

Making Promises

Part 6: The Kingdom

Review

- David's affair with Bathsheba displeased the Lord, and he sent Nathan to David with a parable about a rich man who had stolen the lamb of his poor neighbor, though he had many to spare. David was so incensed that he ordered the greedy man to be put to death, only to realize he was the greedy man.
- David was delivered, but punishment must be carried out, and it was carried out on David's son.
- The sin of David represents another sinful fall of the one appointed to spearhead the Kingdom of God. Much like Adam's fall in Genesis 3 and Cain's sin in Genesis 4, David's fall will result in the death of a son (four, in fact). Further, David and his sons will also be given wise or crafty counsel that will actually lead to more death and further destruction.

Return to Battle

- Following his fall and subsequent repentance, Joab calls for David to come and **finish off** the Ammonites. So David went to Rabbah, gathered his army, and the Lord gave him victory over the Ammonites (**2 Sam. 12:26-31**).
 - ▶ Proper convention calls for the king to strike the **finishing blows** (vv. 29–30). David subjugates Ammon and imposes **forced labor** (v. 31).
 - ▶ The conflict with Ammon was won, but the real battle was lost. Of far more weight is the **disobedience** and lack of **holiness** of Yahweh's anointed.
 - ▶ In First and Second Samuel all human leadership is **flawed**, which means that the kingdom—if there is to be one—can only be established and maintained by grace. Hence the Samuels make us lift our eyes to wait for the **Messianic King**.

The Sins of the Father

- Nathan's prophecy that the **sword** would **never depart** from David's house began to work itself out in strife between David's sons and in the rebellion of **Absalom**, and it began to work itself out in such a way that the sins of David were repeated and exaggerated by his sons.
 - ▶ Overall, the storyline of chapters 13–20 is like the story of **David** and **Bathsheba**. A **sexual sin** (David and Bathsheba; Amnon with Tamar) was followed by a **murder** (David killed Uriah; Absalom killed Amnon), and

afterwards someone came to David telling a **parable** that tricked him into passing judgment against himself (Nathan and the wise woman of Tekoa).

- With that in mind, the storyline of Absalom's life should be familiar: A king's son, he fled from the land to escape the **wrath of the king**, sojourned among **Gentiles** (Arameans in Geshur), and then returned to **Jerusalem (2 Sam. 13:23–14:33)**. Once back in Jerusalem, he conspired against David and was proclaimed king in Hebron (**2 Sam. 15:1–12**). Absalom's life history was clearly a **repetition** of David's own history.
 - ▶ Like his son, David fled from the wrath of a king, spent time in exile among Gentiles, came back into the land and was proclaimed king—in **Hebron**. Absalom was, however, a **photo negative** of David, a **counterfeit** image of his father.
 - ▶ David fled from Saul because of Saul's irrational hostility to him, not because of any evil on his part, but Absalom fled because he had **committed murder**. Further, David did not try to seize the kingdom, while Absalom conspired against his father.
 - ▶ Absalom was the man that Saul thought **David was**. David acted like Saul, and as a result found himself opposed by the worst version of himself.

Biblical Theology

- Echoes of a number of earlier biblical events may be heard in these chapters. Taking Bathsheba was an **Adamic sin**, a sin of seizing forbidden fruit, and David was driven out of the **garden-city** as a result.
 - ▶ The curse on David's house worked itself out in a **Cain-and-Abel** rivalry between Absalom and Amnon, which leads to Absalom's **exile** from the land.
 - ▶ These two sins together interrupted David's kingdom, and this stands in the place of the **"flood" judgment** in Genesis 6–9.
 - ▶ David presided over a **divided house** much as Jacob did, and like Jacob, David lost control of his sons. In Genesis, Jacob's older sons were one-by-one eliminated from being heirs: **Reuben** lost his position by a sin against his father, taking his concubine (**Gen. 35:22; 49:4**), and **Simeon and Levi** were cursed because they slew the circumcised "brothers" in the city of Shechem (**Gen. 34:1–31; 49:5–7**). As a result, the fourth son, **Judah**, became preeminent among his brothers.
 - ▶ When the dust cleared for David's family, **Solomon**, the fourth son and true "Judah," remained on the throne.

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<p>2 Samuel 12:26–31</p>	<p>26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and took the royal city. 27 And Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah; moreover, I have taken the city of waters. 28 Now then gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called by my name." 29 So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah and fought against it and took it. 30 And he took the crown of their king from his head. The weight of it 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, a very great amount. 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.</p>
<p>2 Samuel 15:1–12</p>	<p>1 After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. 2 And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate. And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And when he said, "Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel," 3 Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you." 4 Then Absalom would say, "Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice." 5 And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. 6 Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. 7 And at the end of four years Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the Lord, in Hebron. 8 For your servant vowed a vow while I lived at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the Lord will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the Lord.' " 9 The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron. 10 But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, 'Absalom is king at Hebron!' " 11 With Absalom went two hundred men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their innocence and knew nothing. 12 And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh. And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing.</p>
<p>Genesis 35:22</p>	<p>While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.</p>
<p>Genesis 49:4</p>	<p>Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!</p>
<p>Genesis 49:5–7</p>	<p>5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. 6 Let my soul come not into their council; O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed men, and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen. 7 Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.</p>

**Genesis
34:1–31**

1 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the land. 2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humiliated her. 3 And his soul was drawn to Dinah the daughter of Jacob. He loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her. 4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl for my wife." 5 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. But his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came. 6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. 7 The sons of Jacob had come in from the field as soon as they heard of it, and the men were indignant and very angry, because he had done an outrageous thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing must not be done. 8 But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him to be his wife. 9 Make marriages with us. Give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. 10 You shall dwell with us, and the land shall be open to you. Dwell and trade in it, and get property in it." 11 Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. 12 Ask me for as great a bride-price and gift as you will, and I will give whatever you say to me. Only give me the young woman to be my wife." 13 The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully, because he had defiled their sister Dinah. 14 They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us. 15 Only on this condition will we agree with you—that you will become as we are by every male among you being circumcised. 16 Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to ourselves, and we will dwell with you and become one people. 17 But if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will be gone." 18 Their words pleased Hamor and Hamor's son Shechem. 19 And the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. Now he was the most honored of all his father's house. 20 So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, 21 "These men are at peace with us; let them dwell in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters as wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only on this condition will the men agree to dwell with us to become one people—when every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. 23 Will not their livestock, their property and all their beasts be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will dwell with us." 24 And all who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. 25 On the third day, when they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and came against the city while it felt secure and killed all the males. 26 They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went away. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28 They took their flocks and their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field. 29 All their wealth, all their little ones and their wives, all that was in the houses, they captured and plundered. 30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household." 31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?"