

# David Held Accountable

## 2 Samuel 12

### Lesson Outline

#### I. David Confronted: 2 Samuel 12:1-14

- A. David's Anger: 2 Samuel 12:1-6
- B. David's Accountability: 2 Samuel 12:7-14

#### II. David Chastised: 2 Samuel 12:15-25

- A. David's Affliction: 2 Samuel 12:15-19
- B. David's Answer: 2 Samuel 12:20-25

#### III. David Called Upon: 2 Samuel 12:26-31

- A. David's Awareness: 2 Samuel 12:26-28
- B. David's Achievement: 2 Samuel 12:29-31

### David Confronted

#### 2 Samuel 12:1-14

#### David's Anger: 2 Samuel 12:1-6

##### Nathan's Report

For one year David lived with the guilt of his sin. Perhaps David came to the conclusion that all was fine because the LORD'S judgment was not swift. Evidently he was miserable during this time and his relationship with the LORD was strained (Psalm 51:10, 12). A believer's sinful conduct will hinder fellowship with God. (1 John 1:5-9)

Everything changed when Nathan arrived with a message from the LORD. Being a prophet, Nathan followed God completely. "Prophets make no apologies, nor soften words, nor have respect of persons. They speak to a king as to a peasant – to a rich man as to a pauper."<sup>1</sup> Nathan, also David's friend, was the one man that could deliver the message with power and authority. It is possible the meeting took place in the courtroom before David's servants. The prophet disclosed a troubling account of treachery, which occurred in Israel. The king eagerly listened to the account involving two men.

1. *Rich Man* – he possessed many flocks and herds. Apparently blessed with abundance he had no material needs and few could stand against his power.

---

<sup>1</sup> B. H. Carroll, "An Interpretation of the English Bible, Vol. 5," (Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1947) p. 183

2. *Poor Man* – he possessed only one little ewe lamb, which he loved and raised with his children. The lamb was part of their family and greatly cherished.

One day a traveler came to visit the rich man. Wanting to show his hospitality, the rich man took the poor man's only ewe lamb and slew it for a meal. It was cruel and inconsiderate for this man with plenty to take away all the poor man possessed.

### David's Reaction

David was furious with the rich man. His anger was kindled because of the cruel conduct bestowed upon the poor fellow. David often displayed a generous heart, so his public reaction was not surprising (2 Samuel 9:1, 10:2). However it was interesting.

1. *David acted harsh* – he demanded the rich man be executed for his actions, not according to the law but because he was angered.
2. *David acted honorable* – he demanded the rich man pay back the lamb fourfold, according to the law (Exodus 22:1).
3. *David acted hypocritical* – he was quick to pass judgment on a man that acted similar to his behavior.

David's conscience was seared, so he failed to recognize the similarities between the rich man and himself. Perhaps he did not believe he was capable of such wickedness, if so, he was self-deceived (1 Corinthians 3:18). Many are misled into believing they are good people, when in reality all are filthy sinners before God (Psalm 14:1-3; Romans 3:10, 23). Nathan's simple story was effective. It fit the occasion, since David, who had many wives, took Uriah's one and only wife. It was practical, so David could relate. Finally, it produced an honest verdict from the king. As David found out, it is easy to notice the sin in others and pronounce judgment on them before examining our own life (Matthew 7:2-5).

### **David's Accountability:** 2 Samuel 12:7-14

#### David's Guilt

Looking upon the king, Nathan boldly accused him of being the guilty man. This took courage, seeing that David already killed a man for being in his way, so Nathan's safety was not guaranteed. David may have known what Nathan referred to, if not he was about to find out. Nathan reminded the king of his situation. David had been blessed by God, yet he went against the LORD and lived in sin.

1. *Power over Saul's house* – he received all that belonged to Saul, including his wife (1 Samuel 14:50). He did not necessarily take Saul's wife but had authority over her.
2. *Power over the nation* – he was made king over all Israel and received all that came with this power and authority, including a nice house, servants, fields, flocks, herds, etc.

Had David required more, the LORD would have provided (Philippians 4:19). Had he asked for more, the LORD would have given it to him (John 16:24). Instead David despised the LORD'S command, referring to two of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20.

1. *David was guilty of adultery (Exodus 20:14)* – he took Uriah's wife Bathsheba. Marrying a widowed woman is not wrong but marrying the widow of a man one has slain is evil. Their marriage appeared legal but before God it was morally incorrect.
2. *David was guilty of murder (Exodus 20:13)* – he did not do this with his own hands but arranged for it to be done by the Ammonites.

David had no need to take someone else's wife but when lusts are indulged they are difficult to control. His polygamous living encouraged him to fulfill his fleshly desires. Be careful of allowing any sin into your life. It may appear harmless but it eventually leads to destruction (James 1:15).

### David's Grief

David's punishment was revealed. Violence and bloodshed would fill his house, leading to the death of many. One would even make great troubles, referring to Absalom's rebellion, which produced a short civil war (2 Samuel 15). The king's wives would also be humiliated before the nation (2 Samuel 16:21-22). David's sin was done in secret but the chastisement would be public. The entire nation would witness the difficulties and succeeding generations would know of his hardships.

Instead of making excuses or blaming others, David accepted responsibility for his conduct (Psalm 51). He confessed his sin, sought the LORD, and was forgiven immediately (Psalm 86:5; 1 John 1:9). His sin was put away or removed (Psalm 103:12). Yes his sin was great but God's forgiveness was greater. David accepted the punishment from the LORD.

1. *David was faithful* – he continued to seek the LORD and worship Him.
2. *David was grateful* – he realized he was unworthy of anything, so he was thankful for what the LORD allowed.
3. *David was content* – he understood the LORD was in control.

David was forgiven but the consequences remained (Galatians 6:7). Though his troubles were not removed, his fellowship with the LORD was restored and he would not be forsaken (Hebrews 13:5).

## David Chastised

2 Samuel 12:15-25

### **David's Affliction:** 2 Samuel 12:15-19

#### **David's Child Became Sick**

The LORD struck the child so it was sick. Some struggle with this verse, but remember since all belongs to the LORD He is able to give and take life (Colossians 1:16-17). Being the Almighty Creator, the LORD is obligated to nobody (Romans 2:11). Be thankful He graciously gave you life and sustains it. This verse also reminds us that illnesses and deaths of infants and children provide proof of original sin and the sinful nature inherited (Romans 5:12).

David went before the LORD and prayed for his child. Evidently he hoped the LORD would allow the child to live as a token of His grace. The king fasted and lied upon the ground, refusing to return home and eat. His pain and anguish were great. Knowing the child was dying due to his sin probably made it more difficult for David. It is likely Bathsheba remained over the child while David sought the LORD.

#### **David's Child Died**

After seven days of sickness the child died. David's servants feared to tell David because they were uncertain of his reaction. Since he was greatly distressed they believed he would act worse after hearing the news. David noticed the servants talking and understood something was wrong. After inquiring, he was told that his child had died.

### **David's Answer:** 2 Samuel 12:20-25

#### **David Continued**

To the surprise of many, instead of continuing to mourn, David arose from the ground and immediately went about his life.

1. *David washed and changed his clothes* – he prepared himself physically before he worshiped the LORD. Our clothing displays our respect for what we are doing.
2. *David worshiped the LORD* – he loved the LORD and nothing would change that.
3. *David went home and ate food* – he ate after he worshiped. His priorities were correct.

David's demeanor baffled his servants. Noticing he fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, they expected his behavior to worsen with the news of the child's death. David explained his conduct. Knowing the LORD was powerful and able to do all things, he was hoping the LORD would graciously spare his child (Mark 10:27). When the child died, nothing could be done to bring him back (Hebrews 9:27). No amount of mourning, weeping, or praying will affect those that have entered eternity. David understood the dead could be remembered and honored but not reached. David

recognized the situation, his child was removed but not gone, and David would some day go to him (1 Thessalonians 4:13). A correct understanding of life and death provides comfort when grieving for the departed.

### David Comforted Bathsheba

David went to Bathsheba, who was probably just as devastated. It was her child as well as David's. She was probably comforted with God's promises of forgiveness and future blessings (Psalm 119:50). Bathsheba was called David's wife. Their actions were in the past and they were to move forward (Philippians 3:13-14). When the LORD forgives we are free to continue (John 8:36).

The LORD blessed them with a son. God did not replace their child but gave them another one. David named him Solomon, which means peaceful (1 Chronicles 22:9). The LORD loved Solomon (2 Samuel 7:14). Some erringly believe Solomon's birth provides license to sin, when it is actually a picture of God's grace. The LORD had already addressed their sin, chastising them when He took their child. In allowing David and Bathsheba to have Solomon, He graciously blessed them (Psalm 84:11).

## David Called Upon

2 Samuel 12:26-31

### David's Awareness: 2 Samuel 12:26-28

#### Joab's Success

Joab and the Israelites successfully besieged Rabbah and overcame the city. Rabbah, the royal city or capital of the Ammonites, was located in a narrow valley along the Jabbok River. The city sat on both banks of the river with the north banks being the home of the royalty.<sup>2</sup> The section on the southern banks was considered the "lower city" and was probably the area Joab took.

#### Joab's Message

Joab sent messengers to David concerning their success and encouraged him to join them so they could complete the siege. It was customary for the conquering king to enter the fallen city and receive credit for the victory. If David delayed, Joab would be credited for taking Rabbah. When leaders fail to lead, someone else will. This would negatively affect his standing before the people and other nations.

Joab's motives are unknown. Some believe he was threatening David while others believe he was showing respect. Either way, David should have been with the army instead of remaining in Jerusalem. Once again, we see his neglect of responsibility nearly produced more problems.

---

<sup>2</sup> John Lange, "Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Samuel," (Michigan: Zondervan, 1951) p. 475

## **David's Achievement: 2 Samuel 12:29-31**

### **David Directed the Israelites**

The king gathered the Israelites and marched to Rabbah looking to secure another victory for the LORD'S nation. David continued to lead instead of quitting because of his mistake. This was possible because David was forgiven (1 John 1:9). The LORD planned to use David for His glory (Romans 8:28).

David defeated the Ammonites, took the king's crown and placed it upon his head. Hanun could have kept his crown had he not heeded the foolish words of his princes. The crown was luxurious, made of gold and adorned with precious stones. According to some, its weight was equivalent to at least 100 English pounds.<sup>3</sup> David also took a large spoil from the city.

### **David Dealt With the Ammonites**

David ordered the Ammonites to be executed by different methods, with some slain by the saw, others placed in irons, some by axes, and some in the brickkiln. Obviously it was not all of the Ammonites. It may have been the soldiers, the leaders, or those involved in the humiliation of David's servants. His actions may have been determined by the Biblical direction concerning Israel and war (Deuteronomy 20:10-14). Or David chose to apply the law of retaliation (Exodus 21:23-25; Leviticus 24:19-20).

Because of this, David is often accused of brutality. It must be remembered the idolatrous Ammonites were known for their wicked cruelty (1 Samuel 11:1-2; Jeremiah 41:6-7; Judges 7:11-12). They sacrificed their children in fire to their false god Moloch (Leviticus 18:21; 2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35). They humiliated the Israelite ambassadors, hired mercenaries to destroy Israel, and fought until they could fight no longer. Could David have been merciful towards them, perhaps, but he already extended his kindness and was rebuffed (2 Samuel 10). It is difficult to accuse David of brutality while living in a nation that aborts thousands of defenseless and innocent babies yearly.

This was the last war David fought against Israel's enemies. He was extremely successful. From this point on David would deal with inner turmoil instead of living in peace.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 476