

2 Samuel 12 - Nathan's Parable; David's Confession; Death of David's Son; Birth of Solomon

II. David's fault (11:1—12:31)

(2) David's consequences (12:1-25)

(3) David completes the battle with Ammon (12:26-31)

2 Samuel 12

(2) David's consequences (12:1-25)

1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, "There were two men in a city, the one wealthy and the other poor.

1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, "There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.

1 so the LORD sent Nathan to David. Nathan approached David and said, "There are two men in the city. One is rich and one is poor.

1 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

- Some time (9 months?) passed between the events of 2 Sam 11 and 12:1...

— God graciously gave David time to confess his sin, but when he did not, the Lord sent Nathan to confront him (Cf. 1 Cor 11:31)

- Nathan told David a story of a rich man who, in spite of having everything, stole a poor neighbor's only ewe (i.e., female lamb) to provide a feast for a guest

— This required considerable courage on Nathan's part, since David could have hardened his heart and had the prophet executed, as he did with Uriah

David wasn't relaxing and taking life easy, sipping lemonade on his patio, during the aftermath of his adultery. Count on it...he had sleepless nights. He could see his sin written across the ceiling of his room as he tossed and turned in bed. He saw it written across the walls. He saw it on the plate where he tried to choke down his meals. He saw it on the faces of his counselors. He was a miserable husband, an irritable father, a poor leader, and a songsless composer. He lived a lie but he couldn't escape the truth. Ps 32:3-4 records David's misery during the time between committing his sins and his confession. This Psalm and Ps 51, gives further insight into David's feelings when he confessed his sins.

He had no joy ("Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation," Ps 51:12.) He was unstable. He felt inferior and insecure ("Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me," Ps 51:10.) Sin does that to you. It's part of the wages that sin inevitably demands. A carnal Christian will dance all around and try to tell you, "Everything's fine. Don't press me. I'm really free...really having fun...I'm doing well. You just haven't any idea." But down inside it's there. Everything is empty, hollow, joyless, pointless. A true Christian cannot deny that. True guilt is there. Oppressively there. Constantly there.

2 "The wealthy man had a great many flocks and herds.

2 "The rich man had a great many flocks and herds.

2 The rich man has many flocks and herds,

2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

3 "But the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nurtured; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat scraps from him and drink from his cup and lie in his lap, And was like a daughter to him.

3 "But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him.

3 but the poor man had nothing except for one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It used to share his food and drink from his own cup. It even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 "Now a visitor came to the wealthy man, And he could not bring himself to take *any animal* from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the traveler who had come to him; So he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

4 "Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

4 A traveler arrived to visit the rich man. Because he was unwilling to take an animal from one of his own flocks or herds to prepare for the guest who had come to visit him, he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to visit him."

4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor

man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

5 Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this certainly deserves to die!

5 Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die.

5 David flew into a rage at the man and told Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

- Nathan's parable (Cf. 14:1-20; 1 Kings 20:35-42; Is 5:1-7; Jer 3:1-5) appealed to David's compassion as a shepherd and drew an emotional response from the king

— Just like the man in the parable, David deserved to die, he deserved death for adultery (Lev 20:10) and murder (Lev 24:17)

— The man in the parable was not under the death penalty under the Law; David was acting emotionally, seemingly trying to get rid of his own guilty conscience by condemning someone else

— Though the Law contained no such penalty for the theft of property, kidnapping was a capital offense and it may be that David viewed the taking of a pet lamb in this light (Ex 21:16)

— In addition, he said, the rich man must restore four lambs for the one stolen for not even the rich man's death could compensate the poor man's property loss (Ex 22:1)

6 So he must make restitution for the lamb four times over, since he did this thing and had no compassion."

6 He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion."

6 He will restore the lamb four times its value, because he did this thing, and because he did it without compassion."

6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

- Hypocritically, David ordered the man in Nathan's story to make restitution, appealing to the same Mosaic Law that he himself had disregarded

— It is interesting that four of David's sons died, perhaps as a divine fulfillment of the fourfold restitution that David ordered: David's first child by Bathsheba (v18), Amnon (13:28-29), Absalom (18:14-15), and Adonijah (1 Kings 2:23-25)

7 Nathan then said to David, "**You yourself are the man!** This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: 'It is I who anointed you as king over Israel, and it is I who rescued you from

the hand of Saul.

7 Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul.

7 But Nathan replied to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD God of Israel says: "I anointed you king—and you became king over Israel.

"I delivered you from Saul's control.

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

- "...You yourself are the man!" - one of the most dramatic sentences in the Bible!

— The Lord reminded David of all that He had done for David—anointing him king, rescued him from Saul, and gave him Saul's house, wives and the nation

8 I also gave you your master's house and *put* your master's **wives** into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would have added to you many more things like these!

8 I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would have added to you many more things like these!

8 "I gave you your former master's household. "I placed your former master's wives right in your arms. "I gave you Israel and Judah. "And if this had been too little, I would have added much more than that to you!

8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

- David had abused the great blessings that God had given him

— Nathan listed five great things for David (v7-8), but David had done four sinful things in spite of God's goodness (v9)

— The LORD, he said, had given David everything, but he had taken, as it were, the pet lamb of a poor neighbor

- "...wives" - "women"; evidently all the female servants of Saul's household had become David's when he became king

— The taking of a ruler's "women" symbolized complete defeat in the ancient world

9 Why have **you despised** the word of the LORD, by doing evil in His sight? You have struck and killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, you have taken his wife as your wife, and you have slaughtered him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.

9 Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed

him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.

9 "Why did you despise what the LORD has promised by doing what is detestable in his sight? "You struck down Uriah the Hittite with a battle sword. "You took his wife to be your own. "You killed him with the sword of the Ammonite army.

9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

- "...you despised" - God said that David's actions were those of a man who "despised me"
- Nathan repeated the fact that David had killed Uriah, for emphasis
- David had despised God by disobeying His Word, as though he were superior to it
- David saw firsthand what happened to Saul for rejecting God's Word, but that experience didn't impact his behavior

10 Now then, the **sword** shall **never** leave your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

10 "Therefore the sword will never leave your household, because you have despised me by taking the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

- "...sword" - an instrument of death; David experienced temporal death for the rest of his life

— This "curse" on David's household, as the consequence for his sin of adultery and murder, will have long lasting effects throughout the rest of David's life

— The first consequence of the "sword" is that the son born out of his adultery was taken away, then there was warfare within his own family where David was almost always on the run

- "...never" - compare David's earlier curse of Joab's house (3:29), where "never" is also used

Before naming David's specific sins and the damage they caused to others, God said, "you despised my word" (v9). God then repeated even more forcefully, "you despised me" (v10). The first and greatest offense in all sin is rejecting God and His Word.

11 This is what the LORD says: 'Behold, I am going to raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your companion, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight.

11 Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.

11 "This is what the LORD says: "Listen very carefully! "I'm raising up evil against you right out of your own household. "I'm going to take your wives away from you right before your eyes. "Then I'll give them to your neighbor. "And then he's going to have sex with your wives in broad daylight!

11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

- David's punishment would be two-fold (Gal 6:7):

(1) His own children would be the source of his discipline

(2) God would remove the sources of his children (his wives) from him

— The execution of this discipline follows in 13:11-14,38-39; 16:22; 18:15

12 Indeed, you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and in open daylight!"

12 Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun."

12 "'What you did in secret I'm going to do right in front of all Israel and in broad daylight as well!"

12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

- Because David had violated Uriah's marriage in secret, one close to him would violate his wives "in broad daylight"

- David now would suffer the sword as had Uriah, and David's wives would be taken from him as Bathsheba had been stolen from the Hittite

— This was fulfilled by Absalom (David's own son!) when he lay with David's concubines (16:22)

As David "took" Uriah's wife (v9-10), so the Lord will "take" David's wives (v11). As the Lord "gave" Saul's property and Israel's kingdom to David (v8), so he says that he will now "give" David's wives to someone else, to "one who is close to you" (v11)—ironically, an expression earlier used of David himself in similar circumstances (see 1 Sam 15:28; 28:17).

Just as David willfully took Bathsheba for himself (11:2-4), so Amnon forced Tamar (13:8-14), Absalom entered the royal harem (16:22), and Adonijah tried to claim his deceased father's concubine (1 Kings 2:13-17).

David's shame would be even greater because, in contrast with David's sin in secret, all these things would happen in the glare of the public eye, in broad daylight. David had violated the sanctity of the home; his own home now would produce evil. This judgment

needs to be seen as a natural consequence of David's act; his own disrespect for the divinely ordained family pattern would bear its own bitter fruit.

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has allowed your sin to pass; you shall not die.

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.

13 At this point, David told Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan responded to David, "There's one other thing: the LORD has forgiven your sin. You won't die.

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD.

And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

- David's immediate reaction is revealing: unlike others who struck out in anger against such prophets and condemned them, David immediately confessed his sin and admitted the rightness of God's judgment

— God spared David's life by pure grace; normally, David would have died for his sins (Lev 20:10; 24:17)

— David called his sin what it was rather than trying to cover it up or explain it away, which was Saul's typical response. In addition, David acknowledged that his sin was primarily against God, not just against Bathsheba and Uriah (Cf. Prov 10:17).

- God's forgiveness followed immediately after David's confession, as if God had already forgiven him before he confessed (Cf. Rom 5:20)

Sin has two results—it separates a man from God, and it produces evil effects in the world. The first of these can be canceled by forgiveness, but the second remains. The tragedy of human history is that the evil effects of sin are not always nor wholly borne by the sinner.

14 However, since by this deed you have shown utter disrespect for the LORD, the child himself who is born to you shall certainly die."

14 However, because by this deed you have **given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme**, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."

14 Nevertheless, because you have despised the LORD's enemies with utter contempt, the son born to you will most certainly die."

14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

- God removed the guilt of David's sin (forgiveness), but He did not remove the consequences (discipline) of it

— This is how God deals with sin normally...He removes the guilt that would result in damnation, but He usually allows at least some of the consequences to follow, and uses

these for discipline and instruction

— David's sin was heinous, but the grace of God was more than sufficient to forgive and restore him, as Nathan could testify. And yet, though David could be restored to fellowship with his God, the impact of his sin remained and would continue to work its sorrow in the nation as well as in the king's life.

- "...given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme" [NASB95] - another consequence of David's sin is that he gave the enemies of God an opportunity to blaspheme God

— The enemies of God love it when a preacher or proclaimer of the gospel is shown to be corrupt or hypocritical, because it gives them a topic of derision against the gospel and God Himself

David had surrendered to sin without a battle. He had abused his power, committed adultery, broken faith with those who trusted him, murdered a loyal subject and fellow believer. He had caused needless death on the battlefield and involved others in his sin. Yet David's greatest sin was against God.

David's confession brought him forgiveness, but it could not change the course of events his choices had set in motion. David would not die, but the child Bathsheba had conceived would die. One day David would go to be with the son whom the Lord had taken, but that son would never know David on earth. David would lose the successive deaths of four sons, besides a lengthened train of other evils (Cf. v6).

Just as healed wounds leave scars, even when God forgives sin, consequences remain.

Age of Accountability (see also Rom 7:9)

15 Then Nathan went to his house.

Later the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick.

15 So Nathan went to his house.

Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick.

15 Then Nathan went home.

After this, the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife had born to David, and the child became very ill.

15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

- Shortly after the interview with Nathan, the child became terminally ill

— Despite David's intense fasting and prayer (v16), the baby died within a week

Why did God take the life of this child since its parents sinned? That the child should be punished for what David did seems wrong and unfair. We need to remind ourselves that

even today, innocent children suffer from the things their parents do. The more pointed question deals with whether God should be credited with the cause of the suffering. For example, consider a child riding his bicycle, who is accidentally killed by a drunk driver. At the funeral, the minister tried to convince those in attendance that God had a purpose in the child's death as though it were something God had planned. That is appalling...it is taking an evil event and making God the cause. In understanding Nathan's interpretation of the child's illness, we need to separate the physical cause and the religious interpretation or application. Whatever the child's illness, both Nathan and David saw it as connected with David's sin and raised no questions about it as we do.

When David slept with the woman and created new life, the woman did not belong to him, but to Uriah. The child cannot belong to David. He cannot enrich himself through his sin, and in a sense, justice is done to Uriah.

16 David therefore pleaded with God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.

16 David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.

16 David begged God on behalf of the youngster. He fasted, went inside, and spent the night lying on the ground.

16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17 The elders of his household stood beside him in order to help him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them.

17 The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them.

17 His closest advisors at the palace got up, remained with him, and tried to help him get up from the ground, but he would not do so. He also wouldn't eat with them.

17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18 Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was *still* alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to us. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do *himself* harm?"

18 Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was

still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do *himself* harm!"

18 A week later, the child died, and David's staff was afraid to tell him that the child had died. They were telling themselves, "Look, when the child was still alive, we talked to him but he wouldn't listen to what we said. Now what kind of trouble will he bring on himself if we tell him that the child has died?"

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

- The child died nameless, since Israelites normally named children on the eighth day after their birth

19 But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."

19 But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."

19 But as David observed his staff whispering together, he perceived that the child had died, so he asked his staff, "Is the child dead?"

They replied, "He has died."

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 So David got up from the ground, washed, anointed *himself*, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and when he asked, they served him food, and he ate.

20 So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed *himself*, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate.

20 At this, David got up from the ground, washed, anointed himself, changed his clothes, and went into the LORD's tent to worship. Then he went back to his palace where, at his request, they served him food and he ate.

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

- David's "worship" was his accepting of God's judgment, submitting to God's will, and not becoming bitter or retaliatory over God's treatment
— David accepted the sorrowful consequences and looked ahead in faith to the time when God would reunite him with his child

21 Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child *while he was* alive; but when the child died, you got up and ate food."

21 Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food."

21 His staff asked him, "What's this about? When the child was alive, you fasted and cried. Now that the child has died, you get up and eat!"

21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 And he said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, and the child may live.'

22 He said, "While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'

22 He answered, "When the child was alive, I fasted and cried. I asked myself, 'Who knows? Maybe the LORD will show grace to me and the child will live.'

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? **I am going to him, but he will not return to me."**

23 But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

23 But now that he has died, what's the point of fasting? Can I bring him back again? I'll be going to be with him, but he won't be returning to me."

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

- David's response is classic: while the child was still alive, he fasted and wept, but now that he is dead, he didn't need to fast any longer

— David attested to the irrevocability of death—its finality renders further petition absurd

- "...I am going to him, but he will not return to me" - this is one of the reasons that many believe that a child, before the "age of accountability," is saved. This would seem to be what Paul also says in Rom 7:9.

24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and slept with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him **Solomon**. Now **the LORD loved him**,

24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him

24 Then David consoled his wife Bathsheba. He went in and had sex with her, and she bore a son whom he named Solomon. The LORD loved him,

24 And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.

- "...Solomon" - the name comes from the Hebrew word *shalom* (peace) and means "Peaceable"

— The birth of Solomon demonstrates that God's grace is greater than all our sin

— Solomon was born about 991 BC

— The Lord had previously revealed to David that He would give him a son, and that he should name him "Solomon," who would succeed David on his throne (1 Chr 22:6-10; Cf. 1 Chr 28:5,9; 29:1)

- "...the LORD loved him" - this statement is a Hebrew way of saying that the Lord chose him (Cf. Mal 1:2-3)

25 and sent *word* through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD'S sake.

25 and sent *word* through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD's sake.

25 and sent a message written by Nathan the prophet to call his name Jedidiah, for the Lord's sake.

25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, and captured the royal city.

26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the sons of Ammon and captured the royal city.

26 Meanwhile, Joab attacked the Ammonite city of Rabbah and captured its stronghold.

26 And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

27 Then Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, I have even captured the **city of waters**.

27 Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, I have even captured the city of waters.

27 Then Joab sent messengers to David to tell him, "I just attacked Rabbah and captured its municipal water supply,

27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

- In the meantime, the Ammonite war went well for Joab; he had all but captured the Ammonite capital, Rabbah, having taken the royal citadel and the city's water supply - "...city of waters" - "waterfort"; the work defending the water supply of the royal city

28 Now then, gather the rest of the people and camp opposite the city and capture it, or I will capture the city myself and it will be named after me."

28 Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and camp against the city and capture it, or I will capture the city myself and it will be named after me."

28 so call out the rest of the army, attack the city, and capture it. Otherwise, I'll take the city myself and name it after me."

28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

- In order that David might gain the credit for its fall, Joab urged the king to lead the final assault himself. David did.

29 So David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah, and he fought against it and captured it.

29 So David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah, fought against it and captured it.

29 So David mustered his entire army and marched on Rabbah, attacked it, and captured it.

29 And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

30 Then he took the crown of their king from his head; and its weight *was* a talent of gold, and *it had* a precious stone; and it was *placed* on David's head. And he brought out the plunder of the city in great amounts.

30 Then he took the crown of their king from his head; and its weight *was* a talent of gold, and *in it was* a precious stone; and it was *placed* on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city in great amounts.

30 He confiscated the crown of their king from his head—it weighed one talent in gold and was set with precious stones—and it was placed on David's head. He confiscated a great amount of war booty that had been plundered from the city,

30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

- He sacked the city of its wealth, including the 75-pound (a talent) golden crown of the Ammonite king

31 He also brought out the people who were in it, and put *some to work* at saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and made others serve at the brick works. And he did the same to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

31 He also brought out the people who were in it, and set *them* under saws, sharp iron instruments, and iron axes, and made them pass through the brickkiln. And thus he did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

31 brought back the people who had lived in it, placing them under conscripted labor with saws, iron picks, and axes. He did this to every Ammonite city, and then David and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.

31 And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

- David also put the survivors to slave labor (using saws, iron picks, and axes and working at brickmaking) and returned in triumph to Jerusalem

Conclusion

When OT saints are shown to be sinners, Scripture is expressing something basic about the Gospel. The good news of God's love for man is not, "Trust Me, and be freed of your humanity." The good news of God's love is that the Lord has committed Himself to deal with sin and to make us progressively more and more like Him. For progressive growth we always stand in need of God's grace and aid. God deals with sin by the means of forgiveness. The greatness of David is not in his perfection but in his willingness to face his sin and to return wholeheartedly to God.

How different from Saul! When Saul sinned, he begged Samuel to stay with him, that the people might not discover God's anger. When the Prophet Nathan confronted David concerning his sin with Bathsheba, David not only confessed immediately, but he even wrote a psalm used later in public worship, openly admitting his fault and sharing the inner anguish that accompanied loss of fellowship with God!

This is also an appropriate occasion to review David's classic psalm of repentance: Ps 51

Sin

There are three major Hebrew word groups that communicate the concept of sin in the OT. Each of them is illustrated in these chapters. In fact each of them is used in David's prayer of confession, Ps 51.

The principle Hebrew word for sin, *chatta'ah*, means to miss the mark. It assumes the existence of a divine standard which, for some reason, a person does not live up to. The other major terms also assume the existence of a divine standard and describe human actions in relation to it. The Hebrew word *pasha*, "transgressions," in the vocabulary of sin indicates a conscious revolt or rebellion against the divine standard. And *avon*, "iniquity" or "guilt," is a deviation from, or twisting of, the standard.

Strikingly, in Scripture the language of sin is also the language of redemption. The word *chatta'at* means both "sin" and "sin offering." Thus it speaks both of human failure, and the wonderful provision by God of forgiveness through an offering that removes our guilt.

How beautifully both these realities are illustrated in David's life.

David had penetrated to the heart of the issue. His was no mere legal relationship with some "bookkeeper God" who cares only about balanced books. David did not rush to ask what he could do for God to make up for his sin! Instead David realized that God's concern is personal rather than legal in nature. A contrite heart means more to God than all anyone might possibly do for Him.

With David's heart attitude corrected, forgiveness could flow and the Spirit of God could work again to cleanse David. When he was cleansed, God would work through David to do good for Zion and for all his people. We cannot, and God did not, condone David's sins and failings. But we can praise God for moving David to share honestly with us. Through David we learn fresh lessons about the grace of God, and we are reminded that you and I are invited to come boldly to the Lord too that He may meet us—and our needs.

Application

- We often see sin in others, but fail to see the horror of our own sin
- We ignore or excuse sinful attitudes or actions, weakening our will to fight sin
- God graciously took the initiative to bring David to repentance and forgive him
- Four of David's sons later died—the fourfold penalty David had proclaimed against the rich man in Nathan's story (2 Sam 12:19; 13:28-29; 18:14-15; 1 Kings 2:23-25)
- God's grace is always greater than our sin (Rom 5:20; 6:14)
- Pride and lack of dependence upon God blinds us to temptation's power. Disinterest and coldness toward God makes both God and sin seem small and insignificant.
- Sexual sin always hurts someone: have you redefined sexual sin as acceptable "if no one gets hurt"?