

Second Samuel

Lesson 14

“A Father’s Failure Leads to A Fractured Family”

[From the ending of lesson 13: Thrown through the door, Tamar drenched herself with ashes from the very fire she had cooked Amnon’s meal. She tore her clothing in a sign of grief. If David could have foreseen all this, he would not have taken Bathsheba the way he did. This act came because of David’s act with Bathsheba and his premeditated murder of Uriah. Indeed, David’s folly was followed by shame. Amnon’s folly was followed by shame. For Tamar, she could not hold back tears of grief.]

d) Absalom’s Rescue (13:20-23)

Outside, Absalom found his sister tattered, torn, and in tears. So we come to Absalom’s rescue of his sister, Tamar. Verse 20. *“Then Absalom, her brother said to her, ‘Has Amnon, your brother been with you? But now keep silent, my sister, he is your brother; do not take this matter to heart.’”*

So Tamar remained and was desolate in her brother Absalom’s house. ²¹ *Now when King David heard of all these matters, he was very angry.*

²² *But Absalom did not speak to Amnon either good or bad; for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.”*

Absalom did the right thing. He protected Tamar from being a public spectacle if she became pregnant. He also protected her from any further advances from his brother Amnon. It is human nature to sin, become sick of sin, and run from sin, but sin will call a human back to the same sin. I have no doubt that had Tamar been out and about, Amnon would have wanted to retake her. Absalom stopped that possibility. Even Tamar’s father heard of the violation. He was angry. He had the absolute authority as the father, despite that he was the king, to inflict a penalty on Amnon for his sin, but David stayed silent, except for being angry about what Amnon did. Thus, the title of this lesson, *“A Father’s Failure Leads to A Fractured Family.”*

Absalom was silent, too, for two years. But he had not forgotten what Amnon did to his sister.

e) Absalom’s Reception (13:23)

Absalom just waited. He waited for his kingly father to act, but his kingly father did not act. His kingly father did nothing for his daughter, who had been raped. His father failed the family. So we come to Absalom’s reception. Absalom had a plan involving all the family of David’s sons. Verse 23. *“Now it came about after two full years that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king’s sons.”* How many sons were at the reception in Ephraim? Ephraim sat at least twenty miles from

Jerusalem. We are not sure, but all nineteen were invited. All nineteen were probably there.

2. Absalom Avenges Tamar (13:24-39)

a) Absalom's Revenge (13:24-39)

The plan was in place. At Baal-hazor we are told how Absalom avenges Tamar. Verse 24. *“Absalom came to the king and said, ‘Behold now, your servant has sheepshearers; please let the king and his servants go with your servant.’”*

²⁵ *But the king said to Absalom, ‘No, my son, we should not all go, for we will be burdensome to you.’ Although he urged him, he would not go, but blessed him.*

²⁶ *Then Absalom said, ‘If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us.’ And the king said to him, ‘Why should he go with you?’* ²⁷ *But when Absalom urged him, he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.”*

²⁸ *Absalom commanded his servants, saying, ‘See now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, ‘Strike Amnon,’ then put him to death. Do not fear; have not I myself commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant.’”*

²⁹ *The servants of Absalom did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose and each mounted his mule and fled.”*

Absalom, the avenger, had avenged his sister, Tamar, and all their brothers fled from Baal-hazor in fear of Absalom. Amnon was dead. Absalom had lost his trust in father to do what was right with the family. As the brother of Tamar, Absalom did what his father should have done.

b) Jonadab's Report (13:30-33)

It did not take long for the report of Amnon's death at the hands of Absalom to make it back to Jerusalem and the ear of David. But the initial report was wrong. Jonadab's report was right. Verse 30. *“Now it was while they were on the way that the report came to David, saying, ‘Absalom has struck down all the king's sons, and not one of them is left.’”*

³¹ *Then the king arose, tore his clothes and lay on the ground; and all his servants were standing by with clothes torn.*

³² *Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, responded, ‘Do not let my lord suppose they have put to death all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead; because by the intent of Absalom this has been determined since the day that he violated his sister Tamar.*

³³ *Now therefore, do not let my lord the king take the report to heart, namely, ‘all the king's sons are dead,’ for only Amnon is dead.”*

How Jonadab knew Absalom's plan, we are not told. Was Jonadab at Baal-hazor with Absalom and the sons? We are not told. However, it seems that Jonadab knew Absalom's plan before it took place, and Jonadab did not need to be in Baal-hazor to understand what happened. Absalom did not have a hatred for all his brothers; he only had a hatred for Amnon.

c) Absalom's Retreat (13:34-36)

Down at Baal-hazor, we are told of Absalom's retreat. Undoubtedly, he feared for his life and did not want to face his kingly father. Verse 34. *"Now Absalom had fled. And the young man who was the watchman raised his eyes and looked, and behold, many people were coming from the road behind him by the side of the mountain."*

³⁵ *Jonadab said to the king, "Behold, the king's sons have come; according to your servant's word, so it happened."*

³⁶ *As soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came and lifted their voices and wept; and also the king and all his servants wept very bitterly."*

David must have been comforted when he saw seventeen of his sons coming up the road, which supported Jonadab's report that they were safe. Amnon was not with the seventeen. He was dead. Absalom was not with the seventeen; he was in full retreat. Where did he go?

d) David's Remorse (13:37-39)

As this chapter comes to a close, we learn where Absalom retreated to in his haste after having his brother killed. But we are also told of David's remorse. Verse 37. *"Now Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammibud, the king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day."*

³⁸ *So Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur, and was there three years.* ³⁹ *The heart of King David longed to go out to Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead."*

We need to get this right. Who did David mourn for every day? It was not for Amnon; it was for Absalom. Absalom was safe with Talmai in Geshur. Geshur was located northeast of the Sea of Galilee in an area called the Golan Heights today. The area belonged to the tribe of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan River. Absalom was safe there; he stayed there for three years. As the passage says, David wanted to see Absalom in Geshur because Absalom had brought great comfort to David by killing Amnon. Absalom did what David would not do. The law was clear. *"For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people."* (Leviticus 18:29). David knew that Amnon had to be cut off from the nation of Israel. He did not want to do it and was comforted that Absalom had the fortitude to keep the law of the LORD. But David's remorse was because he knew this sin was because of his sin with Bathsheba, along with his failure to judge and punish Amnon, would not go well for David and his relationship with Absalom. David had failed as a father and now his family was fractured. More trouble for David was on the way. Next, Joab, his commander, will make things worse.