

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### **The Books Of Samuel: God's Shift Of Israel From Apostasy Under The Judges To David's Reign**

#### **II. 2 Samuel: The Reign Of David Over Israel**

##### **P. Restoring God's Helpful Order After Sin's Harmful Disorder**

###### **(2 Samuel 12:13-31)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Sin produces harmful disorder at all levels of experience as we can readily illustrate (as follows):

(1) At the international level, recent bombings by Islamist terrorists in Manchester, England and Kabul, Afghanistan have claimed the lives of 102 people and injured nearly 400, creating havoc and grief for many.

(2) We see it at the national level: John Hinderaker's blog, "The 4th Circuit's Travel Ban Decision: An Affront to the Rule of Law" (powerlineblog.com, May 26 as cited in the "Quotable" editorial, Republican-American, May 27, 2017, p. 6A) critiqued the 4th Circuit of Appeals ruling that countered President Trump's national security travel ban to the U. S. for people in various nations. Mr. Hinderaker wrote, "For a court to say that a presidential order may or may not be constitutional depending on who the president is . . . is the ultimate repudiation of the rule of law."

(3) Our members often face the harmful disorders of sin: this past week alone, members have told us or put on our Prayer Chain issues they or others they know face in today's evil, unsettling world that can tempt anyone to fret.

Need: *So we ask, "If sin yields much destructive disorder, what does God want us to do about it?!"*

- I. God forgave David of his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah, but these sins required that the Lord defend His testimony by causing the child David had sired in adultery to die, 2 Sam. 12:13-23:**
  - A. The prophet Nathan explained that though the Lord had forgiven David's sins so that he would not die, God had to take the child's life to protect His reputation as righteous before onlooking Gentiles, 2 Sam. 12:13-14.
  - B. David was distraught at this news, so he fasted and lay all night upon the earth before the Lord, pleading that He might save the child's life while he also refused to be consoled by his court officials, 2 Samuel 12:15-17.
  - C. Nevertheless, God's testimony was upheld as the child died on the seventh day of an illness, 2 Sam. 12:18a.
  - D. David's servants were amazed that he had composed himself after his child's death, so David explained that death is inevitable, that since God had taken the child, all he could do was accept God's will, 2 Sam 12:18b-23.
- II. Also, the sorrows David's sins had caused Bathsheba required that he edify her, 2 Samuel 12:24-25:**
  - A. David's adultery and murder had left Bathsheba grieving over the deaths of first her husband Uriah (2 Sam. 11:26) and then of her child (2 Sam. 12:24a), so David needed to edify her, reconstructing her devastated life.
  - B. Accordingly, David cohabitated with Bathsheba again, and she conceived and delivered a son whom David called "Solomon," meaning "Peaceable," 2 Samuel 12:24b; Zon. Pict. Ency. Bible, v. Five, p. 469.
  - C. God loved Solomon and sent David a message by Nathan to call him "Jedidiah," i. e., "Beloved of the Lord," marking Solomon as David's successor, 2 Sam. 12:24c NIV; Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Sam. 12:25.
- III. David's sins had also threatened the nation with harmful disorder, requiring his action, 2 Sam. 12:26-31:**
  - A. David had committed adultery and murder because he had put himself in temptation's path by staying at home when he as Israel's king should have been leading the army in battle against the Ammonites, 2 Samuel 11:1ff.
  - B. This battle was Israel's final thrust against the Ammonites for their mistreatment of David's ambassadors who had initially visited the Ammonite king to console him over the death of that king's father, 2 Samuel 10:1-19.
  - C. However, in view of these facts, David's lapse in leading this final siege exposed Israel to harmful disorder:
    1. First, David's lapse in leading his army against the capital of the Ammonites threatened division in Israel:
      - a. David's general, Joab, had taken that part of the Ammonite capitol Rabbah that was linked to its water supply, so he was poised to conquer the whole city, 2 Sam. 12:26-27; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to 2 Sam. 12:27.
      - b. However, if Joab did that, he instead of David would gain fame for it, threatening a division in Israel between Joab and David. Joab thus asked David to lead the final assault on Rabbah, 2 Samuel 12:28b.
    2. Second, David's failure to lead his army against the Ammonites threatened Israel's people with future mistreatment from onlooking Gentiles unless David punished the Ammonites for mistreating his officials:
      - a. The Ammonites had cut off half of the beards and garments of David's ambassadors, a gross indignity in the Ancient Near East that amounted to a declaration of war, 2 Sam. 10:4; Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 466.
      - b. However, if other onlooking Gentiles saw that David would not retaliate on the Ammonite officials who so badly mistreated his officials, they would feel free to abuse Hebrew citizens who visited them!
  - D. Thus, David's 2 Samuel 12:29-31 actions countered the threatening harmful disorder of his sins against Israel:

1. First, David united Israel behind him as king by directing all of Israel's warriors to join him in the final assault on Rabbah so that he conquered the city, 2 Samuel 12:29. David took the Ammonite king's 75-pound gold crown that was inlaid with precious stones, and it was placed on David's head, marking him as the conqueror, and he took great spoil from the city, 2 Samuel 12:30; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to 2 Samuel 12:30.
2. Second, David protected Israel's citizens from future abuse by onlooking Gentiles when he publicly punished the Ammonite men, subjecting them to hard labor for abusing his officials, 2 Sam. 12:31 ESV, NIV. [2 Samuel 12:31 KJV claims David cruelly tortured Ammonites to death, but as we will show in our "Conclusion" section, the NIV and ESV have the preferred reading that claims he put them to hard labor.]

***Lesson:*** *David's adultery and murder had led to harmful disorder to God's testimony, to the life of Bathsheba and to Israel's people, so God directed that helpful order be restored, what involved pain and effort on David's part.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we believe in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) If we sin as a believer, though we have confessed it for God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9), may we realize that (3) this sin has produced harmful disorder that MUST be rectified for future divine blessing, and (4) accordingly heed God's directives to CORRECT that disorder as much as possible for God's future blessings.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the message . . .)

(1) As we noted in our sermon, 2 Samuel 12:31 KJV claims David tortured Ammonites, a claim Bible critics use to assert that Scripture's God is cruelly evil. (Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, When Critics Ask, 1992, p. 175)

To apply this sermon, we correct this sinful slander of God's character by correcting the KJV reading: (a) First, the verb *sim* the KJV renders "put under" also means "set, appoint," and *he'ebir* the KJV renders "he made (them) pass over" differs from another verb, *he'ebid*, "he made (them) toil," by a tiny tittle that distinguishes the letter *resh* (*r*) in *he'ebir* from the letter *daleth* (*d*) in *he'ebid*. (A. R. Hurst, O. T. Tran. Prblms., 1960, p. 33-34; B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 962-964) A copying scribe could easily miss a *daleth's* tiny tittle to change *he'ebid* to *he'ebir*, making David look like he tortured Ammonites when he really put them to labor! (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 475)

(b) Second, the extended context supports the NIV and ESV reading that David put the Ammonites to hard labor (as follows): (i) In Deuteronomy 20:10-15, God told Israel to extend to all Gentile enemies outside Canaan (like Ammon) an appeal for peace, but that if the foe refused peace, Israel was to slay its men by the sword but spare its women and children,. David's 2 Samuel 12:31 actions followed his confession of sin, so it is highly unlikely that he would have at that time openly rebelled against God's Deuteronomy 20:10-15 order to torture Ammonites to death!

(ii) Bedouins considered the torture of war prisoners excessive cruelty. (The Wycliffe Bible Com., 1971, p. 297) God had just slain David's son to protect His reputation before Gentiles (2 Sam. 12:14-24), so it is not logical that David would at that time sabotage his and God's testimonies by doing what was wicked to onlooking Gentiles! (iii) In Psalm 51 where David's confession of sin was voiced just before his attack on Rabbah, at verse 18b, he asked God figuratively to build up Jerusalem's walls, expressing a desire to protect Israel from her foes. Subjecting captive Ammonites to hard labor as punishment for their abuse of David's ambassadors (2 Samuel 10:1-6) would send a strong message to onlooking Gentiles not to mistreat Israeli citizens, perfectly fitting David's Psalm 51:18b concern.

Thus, the NIV and ESV reading is preferred (Roland deVaux, Ancient Israel: Vol. 1 Social Institutions, 1961, p. 89) and we thus defend God's character as perfectly righteous and not cruelly evil.

(2) President Trump's recent decision to pull the U. S. out of the Paris accord that aligns with climate change ideology was called by House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi "a grave threat to our planet's future." (Bill Colvin, AP, "U. S. quits climate accord," Republican-American, June 2, 2017, p. 1A) We again counter this errant climate change ideology that makes so many fret by recalling God's Genesis 8:22 promise to preserve seedtime and harvest weather patterns as long as the earth exists, which it will do until after Christ's earthly reign, cf. Revelation 20:1-12.

(3) In addition, we work in our Church's ministry format to counter the destructive disorder of sin in the world and in the troubled backgrounds of a number of our members: (a) first, we focus on a stable, faithful ministry of God's Word in our Church ministries. (b) Second, though we have long practiced the matter as a witness to newcomers to our services, we have learned that even our repetition of our Church's doctrinal beliefs at the start of our worship services each Sunday is offering needed stability and comfort to some of our members who are regularly being upset by the harmfully disordered events of today's troubled world. Our practice is like an edifying rallying post around which people can wrap their week to counter the harmful disorders in the world. We will continue with this practice.

**May we trust in Christ as Savior. If we sin as believers, may we align with God's Biblical will in countering the disorder caused by sin by heeding God's healing, constructive steps to edifying order.**