

2Samuel 12:1 ¶ And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

2Samuel 12:2 The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds:

2Samuel 12:3 But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

2Samuel 12:4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

The narrative continues from the previous chapter...

I think it is significant to note that the LORD sent Nathan to David to confront him with his sin; Nathan didn't take that action on his own. I am assuming, however, that it was his idea to present the truth disguised in a story that he knew would get David's sympathy. The king, however, did not know that it was just a story.

The story involved two men—one rich and one poor. The rich man had many flocks and herds, while the poor man had one little ewe lamb which he had nourished as a pet. It was considered a part of the family, just as beloved pets are today. A visitor showed up at the rich man's door. Instead of taking from his own flocks to provide a meal for his visitor, he stole the poor man's lamb.

2Samuel 12:5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die:

2Samuel 12:6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

As Nathan surely knew he would, David became very angry at the rich man and immediately declared that he should die. Before dying, however, he would have to restore the poor man fourfold for his loss and because he showed no compassion to one who had so little.

To replace the lamb by restoring the poor man fourfold was according to scripture. Though the crime was heartless, it did not warrant a death sentence.

Exodus 22:1 "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."

JFB made an interesting observation: "David was not himself doomed, according to his own view of what justice demanded; but he had to suffer a quadruple expiation in the successive deaths of four sons, besides a lengthened train of other evils."

2Samuel 12:7 And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

2Samuel 12:8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

2Samuel 12:9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Without hesitation, Nathan told David that he was the guilty party. I am sure David quickly started making the connections. He was the rich man, Uriah the poor man, and Bathsheba his one wife. David had many wives from which to choose to meet his needs, but he wasn't satisfied; he wanted what belonged to Uriah, one of his most faithful warriors.

The LORD had a message for David. My paraphrase: I made you the king over Israel and delivered you from Saul. I gave you all that Saul had possessed, including his wives. I gave you the unified kingdom of Israel and Judah; and if that had not been enough, I would have given you more. (My note: There is no way that the LORD is telling David that He would have given him more wives.) Why then have you disobeyed my commandments? Why did you kill Uriah and take his wife as your own? Why did you try to hide your murder by making his death appear to be a casualty of the war with Ammon?

Frankly, I don't remember being told that David had taken any of Saul's wives. John Gill notes that the Jews say that Eglah, David's sixth wife, was Saul's former wife. Other commentators note that according to the customs of that day, the king inherited the wives of the former king along with his other worldly possessions.

In his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, David broke at least four of the ten commandments.

Exodus 20:13–17 "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal....Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

2Samuel 12:10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

2Samuel 12:11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

2Samuel 12:12 For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

2Samuel 12:13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

2Samuel 12:14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that is born unto thee shall surely die.*

Nathan continues to deliver the LORD's message to David. The judgment for David's sin with Bathsheba and against Uriah (which also resulted in the deaths of others) would extend over years. David's own children would rape and kill one another. One of his own sons would dishonor him by committing adultery with David's wives. David kept his adultery with Bathsheba private, but the LORD would see that David's humiliation was public knowledge.

David did not protest or try to excuse his sin (as we are so often want to do). He immediately confessed his sin, recognizing that his greatest sin was against the LORD. Nathan assured David that the LORD had forgiven him, and he would not die.

That is a truth that we often ignore. No matter how great the sin against another person, when a son or daughter of God in Jesus sins, he/she has sinned against God first and foremost. Yes, the sin against someone else may be horrendous, but the greater evil is that it gives enemies of the LORD an opportunity to blaspheme Him and discourage others from turning to Him in faith and repentance. The greater the sphere of influence of the believer that sins so publicly and so egregiously against God's word, the greater damage to the testimony of God's love and truth to others. The enemy takes great pleasure in getting to point the finger at a fallen pastor or believer with high visibility in the public eye and declare that he/she is no different than those that reject God's love and truth.

Because David's sin provided the opportunity for the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme Him, the LORD decreed that the baby son of David and Bathsheba would die. That baby would have been a constant reminder of David's sin and provided an ever present point of attack to blaspheme the LORD. I believe this was also an act of compassion and love for the baby. He would not have to suffer the shame of being associated with his father and mother's sin. His future in the presence of Jesus would be one of joy.

2Samuel 12:15 ¶ And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

2Samuel 12:16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

2Samuel 12:17 And the elders of his house arose, *and went* to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

2Samuel 12:18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the

child is dead?

Nathan left after delivering the LORD's message to David. The LORD then caused the child to become very sick. David knew what the LORD had decreed, yet he still held out hope that the LORD would spare the child if he fasted and prayed. No matter how his advisors tried, they could not get David to eat. Finally, on the seventh day, the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him. They reasoned that if he had grieved so intensely at the child's illness, he might harm himself if he knew the child were dead.

2Samuel 12:19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

2Samuel 12:20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

2Samuel 12:21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, *while it was alive*; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

2Samuel 12:22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

2Samuel 12:23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

David realized that something had happened when all his servants began whispering around him. He realized that the child must have died and asked his servants point blank if that were so. When they affirmed the truth, David got up and washed, lubricated his skin and changed his clothes. He then went to the house of the LORD to worship. When he returned home, he ate.

The servants didn't understand his actions and asked for an explanation. He explained that while the child was alive, he fasted and wept with the hope that perhaps God would be merciful and grant him grace and let the child live. Now that the child was dead, there was no reason to fast; he could not bring him back from the dead. He then confidently stated that he would one day go to his child, but his child could not come to him before then.

David knew that his little baby boy would be with him in eternity to live in the presence of the LORD. I personally think this is one of the best proof texts in understanding God's provision for babies and children that have not reached the age of personal accountability for their sin before God. I believe that the millions of babies that have been aborted in America and throughout history are in the presence of Father God. Taken in conjunction with the principle established by God when judging the wilderness generation, the two make powerful proof texts. God's character doesn't change. He did not hold the children of the wilderness generation accountable for their parents' sin of unbelief.

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not...."

*Deuteronomy 1:34–39 "And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers, Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD....Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, **which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil**, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it."*

In my heart, I believe this principle applies to all "children" that have not reached the age of accountability. There is, however, a verse in Paul's letter to the Corinthians that seems to make a difference between the children of believers vs. unbelievers. I am using the CJB translation since it is so clear.

1 Corinthians 7:14 "For the unbelieving husband has been set aside for God by the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been set aside for God by the brother — otherwise your children would be "unclean," but as it is, they are set aside for God."

In my study of Hebrews, however, I think there is a strong case for identifying the wilderness generation that was not allowed to enter the Promised Land as a generation of unbelievers, and the LORD did not hold their children accountable for their sin.

*Hebrews 3:9–19 "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, **They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.** So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, **lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief**, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, **but to them that believed not?** So we see that **they could not enter in because of unbelief.**"*

I am also reminded of the words of the LORD through the prophet Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 18:4&20-21 "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die....The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

Again we are given a principle based on God's character. We are all born with a

sin nature, but we are not all born practicing sin for which the LORD will hold one accountable. The verses imply the ability to choose with discernment to do what is lawful and right or not. That brings up the determination of an age of accountability, and I don't think there is a set answer to that question. Only the LORD knows a person's heart; and only He has the ability to make that determination.

Finally, the words of the LORD Jesus seem to affirm that children are part of His kingdom.

Luke 18:16 "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

Though I cannot make an airtight case for my belief. I am quite willing to rest in the truth that God is love, God is holy, and God is full of compassion. Further, I know that God will do what is right and that I will not question His judgment when I am in His presence.

Leviticus 19:2 "I the LORD your God am holy."

1 John 4:8 "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Psalms 145:8 "The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy."

Genesis 18:25 "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Deuteronomy 32:4 "He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

2Samuel 12:24 And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.

2Samuel 12:25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

We are told that David comforted Bathsheba his wife. He showed far more consideration for her as his own wife than he did when she was Uriah's wife. Eventually, some time after Bathsheba had time to heal physically, they once again came together and Bathsheba again became pregnant and gave birth to another son. They called his name Solomon, a name which means "peaceful." The Chronicler indicates that David chose this name because God had told him to.

1 Chronicles 22:7-10 "And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest;

and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever."

The wording of verse 25 is a bit ambiguous, but it sounds as if the LORD told Nathan that the child should also be named Jedidiah or "beloved of Jah." This fits right in with the LORD declaring that he would be "My son."

2Samuel 12:26 ¶ And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

2Samuel 12:27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

2Samuel 12:28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

I think it should be noted that the last part of this chapter is a conclusion to events that occurred following the death of Uriah. The troops of Israel under Joab's leadership, had essentially conquered Rabbah, the capital city of Ammon. He sent word to inform David and urged him to gather the rest of his troops and come and join him on the battlefield before Joab was given all the credit and the conquered city named after him.

JFB has a comment that helps explain the reference to "the city of waters."

"Rabbah, like Aroer, was divided into two parts — one the lower town, insulated by the winding course of the Jabbok, which flowed almost round it, and the upper and stronger town, called the royal city. "The first was taken by Joab, but the honor of capturing so strongly a fortified place as the other was an honor reserved for the king himself."

2Samuel 12:29 And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

2Samuel 12:30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was *set* on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

2Samuel 12:31 And he brought forth the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

David followed Joab's advice and joined the battle eventually taking possession of the whole city. He took the king's crown off the head of Ammon's king, a crown that was made from a talent of gold and was embedded with precious stones. The crown was placed on David's head, and his men gathered a great amount of treasure from the city as the spoils of victory.

According to the available information, this crown would have been too heavy

for David to wear if it actually weighed a talent of gold. I think the main point is that the crown was very valuable and became David's by right of conquest.

I liked the ESV translation of verse 31: *“And he brought out the people who were in it and set them to labor with saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them toil at the brick kilns. And thus he did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.”*