

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

9. Did Bathsheba mourn for her husband? _____
10. Did David marry Bathsheba? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 12

- Vv. 1-6 *Nathan's parable.* Nathan came into David's presence to tell him a story that brought out a great truth. The story so intrigued David that he was caught in his own judgments.
- Vv. 7-23 *God's judgment.* Nathan delivered to David the judgment of God upon David's sin. David was not able to hide his sin from God. The child born to David and Bathsheba out of their adulterous union was smitten. Eventually it died.
- Vv. 24-25 *The Birth of Solomon.* David repented of his sin and God blessed his marriage with Bathsheba. Solomon's other name, Jedidiah, means "Beloved of the Lord."
- Vv. 26-31 *The final siege of Rabbah.* The armies of Israel were finally victorious over the Ammonites. The citizens of Rabbah, their leading city, were besieged and finally put under the strictest kind of servitude. We can well imagine that David may have wished he had never heard of the country of Ammon.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *A beam in the eye* (Matthew 7:1-5). David wanted to punish a man who had killed another man's lamb. He did not realize that Nathan was talking about him, but he was one who was guilty of a far greater sin.
2. *"Thou are the man"* (v. 7). The apostle Paul urged the preachers of the gospel to be sure that they did not

condemn themselves when they condemned others (Romans 2:21-24).

3. *The iniquities of the fathers* (Exodus 20:5). God does not visit the ultimate condemnation of a father's sin upon the children, but many fathers cause much suffering for the children. David and Bathsheba in their sin brought on the death of their first child.

3. David's Repentance, 12:1-31.

Nathan's Parable. 12:1-6

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.

2 The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds:

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 And there came a traveler 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 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:

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

1. *What kind of story did Nathan tell?* 12:1

The story that Nathan told David was a parable. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. It is a story of what actually did happen or could have happened. It is different from a fable, inasmuch as a fable

is generally some kind of story that is quite definitely fictitious. Whether or not there were two men in a city of Nathan's acquaintance should not alter the meaning of the story. The setting is typical of life. One man was rich, the other was poor. This parable was the setting for a message that God had given Nathan to deliver to David.

2. *Who was the rich man? 12:2*

The rich man in the parable must have been David. Although we must be careful lest we err in forcing all the points of a parable to have some significance, this central truth is clear. The parable was directed against David. Later, Nathan said, "Thou art the man" (verse seven). David certainly fit the picture; he had exceeding many flocks and herds. God had given him prosperity above anything he could have hoped for or imagined in his fondest dreams.

3. *Who was the poor man? 12:3*

The poor man who had nothing save the one little ewe lamb must have been Uriah. Uriah was a Hittite. He was a foreigner to the commonwealth of Israel and was a soldier in David's army. Naturally, the rest of the picture does not fit exactly. Uriah had not raised Bathsheba in his own home, and it does not seem appropriate to view her being with his children as one of his own family. Neither is it appropriate to liken Bathsheba to a poor man's daughter.

4. *Who was the poor man's lamb? 12:4*

Even though we cannot make all points of the parable fit the true life situation, the poor man's lamb must have been a reference to Bathsheba. David had taken Bathsheba away from Uriah just as the rich man had stolen the poor man's lamb. Of course David did not "dress" the "lamb" and serve it to his guests, as did the rich man in the parable when the traveler came to him. Pressing the points of the parable too far would make Bathsheba absolutely innocent and of the same nature as a lamb.

Although Bathsheba did not lure David into the sinful situation that was theirs, we cannot absolve her of all blame completely. She apparently made no resistance, and entered into the adulterous union without revealing the heinous nature of the crimes that had been committed.

5. *What was David's reaction? 12:5*

David's anger was greatly kindled. He thought Nathan was telling him a true story of the events transpiring in his kingdom. As ruler of the land, he judged that the man who had done this terrible thing was worthy of death. He pronounced the sentence of death upon him. He also ordered that the lamb be restored fourfold. This was the statute laid down in Exodus 22:1. If an ox had been involved, then five oxen were to be used to make restitution. In the case of sheep, only four sheep were to be repaid. This quick action on David's part is typical of him when he was at his best. He was a man of action and took immediate steps to rectify wrongs which were done in his kingdom.

God's Judgment. 12:7-23

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;

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.

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.

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.

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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 neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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 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?

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 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshiped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did 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 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 is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

6. *What was Nathan's announcement? 12:7*

Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man." The Septuagint in one of its texts adds, "Who has done this!" Nathan would hardly have needed to add this latter clause, when he said that David was the man that he was talking about. David caught the point. The robbery of the darling is the real point of the parable, but the guilt of the man was the thing that Nathan brought to David's attention. David had judged the man worthy of death, and then Nathan told him that he was the man he was talking about.

7. *Why did Nathan recall God's blessing on David? 12:8*

God had made David like the rich man of the parable who had herds and flocks. Nathan reminded David that God had given him his master's house. He had inherited everything that had been Saul's except for the bit of land that was his family's heritage. Nathan even said that David had been given Saul's wives. We have no other indication of David's possessing the concubines of Saul. Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines, had been in the care of Ish-bosheth, and Abner was charged with having tried to take her for his wife (II Samuel 3:7). More than likely, this is a reference to the fact that David had received Michal, Saul's daughter, as his wife, since there is no specific mention of David having any of Saul's wives or concubines.

8. *How had David despised the command of the Lord?*
12:9

One of the Ten Commandments was "thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). David had broken this commandment. He had lain with another man's wife. Another commandment was "thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). David had brought about the death of Uriah. It was specifically stipulated in the law that a man should not covet his neighbor's house, his neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his ass, or anything that was his neighbor's (Exodus 20:17). David had broken all these commandments and conducted himself in a very sinful way.

9. *What penalties were pronounced? 12:10, 11, 14*

The penalties pronounced on David were manifold. Some were personal and immediate; some general and to be fulfilled in the future. All brought grief to David. This is a list of them:

- a. The sword should never depart from David's house.
- b. God would raise up evil against David in his own house.
- c. David's own wives were to be taken from him by a neighbor.
- d. The child which was to be born was doomed to die.
- e. The penalty of death was put away for the time, yet David suffered the indirect consequences of it.

10. *How did David receive these penalties? 12:13*

David cried out, "I have sinned against the Lord." Echoes of this cry are found in Psalm 32:5, where David said, "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin," and in Psalm 51:4 where David said, "Against Thee and Thee

only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest." One can only wonder if this were also in the mind of Solomon as he wrote, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

11. How would the enemies of the Lord blaspheme? 12:14

David was a "man of God." He was a man chosen by God to lead the people of Israel. Men round about would come to hold God Himself in disrepute because of His selection of such a man as David. It is the old story of people blaspheming the name of God as they say, "Look at the preacher. See how sinful he is. Surely the God he talks about is not righteous or just." A Christian is often the only "Bible" a careless world will read. What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?

12. Why did David pray against God's decree? 12:16

God's promises are sometimes conditional. When man changes, God's purposes are seen in a different light. Jonah went into Nineveh preaching that in forty days the great city would be destroyed. The king and all his subjects repented of their wickedness and clothed themselves in sackcloth putting ashes upon their bodies, and fasting before the Lord. They prayed mightily unto God and repented of their evil. They stopped the wicked things which they were doing, saying, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?" (Jonah 3:9). God saw their works and Nineveh was spared. The tense of the verb used in describing David's beseeching God on behalf of the child, his fasting, his going in and lying all night upon the earth, points to the fact that he made a habit of doing these things. It became his daily routine.

13. Why did the elders interfere? 12:17

The leaders of the kingdom had great influence on David and they were concerned for his physical and mental

well-being. Their concern was on his behalf, but they were not trying to interfere with his spiritual life. It was the same kind of concern that Saul's servants had for him when he had eaten nothing as he made his ill-fated trip to see the witch of Endor (I Samuel 28:23).

14. *Why did the servants think David's actions were strange? 12:18-21*

The crisis came on the seventh day, and the child died. The servants were afraid to tell David that the child was dead. They had seen his extreme grief and agony while the child was ill, and they were afraid that he would not be able to stand the shock of the news that the child had died. David heard the servants whispering, and reached the conclusion that the child had died. He asked them directly if this were so, and they affirmed that it was. At that point, David arose from the earth where he had been lying, bathed himself, anointed himself, changed his clothing, and went to the house of God to worship. After that he came back to the palace and ordered that they should give him something to eat. David's journey to the house of the Lord must have been to the temporary tabernacle which David had made to house the Ark of the Covenant. All of this was contrary to what the servants had expected. They had expected that after the child had died he would be even more vexed and grieved.

15. *Did David believe in a future state? 12:23*

None will doubt that David had faith in prayer. None will doubt that David believed that God could be prevailed upon to answer a fervent, earnest prayer. None can doubt that David believed in a peaceful, complete home in heaven. Did David not say, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me"? (II Samuel 12:23). His conduct after the death of the child was therefore only what might be expected. While the child lived, he was in deep anguish of soul, hoping that God would spare him. When the child

died, David knew that he could not bring him back to life. His hope was thereafter fixed on a reunion in Heaven.

The Birth of Solomon. 12:24, 25

24 And David comforted Bath-sheba 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.

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

16. Why call Solomon Jedidiah? 12:24, 25

In some way God must have shown that He loved the second child born to David of her who had been the wife of Uriah. The name Jedidiah means "beloved of Jehovah." Perhaps God had again spoken to Nathan, who in turn spoke to David, telling him of God's good intentions for Solomon. Solomon's birth was the fulfillment of a promise (see I Chronicles 28:8-10). Solomon was to be a man of rest. It was he who was to build the temple.

17. What is the purpose in giving this narrative? 12:1-31

The Old Testament is a "tutor" to lead us to a better understanding of Christ and His mission and message. Christ died for our sins. A black narrative like this should teach all men everywhere that if men like David were not spared the consequences of sin, no man can expect more. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse man from his sin. Furthermore, as men of good will read the account, they are assured of its trustworthiness. No fabricated account of the lives of Israel's heroes would contain a notice of sin like this.

The Final Siege of Rabbah. 12:26-31

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

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

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.

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

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.

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.

18. *Explain Rabbah's being called "the city of waters."*

12:26

The river Jabbok flows near the city of Rabbah. This river would supply water to sustain many people. There was, as a matter of fact, a higher as well as a lower city. The city nearer the river was of lesser importance. The city sitting back some 300 feet higher in elevation was the principal city. The city was probably built to protect the formation. The unusual site of the city prompted the name. It was a royal city since it was the residence of the king. Once it was taken, the Ammonites were beaten.

19. *Why was Joab so considerate? 12:28*

Joab preferred that David have the glory which would come from capturing the city. He said that if he were to take it the city might later be called after his name. Conquerors quite often named cities after themselves. In other cases of historical note, the people have acclaimed

the liberator by naming their city after the man who drove out their enemies. Such names as Caesarea, Tiberias, and Philippi bear testimony of the fact that the Romans captured and ruled over these places. Joab may have thought the king's fortunes were ebbing and he needed this additional boost to his popularity.

20. *Why did the king have such a great crown? 12:30*

After the Israelites conquered the Ammonites, they took the king's crown from off his head, so that he had either been taken a prisoner or slain at the time of the capture of the city. The weight is mentioned specifically, and it has been calculated to be something like eighty-three pounds. The strongest man could hardly have worn a crown of this weight on his head, even for a short time; and David would scarcely place it upon his own head. The crown must have been more for ornamental purposes than for actual use, but it would have symbolized the king's greatness and was very befitting to David's exalted position. It may have been placed on his head in ceremonial fashion as men stood around to hold it, and this would signify that David was the ruler over this vassal state in the land east of the Jordan.

21. *How did David treat the captives? 12:31*

David treated the people very harshly, but he did not torture them. Some commentators view this as David's actually sawing the people into pieces, and dragging harrows of iron over their bodies, or chopping them with axes. They even view this punishment as one of severe torture whereby they were caused to walk through heated brick kilns. David only made these people to do all kinds of servile work. He made them to serve as woodsmen. They dragged harrows through the field, and labored at the debilitating work at the brick kilns. They literally performed slave labor and thus, augmented the services available to the kingdom of Israel.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL
CHAPTER 12 IN REVIEW

1. What kind of story did Nathan tell David? _____
2. Whom did the poor man represent? _____
3. Whom did the rich man represent? _____
4. Whom did the lamb represent? _____
5. What did Nathan say David had caused God's enemies to do? _____
6. What did Nathan say would happen to David's son by Bathsheba? _____
7. Did David admit he had sinned? _____
8. How many days did the child live? _____
9. What was the name of the second child of David and Bathsheba? _____
10. What name did Nathan give to the child? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 13

- Vv. 1-14 *Amnon's sin with Tamar.* Amnon was David's oldest son by Ahinoam, his Jezreelite wife. Tamar was the daughter of David and his wife Maacah. Tamar was the sister of Absalom. Amnon was a vicious young man and forced Tamar and lay with her.
- Vv. 15-29 *Absalom kills Amnon.* Absalom took judgment into his own hands. He waited for an opportune time and then killed his half-brother, Amnon.
- Vv. 30-39 *Absalom flees to Talmai.* Realizing that his own life was in danger because he had killed Amnon, he fled to his grandfather, Talmai, the king of Geshur. Here he found refuge.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Forbidden fruit is bitter.* Immediately after Amnon had committed his heinous crime against Tamar, we