of the ewe lamb?
What are the differences?
2. What have we learned about Absalom's character?
3. What should we learn from David's parenting failure?
4. How did Absalom steal the hearts of the people of Israel?
How does the same thing happen today in the realms of politics and the church?
5. How is religion misused by people seeking power?
6. How is David's situation like that of Christ?
7. How should we deal with situations in which others betray us?
8. How might David's dilemma (described in 14:14) point to how God brings home His banished ones through redemption?