

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Lesson 7
November 20

Saul, David & Solomon

David's Family
Loses Their Way
2 Samuel 13-18

“Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house...” (2 Sam 12:9-10)

That was the dark promise delivered by Nathan from the LORD to David. Throughout this study, we've watched King Saul lose his way, King David lose his way, and 2 Samuel 13-18 painfully documents how David's family loses their way. Before we dig in, 2 Samuel 5:13 already told us some alarming things about David after he began to reign in Jerusalem:

And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David.

David's firstborn son was named Amnon (3:2). David had another son from another woman named Absalom (3:3) and Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar (13:1). But in 2 Samuel 13, we begin to see the fulfillment of God's dark promise against David as Amnon attacks Tamar.

When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon... (13:21-22)

Two years later, Absalom arranged for all of David's sons to be together and commanded his servants to kill Amnon (13:23-33). Absalom fled and stayed away for the next three years (13:34-39). When he eventually came back to Jerusalem, he lived another two full years without coming into David's presence (14:24, 28).

After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. 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,” Absalom would say to him, “See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you.” 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.” 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. Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. (15:1-6)

After years of doing this, Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all Israel, saying, “As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, ‘Absalom is king at Hebron!’” (15:10). David was forced to flee for a while, but Joab and his men eventually killed Absalom (18:9-15). 2 Samuel 18 ends with King David weeping, “O my son Absalom, my son!” (18:33). It's a sad, sad story. Let's talk about it...

For Class & Family Discussion:

- What do you think the LORD meant when he said to David, “The sword shall never depart from your house” (2 Sam 12:10)? Why wouldn’t the LORD just stop all the bad things from happening in David’s family once David’s sin had been uncovered?
- Our video suggested that we were already told some alarming things about David in 2 Samuel 5:13 after he began to reign in Jerusalem. What had the LORD specifically warned about all the way back in Deuteronomy 17:14-17? What can we learn from this?
- 2 Samuel 13:21 tells us that King David was very angry when he heard what Amnon had done to Tamar, but that’s all we hear. What do you think? Is there anything David could have done, *should* have done at this point that might have changed the eventual outcome?
- And what about Absalom? 2 Samuel 13:22 tells us that “Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon.” The next thing we’re told is that two full years pass. Is there anything Absalom could have done, *should* have done differently that might have changed the eventual outcome?
- 2 Samuel 15:1-6 tells us about Absalom “stealing the hearts” of the men of Israel. In your own words, what was he doing?
- Psalm 3 is a psalm of David, “when he fled from Absalom his son.” Let’s read that together. What can we learn from this psalm?
- Throughout this study, we’ve watched King Saul lose his way, King David lose his way, and now we’ve watched as David’s family loses their way in 2 Samuel 13-18. What can we learn from this pattern already developing in Israel’s united kingdom?