



LESSON EIGHT

Man's Failure and God's Punishment

Scripture Reading:

2 Samuel 12:15-31 (Section 1 and 2)

- 12:15 Then Nathan went to his house. And Jehovah struck the child whom Uriah's wife bore to David, and he was very sick.
- 12:16 And David besought God for the child; and David fasted and went in and spent all night lying on the ground.
- 12:17 And the elders of his house stood over him to raise him from the ground; but he did not want to, nor would he eat food with them.
- 12:18 And on the seventh day the child died. And David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, While the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to our voice; how then can we tell him that the child is dead? He will do himself some harm.
- 12:19 And David saw that his servants were whispering, and David perceived that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.
- 12:20 Then David rose up from the ground and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went to the house of Jehovah and worshipped. Then he went to his house; and when he requested it, they set food before him, and he ate.
- 12:21 And his servants said to him, What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but as soon as the child died, you rose up and ate bread.
- 12:22 And he said, While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I thought, Who knows? Jehovah may be gracious to me, and the child may live.
- 12:23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not come back to me.
- 12:24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife and went in unto her and lay with her. And she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And Jehovah loved him;
- 12:25 And He sent word through Nathan the prophet and called his name Jedidiah for Jehovah's sake.
- 12:26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon and took the royal city.
- 12:27 And Joab sent messengers to David and said, I have fought against Rabbah; indeed I have taken the city of water.
- 12:28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people, and encamp against the city, and take it; otherwise I myself will take the city, and it will be called by my name.
- 12:29 So David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah and fought against it and took it.
- 12:30 And he took the crown of their king from off his head. And the weight of it was a talent of gold, and it had precious stones; and it was put upon David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city, a very great amount.
- 12:31 And he brought out the people who were in it and set them under saws and iron cutting tools and iron axes and made them pass through the brick kilns; and thus did he do to all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 13:1-22 (Section 3)

- 13:1 And some time after this, it so happened that Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.
- 13:2 And Amnon was so distraught that he made himself sick because of Tamar his sister; for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her.
- 13:3 Now Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very crafty man.
- 13:4 And he said to him, Why are you, O son of the king, so downcast morning after morning? Will you not tell me? And Amnon said to him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

13:5 And Jonadab said to him, Lie down on your bed, and pretend to be sick; and when your father comes to see you, tell him, Please let Tamar my sister come and give me bread to eat, and let her make me food in my sight that I may see it and eat from her hand.

13:6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, Please let Tamar my sister come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat them from her hand.

13:7 Then David sent word home to Tamar, saying, Go now to your brother Amnon's house, and make him food.

13:8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes.

13:9 And she took the pan and emptied it before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, Have all the men go out from me. And all the men went out from him.

13:10 And Amnon said to Tamar, Bring the food into my room so that I may eat from your hand. And Tamar took the cakes that she had made and brought them to Amnon her brother in his room.

13:11 And when she brought them near to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, Come lie with me, my sister.

13:12 And she said to him, No, my brother. Do not force me, for such a thing should not be done in Israel. Do not commit this folly.

13:13 And where will I carry my shame? And you, you will be like one of the foolish men in Israel. Now therefore, speak to the king, I beg you; for he will not withhold me from you.

13:14 But he would not listen to her voice. And being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.

13:15 Then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred, for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, Rise up and go.

13:16 But she said to him, Do not cause this greater wrong by sending me away, greater than the other that you have done to me. But he would not listen to her.

13:17 And he called his young man who served him and said, Send this woman away from me outside, and bolt the door behind her.

13:18 Now she had a long garment with sleeves, for the virgin daughters of the king dressed themselves in such robes. So his servant brought her outside and bolted the door behind her.

13:19 And Tamar put ashes upon her head and rent the long garment with sleeves that was upon her, and she put her hand on her head and went off, crying aloud as she went.

13:20 Then Absalom her brother said to her, Has Amnon your brother been with you? But be quiet now, my sister. He is your brother; do not take this thing to heart. And Tamar remained in her brother Absalom's house, desolate.

13:21 And when King David heard about all these things, he was very angry.

13:22 But Absalom did not speak anything good or evil to Amnon, for Absalom hated Amnon because he had forced Tamar his sister.

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. What is God intending to build in His eternal economy?
2. What is the cause of David's failure?
3. What are God's punishments revealed in the books of Samuel upon David?

Section 2:

1. What is the warning to us from the account of God's punishing judgment on David?
2. What happened to the sons born to David of Uriah's wife?

Section 3:

1. What is the source of the many evils taking place among David's family?
2. What are the lessons that we can learn from here?

I. SOVEREIGNTY AND GOD'S ECONOMY

The books of Samuel unveil God's sovereignty and God's economy. God is sovereign; He is behind everything and everyone. He has the full capacity to carry out what He wants according to the desire of His heart and according to His eternal economy.

God desires to work Himself in Christ into His chosen people, making Himself and them one organic entity. This means that the processed and consummated Triune God is building Himself in Christ into the intrinsic being of His chosen people, in order to have a constitution that is both divine and human. Such an entity is called the kingdom of God, the organism of the Triune God, and the organic Body of Christ. Whereas God is building such an entity, many of those who are spiritually blind are endeavoring to build up for themselves a monarchy within the divine kingdom.

II. MAN'S FAILURE

The books of Samuel also unveil man's failure. David, a man according to God's heart, failed in the matter of the lust of the flesh. David's defect was that he did not restrict his flesh. When he was crowned in Hebron at thirty years of age, he already had at least six wives (2 Sam. 3:2-5). Later, he abused his kingship by murdering Uriah and robbing him of his wife.

In His creation God ordained that man have one wife so that man may have godly children (Mal. 2:14-15). However, some men broke this principle. For instance, Gideon, one of the judges of Israel, had many wives (Judg. 8:30). Boaz, an important ancestor in the genealogy of Christ, was a good pattern because he controlled the lust of his flesh (Ruth 3). Samuel was also a good example. His mother consecrated him to God as a Nazarite, and he kept the vow of his mother throughout his life. David, on the contrary, even though he was a man according to God's heart, had a great failure in the matter of the lust of the flesh.

III. GOD'S PUNISHMENT

In addition to man's failure, the books of Samuel reveal God's punishment. God exercised

a severe punishment upon David because his sin was very evil.

A. The Change in the Behavior of David's Children Teaching Us to Fear God

After David's failure many evils, including incest, murder, and rebellion, took place among his family. It seemed that, after David's failure, the behavior of his children changed. This change is seen particularly in the case of David's son Absalom. Absalom killed his brother Ammon because he had defiled Absalom's sister, and then he rebelled against his father David, even seeking to kill him. The source of this unprecedented evil was David's indulgence in the lust of the flesh.

The change that took place with David's children should teach us to fear God. We must learn the lesson to have a holy fear toward God and to tremble before Him. Whether our children will be good or bad is altogether up to God. What we are in the sight of God will affect our children. Furthermore, God's chastisement and His governmental dealing with those who love Him always affect their children.

B. There Being No Peace in David's Family or in the Kingdom of Israel

In God's punishment, the first child born of the wife of Uriah died (2 Sam. 12:18). In God's sovereign mercy, another child was born of her. The name given to him by God was Jedidiah, which means "beloved of Jehovah" (v. 25). David gave him the name Solomon, which means "peaceful" (v. 24). This indicates that David expected to have a peaceful time. But from that time there was no peace in David's family or in the entire kingdom of Israel. Solomon's kingship had a wonderful beginning, but the same thing happened with him as with his father, and his end was pitiful. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (1 Kings 11:3). His pagan wives brought their idols with them and turned Solomon's heart away from God (vv. 4, 8).

C. God Being Just as Well as Merciful

Our God is merciful, but He is also just. God loved David, but because of his sin David lost his standing and position and eleven of the twelve tribes. Only the tribe of Judah remained with David (2 Sam. 20:1-2). After Solomon's

reign the kingdom was divided, and eventually Judah and Israel were taken into captivity. The children of Israel lost their nation and the land of their fathers; they were scattered around the globe; and they were persecuted and killed. Today, although they have a narrow strip of land near the Mediterranean Sea, they have no peace with their neighbors.

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D. Judgment in the History of the Church

If we trace the history of the church, we will see that what has happened during the past nineteen centuries matches the four matters found in the books of Samuel: God's sovereignty, God's economy, man's failure, and God's punishing judgment. In chapters two and three of Revelation, we see the church under God's judgment. This judgment will consummate in chapter seventeen, with the judgment of Babylon the Great. As we consider this matter of God's judgment, we need to be very conscious of what God is and of what our response should be.

IV. PUNISHING JUDGMENT ON DAVID BEING WRITTEN AS A WARNING TO US TODAY

The account of God's punishing judgment on David is written as a warning to us today (1 Cor. 10:11). We should read this account seriously in the presence of God. This account warns us that the indulgence of the flesh is a serious thing. David was tempted simply by a glance and then he failed to restrict himself.

In contacting the opposite sex, we in the Lord's recovery need to be sanctified and separated unto God. The evil concerning sex is very contagious. We must exercise our spirit to overcome our flesh and our old man. This must not be a mere teaching; it must be a practice in our daily life.

All the saints, especially the young ones, should search their hearts and make a strong resolution of heart (Judg. 5:15-16) never to go the way of the indulgence of the flesh. Our God is living, and Christ is real. With Christ as the life-giving Spirit, everything is real, but apart from Him everything is vanity of vanities. The Spirit is moving within us in a very gentle way. We need to say, "Lord Jesus, I love You, I need

You, and I receive You." If we say this, He will be our Savior and our dynamic salvation. As the pneumatic Christ, He will save us, preserve us, and protect us from the contamination of this age, so that we may keep the glory that we have gained.

V. THE DEATH OF THE CHILD BORN OF URIAH'S WIFE

In 12:15b-23 we are told of the death of the child born to David of Uriah's wife.

A. Jehovah Striking the Child with Heavy Sickness

David besought God for the child with fasting, spending all the night lying on the ground (v. 16).

B. David Beseeching God for the Child

Because David the king had power and because he could have misused this power to kill Nathan the prophet, Nathan was careful in speaking to David. Instead of directly condemning David, Nathan told him a parable which led him to condemn himself for what he had done in murdering Uriah and robbing him of his wife (vv. 1b-7a). When David heard about the rich man who took the poor man's ewe lamb, David's "anger was greatly kindled against the man. And he said to Nathan, As Jehovah lives, the man who has done this is worthy of death; and he shall restore the ewe lamb fourfold because he has done this thing and because he had no pity" (vv. 5-6). Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man" (v. 7a).

C. The Child Dying and David Being Released

On the seventh day the child died and David was released (vv. 17-23). When David realized that the child had died, he rose up from the ground, washed and anointed himself, changed his clothes, and went into the house of Jehovah and worshipped.

V. THE BIRTH OF SOLOMON

In verses 24 and 25 we have a word regarding the birth of Solomon.

A. David Comforting Bath-sheba His Wife, and She Bearing a Son

David comforted Bath-sheba his wife. She bore him a son, and he called his name Solomon, which means “peaceful” (v. 24a).

B. Jehovah Loving Solomon

Jehovah loved Solomon, sent word through Nathan the prophet, and called his name Jedidiah for Jehovah’s sake (vv. 24b-25). The name Jedidiah means “beloved of Jehovah.”

VI. DAVID’S CONQUEST OVER THE CHILDREN OF AMMON

Verses 26 through 31 speak of David’s conquest over the children of Ammon.

A. Through His Captain Joab

This conquest of the children of Ammon was through David’s captain Joab (vv. 26-29).

B. Robbing the King of Ammon of His Crown

David robbed the king of Ammon of his crown, the weight of which was a talent of gold. David also brought forth the spoil of the city, a very great amount (v. 30).

C. David’s Dealing with the Cities of the Children of Ammon

In dealing with the cities of the children of Ammon, David set the people under saws, iron cutting tools, and iron axes and made them pass through the brick kilns (v. 31).

----- [SECTION 3] -----

VII. THE INCEST OF AMNON THE SON OF DAVID WITH HIS SISTER TAMAR

Second Samuel 13:1-22 is an account of the incest of Amnon the son of David with his sister Tamar.

A. Through the Craft of Jonadab, Amnon’s Cousin

The incest of Amnon was carried out through the craft of Jonadab, Amnon’s cousin (vv. 3-14).

B. Amnon Turning to Hate Tamar and Chasing Her Away

After committing incest with Tamar, Amnon turned to hate her and chased her away (vv. 15-19).

C. Tamar’s Brother Absalom Discovering the Incest

Tamar’s brother Absalom discovered the incest, and she remained in his house. When David heard about all these things, he was very angry. Absalom hated Amnon because of what he had done to his sister (vv. 20-22).

VIII. THE MURDER OF AMNON BY ABSALOM THE SON OF DAVID

Verses 23 through 39 are an account of the murder of Amnon by Absalom the son of David. This murder had been determined by Absalom since the day Amnon forced his sister (v. 32b).

A. By Conspiracy

Verses 23 through 29 indicate that the murder of Amnon by Absalom was carried out by a conspiracy.

B. Reported to David

According to verses 30 through 33, the murder of Amnon was reported to David.

C. David’s Sons Lifting Up Their Voice and Weeping

David’s sons lifted up their voice and wept, and David with all his servants also wept exceedingly (vv. 34-36).

D. Absalom Fleeing to the King of Geshur

Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur, and was in Geshur three years. David mourned for his son every day. Eventually, the spirit of David the king longed to go out to Absalom, for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead (vv. 37-39).

IX. JOAB’S DEVICE TO BRING ABSALOM BACK

Second Samuel 14:1-24 tells us of Joab’s device to bring Absalom back.

**A. Perceiving That David's Heart
Was Set on Absalom**

Joab perceived that David's heart was set on Absalom (v. 1).

B. Performing His Device through a Woman

Joab's device to bring Absalom back was performed through a woman (vv. 2-22).

**C. Bringing Absalom Back from Geshur to
Jerusalem**

When David told Joab to bring Absalom back, Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem (v. 23).

D. David Not Letting Absalom See His Face

David did not let Absalom see his face but let him return to his own house (v. 24).

**X. ABSALOM'S BEAUTY AND
CHILDREN**

**A. Being More Beautiful
than All the People in Israel**

Absalom was more beautiful than all the people in Israel. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him (vv. 25-26).

**B. Having Three Sons
and One Daughter of Beautiful Appearance**

To Absalom were born three sons and one daughter, a woman of beautiful appearance (v. 27).

**VIII. ABSALOM'S SEEKING TO SEE HIS
FATHER DAVID**

In verses 28 through 33 Absalom sought to see his father David.

**A. After Dwelling in Jerusalem for Two Full
Years**

Absalom dwelt in Jerusalem for two full years and did not see his father's face (v. 28).

B. Through Joab

It was through Joab that Absalom eventually was able to see his father's face (vv. 29-32).

C. Brought to See His Father by Joab

Joab went to David and spoke to him. David called for Absalom, and Joab brought him to see his father (v. 33a).

D. His Father Kissing Him

Absalom bowed himself with his face to the ground before David the king, and then his father kissed him (v. 33b).