

2 Samuel 12b-13 Chapter Study

III. David's Troubles Chs. 11-20:22

A. The "Bathsheba Incident" Chs. 11-12

1. David commits adultery with Bathsheba 11:1-5
2. The conspiracy to murder Uriah 11:6-25
3. David marries Bathsheba 11:26-27
4. Nathan confronts David 12:1-14
5. The child dies 12:15-23

15-18

David had been such an emotional wreck during the infant's illness, they feared hearing of its death would send him over the edge & provoke him to commit suicide.

The prophet Nathan had warned David while God *forgave* him for his sin against Uriah & Bathsheba, there would still be massive *consequences* for what he'd done.

One of those consequences was the death of this child.

Not long after birth, it became ill. David prayed & pleaded for mercy.

He fasted & would have nothing to do with the normal affairs of life.

This went on for a week, then the child died.

Why did this child have to die? Why punish this poor innocent little one for the sin of its parents?

While God forgives us of the sin we confess, there are still *consequences* that *must be born*.

When we sin, we set in motion a series of results that fall like dominoes.

This child's death was a *consequence* of David's *sin* with Bathsheba.

David had to know he could not be *enriched* by sin.

Also, the child was conceived while Bathsheba was *still the wife of Uriah*.

Legally, the child's parentage would *always be questioned*.

Its place in terms of the throne would be a cause of unending trouble & intrigue.

It may also be that the child's death was a way for poor Uriah to be given some justice.

19-23

Even though Nathan had foretold the child's death, David didn't take a fatalistic stand toward its illness.

He knew God was gracious & might relent of the judgment He'd announced.

As long as there was a glimmer of hope, he held on. But there was no point in continuing to hope, pray, & fast when the opportunity for grace had passed.

David knew that while God is merciful; He's also righteous.

If his child was to be the object of justice instead of grace, he trusted God knew best, and would praise Him for *whatever* came.

David knew that there's life after death, and that one day, he would see his child again.

While David was *far from perfect*, as this whole sad tale makes abundantly clear, he does stand as one of the great heroes of faith.

As a man after God's heart, there's no doubt he'll be in heaven.

David knew that, and had confidence his child was already there.

This passage has given tremendous comfort to parents who've lost a young child.

Many years ago, while I was still a young pastor, I got a call to a home where an infant had just died of SIDS.

The parents weren't believers but were friends of members of our church.

I sat with them as they expressed their grief.

There's not much you can say at a time like that; you just go to be there & provide companionship.

Eventually, they got around to asking why & how this happened.

There was the typical anger at God that so often comes with a trial like that. I provided what counsel & comfort I could. Then the mother asked where he baby was.

My immediate reaction was to say that he was in heaven, but I stopped short & quickly reviewed on what basis I could say that. What was my scriptural authority for that answer.

My mind was a blank for a couple seconds, then this story & the end of v. 23 lit up in my memory.

I shared it with her and it brought her immense peace.

In that moment, sitting in that living room, I experienced the fulfillment of the promise Jesus made the disciples in John 14:26 – that the Holy Spirit would bring to our remembrance all God has said.

I'd not *memorized* 2 Sam 12, but I'd read it.

And when the need came, the Holy Spirit gave me the answer.

That taught me 2 important lessons –

- 1) I need to read the Bible, putting God's Word into my spirit so when I'm facing something – the Holy Spirit has the raw material to draw from.
- 2) Walking into that grieving home was a real stretch for me, way out of my comfort zone. I'd never dealt with that kind of thing before & walking in I felt so utterly unprepared. But God was faithful and gave the grace to bring that grieving mother & father a measure of comfort & peace.

Be diligent to install God's Word in your heart & mind so the Holy Spirit has something to recall to your memory.

Then step out in faith, trusting God will use you as you make yourself available to Him.

6. Solomon is born 12:24-25

24-25

David did his grieving *before* the child died, Bathsheba did it *after*.

They were now married & David consoled his wife by giving her special attention.

In the process of time she again conceived & gave birth to a son they named *Peace*; Solomon.

God made it clear through the prophet Nathan He loved this new son of

Bathsheba's, that he would be the one promised in ch.7 *who would inherit the*

throne.

God wanted David to know no more of Bathsheba's children would die.

Rather, God would establish Solomon & bless him abundantly.

To mark this, he was given the additional name, *Beloved of Yahweh* = Jedidiah. Bathsheba's first child couldn't survive because David couldn't prosper in his sin.

Solomon was God's blessing on David's whole-hearted repentance.

7. The conquest of Rabbah 12:26-31

26-28

David had sent Joab & the army out to conquer the Ammonites in ch. 11 while he stayed home & got into trouble with Bathsheba.

The siege of the Ammonite capital of Rabbah is almost over since they capture the city's water supply.

In just a few days it will fall & Joab doesn't want any question over who gets credit for the victory – so he calls for David lead the final assault.

Joab didn't want people heaping praise on him that might raise David's jealousy as it had years before with Saul's jealousy over David's military successes.

Joab's aware of David's spiritual slippage – how could he not after David included him in the conspiracy to murder Uriah.

So, seeing that David has strayed from God, & not knowing he's now repented & returned to the Lord, Joab takes measures to forestall David's jealousy by calling him to lead the final assault.

29-30

The fortune taken in the conquest of Rabbah was *staggering*.

A talent of gold was at *least* 80 lbs, so this was obviously not the everyday crown the king wore to signify his rule. This was a ceremonial crown worn only at special times to show the power & glory of the king.

31

The Ammonites became a huge forced labor work-force in Israel to produce the grand public work projects David had planned.

Of course, administrating such massive public works along with their labor pools would require a massive expansion in the size of the *government bureaucracy*, which would then need to be supported by *increased taxes*, which in their assessing & collecting would add even more to the size of government, requiring *more taxes* still.

It was of this very thing Samuel had warned Israel about decades before when they asked for a king.

The burden of too many taxes under David & Solomon will one day lead to *civil war* in Israel.

B. David's Troubled Family Chs. 13-14

1. Amnon rapes Tamar 13:1-22

1

Absalom & Tamar were David's children by his wife *Maacah*. (3:3)

Amnon was David's *firstborn* son by *Ahinoam*. (3:2)

Following in his father's footsteps, he was attracted to his gorgeous half-sister Tamar.

He thought he was deeply in love; but we'll see in a moment it was only a bad case of lust.

2

Well, yeah! It would be *incest*. But Amnon wasn't distressed over the moral sickness for having the hots for his sister. He was distressed because according to common sense & decency she was out-of-bounds to him.

3

They were cousins & Jonadab was a *clever schemer*.

4

Amnon was so worked up over Tamar he'd stopped eating and was losing weight. Jonadab knew something strange was going on & asked Amnon what was up.

5-8

Now that the kingdom was at peace & prospering as never before, David's palace had become a complex of buildings with each wife & her children occupying their own quarters.

Following his cousin's sly scheme, Amnon feigned illness. Being all skinny because of his infatuation with Tamar, it was a believable ruse.

David heard something was wrong & came to check on him. When he did, Amnon said he knew he'd feel better if Tamar were to come & make him something to eat.

Though it was against custom for men & women to mix like this, David told Tamar to attend to her half-brother's request.

She came and set to work making him something to eat.

9-10

It seems on the sly he sent away the servants leaving just he & Tamar in the house. Then feigning weakness and the need to lie down, he called her to feed him what she'd prepared in his bedroom.

11-13

As soon as she came into his bedroom, he grabbed her & made his intentions clear that he wanted to have sex with her.

Her protest was fast & furious. She begins by appealing to his respect of her person, which obviously is of no concern to him.

So she appeals to his sense of morality, which also quickly gets blown away.

What he's doing she says he'll later regret as shameful – but that has no effect on him either.

Will he not consider what this would do to her – no, that doesn't influence him.

When she realizes that all appeals to common sense & morality are useless in the face of his burning lust, she just tries to *forestall* him by saying if he's earnest, he should ask Pops, who because he's the king can make arrangements – but Tamar doesn't really believe that – she's just trying to get out of there!

14

He raped her – there was no consent in this on her part.

15-17

As soon as Amnon's lust was sated, his feelings did a complete 180. He despised Tamar and had her expelled.

What Tamar protested was that Amnon used her like this, then made it look as if SHE was the guilty one, as though she'd seduced him instead of he raping her!

The flip-flop of emotions in Amnon is a common experience in people who are driven by immoral compulsions.

The compulsion blinds them to reason; all they can think about is doing what they want.

But as soon as they do it & the compulsion is momentarily sated, the blinders fall & they see themselves for the weak, pathetic thing they are and hate themselves.

But self-loathing is too painful to bear for long, so they shift the guilt to the object of their desire, blaming it for their weakness.

That's what Amnon does here – instead of owning his guilt, he blamed Tamar!

She knew what was going on and refused to accept the blame.

As we track through this story which is going to go on now for several chapters, be careful to note how David's children repeat the same tendencies we saw in him in the affair with Uriah & Bathsheba.

Amnon exhibits the same problem with lust, impatience, and abuse of power we saw in David's scheming to get Bathsheba into bed.

18-20

Tamar went to her brother Absalom's house bearing marks that made plain what had happened to her.

Her torn garment meant she was no longer a virgin, the ashes, that a great calamity had fallen to her.

The rape could very well *ruin* her chances for marriage.

Absalom verified his suspicions that Amnon was the cause of his sister's grief, then counseled her to stay with him & keep silent about the matter; he'd defend her honor.

As David's firstborn, Amnon stood in line to inherit the throne.

Absalom probably saw his sister's rape as a grand opening to advance his own cause, which was to take the throne away from Amnon.

He could get rid of Amnon under the *pretense* of revenging Tamar.

That's why he told her to keep silent about it instead of running to Papa for him to deal with it.

Absalom didn't want David dealing with Amnon – he wanted to do it so he could make sure he was out of the way altogether and the throne would fall to him.

21-22

Any qualms Absalom may have had about getting rid of Amnon *before* were now out of the way.

He could justify his hatred & murder of his brother because of what he'd done to Tamar.

But he submerged his intentions under a *veil of disinterest* – shielding his plans from Amnon.

This hints at something *sinister* we'll see later.

When David learned of Tamar's rape, he was *furious*. But he didn't **DO** anything!

No action was taken to punish Amnon or address Tamar's grievance or concerns.

He felt *he lacked the moral authority* because of his own failure.

The writer wants to get this across by referring here to David as "King David." He was King, but was left powerless because of the awareness of his own crimes.

Nathan told David in ch. 12 that because he'd troubled the house & family or Uriah, trouble would come upon him from his own house. [vs. 10-14]

It may be that David let Amnon's rape of Tamar go unanswered because he saw it as a proper consequence for his sin.

But that was a mistake! Even though David had done wrong with Bathsheba, that ought not have hindered his parenting of his kids.

It's a parent's duty to teach children right from wrong and to apply appropriate discipline when they err.

I was a wretched little sinner in my late teen years.

I feel terrible about the things I did and would give anything to go back & live those years over again with the knowledge I have now.

But that isn't going to stop me making it very clear to my kids that they ought not do the silly things I did, and if they do & I catch them, I'll use the appropriate discipline.

If David thought his letting Amnon get away with his crime was a sign of his repentance, he was sadly mistaken.

2. Absalom's conspiracy to murder Amnon 13:23-33

23

2 years pass – but Absalom's plan to exact revenge is still in play.

The years of inaction are a part of his strategy to lull Amnon into thinking all's cool & any threat against him is past.

This is an effective tactic our spiritual adversary will use against us.

He uses seasons of relative peace to lull us into inattention, so we'll drop our guard, lose vigilance, all so he can blind-side us with a major assault.

9/11 was a major wake up call that militant Islam is at war with the US.

A handful of intelligence analysts were trying to raise the alarm for years but weren't given any press.

They tried to alert the nation to the danger of the jihadists and said that for over a decade they had been saying they were at war with the West.

Most Americans were oblivious to that fact, until those planes flew into the World Trade Center & Pentagon.

Now we're in a War on Terror, which really ought to be named for what it is – a War with Islamists.

And even though the images of 9/11 are still fresh in our minds, many

Americans have been lulled by the lack of further attacks on our homeland into thinking the war's not real, or over.

It's not! It still rages, and inattention will lead to another 9/11 – a worse attack – because that's the way the jihadist's work – every attack is an *escalation* of the conflict.

Understand something – all of that is but a manifestation of the spiritual war we're in.

The same demons that inspire jihad are at war against you daily.

If you aren't watching, keeping guard, vigilant – then your own spiritual 9/11 is right around the corner.

Sheep-shearing was a time for celebration, so Absalom used it as a time to invite the royal court for special festivities at a picturesque location a day's journey north of Jerusalem.

24-25

Absalom knew David & his officials couldn't attend, so he invited him to cover the plot he'd hatched.

26-27

When David declined the invite, Absalom asked if Amnon could still go.

David was suspicious and asked why but Absalom only pressed the more.

Finally David said all the royal sons could go, probably thinking Amnon would be safe in their midst.

28

Absalom gives the order to his servants to kill Amnon when at the feast he's drunk with the wine Absalom will make sure he has plenty of.

In his command, Absalom uses the authority he's plotting to one day have as king if Amnon's out of the way.

Absalom here concocts a conspiracy to commit the murder of a family member, and he uses his authority as royalty to pull it off – much as David had conspired to murder his loyal friend Uriah, and used his royal authority to do it.

29

They feared Absalom would kill them all so there'd be unhindered access to the throne.

30

As often happens, falsehood gets back to Jerusalem first and David hears one of his son has assassinated the rest.

With Nathan's warnings of trouble for David's house, it's easy to believe the report.

31-33

Wait a minute – who's this – and how did he know? It's Jonadab, the guy who'd told Amnon how to satisfy his lust toward his sister.

He knew exactly what Absalom had planned and was all ready to smooth things over at court when word came of Amnon's death.

Because of this, many commentators conclude Jonadab had conspired with Absalom from the beginning to get rid of Amnon. That's why he's first introduced as shrewd – because he was already angling to get rid of Amnon. Jonadab was looking for a way to remove Amnon and saw his inordinate lust for his sister as the lever to bring him down.

Which means, Absalom was willing to *sacrifice his sister* for his own political ends. He wanted her to be abused so he'd have cause to go after Amnon.

The seeds of conspiracy David sowed in the murder of Uriah are bearing hideous fruit in the troubles of his own family.

3. Absalom flees 13:34-39

34-39

David mourned the death of his firstborn, but after a time came to see his death as not so bad.

His rape of his sister had proven him an unfit king to rule God's people.

Problem is, Absalom's murder of Amnon proved he wasn't fit either.

Absalom justified the murder by saying it was just retribution for Tamar's rape.

If David would do nothing to punish the wicked Amnon, well then Absalom would do it.

He wasn't alone in this line of thinking, others felt the same way – that

Absalom had only done what David *ought to*, but felt he *couldn't* do.

Absalom couldn't return to Jerusalem because he'd committed murder, so he fled to Syria to stay with his mother's father, the king of Geshur.

After 3 years, David regretted all that had befallen and just longed for Absalom to come home.

Nothing could be done about Amnon, he was gone, but Absalom was in exile and David missed him.