

2 Samuel 12 is a pivotal chapter in the narrative of King David's reign, marking both God's judgment and the complexities of David's character. The chapter opens with the prophet Nathan confronting David with a parable, exposing David's sin with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah. This confrontation leads to David's heartfelt repentance, but also to severe consequences decreed by God.

The narrative then shifts to the illness and eventual death of the child born from David and Bathsheba's adulterous union. This tragic event underscores the gravity of David's sin and God's punishment, despite David's heartfelt prayers and fasting. Following the child's death, David's response demonstrates a striking blend of acceptance and continued faith in God.

The chapter concludes on a note of hope with the birth of Solomon, whom God names Jedidiah, meaning "beloved of the LORD." This signifies God's enduring grace and the future legacy of David's line, which ultimately leads to the establishment of Solomon as king and the builder of the temple.

THE DEATH OF DAVID AND BATHSHEBA'S CHILD (VERSES 15-19)

Verse 14 ends with a clear prophetic punishment: "the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." The Lord fulfills this by striking the child, making it very sick. This scenario raises many questions, such as why the child was punished instead of the parents. Some questions have no clear answers, reminding us that "now we see through a glass, darkly" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

It's important to note that this is not a standard punishment for out-of-wedlock pregnancies. In fact, there is no "standard punishment" for any sin. God's response to sin has varied; sometimes direct and announced, other times indirect or overlooked, even in the Old Testament.

In the "dispensation of the grace of God" (Eph. 3:2), all punishment for sin is indirect. Actions carry their own consequences, as indicated in Colossians 2:21-22. Cultural norms also influence the way society itself punishes or ignores sin.

I disagree with those who link every bad experience directly to sin. While scripture shows examples of God directly influencing circumstances, my view is that this doesn't happen today. After the rapture, God's direct intervention will return.

David sought God, fasted, and repented, lying "all night upon the earth" (v. 16). His visible remorse worried his advisors (v. 17). Although David practiced fasting, persistence, and repentance, his prayer wasn't answered. This shows that promises like Matthew 21:22 aren't blanket guarantees.

David's remorse in 2 Samuel 12:16-17, where he fasted and lay upon the earth, echoes Psalm 51. In the midst of his child's illness, David's actions show guilt and a plea for divine forgiveness. Psalm 51:1-2 reflects his desperation for

mercy and cleansing from sin, likely intensified by the consequences of his actions with Bathsheba and Uriah.

David's acknowledgment of his sin in Psalm 51:3-4 aligns with his broken spirit in 2 Samuel 12. His deep repentance is captured in Psalm 51:10-12, where he pleads for a clean heart and renewed spirit, resonating with his sorrow during his child's illness.

When the child died after seven days, David's servants feared for his life. David observed their behavior and directly asked if the child had died. The direct answer, "He is dead" (v. 19), highlights how the harshest truths often need no embellishment.

DAVID'S RESPONSE TO THE CHILD'S DEATH (VERSES 20-23)

Verses 20-21 show David's behavior reversal after his child's death. He "washed and anointed himself" (v. 20), indicating a sign of blessing and prosperity with olive oil, which was withheld during mourning (Dan. 10:3). David then "came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped" (v. 20), likely involving sacrifice and communal worship.

The term "house of the Lord" appears 234 times in the Hebrew scriptures but not in the New Testament. Modern references to "the Lord's house" for churches are not scriptural; rather, places are set aside for worship.

Typically, intense grief follows a profound loss, like Calvin Coolidge's depression after his son's death in 1924, which deeply affected his presidency. David's servants were perplexed by his quick return to normal activities and questioned him (v. 21). David explained that his grief was for the possibility of God's mercy. Now, accepting reality, he stated, "can I bring him back again?" (v. 23).

David's resolve to move forward shows responsible behavior in grief. His phrase, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (v. 23), indicates comfort in reuniting after death, despite limited afterlife theology in his time. The concept of Sheol as a place for all departed souls existed, with early indications of resurrection hope in scriptures like Job 19:25-26 and Psalm 16:10-11.

THE BIRTH OF SOLOMON (VERSES 24-25)

This sad story has a happy ending in the birth of Solomon. The text tells us that Solomon was born to David and Bathsheba, and "the LORD loved him" (v. 24). This puts Solomon in the ranks of those like Abraham (Is. 41:8), Jacob (Mal 1:2-3), Daniel (Dan. 10:11), and the nation of Israel itself (Deut. 7:7-8).

As we all know, in time Solomon will inherit the kingdom and will build the temple as well as bring the kingdom to its zenith in ancient history.

Though his parents called him Solomon, the Lord called him Jedidiah, "beloved of the Lord" (v. 25). There are no other places in Scripture in which the name Jedidiah is used.

Could it be that this "I love you" from God was God's way of saying, "forgiveness has been granted"? What a beautiful way to say the story of David is not over!