

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

Notes for 1 Feb

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Read: [2 Samuel 14](#)

Main Personalities

DAVID: King, father, judge, leader.

JOAB: Facilitator, counsellor.

TEKOA: Actress, courageous adviser.

ABSALOM: Ambitious, sulking hulk, son of David.

This is a lengthy passage with all sorts of complex human emotions surfacing. However, we may be able to identify with some of these complexities in our own lives.

Themes to explore:

1. Arts.

Tekoa performed a one woman play for David to drive home a point.

- Do we underrate the power of the 'Arts' to convey deep spiritual meaning?
- Does the written word, preaching from the pulpit, or discussion in our sabbath school class, or on Virtual Vestry, limit what we can convey in terms of meaning and emotion of certain biblical passages?
- Verses 5 to 11: Can I ask you to read [John 8:1-11](#)? It's a very powerful story. Compare it with Rembrandt's painting shown here. Does the painting convey something extra that our reading of the passage is unable to do?



Rembrandt, ["The Woman Taken in Adultery"](#), National Gallery, London

2. Punishment.

A few weeks ago we explored the concept of '[forgiveness](#)'. Absalom was effectively banished, which considering his status and the culture of the time was a severe punishment. The threat of punishment makes us think before breaking the law.

- Is there a place for it? David, the father, made a judgement on Absalom because he murdered Amnon, the heir apparent. Discuss the problem with this?
- Why is it important to have an independent judiciary?

3. Forgiveness.

Consider our recent explorations of forgiveness. We didn't delve too deeply into its nature. Read verses 23, 24.

- Is there a problem with David's concept of forgiveness?
- Do you think forgiveness should be conditional?
- Absalom realised that the reconciliation with his father was nowhere near complete. He wanted Joab's help. Joab initially ignored his pleas. Why do you think Joab ignored him? However, he found an interesting way of grabbing his attention. What does this inform you about Absalom and his state of mind?

Discuss verse 33!