

# 2 Samuel 13

## The Sad Story of Amnon and Tamar

We continue our study of 1-2 Samuel.  
Studies in Failure.

Today we look at another sad story in  
the biblical text.

This story barely mentions King  
David....BUT

It is the continuation of his failure with  
Bathsheba and Uriah.

God help us to see through our failures  
(and of others) and learn from them.

I am not going to read the entire passage...so I as we go through the slides you will see **some** texts and at other points I will be giving you the quick version of the story.

[Slide]

13 In the course of time,  
Amnon son of David fell in love  
with Tamar, the beautiful sister of  
Absalom son of David.

v2 Amnon became so obsessed with  
his sister Tamar that he made  
himself sick.

She was a virgin, and it seemed  
impossible for Amnon to have his way  
with her.

Jonadab, one of Amnon's advisors came to Amnon asking why he was looking so tired day after day.

v4 Amnon said to him,  
“I’m in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom.”

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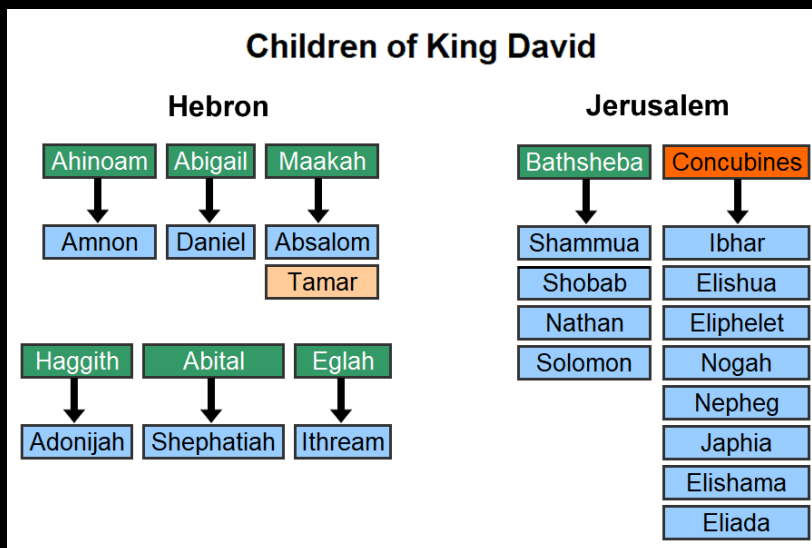
Spoiler Alert: Amnon rapes Tamar.  
THAT is the story...  
the sad story of David's family.

But I want to give you some of the details that the text does not tell you.

These details made the story easier for me to understand...

1. David has a bunch of children from several wives and concubines. They are listed in 1 Chronicles 3

[Slide]

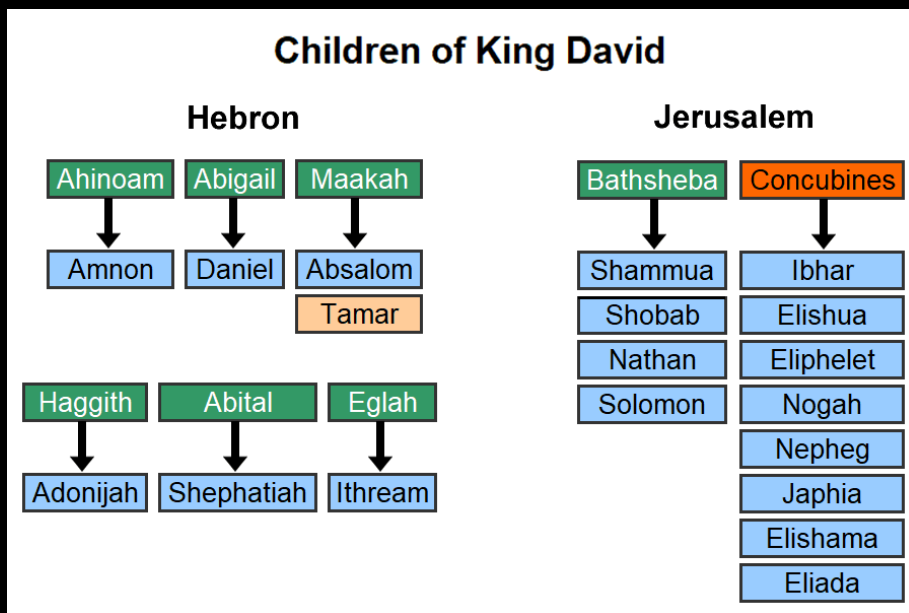


David had at least 18 sons from 7 different wives... 8 sons from concubines.

The mothers of those sons are not given...think of how that affected those boys as they grew up....

"My mom was just a concubine."

David had 18+ sons, but only one daughter is even mentioned....because she was raped.



With 18+ sons  
I would guess  
that David  
had at least  
10 daughters.

But daughters were not important in the ancient world like sons.

So, the first problem...and dynamic,  
is that David had too many children.

That is my personal opinion.

Moving on...

2. You have 18+ boys from a least  
8 different mothers. This leads to  
varying allegiances - at least one of

these women was the daughter of a Gentile king - Absalom's mother.

We are dealing with half-brothers and half-sisters...from 8-10 different women.

It's not like half-siblings in today's world of 2-3 children.

MANY of these sons are vying for places of power...Who will take over the kingdom when their common father dies?

AND their mothers are probably pushing them.

If their son has a position of power, then her other children (esp. the girls) will be taken care of.

3. Amnon is the oldest son of David. Others probably think he is heir to the throne.

4. Absalom wants to be the King. He is one of the sons born from a Gentile mother and grandson of a Gentile king.

He appears to have the drive and personality to TAKE what he wants.

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So, those are details that surely come into play in this story.

Let's go back and finish the story.

[Slide]

Jonadab (one of David's brothers) is the advisor to Amnon.

He comes up with a scheme.

He tells Amnon to pretend to be really sick in bed.

When David comes to see how he is doing, Amnon asks that his half-sister Tamar - the sister of Absalom - be allowed to come and take care of him.

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When she comes to feed him, Amnon asks her to get into bed with him - it is HIGHLY likely that his advance was FAR more obvious than the text shows.



Tamar begs that he not pull her into bed....and suggests that King David would give her to Amnon to be his wife.

Amnon over-powered Tamar...  
and raped her.

[18 min]

In this exchange the text has each of them calling one another "brother" and "sister."

In fact, when Amnon first tells his uncle that he is attracted to Tamar he haltingly calls her "my brother Absalom's sister."

Why are they calling each other by familial ties?

What happens goes against the Law of Moses.

They both know this.  
Yet Amnon rapes her.

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15 Then Amnon hated Tamar with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, “Get up and get out!”

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Why would Amnon suddenly hate Tamar?

- well, she probably resisted him
- perhaps she was not engaging with him the way he wanted

- she is a virgin...
- so it was probably painful  
[ this whole story is uncomfortable reading or hearing in church...]
- Amnon becomes unclean AND his half-sister is likely not a willing participant

So, now Amnon demands that she "Get out of his sight."

[Slide]

16 "No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me."

He calls in one of his servants and tells him to get her out of his house... "and bolt the door."

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I know this is all uncomfortable.  
Believe me...I have wrestled with this  
story all week.

But the text is right there, so I think  
there is something for us to learn.

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In the Law of Moses,  
IF a man rapes a woman he can make  
the crime go away by taking the  
woman to be his wife.

Amnon rejects this option.  
So now Tamar, through no fault of her  
own, is treated as an "outcast" from  
society - she is no longer able to be  
married.

[Slide]

21 When King David heard all this, he was furious.

22 Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

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Two years pass, then Absalom creates a way to have some of his men kill Amnon.

He then flees to another region... probably fearful that King David will execute justice.

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Ok. That is the story.

Our Study is about what can we learn from Failure.

The first thing I would say is that one of the things that makes the biblical text believable is:

We see God's people doing stupid, evil things -

The writers could have easily ignored this story rather than putting it into the text.

LESSONS:

1. This is all about David's personal lack of integrity AFTER he becomes the King of Israel.

- David takes on all of these wives and concubines.

Yes, the culture was different...but I think this story is a signal for all to see.

2. No man can be a good father to 30 children from 8-10 different women.

This story reveals the lack of character in David - he grew more powerful... and failed to be a good father.

We all know this:

Being a good parent requires TIME.

Spending time with our children...

and with our grandchildren...

Children learn from watching us over time...

Notice that while David is angry with Amnon...he does nothing.

According to the Law in Deut. 22 Amnon can marry Tamar... otherwise, he should be put to death. David does nothing.

After Absalom has his half-brother killed, he flees....

But David is not going to do anything.

This story is a strange contrast to David taking Bathsheba.

All of this, IMO...shows that David has lost the integrity he had shown prior to becoming the King.  
Power corrupts.



3. Nobody enjoys being disciplined.

Children must be taught that bad choices lead to consequences.

David failed...  
and it is coming back to haunt him.

Absalom will end up trying to take his father's kingdom...by force.

No matter what we have done...  
His mercy is everlasting...  
New every morning...  
Great is Your faithfulness oh God.

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P R A Y E R  
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# Comments? Questions?

Robert Alter:

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_David\\_Story\\_A\\_Translation\\_with\\_Comme/4xkcFXVZ5zgC?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=amnon](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_David_Story_A_Translation_with_Comme/4xkcFXVZ5zgC?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=amnon)

"Kinship in 2 Samuel 13," WILLIAM H. PROPP, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* Vol. 55, No. 1 (January, 1993), pp. 39-53  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43721141>