

The Gospel According to Joab – Trying to reconcile people to God, who have no change of heart.

There is a gospel being preached and promoted that attempts to bring people to a belief that they can be at peace with God without any change of mind and heart. This gospel only requires that people need to believe in the doctrine of Christ's blood for the atonement that will get them to heaven – that if they agree to the facts of Christ's death, burial and resurrection and say a prayer, or perform some other list of religious requirements, they will go free. This false gospel presents no need to deal with heart rebellion and selfish hatred of God's ways. Faith becomes a mere intellectual agreement. Repentance is extra credit, for those who want rewards in heaven. It is a gospel of lasciviousness / licentiousness – turning God's grace into a license for unrestrained lust (Jude 1:3-4; II Peter 2:17-22 cp. Titus 2:11-15; James 4:1-4).

The story of David, Absalom, and Joab provides an illustration of this dilemma. See II Samuel 13 – 18.

Background Story – II Samuel 13

David's son, Amnon, thought that he loved his half-sister Tamar. He violated her and then forsook her. David heard of it, was angry, but did nothing. Tamar's full brother, Absalom, plotted revenge for two years, then killed Amnon. Afterwards, Absalom fled the country.

Absalom Returns Three years later – II Samuel 14

After three years, David's chief general, Joab, noticed that David, after grieving for Amnon, was now grieving the absence of his son, Absalom. Joab, using deception, convinced David to allow Absalom to come back without any punishment for his crime. It is in these efforts of Joab that we want to point out a gospel truth: true reconciliation requires the repentance (i.e. change of mind and heart) of the guilty offender. Joab's tactics resemble the false gospels that are preached and believed today.

A Faulty Motive & Method – Joab was not led by God or by the King. He used his own wits and decided to do this on his own. Joab prepared a false messenger and David was tricked into allowing his son Absalom to return to the kingdom (**II Samuel 14:1-23**).

See the contrast, when God sent a true messenger to tell a heart-moving story to David (II Samuel 12:1-14). This produced repentance! But Absalom did not repent and was not required to repent. Today, many false gospels tell people that they can "believe" without any attitude change towards sin. They are promised that, by their "faith," all their sins will be forgiven, and they will go to heaven. This is not God's message from His Word.

A Fake Reunion – Absalom returned, but David refused to see him. Absalom seemed to prosper for two years and became very popular (**II Samuel 14:24-28**). Through false gospels, many people appear to have a place in God's kingdom. Yet, they have no real fellowship with the Lord. At the same time, they may be very talented, popular, and appear to be productive people in the church.

A Forced Public Relations Scheme – Absalom then asserted himself and pressured Joab to get an audience with David (**II Samuel 14:29-33**). Absalom could not further his social status without a public appearance of David's approval. It resembled Saul's shallow desire for public appearances (I Samuel 15:30-31 – *notice no repentance here, either!*). David kissing his son is much different than the kiss the prodigal son's father gave (Luke 15:20-24 cp. vs. 7,10 – *first repentance, then celebrating!*). How often have unregenerate, unreconciled people maneuvered themselves into places of prominence and position in the church?

A Full-scale Rebellion – Absalom now had the freedom needed to influence other people in the kingdom. He gradually worked at becoming increasingly more popular than David. It took 40 years, but Absalom staged an all-out rebellion against the king (**II Samuel 15:1-14**). It resulted in civil war and ultimately Absalom's death (**II Samuel 18:1-17**).

A false gospel brings people into the membership of the church, even into leadership, that have not repented, and are not reconciled to God. They are still rebels (Matthew 7:13-23). Left unchecked, they will cause division and scandal in the church. As David was cast out of his own city and palace, so false brethren can cause Jesus Christ to be outside of His own church, knocking to get in (Revelation 3:14-20). Well, did the apostle plead with us, “**...be reconciled to God**” (II Corinthians 5:20).

We therefore conclude that reconciliation provides the way for God and man to be friends. This means that God will not be hostile towards those who receive His Son. It also means that those who receive His Son will not be hostile towards God. They will seek to live an intimate, peaceful, harmonious relationship with God now, in this life, and look forward to experiencing a perfectly intimate, peaceful and harmonious relationship with God in eternity. See Romans 6:17-23.