

## **Exegetical Notes – 2 Samuel 12:1-31**

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### **2 Samuel 12:1-31**

#### **Verses 1-6**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup> The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, <sup>3</sup> but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

<sup>4</sup> “Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.”

<sup>5</sup> David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! <sup>6</sup> He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”

- David assumed that his “cover-up” concerning his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, her husband, was successful (see 2 Samuel 11). But it was not. God knew what David had done. So God sent Nathan, the prophet and David’s spiritual adviser, to David.
- Nathan’s approach to David was soft. He told David about an unnamed rich man who had many sheep and cattle and a poor man who had only one little lamb. The poor man raised the lamb as a pet. It was almost like a child to him. One day the rich man had a visitor come to his house. The rich man did not slaughter one of his own sheep to provide dinner for the traveler. Instead, he killed the poor man’s one sheep to feed his visitor.
- The story made David very angry. He declared that the rich man ought to die for what he had done. David declared that the rich man should pay four times the value of the lamb to the poor man because the rich man had shown no pity to the poor man.

### Verses 7-10

**<sup>7</sup> Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. <sup>8</sup> I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. <sup>9</sup> Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. <sup>10</sup> Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’**

- Then, Nathan’s words became harsh. He said to David, “YOU ARE THE MAN!” Nathan reminded David of all that God had done for him and given to him. He revealed to David that what he had done with Bathsheba and how he had treated Uriah was known and that God was displeased with him.
- He told David the consequences of his behavior. The first consequence was that David’s house would never be at peace.

### Verses 11-14

**<sup>11</sup> “This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. <sup>12</sup> You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”**

- The second consequence of David’s sinful behavior was that his wives would be taken from him by someone close to him. This person would sleep with David’s wives openly.

### Verses 13-14

**<sup>13</sup> Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. <sup>14</sup> But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die.”**

- David confessed that he had sinned against YHWH.
- Nathan told him that his sin was forgiven. God was not going to strike him dead for his sin.

- However, the child he had conceived with Bathsheba would die. The third consequence of David's sin was the death of the child.
- The sin was forgiven, but the consequences of David's sin could not be escaped.

### **Verses 15-25**

<sup>15</sup> After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. <sup>16</sup> David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. <sup>17</sup> The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

<sup>18</sup> On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

<sup>19</sup> David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

<sup>20</sup> Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

<sup>21</sup> His attendants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

<sup>22</sup> He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' <sup>23</sup> But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

<sup>24</sup> Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; <sup>25</sup> and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.

- After all this had happened and Nathan had gone home, Bathsheba gave birth to a son. But the child was sickly and did not thrive.
- David pleaded to God for the child, but the child died. David's pleading for the child was so intense that his officials were afraid to tell him of the child's death. But when he heard of the child's death he stopped his pleading with God and returned to his normal life.

- When the officials asked about why he had mourned before the child was dead instead of after the child died, he explained that he had hoped to persuade God to be merciful to him and let the child live, but now he understood that there was nothing he could do to change things after the child had died.
- David then went to Bathsheba to comfort her. She conceived and bore David a second son. They named the boy Solomon. God loved Solomon very much and instructed Nathan to give the baby the name Jedidiah. The Hebrew means “loved of God.”

### **Verses 26-28**

**<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal citadel. <sup>27</sup> Joab then sent messengers to David, saying, “I have fought against Rabbah and taken its water supply. <sup>28</sup> Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it. Otherwise I will take the city, and it will be named after me.”**

- Joab, the chief general of Israel’s army captured the royal citadel of Rabbah, the king of the Ammonites. He informed David of what he had done and told David that he better move against the citadel or he would and claim it for himself.
- Joab is declaring that he is now no longer totally submitted to David. Remember, he knew what David had ordered done to Uriah.

### **Verses 29-31**

**<sup>29</sup> So David mustered the entire army and went to Rabbah, and attacked and captured it. <sup>30</sup> David took the crown from their king’s head, and it was placed on his own head. It weighed a talent of gold, and it was set with precious stones. David took a great quantity of plunder from the city <sup>31</sup> and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brickmaking. David did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then he and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.**

- David secured the territory belonging to the Ammonites and took the crown of Ammon for himself.
- However, he did nothing about Joab’s declaration of rebellion.

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