

Recalling God's Banished

2 Sam. 13 tells of how Amnon, one of David's sons, raped Tamar, one of his half-sisters. Because of this, Tamar's brother Absalom hated Amnon and determined to kill him when the time was right. After 2 years, Absalom had a feast in which he invited Amnon, and he arranged to have some of his servants kill Amnon once he had drunk wine. Because of this, Absalom fled to Geshur for three years. Apparently David was content to ignore Absalom, and not press the issue, even being relieved to be rid of his rapist son Amnon. In chapter 14, Joab schemes to get David to recall Absalom, by sending a woman with a made-up story about two of her sons.

In 14:14 we see a very interesting thought, spoken by this woman.

2 Sam. 14:14 - "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him."

The first part of the verse describes how all men are mortal and die, never to be gathered up again (at least, until the resurrection). While not the point of this teaching, notice that this, along with Heb. 9:27, is a complete refutation of the idea of reincarnation.

"Neither doth God respect any person" refers to the universality of death – not even the rich can get out of it.

Sholom Aleichem, speaking of the poor people in Kasrilevka – "Their only comfort is that people die everywhere, even in Paris, and that no one can buy his way out. Even Rothschild himself, who is greater than royalty, has to get up and go when the angel of death beckons." (in the short story "The Inheritors")

Also from the movie Fiddler on the Roof – "If the rich could hire the poor to die for them, we, the poor, would make a good living!"

Ps. 49:6-10 – "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others."

Eccl. 8:8 – "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it."

But what we will concentrate on is the end of 2 Sam. 14:14, that God devises means to recall his banished to him.

Unregenerate Man is Living in a State of Banishment From God

This began in the very beginning, when Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden, and from the everyday, conscious presence of God. But it has continued through the ages, in that we are born in sin and spiritual death. There is no life in us before becoming Christians.

How Can Man be Justified Before God?

The predicament of mankind is stated in Job - "How should man be just with God?" (9:2, or "justified" in 25:4). We are born in spiritual death because we are all "in Adam". Even if we could somehow discount the guilt of this inherited sin, we have all added to our guilt through personal sin.

All men are guilty before God

Rom. 3:9-19 describes how we all, Jew and Gentile, and every individual, are guilty. 3:10 – "There is none righteous, no, not one."

Rom. 3:23 – "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

God will not simply ignore, or pass over sin.

To do so would be a violation of the justice of God.

Hab. 1:13 – "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"

Ex. 23:7 "... for I will not justify the wicked." That is to say, God will not simply pass over sin with a pat on the head, and ignore it. God is totally righteous, just, and holy, and nothing sinful can abide in his presence without judgment.

The Wages of Sin is Death

Rom. 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death” Death, both physical and spiritual, is the ultimate pronouncement of God’s just response to sin. We are born in sin, we die physically, and in the day of judgment, unredeemed men will experience the judgment of the Lake of Fire (Hell, Gehenna), which is called the “second death” (Rev. 21:14).

Confidence in the Law is Vain

3:20 – “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Gal. 3:21 – “Is the law against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” The law is not bad, but good. But men mistake its purpose – it was not given to save men, but to reveal our sin. No man has EVER kept the law perfectly, except for one, the man Christ Jesus.

Yet God has Devised a Means of Justification – the Son of God as a Pure and Holy Sacrifice

How can God maintain his righteousness and justice if he does not judge sinners? If he could just somehow ignore sin, then Christ died in vain. Remember 2 Sam. 14:14 says “...yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.” God has devised a means to forgive men our sins, that is completely consistent with his just and righteous nature.

From the beginning, men have looked in hope to this possibility.

Job 19:25-26 – “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

Ps. 49:15 – “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me.”

As a matter of fact, the whole OT system of sacrifices was meant to provide a means of forgiveness. Lev. 5:10 – “... the priest shall make an atonement for him for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.” But this forgiveness was in a sense conditional. Those OT sacrifices, if done properly and in good faith, were really looking forward to the perfect sacrifice to come, Christ on the cross as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” His death as the pure and spotless Lamb, the Son of God, was the fulfillment, or the ratification of all those animal sacrifices, and it was a sacrifice that was “once-for-all”, unlike the earlier sacrifices. Heb. 9:26-28

This is called “Substitutionary Atonement” – that we are justified before God on the basis of the price of sin (death) having been paid. Not by us, as deserved, but by the voluntary death of Christ on the cross to bear the penalty of our guilt. He is our Substitute.

Rom. 3:24-26 – “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [a satisfaction] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Rom. 5:1, 6-11 – we are justified by faith in his blood, have been saved from wrath, and now have peace with God through Christ.

Yet all the benefits of the cross are nothing to us if we do not respond to him.

Rom 10:9-10, 13 – “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

Jn. 1:12 – “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

This is the new birth spoken of in Jn. 3, 1 P. 1:23, and in Titus 3:5 (“regeneration”).