

STUDIES IN SAMUEL
CHAPTER 12 IN REVIEW

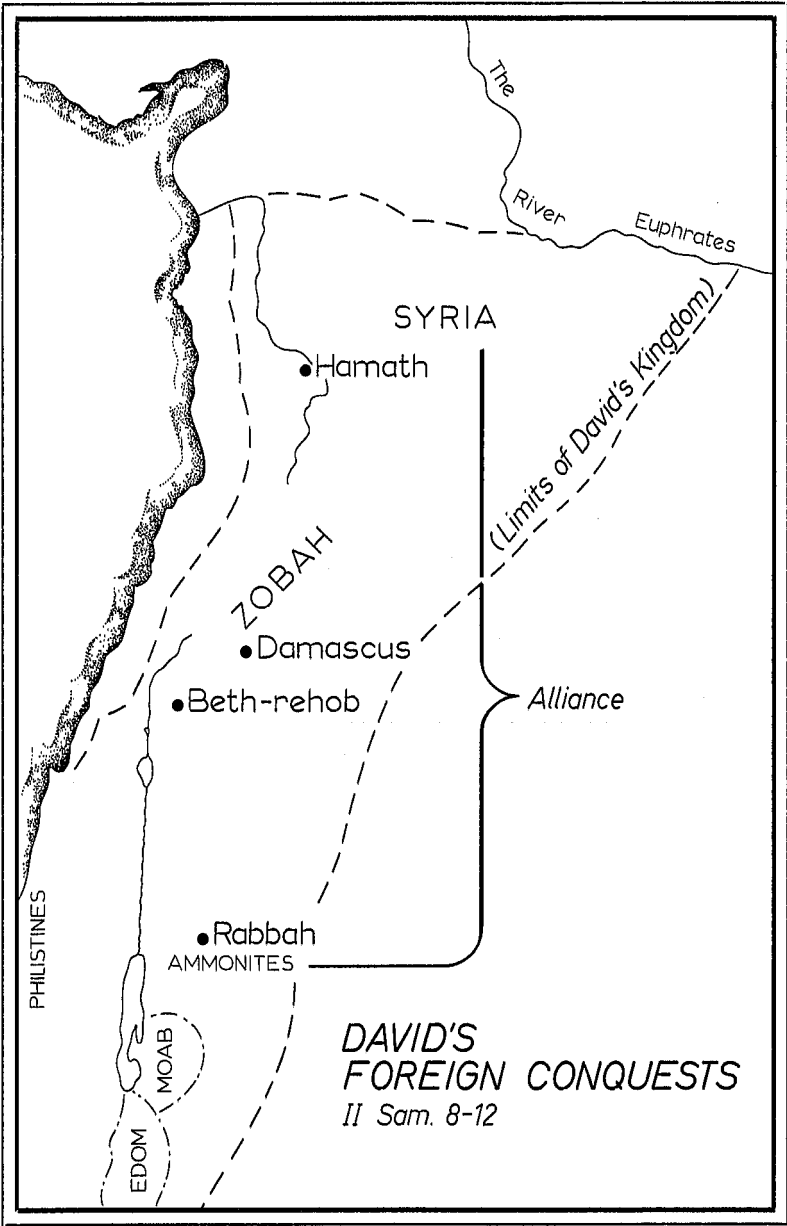
1. What kind of story did Nathan tell David? _____
2. Whom did the poor man represent? _____
3. Whom did the rich man represent? _____
4. Whom did the lamb represent? _____
5. What did Nathan say David had caused
God's enemies to do? _____
6. What did Nathan say would happen to
David's son by Bathsheba? _____
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? _____

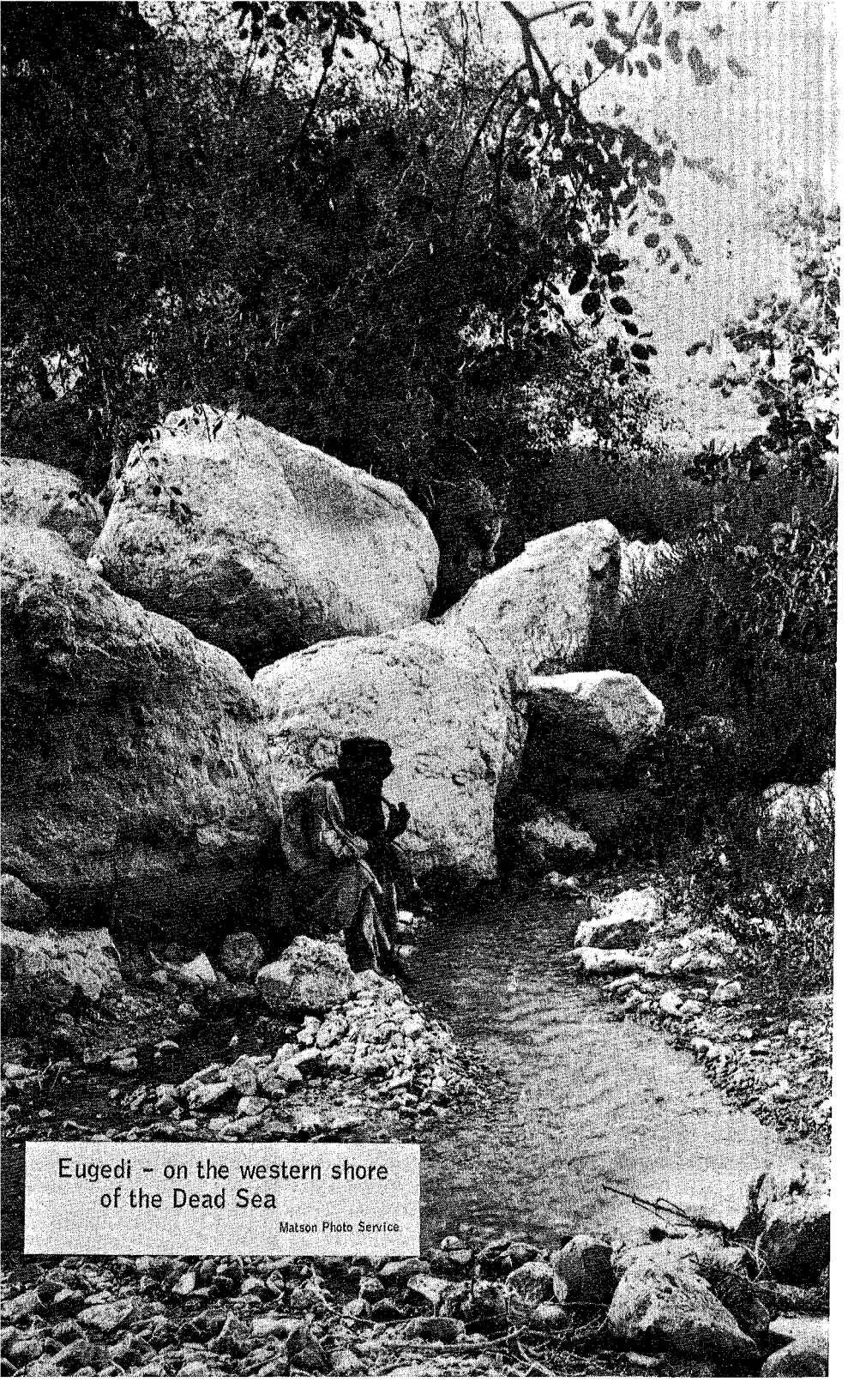
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 13

- 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





Eugedi - on the western shore
of the Dead Sea

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read that "he hated her exceedingly so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her" (v. 15). This is often true in life today. Temptation is very alluring, but the fruit of sin is dust, ashes, and death.

2. *Like father, like son.* David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Amnon committed fornication with his half-sister. Absalom killed Amnon. We are left to wonder if Amnon would have been bold enough to commit his crime if David had lived a holier life. We also doubt that Absalom would have taken judgment into his own hands if his father had acted to punish Amnon. Too often the sins of the children are but reflections of the sins of the parents.

4. Amnon's Death, 13:1-39.

Amnon's Sin With Tamar. 13:1-14

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother; and Jonadab *was* a very subtle man.

4 And he said unto him, Why *art* thou, *being* the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar

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come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand.

6 So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.

7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat.

8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.

9 And she took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him.

10 And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* into the chamber of Amnon her brother.

11 And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.

12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly.

13 And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.

1. *Who was Tamar?* 13:1

Tamar was the full sister of Absalom, both being the children of David by Maacah (II Samuel 3:3). Amnon was the son of David and Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and David's first-born, thereby the heir apparent to the throne,

and Israel's crown-prince. Tamar was therefore the half-sister of Amnon. A significant notice of Tamar's beauty was made; for the handsome features of Absalom, her brother, were also outstanding.

2. *Why was Amnon vexed?* 13:2

Amnon's lust for Tamar was so intense that he literally became ill as he harbored these wicked thoughts. Later on, he added a sickness that was feigned to his natural sickness (verses 5, 6). Klostermann, a commentator of some years back, suggested that the root word was very close to another word which means "to become insane." It is doubtful that Amnon became an idiot, but his illness was brought on by his state of mind. His vexation was caused by the fact that Tamar was a virgin, and he thought it would be impossible for him to seduce her and lay with her, since being a virgin Tamar had less public freedom. She was kept closer to home, as a matter of custom, and for her own protection. Amnon seems to have no personal inhibitions about forcing her and lying with her, and it probably did not seem hard to him to do anything to her because of his own conscience. Rather, he was stymied by the circumstances of the situation.

3. *Who was Jonadab?* 13:3

Jonadab was another of David's nephews. He makes the fourth nephew to be connected with David's rule—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel all being in David's army. Shimeah, Jonadab's father, was the third of Jesse's sons to pass by Samuel when Samuel was seeking the Lord's anointed to be king over Israel (I Samuel 16:9). Such a circumstance would point to his being the third-born of Jesse's sons and David's older brother. Jonadab is described as being a subtle man, and it is better to consider him full of subtlety and guile, than to think of him as being the possessor of actual wisdom.

4. *What did Jonadab ask Amnon? 13:4*

Jonadab asked Amnon why he was thin and haggard from morning to morning. Jonadab had noticed the way in which Amnon was becoming lean and haggard but did not know the cause of it. Amnon told him that it was because of his misplaced affection for Tamar, his half-sister, and Absalom's full sister. Jonadab thought that such a condition was not becoming to a king's son. The royal family should have the appearance of being well-fed and properly nourished. Amnon's vexed condition led Jonadab to make his inquiry.

5. *What was Jonadab's scheme? 13:5*

Jonadab advised Amnon to go to bed and pretend that he was ill. David's concern over his condition would bring the king to visit him, and this would afford Amnon an opportunity to make his request. Amnon followed Jonadab's instructions and laid the trap for Tamar. His request for his sister's coming to him to prepare his food might have seemed quite unusual, but David would think it only the whim of a sick man.

6. *How could Amnon carry out such a dastardly plot? 13:6*

There was a bit of plausibility in his request. First, he was sick. Second, anyone would know that a sick man often has peculiar whims especially with regard to food. He simply decided that it was right to grant the sick man's request. The actual preparation of the meat in the house would fill the dwelling with the appetizing aromas and add to the appeal of the food. One of the king's own household might well be more careful in the preparation of the food. The plot seemed logical, and the arrangements were made.

7. *What kind of cakes did Tamar make? 13:7*

Some evidence is gathered from the text to support the belief that the cakes were heart-shaped. The Greek trans-

lation indicates that they were cylindrical-shaped cakes. The original text described the cakes with a word which was at the root of our English word for the heart. Too much cannot be made of this, and it would be a stretching of the actual indication of the text to make them any kind of love-cakes. They were, no doubt, appropriate. The verb used to describe the preparation of the cakes generally means "to boil." The Greek translation has a word which often means to "set fire to," but the translation in the King James is accurate. They were baked, or boiled, and prepared in such a way as to make them tasty and appetizing.

8. *Why did Amnon refuse to eat? 13:9*

Amnon acted very strangely. He must have taken steps to insure that all his servants were gone from the house. If Tamar sent the food to him by the servants, he may have sent it back to her with instructions that these men were to leave, and she was to bring the food into his bedchamber. The fact that she baked the cakes "in his sight" (verse eight) would not mean that he had only one room in his dwelling and that she baked the cakes where he was lying in his bed or that he was in the room where food was prepared. Her being in his house would suffice for the meaning of the phrase. Her pouring them out "before him" might have been done in the room where food was prepared and not necessarily where he was lying.

9. *Why did Tamar yield to Amnon's request? 13:10*

Amnon's refusal to eat the food which was set before him was not an unusual action for a sick man. Once again, he was acting whimsical; she could hardly suspect anything when he asked that she personally feed him his meal. This is in keeping with the way sick people act, often refusing to eat their meals unless it is fed to them by a certain person or in a certain way. By this fiendish scheme, Amnon was able to entice Tamar into his bed-

chamber, and at the same time, be sure that all others were out of the room. When she brought his food to him, he grabbed her, and forced her to lie with him.

10. *Why did Tamar suggest speaking to David? 13:13*

There was nothing particularly effective in Tamar's suggestion that Amnon ask for her hand in marriage from her father, the king. She was probably devising some way to escape for the time. She had remonstrated with Amnon saying that such a crime ought not to be committed in Israel, thereby implying such may have been customary among the Canaanites. She looked upon his actions as folly, but all of this was to no avail. She appealed to Amnon on her own behalf, saying that she would be ashamed if he carried out his intentions. She even told him that he would be as one of the fools in Israel. Amnon refused to listen to her. Since he was a man and stronger than she was, he forced her and lay with her. The description of his crime is similar to that committed by Shechem with Dinah the daughter of Jacob (Genesis 34:2).

Absalom Kills Amnon. 13:15-29

15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.

16 And she said unto him, *There is* no cause: this evil in sending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her.

17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her.

18 And *she had* a garment of divers colors upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins appareled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

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19 And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he *is* thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21 But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.

22 And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

24 And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant.

25 And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

26 Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?

27 But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

29 And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

11. *What were the effects of this sin on the parties affected? 13:15*

The following after-effects of Amnon's sins are typical of those seen in the lives of those who commit similar crimes today:

1. Amnon despised Tamar. With the intensity that he had before seemed to love her, he now hated her. It is usually true that men hate those whom they have injured. Here is proof that lust is not love.
2. Absalom spoke kindly to his sister to comfort her. There was nothing he could do immediately, but he was very angry.
3. David was angry. His hands were tied. He could not punish his son for this crime, when he himself had only recently committed a similar, but worse, one.
4. Tamar was utterly humiliated. She put ashes on her head, tore her beautiful robe, laid her hand on her head, and went away crying. Her sorrow and shame were overwhelming.

Such scenes are often repeated—the criminal hates his victim, the brothers of the wronged sister seek revenge, the parents are angry but helpless, and the victim is shamed.

12. *Why was Amnon's sending Tamar away a greater evil? 13:16*

When Amnon tried to get rid of Tamar, she rebuked him saying that it was worse for him to send her away than to force her and lie with her in the first place. If Amnon's love had been sincere, he would not have treated her this way under any circumstance. Tamar was a very clear-minded girl; and although she knew that it was not customary for a half-brother to marry his half-sister, she would certainly have considered this less of a folly than what Amnon was doing. His abrupt command, "Arise,

be gone," indicates that he was contemptuous of her and that her presence was burdensome to him. He could hardly wait to get rid of her after he had humbled her. His twisted state of mind is further brought out in the fact that he finally called his household servant and commanded him to put Tamar out and to bolt the door so that she could not return. He was thus left alone in the cesspool of sin that he had made for himself.

13. *What was her garment of many colors? 13:18*

Tamar's coat of many colors reminds the Bible reader of the coat which Jacob made for Joseph (Genesis 37:3). Bible translators have understood this description in various ways. Aquila, in his Greek translation, rendered the phrase as describing a long coat with sleeves. It was also viewed this way by Jerome in the Vulgate. Tamar's garment was probably an upper coat reaching to the wrists and ankles and was a distinctive garment of the noblemen and king's daughters. Tamar rent this coat as a sign of her deep grief.

14. *What action did Tamar take? 13:19*

Tamar did not know what to do. In her bewildered state, she left Amnon's house in tears. Like the captives described in Babylon (Ezekiel 27:30), "she cast up dust upon her head." Her beautiful princess' robe was ripped in the customary way of showing deep grief. She held her head as if it were to burst and went through the streets weeping.

15. *Why did Absalom suspect Amnon? 13:20*

Jonadab had been observant of Amnon's strange actions, and it would not be unlikely that Absalom was also aware of something unusual in his conduct. He calls him Amnon, a diminutive of contempt. Absalom asked Tamar if "little Amnon" had forced her. He asked her not to do anything about it, but let him take vengeance.

His motive for asking Tamar to hold her peace, grew out of his desire to prevent Tamar from interfering with his designs. He tried to comfort her by asking her not to regard the thing or to make any plans on her own. Tamar was therefore kept in seclusion in Absalom's house while he sought an opportunity to avenge the crime.

16. *What did David do about the situation? 13:21*

David's conduct reminds one of the conduct of Jacob when Dinah was defiled at Shechem. Jacob held his peace when he heard about the sin and waited until his sons had come in from the field (Genesis 34:5). Jacob seemed more concerned for his reputation and physical safety among the Canaanites and Perizzites than he was for the punishment of the sinners. David was very angry when he heard what had happened to Tamar, but he did nothing about it. Perhaps he felt that he was helpless, since he had committed a similar sin himself. On this account his rebuke of Amnon would be ineffective. The Septuagint has an additional statement indicating that David did not rebuke Amnon because he was his first-born son and he loved him. As a matter of fact, if David had really loved the boy, he would have rebuked him. The father chastens the son whom he loves (Hebrews 12:6, 7). David was probably overindulgent towards his son, especially the one he thought would succeed him to the throne.

17. *Why did Absalom refuse to say anything to Amnon? 13:22*

Absalom was so angry about the crime which was committed and hated Amnon so much that he was afraid to say anything to him either good or bad for fear that he would reveal his intentions to him. His motive for silence would seem to be a desire that his designs would not be suspected, and he kept this silent attitude as he laid plans to kill Amnon.

18. *In what way did Absalom take revenge? 13:23*

Absalom slew Amnon. He did not take revenge personally. He commanded his servants to slay Amnon when his heart was merry with wine and he was not cautious. Amnon was slain at the time of sheep-shearing. Sheep-shearing time was a time of feasting (I Samuel 25:36). Absalom showed himself to be a crafty, cunning, hypocritical sort of fellow. For a long time he hid his anger of heart and spoke softly to Amnon and Tamar. He deceived David.

Absalom was just as guilty of the murder of his brother as if he had taken the life himself. What a man does through his agents may be charged to him.

19. *Why did Absalom invite the king and all his sons? 13:24, 25*

The king's sons were the chief rulers of the land (II Samuel 8:18). The Greek translation again has an additional statement that Absalom asked the king and his sons as well as his servants to go to the sheep-shearing feast. David refused saying that if all went there would be great inconvenience to Absalom. Even though Absalom insisted, David refused to go. He did send him away with his blessing suspecting nothing of Absalom's real motive for holding the feast.

20. *Why should Amnon especially be invited? 13:26, 27*

The request for Amnon's presence seems to have aroused David's suspicion, because he asked why he should go. Absalom did not give a direct reason, according to the record, but he continued to urge that he be allowed to go. It may have been that he asked for him and the other sons to be present since David himself had refused to go. Amnon was the heir-apparent to the throne, and Absalom could ask for his presence especially without arousing too much suspicion. David was satisfied by Absalom's explanation and finally gave his consent. Once again, the Greek translation has a phrase which has not come down

to us in our English translations. This phrase states that Absalom made a feast that was fit for a king.

21. *Why did the king's sons ride on mules? 13:29*

Baal-hazor (verse 23) was in Ephraim, some twenty miles north of Jerusalem. Such a long distance to travel would necessitate the king's sons having some means of transportation. The employment of these animals not only for war (II Samuel 18:9), but also in times of peace was an indication of growing luxury in David's kingdom. Previously the ass had been the customary mount for persons of dignity (Judges 5:19; 10:4; 12:14). The horse was used largely for military purposes. The rearing of hybrid animals was prohibited (Leviticus 19:19). Absalom was especially fond of the mule as a means of transportation and employed it when he made his effort to steal the hearts of the men of Israel. He was riding on a mule when his head was caught in the branches of a tree and he was left suspended (II Samuel 18:9). When Absalom gave the order to kill Amnon and his servants actually killed the crown prince, the other princes might have thought that all were destined to be slain; and for that reason, they all fled immediately.

Absalom Flees to Talmi. 13:30-39

30 And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.

31 Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

32 And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

34 But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hillside behind him.

35 And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.

36 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

37 But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day.

38 So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

39 And *the soul* of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

22. *Why did anyone think that all had been killed? 13:30*

Rumor exaggerated the calamity. Confusion reigned at the feast; and by the time word got to David, twenty miles away, the report was made that Absalom had killed all the king's sons. Such catastrophic news left the king in deep mourning. Like Tamar, David tore his garments and lay on the earth. He was brought low, as he was when his son died. The servants stood by helplessly in a similarly bereaved condition.

23. *How did Jonadab know the truth? 13:32, 33*

Jonadab was deeply involved since he had helped Amnon in the original plot. He may have heard expressions from Absalom's lips which made him certain of how the matter stood. He knew that murder was committed according to

the orders given by Absalom. He did not imply by his report that Absalom had, from the first, avowed his purpose of killing Amnon. As matters had developed, the conclusion was reached by an observant man like Jonadab, and he was correct in what he had surmised.

24. *Why would David "take the thing to his heart"?*

13:33

David might well be expected to blame himself for what had happened. Jonadab was anxious, however, that David know the truth. Only Amnon was dead. It is easy to see that David's punishment for his own sin in slaying Uriah is increasing. David was not able to punish Amnon; therefore a double punishment comes on him for his own sin. His son born to Bathsheba died in infancy, and his heir to the throne was killed by another of David's sons.

25. *Why did Absalom flee to Talmai? 13:37*

In II Samuel 3:3 is the note: (speaking of David's sons) ". . . and the third, Absalom, the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur." Absalom fled to the home of his mother's father, his maternal grandfather. Here he hoped to find protection against any punishment David might seek to mete out to him.

26. *What did David do after Absalom fled? 13:39*

David did not send messengers to bring Absalom back; he did not take any overt action. He longed to go forth himself to Absalom. The verb is in a feminine form, to indicate that David's spirit, or his soul, longed to go forth; and the King James translators rightfully show the insertion of the phrase, "the soul of," in italics, meaning that they supplied this subject of the verb. He wanted to do something. He pined away over it, but he did not do anything immediately.

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1. What was the name of David's daughter? _____
2. Who was her full brother? _____
3. What was the name of David's son who forced her? _____
4. What was the name of David's nephew who encouraged his sinful son? _____
5. What kind of food did David's daughter prepare for his evil son? _____
6. What kind of distinctive garment did she wear? _____
7. How did the girl describe the man's sin? _____
8. At what kind of feast was the son killed? _____
9. By what corruption of the evil son's name did the daughter's brother describe him? _____
10. To what city did Absalom flee? _____