

# Second Samuel

## Lesson 12

*“Isn’t It Strange that Some People Cannot Forgive a Sinner Forgiven by the LORD?”*

### 2. David’s Child (12:15b-23)

#### a) A Penalty for the King’s Decision (12:15b-20)

The nine months of pregnancy will soon come to pass, and as nature moves moment by moment, Bathsheba gives birth to a son. You cannot stop the progress of good or evil that you have done in this life. Both good and evil have a timeline that they must follow. Good drags along good. Evil drags along evil. It is why we must be careful what we do and say. We should focus on always doing good because good will continue to bless everyone. We must avoid evil at every turn because evil will continue to produce evil that brings heartache to self and others. David’s child, conceived in evil adultery comes with a penalty for the king’s decision. Verse 15b. *“Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s widow bore to David, so that he was very sick. <sup>16</sup> David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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!” <sup>19</sup> 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.” <sup>20</sup> 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.”*

For a week after the birth of the son of Bathsheba, David was so distraught that he could not eat.

The Scripture word for not eating is called *“fasting.”* In the Scripture, fasting is always associated with grief, mourning, and sin. Nothing ever comes for good from *“fasting”* in the stories in the Scripture. It is an element used in the worship of every false religion and the worship of every false god, and Israel learned it in Egypt. However, it is not mentioned in Scripture until Judges 20:26, in the last event that will conclude the book, about 3,353 years after the creation of Adam, more than halfway in the story timeline from creation until now in AD 2023. It seems that fasting for a religious purpose would have shown up in Judaism sometime before the last story in Judges, but it does not. Fasting is not for some holy purpose in the Scripture as some try to present it. Had it been a part of Old Testament worship, the LORD would have included it in the requirements for worship in the book of Leviticus, but it is not there. It is mentioned in Scripture when grief, because of sin, is so great that hunger is not present. Later in the nation of Israel, it will be used so Jezebel can sin against Nabal. In Babylon, Daniel and the three Hebrews will refuse to eat because the food was an offering to a false god. But back in this place in the story line, once the child was born, David knew the penalty. He knew the child’s fate; He knew it was his fault. He knew the child would die. Nathan knew it too. But notice Nathan is not around. David is facing this burden for his sin alone, and the child will pay the cost. Finally, the child died. The LORD’s verdict was over. The first payment for David’s sin was paid. A life for a life. A child’s life for the sin of the father. What greater pain could consume the father than to know it was his fault, that his child died at seven days old? David, forgiven by the LORD, stood to his feet, bathed, dressed, ate. To his servants, it seemed odd. The child was dead; shouldn’t the King continue to mourn? Let’s ask the question again, *“Can Someone’s Sin Really Cause a Lifetime of Trouble for Others?”* David’s sin has caused a lifetime of trouble for Bathsheba, taken the life of Uriah, taken the life of Bathsheba’s child. David knew it. Bathsheba knew it. Nathan knew it. David’s servants knew it. The kingdom knew it. It cannot be covered over. This sin has screamed

from the pages of God's Holy Writ for centuries and it will always be there. The stain of David's sin cannot be washed away even though it was forgiven by the LORD. It did not affect just David. Sin never affects just one person. The whole family pays the price for the actions of one.

#### b) A Reaction for the King's Decision (12:20-23)

Upon the death of the child, the servants gave a reaction for the king's decision that they did not expect. Verse 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.'"* <sup>22</sup> 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.'"* <sup>23</sup> 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."

David knew that while the child was still alive, he could petition the LORD for the child's life; that is what David did but to no avail. The LORD had proclaimed the verdict on the king, and the child could not live. He understood eternity also. The child could not return to this earth, but one day, David could go to be with him. He understood that the child belonged to the LORD and the LORD had him safe in the bosom of Abraham, awaiting the arrival of David one day. It would not be long. David would join him in about thirty-two years. David had mourned all he needed to mourn and now it was time to take care of others.

David's servants did not understand his fast return to business as normal. He had not grieved long enough. He had not pined away in sorrow long enough. He has forgiven by the LORD, but his servant could not forgive him. *"Isn't It Strange that Some People Cannot Forgive a Sinner Forgiven by the LORD?"* It starts with little conversation interaction. They will ask a simple question like, *"What is this thing that you have done?"* They were proud of him while the boy was alive and sick. That David did right. But when David stood to his feet and began to move on with his life, they could not forgive him for such decision. *"Isn't It Strange that Some People Cannot Forgive a Sinner Forgiven by the LORD?"* This was the first chunk out of their loyalty to David. It would continue to chip away until all of David's integrity is gone in their eyes. No matter what David said, regardless of his logical explanation, nothing he said would satisfy them. We will see how this plays out in David's life as we continue through the Scripture. But David was not the only parent of this child.

#### 3. David's Wife (12:24-25)

As for Bathsheba, she had lost the child too. We come to David's wife and what he did for her. Verse 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"* <sup>25</sup> *and sent word through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD'S sake."*

We know this new child as Solomon, the son who will take the place of David one day. That was the name given by David and Bathsheba, and it means *peaceful*. But the LORD called him *"Jedidiah"* which means *loved by Jehovah*. What does it mean when the Scripture says, *"for the LORD's sake."* It is not what you might think. By the time Wycliffe and Tyndale used the word *"sake"* in this place in the Scripture, it meant *out of consideration or regard for a person or thing*. It was out of consideration for David, and most likely David's seven days of contrition before the LORD, that the LORD named Solomon Jedidiah or *loved of God*. As it turns out, in the book of First Kings, the LORD will be so upset with Solomon and the LORD would desire to rip the kingdom of Israel apart, but the LORD will not do that during the life of Solomon because of His consideration of David. Nevertheless, after the death of Solomon, the kingdom will be ripped into two parts within a year.

#### 4. David's War (12:26-31)

The compiler backtracks in time to tell us about David's war. It was at the beginning of this war that David found himself in trouble with Bathsheba. It was in this war that Uriah was killed. Remember the words of chapter 11:1, *"Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle,*

*that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem.”* The compiler did not interrupt the story of David’s sin with Bathsheba to tell the details of this war, but now he returns to tell us about Joab’s threat to David and his need for reinforcement. While Bathsheba was finding out that she was pregnant with David, David was faced with the call of Joab for help. Verse 26. *“Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the sons of Ammon and captured the royal city. 27 Joab sent messengers to David and said, “I have fought against Rabbah, I have even captured the city of waters. 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.” 29 So David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah, fought against it and captured it. 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. 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.”*

The Chronicles reports the following in chapter 20:1b – 3. *“Joab led the Israelite army in successful attacks against the land of the Ammonites. In the process he laid siege to the city of Rabbah, attacking and destroying it. However, David stayed behind in Jerusalem. 2 Then David went to Rabbah and removed the crown from the king’s head, and it was placed on his own head. The crown was made of gold and set with gems, and he found that it weighed seventy-five pounds. David took a vast amount of plunder from the city. 3 He also made slaves of the people of Rabbah and forced them to labor with saws, iron picks, and iron axes. That is how David dealt with the people of all the Ammonite towns. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.*

First Chronicles 20, verse 1, proves that this battle belongs with the timing of David’s sin with Bathsheba because *“David stayed behind in Jerusalem”* just as the story began with David’s situation when he saw Bathsheba and invited her over to his place.

We are thankful for the Chronicles passage because if Second Samuel was all we had, we would have concluded that David lined up the Ammonites and killed them all with the saw, sharp instruments, and axes and burned them in the kilns. However, that is not the case. The Chronicles reveals that David used the Ammonites as forced labor with those tools to build projects for the nation of Israel. The text calls them *“slaves,”* but the law prohibits slaves within the nation. No Israelite can own of slave. These Ammonites were not slaves who simply worked for food, drink, and prolong life. As we will find out, during the reign of Solomon, he will also use forced labor from men of the surrounding nations that were under tribute to Israel. These men would come to Israel in monthly shifts, earn money, and return to their homes to be with their families before returning to Israel at a scheduled time, for another shift. When involved with the nation of Israel, the word *“slaves”* basically means men who were hired to work on projects by the government and paid. They worked in month-long shifts, and then returned to their homes in their own countries to care for the welfare and business of the family.

We have spoken about David being the crowned king of Israel many times thus far in this book. We first heard about a crown when the Amalekite showed up in Ziklag with Saul’s crown. We know David became the anointed king of Judah in the following days, but we were never told that David actually wore a crown until this point in chapter 12, where David puts the crown of the king of Ammon on his head. It was a beautiful crown of gold, filled with gemstones, and weighed seventy-five pounds. It is hard to believe that David would have worn such a heavy crown daily. Why would a king wear such a heavy crown daily? No doubt he donned the crown on special occasions. Be that as it may, we might gain some insight into David’s demeanor when this crown was given to him. When in sin, the LORD always allows the sin to blossom in full before He brings correction. David had already sinned with Bathsheba before he received this crown. From what we know about David in First Samuel and to this point in Second Samuel, we would have thought that David would have shunned such a gaudy crown, not wanting to draw attention to himself. But David took this crown of

another country and made it his own, very much out of character. But David was also very much out of character when he stole Bathsheba for his own. We are like that, too, when we are drenched in sin. People around us know something is going on because our character changes. Sin changes our character. When in sin, our character does not change in just one area but many areas of our lives. Sin begets sin. Sin enforces sin. Sin attracts sin. Sin prolongs sin. But the LORD will only let sin live for a season, and then it will be revealed as sin to all in broad daylight. Many of us have seen such in people's lives engulfed in sin. We cannot put our finger on the problem, but we will say, "time will tell." For those of us who have lived many years, we have come to know that the adage "time will tell" is true. Time will tell, and others say, "it will all come out in the wash." The LORD will ensure that sin is revealed to the discredit of the proud gaudy, crowned sinner.

Joab was furious with David. Maybe he was furious and rightly so. Joab was leading the battle that David should have been leading as king. It was David's place. But rather being where he was supposed to be, David was where he ought not to be, and that took him deep into adultery and sin. Joab actually called David on his sin. Joab actually threatened to take the nation's glory for defeating the Ammonites. Joab actually decided to capture the city and rename it "Joab." It may not have set well with David, but Joab did, in fact, motivate David to step back into the role of king and out of the role of adulterer. Joab was not willing to forgive David. *"Isn't It Strange that Some People Cannot Forgive a Sinner Forgiven by the LORD?"* Joab may have been right. Had David been where he was supposed to be, with Joab on the battlefield, David would not have caused a lifetime of trouble for others.