



# Finer Grounds Bible Study

## 2 Samuel

### Lesson 8: 2 Samuel 12-13

In our last lesson, we focused on God's redemption of David. Even though David had committed sins that were punishable by death according to the law of Moses, God forgave His servant. Because of David's repentant heart, God put away his sin. However, God warned David that there would be dire consequences for his sins.

**Read 2 Samuel 12:6. What punishment did David prescribe for the rich man that stole the poor man's lamb?**

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**Read 2 Samuel 12:10-12. What would happen to David because of his sin?**

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The next section of 2 Samuel (chapters 13-19) tells how these consequences came to pass. One of the consequences, the death of David and Bathsheba's first child, had already happened, signifying that the rest of the punishments were assured. As we read on, we will see that the other punishments did not occur as "acts of God" like plagues or natural disasters but resulted from sinful behaviors that mirrored what David had done to Bathsheba and Uriah.

A note before we begin today's reading. If you have never read 2 Samuel 13 before, I want to warn you that it is a difficult chapter to read. It describes the rape of a woman, Tamar, by her depraved half-brother, Amnon. You will be utterly disgusted by the actions of Amnon in this chapter. I also know that most likely, you or someone you know has had an experience like Tamar's. I want to say before we start that I am sorry dear sister. I wish that I could sit down and pray with you. Hearing about Tamar's experience may force you to relive one of the most painful moments of your life or it may cause you to vividly think about something that happened to a loved one.

I wish that this passage offered hope for your situation by showing how the people in Tamar's life defended her and pursued justice for her. However, that does not happen. This passage was not meant to show how to seek justice, it was meant to show a gross miscarriage of justice. While this passage does not provide encouragement for victims of sexual assault or abuse, the Bible does. We will discuss that more at the end of the lesson.



# Finer Grounds Bible Study

**Think about it: How can you help someone you know who was assaulted or abused? If you have been abused, who can you go to receive support?**

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## Read 2 Samuel 13:1-4

Amnon was David's oldest son. If the traditional rules of succession were followed, Amnon would have been considered the next in line to the throne of Israel.

## Read Leviticus 18:1-5, 9, 24-30.

**According to the law, why was Amnon not allowed to marry Tamar? What was the consequence for a man who had sexual relations with his sister?**

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## Read 2 Samuel 13:5-10

Amnon, through the advice of his cousin Jonadab, set a trap. Amnon feigned illness to make his request for Tamar's presence seem legitimate. David relayed the request to Tamar and Tamar dutifully agreed to obey her father. The writer explains in detail how Tamar carefully prepared a meal for her "sick" brother. However, when her work was complete and it was time for Amnon to eat, Amnon refused, seeing an opportunity to act on his lust.

## Read 2 Samuel 13:11-14

**How did Tamar respond to Amnon's illicit request? What reasons did she give to convince him to stop?**

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Tamar offered a complete rebuttal to Amnon's actions.

- She refused on the basis that this is a disgraceful action for any Israelite, as the Israelites were supposed to live in accordance with God's laws.
- She refused based on the disgrace that it would bring on her as a virgin daughter of the king.
- She even refused because Amnon's actions would bring disgrace on him.

The Hebrew word Tamar used that is translated as "wicked" is used elsewhere in the Bible to describe the most egregious acts committed in defiance of the God's law. These acts were met with swift judgment on those who committed them. (See Genesis 34:7, Joshua 7:15, and Judges 19-20 where the Hebrew word is translated as outrageous). This term emphasized how vile Amnon's actions truly were.

## 2 Samuel 13:15-19

**What did Amnon do after violating Tamar?**

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**What was Tamar's response?**

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**Read Deuteronomy 22:28-29. What protection did the law offer an unmarried woman who was raped?**

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The promises of sin are always deceptive. We indulge in it, thinking it will fulfill our needs and desires only to find that it can never fulfill! Amnon, who was sick with lust for his sister, finally got exactly what he wanted. Yet, he found that what he wanted did not fulfill as expected.

One would hope that Amnon's realization would have initiated repentance. Instead, Amnon became filled with hatred for his sister, causing him to wrong her again. Tamar was an unmarried, virgin daughter of the king, and wore an ornate robe that reflected her status as such. As a daughter of King David, Tamar would have most likely married well and would have been provided for. When Amnon defiled her, she would have been viewed as unmarriageable by other men. The Law of Moses made protections for her, indicating that a rapist had to pay a bride price for the woman he violated and must remain married to her for the entirety of her life. While this may seem like a cruel fate for a woman in our modern times, in the time of these events, women needed someone, usually a husband, to provide for them. The law guaranteed that a woman who was the victim of rape would

be provided for her whole life by the man who had wronged her.

Unsurprisingly, Amnon shirked this responsibility and cast Tamar out of his house. Tamar mourned her condition, tearing the robe that signified her status, and putting ashes on her head to show her grief.

**Read 2 Samuel 13:20-22**

**How did Tamar's brother, Absalom, and her father, David, react when they heard about Amnon's actions? What action did they take in response?**

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**Compare Amnon's sin to David's sin with Bathsheba. Considering this and the punishment that the law required for Amnon's actions, why do you think David withheld punishment from his Amnon?**

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**Compare Amnon's reaction to his sin as described in 13:15-18 to David's response to his own sin in 2 Samuel 12:13.**

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**Was it right for David to withhold punishment for Amnon?**

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# Finer Grounds Bible Study

I warned you at the beginning of this passage that this chapter offers an example of a miscarriage of justice in response to a sexual assault. Tamar, already violated by her half-brother, received no justice from the other men in her life who were able to deliver it. While Absalom attempted to comfort her, his response was of little help. His advice was to basically say “it’s not that bad.” While he provided a home for her in his own house, she lived there as a “desolate” woman, proof that what had happened to her was “that bad.”

Meanwhile David, who was supposed to administer justice as the king of Israel, became angry but did not act in response to Amnon’s sin. In fact, Amnon received no official punishment for his actions. He was not cut-off from the people of Israel (Leviticus 18:29), and he was not made to marry Tamar or make restitution for what he did to her (Deuteronomy 22:28-29). David failed as both a father and as a king by not upholding God’s law.

Before we go on, I want you to consider Amnon’s actions in light of God’s promise to David to provide a son who would build a house for God (2 Samuel 7). Remember that Amnon was David’s eldest son and was most likely considered the heir apparent to the throne of Israel. After reading these verses, one can’t help but wonder, is this the son that God promised? Is God really going to use a man who does this to build his house? What will happen to God’s people if they are ruled by a man like this?

2 Samuel 13:22 implies that Amnon’s sin will not go without consequence. Absalom was unwilling to seek justice for his sister in accordance with the law, but he was willing to seek vengeance.

## Read 2 Samuel 13:23-39

**According to 2 Samuel 13:23, how much time had passed since Amnon’s sin against Tamar?**

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**Compare Absalom’s plan for revenge to Amnon’s plan to lure Tamar to his home. Compare Absalom’s plan to David’s conspiracy to kill Uriah (2 Samuel 11:14-27).**

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**What did Absalom do after he killed Amnon (13:34)?**

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**Describe the confusion concerning the events at Absalom’s house (13:30-31). Who provided clarity for King David (13:32-33)?**

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# Finer Grounds Bible Study

**What was David’s response to the death of Amnon (13:36-37)?**

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**Read Leviticus 24:17. What should have been the punishment for Absalom’s actions.**

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Instead of seeking justice in accordance with the law, Absalom decided to take matters into his own hands. He concocted a deceptive plan, just as his father had done to kill Uriah, and just as Amnon had done to trap Tamar. Knowing that he would deserve a death sentence for killing Amnon, Absalom fled to safety with his grandfather Talmai, King of Geshur.

Upon Amnon’s death, the reader realizes that Amnon was not the son of whom God spoke in His covenant with David. At the same time, Amnon’s death leaves a vacuum. Who is the son who will build God’s house? Is it Absalom? He would have been next in line. Will a murderer be the chosen son?

**By killing Amnon, did Absalom provide justice for Tamar?**

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**Think about it: What is the difference between seeking vengeance and seeking justice? Use scripture to support your answer.**

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At the end of chapter 13, everyone involved in the situation felt the consequences of sin. Amnon was dead because of what he had done. Absalom was exiled for murdering his brother. David was in mourning for his dead son because of his inaction. Most tragically, Tamar, the only person who was guiltless in this instance, still had not received the justice due to her.

**Compare David’s actions in this chapter to the description of his reign in 2 Samuel 8:15.**

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**How do the events in this chapter relate to the judgment against David in 2 Samuel 12:6, 10-12?**

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Just as God had proclaimed, “the sword” was active in David’s house. David, and his family, continued to experience the consequences of David’s sin with Bathsheba. Another son was dead while another was deserving of death. However, even though God foretold this disaster, He did not cause it. The sinful actions of Absalom and Amnon



## Finer Grounds Bible Study

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and David's resistance to enact judgment directly led to these tragic circumstances.

**Think about it: Put yourself in Tamar's shoes. How would you feel if your father, and your king, did not deal justly with someone who had wronged you?**

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We discussed in the last lesson how David's sin with Bathsheba revealed the need for a perfect king who could offer redemption. In this lesson, we see the need for a king who carries out perfect justice. Amnon was not it. He treated Tamar selfishly and refused to do the right thing for her after he wronged her. Absalom was not it. Although he sought vengeance, he did so because of his own anger and did not pursue the provisions that were due for Tamar. David was not it. He withheld discipline from Amnon which may have led to the sin on Absalom's part. None of these men were

willing or capable of ruling in perfect justice. Jesus came to bring salvation. But salvation comes with justice.

**Read Romans 1:16-2:8 and Revelation 21:1-8. How are justice and salvation related?**

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We cannot rely on any earthly power to provide perfect justice. However, we can take comfort in the fact that our God is a God of justice. There is a day when sin will be removed, there will be no more curse, and there will be no more crying or pain. Those that are redeemed through Christ will be united with God free from their sins and the sins of others. This is the hope that I promised at the beginning of the lesson for all those who have suffered at the hands of others. Despite a world full of injustice, God promises to make everything right. And God always keeps His promises.