

2 Samuel Chapter 13

Verses 1-2: "Tamar": "Palm tree." She was David's daughter by Maachah, the daughter of Talmai, King of Geshur (3:3). Absalom's (David's third son), full sister and half-sister of Amnon, David's first son by Ahinoam (3:2). Amnon's love for her was not filial, but lustful, as became clear in the story. Unmarried daughters were kept in seclusion from men, so that none could see them alone. Amnon had seen Tamar because of their family relationship and had conceived a violent passion for her. This was forbidden by God (see Lev. 18:11), yet with the example of Abraham (Gen. 20:12), and the common practice among the surrounding nations of marrying half-sisters, he felt justified and wanted his passion fulfilled with Tamar.

Verses 1-22: This is the first example of the punishing sword upon David's house for his sin with Bathsheba (see note on 12:10-11). These verses repeat a dozen times that "Tamar" and "Amnon" were "brother" and "sister" (literally half siblings, because they were both children of David). Thus, Amnon's lust for Tamar was a "disgraceful thing" that should not have occurred among God's chosen people, "be done in Israel" (Leviticus 18:9).

2 Samuel 13:1 "And it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name [was] Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her."

"David"; had many wives and concubines. Both "Absalom," his third "son," and "Tamar," his daughter, were born to him by Maacah. "Amnon," his first son, was born to him by Ahinoam (3:2-3; see 1 Chron. 3:1-9).

Tamar was the daughter of Maacah. David had married Maacah while he was in Hebron. Absalom and Tamar were full brother and sister. They had the same mother and the same father. David was their father. Amnon was half-brother to Tamar. His father was David but his mother was Ahinoam of Jezreel. Amnon was David's first son. One bad thing about having more than one wife is there are many children. Some of them not very closely related, but living in the same house. It appears that Amnon fell in love with his half-sister Tamar.

2 Samuel 13:2 "And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she [was] a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her."

Distressed, straitened, and perplexed in his mind through unruly and unbridled lusts that raged in him.

"That he fell sick for his sister Tamar": As Antiochus son of Seleucus did for his mother in law Stratonice, who, to cure him of it, was delivered to him by his father.

"For she was a virgin": And so kept very recluse from the company of men, that he could not come at her. So Philo, speaking of the Jewish women, and particularly virgins, says, that they were shut up in their chambers, and through modesty shun the sight of men, even those of their own house. Hence, they are called from a word which signifies to hide; and Phocylides the poet advises to the shutting of them up in like manner.

"And Amnon thought it hard for him to do anything to her": That it was difficult to have access to her, almost impossible. What he despaired of, and what, if attained to, would be wonderful and amazing; he was at his wits' end how to contrive any scheme to get at her, and obtain his desire. Amazing; he was at his wits' end how to contrive any scheme to get at her, and obtain his desire.

Amnon must have been older than Tamar. He was the oldest of David's children. I would assume that Tamar is somewhere around 15 or 16. Amnon wanted to sleep with his sister, but she was in the women's quarters with her mother and he could not get her out of there. He also knew that he would be in terrible trouble if he raped her. The sad thing is that he was not thinking of her good, but his desires. He thought about it so much, he was sick.

2 Samuel 13:3 "But Amnon had a friend, whose name [was] Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab [was] a very subtil man."

"Jonadab": The son of David's brother, called Shammah (in 1 Sam. 16:9; 17:3), and Shimea (in 1 Chron. 2:13). Jonadab was Amnon's cousin and counselor who gave Amnon the plan by which he was able to rape Tamar.

Jonadab was David's nephew. "Subtil" here means clever, wise or cunning. Amnon did not go to an elder for advice. He went to someone his own age. This is a mistake.

2 Samuel 13:4 "And he said unto him, Why [art] thou, [being] the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

Or "morning by morning"; he was the king's eldest son, heir to the crown, fed at his table, had everything to make him gay and cheerful, and yet pined away. His flesh wasted, his countenance waxed wan and pale, and especially in the mornings. In the daytime he met with diversions which, in some measure, took off his thoughts from the object his mind was impressed with, but in the night season they were continually employed about it. So that he could have no rest and sleep, which made him look ruefully in the morning. And this man had a suspicion of his case, and therefore put this and the following question to him.

"Wilt thou not tell me?" Who is so nearly related to thee, and who have such a particular value and affection for thee.

"And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister": He does not call her his sister, but Absalom's sister, to lessen his sin of unlawful love to her, which, being thus closely pressed, and by a friend, he could not conceal.

The girls were kept very secluded in those days, so Jonadab probably, had never seen her. Amnon explains that she is whole sister to Absalom. His love (lust), for Tamar had him not wanting to eat, and he was very thin. Jonadab did not understand why a king's son would be so thin, until he heard Amnon's story.

2 Samuel 13:5 "And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see [it], and eat [it] at her hand."

Being a subtle man, he presently formed a scheme to relieve him, and open a way for the enjoyment of what he desired.

"Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick": Feign thyself sick, pretend that thou art so, by lying down on the bed, and making complaints of one kind or another.

"And when thy father cometh to see thee": As he quickly would, after hearing of his illness, being very affectionate to his children.

"Say unto him, I pray thee let, my sister Tamar come, and give me meat": Here he is directed to call her not Absalom's sister, but his own, the more to cover his ill design upon her.

"And dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand": Pretending that his stomach was very weak and squeamish, that he could not eat anything which his servants dressed for him, and which he did not see done with his own eyes.

The daughters lived in a separated place with their mothers. They did not generally, come in direct contact with the young men. The older sons seemed to have separate quarters of their own in the palace. This pretense that he is sick was to get Tamar away from her mother and into his private quarters. The terrible thing is he uses his father, David, to help him with his plot.

2 Samuel 13:6 "So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand."

Took the advice of his cousin Jonadab, and acted according to it.

"And when the king was come to see him": As he quickly did, after he had heard of his illness.

"Amnon said unto the king": Who perhaps inquired of his appetite, whether he could eat anything, and what.

"I pray thee let my sister Tamar come": He calls her sister, as Jonadab had directed, the more to blind his design; though it is much that so sagacious a man as David was had not seen through it. But the notion he had of his being really ill, and the near relation between him and Tamar, forbade his entertaining the least suspicion of that kind.

"And make me a couple of cakes in my sight": Heart cakes, as the word may be thought to signify. Called so either from the form of them, such as we have with us, or from the effect of them, comforting and refreshing the heart.

"That I may eat at her hand": Both what is made by her hand, and received from it.

We see that Amnon took the advice and David did come to see about him, thinking he was truly sick. He said to David, exactly what his friend had told him to.

2 Samuel 13:7 "Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat."

Who perhaps was not in the king's palace, but at her brother Absalom's house (2 Sam. 13:20).

"Saying, go now to thy brother Amnon's house": Who also had a separate house and equipage, being the king's son, and his eldest son.

"And dress him meat": Such as he may desire, and his stomach will bear.

David did not suspicion that anything was wrong. He did just as Amnon had asked. The word of the father was like law, so Tamar did as she was told.

2 Samuel 13:8 "So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded [it], and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes."

In obedience to the king's commands, and in affection to her brother, with an innocent heart, having no suspicion of any design upon her chastity.

"And he was laid down": Upon a couch or bed in his chamber, as being sick as was pretended, into which she was introduced.

"And she took flour, and kneaded it": Made it into a paste.

"And made cakes in his sight": A kind of fritters of them, as in the Talmud.

"And did bake the cakes": Or fried them in a frying pan, in oil.

2 Samuel 13:9 "And she took a pan, and poured [them] out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him."

Out of the frying pan, in which they were, into another dish; and all this was done in his presence, that he might see and know of what, and in what manner it was made, that his stomach might not recoil at it.

"But he refused to eat": For that was not what he wanted.

"And Amnon said, have out all men from me; as if company was troublesome to him, and he wanted rest, etc.

"And they went out every man from him": At his orders, that he might get some sleep, as he seemed desirous of it.

The trick has worked and Tamar is in his house. She is obeying David, fixing a meal for her brother. He could not rape her in front of witnesses, so he sent everyone out but her.

2 Samuel 13:10 "And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought [them] into the chamber to Amnon her brother."

It is probable that when Tamar first came, Amnon had received her in an outward room, but that, pretending now to be fatigued, he retired into his chamber, desiring her to go along with him, that he might put his design upon her in execution without being interrupted; it being an inner chamber probably, remote from any other room.

Verses 11-12: Such relationships between family members were forbidden by the Law of Moses (Lev. 18:9, 11; 20:17).

2 Samuel 13:11 "And when she had brought [them] unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister."

Not only into the chamber, but to the side of the bed or couch where he had laid himself, or sat, in a proper position to answer his purpose.

"He took hold of her; by the arm, or threw his hands about her.

"And said unto her, come, lie with me, my sister": One would think the relation he observes she stood in to him would have checked him from making so vile a motion.

Now the truth is out. He was not hungry for food; he wanted to sleep with her.

2 Samuel 13:12 "And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly."

"Do not thou this folly": Literally "a wicked thing." Tamar appealed to Amnon with 4 reasons that he should not rape her. First, it was an utterly deplorable act in Israel because it violated the law of God (see Lev. 18:11), and Tamar knew that such action could bring disharmony and bloodshed to the king's family, as it did.

Hebrew women were very careful to keep their reputation unspotted. Adultery was punishable by death. Worse than adultery is incest, this is the very sin he wants to commit here. This is one of the blackest marks on our society today. Incest is practiced in over a fourth of the homes. God has strictly forbidden this type of relationship with members of one's own family. To force her, would be rape. That also is punishable by death. This would bring disgrace on David's family.

2 Samuel 13:13 "And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? And as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee."

“My shame”: Second, as a fornicator, Tamar would be scorned as an object of reproach. Even though resistant to the evil crime perpetuated against her, Tamar, would bear the stigma of one defiled. Tamar’s words were probably an attempt to dissuade Amnon from his folly.

“As one of the fools in Israel”: Third, Amnon would be regarded by the people as a wicked fool, a God-rejecting man without principles who offended ordinary standards of morality, thereby jeopardizing Amnon’s right to the throne.

“The king, for he will not withhold me from thee”: Fourth, Tamar appealed to Amnon to fulfill his physical desire for her through marriage. She surely knew that such a marriage between half siblings was not allowed by the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:9, 11; 20:17; Deut. 27:22), but in the desperation of the moment, Tamar was seeking to escape the immediate situation.

Tamar is trying to talk him out of committing so deplorable a sin. She reminds him that his reputation, as well as her own, will be ruined if he does this. Her last advice is that if he is in love with her, go tell David the king, and he will let them marry. The Levitical law forbids such marriages, however.

Leviticus 18:9 "The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, [whether she be] born at home, or born abroad, [even] their nakedness thou shalt not uncover."

2 Samuel 13:14 "Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her."

“Forced her”: A euphemism for “raped.”

His feelings toward her were lust and not true love. Love does not violate someone else. There is no good that could come from him raping his sister. This is some of the violence that came to the house of David in punishment for his sin.

Verses 15-17: Amnon’s sending Tamar away was a greater wrong than the rape itself because it would inevitably have been supposed that she had been guilty of some shameful conduct, i.e., that the seduction had come from her.

In ancient Near Eastern culture, if a man seduced a woman, he had to marry her. If he raped her, he was especially obligated to care for her (Exodus 22:16; Deut. 22:28-29). A woman who was no longer a virgin could not be offered in marriage to another man, so to refuse to marry her was to leave her without any means of provision.

2 Samuel 13:15 "Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her [was] greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone."

"Hated her": Amnon's "love" (verse 1), was nothing but sensual desire that, once gratified, turned to hatred. His sudden revulsion was the result of her unwilling resistance, the atrocity of what he had done, feelings of remorse, and dread of exposure and punishment. All of these rendered her intolerably undesirable to him.

Lust, whether fulfilled or not, often turns to hatred (Gen. 39:13-19). True love "never faileth" (1 Cor. 13:8).

As we said above, he had never loved her. He lusted for her body. The deed done, this would be replaced by hate. Every time he looked at her he would be reminded of the terrible sin he had committed. He no longer desires her, so he tries to send her away.

2 Samuel 13:16 "And she said unto him, [There is] no cause: this evil in sending me away [is] greater than the other that thou didst unto me. But he would not hearken unto her."

For such treatment as this.

"This evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me": Not that this was a greater sin, but it was a greater evil or injury to her, that being done secretly. This openly; being turned out in that open manner, it might look as if she was the aggressor, and had drawn her brother into this sin, or however had consented to it. Had it been kept a secret, she would not have been exposed to public shame and disgrace, and she might have been disposed of in marriage to another. It would not have been known to the grief of her father, to the revenge of Absalom, and to the dishonor of religion. Besides, the sin of Amnon might have been more easily excused, if any excuse could be made for it, as that it arose from the force of lust, and a strong impure affection, but this from barbarity and inhumanity.

"But he would not hearken unto her": But insisted upon her immediate departure.

2 Samuel 13:17 "Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this [woman] out from me, and bolt the door after her."

Amnon doubtless intended to give the impression that Tamar had behaved shamefully towards him. The baseness of this insinuation is in keeping with his brutality.

He has humiliated her. His sending her away is saying that this was all her fault. He has no compassion for her feelings at all. At least he could marry her and save her good name. In addition to committing the sin of rape, he had also lied. He told her that he loved her, when in fact he had no regard at all for her. She was a thing to be used and thrown away. The worst thing of all is having the other men throw her out.

2 Samuel 13:18 "And [she had] a garment of divers colors upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters [that were] virgins appareled. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her."

“A garment of divers colors” (see Gen. 37:33). A garment which identified the wearer’s special position. For Tamar, the robe identified her as a virgin daughter of the king. The tearing of this garment symbolized her loss of the special position (verse 19).

The servant would have known that this was a daughter of the king, because of the colorful garment. This is the actions of a very selfish man. He did not want to share in the shame he caused her.

2 Samuel 13:19 "And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that [was] on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying."

“Tamar’s” actions expressed symbolically her grief and vexation (Job 2:12; Jer. 2:37).

“Put ashes ... rent her garment ... laid her hand ... went on crying”: The ashes were a sign of mourning. The torn garment symbolized the ruin of her life. The hand on the head was emblematic of exile and banishment. The crying showed that she viewed herself as good as dead.

We see that Tamar did not try to hide the shame. The throwing of the ashes on her head showed that she was mourning for her lost virginity. The tearing of the clothes, that the virgins wore, showed that she was no more a virgin.

2 Samuel 13:20 "And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he [is] thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house."

“Regard not this thing”: Absalom told his sister not to pay undue attention or worry about the consequences of the rape. Absalom minimized the significance of what had taken place only for the moment, while already beginning to plot his revenge in using this crime as reason to do what he wanted to do anyway, remove Amnon from the line of succession to the throne (note also verse 32), where Jonadab knew of Absalom’s plans.

“Desolate”: She remained unmarried and childless. Her full brother was her natural protector and the children of polygamists lived by themselves in different family units.

Absalom comforted his sister. He stopped her from causing a big commotion over this terrible thing. He was in hopes that David would take care of this, being her father. It appears that Tamar remained in Absalom's quarters, to keep down trouble and the gossip spreading. We will find later, that Absalom did not forget this humiliation of his sister by Amnon. Whatever Amnon gets, he deserves for so terrible a sin.

Verses 21-23: Although the “king” was angry, there is no record of Amnon’s punishment. Absalom’s hatred would boil for “two years” until his opportunity to avenge “his sister” would come.

2 Samuel 13:21 "But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth."

“David ... was very wroth”: Fury and indignation were David’s reactions to the report of the rape (Gen. 34:7). Because he did not punish Amnon for his crime, he abdicated his responsibility both as king and as a father. The lack of justice in the land would come back to haunt David in a future day (15:4).

David’s own sin immobilized him from confronting his son. Consequently, he allowed the matter to pass by. Meanwhile, Absalom plotted to avenge his sister’s rape.

He was angry, but what did he do? At the least, Amnon should have been cut off from his people. Probably the reason David did not punish Amnon, is the fact that he had sinned so greatly himself.

Verses 22-23: The phrase “spake ...neither good nor bad” could be translated “did nothing against.” “Absalom” hated Amnon, but he bided his time for “two full years” and allowed his bitterness to fester before taking revenge.

2 Samuel 13:22 "And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar."

“Absalom hated Amnon”: As Amnon hated Tamar (verse 15), Absalom loathed his half-brother, Amnon.

Absalom was waiting for the right time. He did not do anything immediately, but would later. He hated Amnon for his disgrace of his sister. It appears that Absalom did not push David to punish Amnon, thinking he would find a time to do it himself.

Verses 23-27: “Baal-hazor”: The Benjamite village of Hazor (Neh. 11:33), located about 12 miles northeast of Jerusalem, was the place for a sheep-shearing feast put on by Absalom, to which he invited all his brothers and half-brothers, as well as King David and his royal court (verse 24). David declined, but encourages Absalom to hold the feast for “the king’s sons” as a means to unity and harmony (verses 25-27). With David’s denial of the invitation, Absalom requested that Amnon go as his representative. Although David had reservations concerning Absalom’s intent, he allowed all his sons to go.

2 Samuel 13:23 "And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which [is] beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons."

Absalom had now silently nourished his revenge for “two full years.” No doubt he chose also to give full opportunity for his father to punish Amnon’s iniquity if he would; and by this long quiet waiting he so far disarmed suspicion that he was able to carry out his purpose. Sheepshearing always was, and still is, a time of feasting (compare 1 Sam. 25:2). The situation of Baal-hazor and of Ephraim are quite unknown, but Absalom’s property was probably not many miles from Jerusalem.

We learned in another lesson that this particular time was a time of parties and rejoicing. The two years that Absalom waited was to find just the right time to get even with Amnon for disgracing his sister. This was about 8 miles out of Jerusalem, and would not have been far for the king’s sons to come.

2 Samuel 13:24 "And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant."

At Jerusalem, to invite him in person.

"And said, behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers": Persons employed in shearing his sheep: and this being a time of entertainment and joy.

"Let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant": He invited the king and the whole royal family to go with him to Baal-hazor, and partake of the sheepshearing feast. For by "his servants" are not meant the king's domestic servants, his guard and retinue, but his sons, as appears by what follows.

2 Samuel 13:25 "And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him."

Pretending great desire of his presence there, to prevent any jealousies, which otherwise he thought would arise in the breast of a king so wise and experienced, and under the expectation of God’s dreadful judgments to be inflicted upon his family.

"Blessed him": Dismissed him with thanks for his kindness, and with his fatherly blessing.

David would not go to the party himself, but he would allow his sons to go and celebrate with Absalom. David gave him a large gift of some kind. That is what is meant by the blessing.

2 Samuel 13:26 "Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?"

Absalom then asks that if the king himself will not come, Amnon, as his eldest son and heir-apparent, may represent him at the feast. David hesitates, but as he could not well refuse without acknowledging a suspicion which he was unwilling to express, he finally consents.

David, probably, sensed the hate that Absalom had for Amnon. That is why he asked why he should go?

2 Samuel 13:27 "But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him."

It is strange that Absalom's urgent desire of Amnon's company raised no suspicion in the mind of so wise a king: but God suffered him to be blinded that he might execute his judgments upon David, and bring upon Amnon the just punishment of his lewdness.

This was a time for the young sons of David to celebrate and he relented and let Amnon and in fact, all the sons go.

Verses 28-29: "Then kill him": Absalom murdered Amnon through his servants (compare 11:15-17), just as David had killed Uriah through others (11:14-17). Though rape was punishable by death, personal vengeance such as this was unacceptable to God. Due course of law was to be carried out.

2 Samuel 13:28 "Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant."

Absalom repeated David's crime, but in a different way and in a different setting. With the murder of Amnon, Absalom was the next in line for the throne of David. (14:7).

Absalom has been waiting for just this moment for two years. He has planned it with great detail. He had already explained to his servants to wait until Amnon is drunk, and then kill him. Absalom will take the blame after it is over. Perhaps he would not be able to get as close as Absalom's servants could.

2 Samuel 13:29 "And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled."

"His mule": Mules were ridden by the royal family in David's kingdom (18:9; 1 Kings 1:33, 38, 44).

We see that the very thing that Absalom had commanded his servants to do, they did. In those days, you could tell who the king's sons were, because they all had a mule to ride. Amnon is dead and all of the other sons mount their mules and hurry away. They left in such a hurry, thinking they might be the next one killed.

2 Samuel 13:30 "And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left."

"All the king's sons": This exaggeration plunged everyone into grief (verse 31), until it was corrected (verse 32).

2 Samuel 13:31" Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent."

In token of extreme grief and sorrow, as Jacob did when he was shown the coat of Joseph, supposing him to have been slain, as David thought all his sons were (Genesis 37:34).

"And lay on the earth": On the bare ground, another token of mourning; so Job did on hearing the death of his sons (Job 1:20).

"And all his servants stood by with their clothes rent": Did as David did, in imitation of him, joining with him in expressions of sorrow; these were his courtiers, ministers of state, and principal officers in his household.

The sons had not made it back to David, but news came that all of David's other sons had been killed by Absalom. David prayed this was not true. He went into deep mourning immediately, and all of his servants with him. He tore his clothes and lay face down before God, praying this news is not true.

2 Samuel 13:32 "And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose [that] they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar."

"Jonadab ... answered": Jonadab knew of Absalom's plot to kill Amnon (see verse 20), for the rape of Tamar. Death was prescribed (in Lev. 18:11, 29). "Cut off" means to execute (see note on verses 28-29).

2 Samuel 13:33 "Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead."

Neither suppose it, nor be troubled for it.

"To think that all the king's sons are dead": Which was not to be thought, nor could any good reason be given for such a supposition.

"For Amnon only is dead": He repeats it again with great assurance, which seems to confirm the suspicion of him before suggested; though some think he said this not from certain knowledge, but by conjecture.

This is the same Jonadab that helped Amnon trick Tamar to his house. He knew that the rape of Tamar had never been paid for, and that her brother Absalom has done that now. His hate was not for all of the brothers; it was just for one who disgraced his sister. Jonadab probably, did not know of the plot, but he was aware of the details of the sin that Amnon committed. He probably had realized the hate that Absalom had let build up inside for his brother Amnon.

Verses 34, 37: "Absalom fled": The law regarding premeditated murder, as most would view Absalom's act, gave him no hope of returning (see Num. 35:21). The cities of refuge would afford him no sanctuary, so he left his father's kingdom to live in Geshur, east of the Sea of Galilee, under the protection of the king who was the grandfather of both Tamar and Absalom (see note on 13:1-2).

2 Samuel 13:34 "But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him."

He who promised his servants protection could not protect himself, and who no doubt fled with him. He knew what he had done was death by law, and that there was no city of refuge for such sort of murder as this, and he had no reason to hope the king would suffer so foul a crime as this to pass unpunished.

"And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked": To the way that led from Absalom's house to Jerusalem, to see if he could spy any other messenger on the road from thence.

"And, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him": That is, behind the watchman, who, looking round him, saw them. These people were the king's sons and their attendants, who, being at some distance, the young man could not discern who they were. They did not come the direct road from Absalom's house, but came a roundabout way, for fear, as R. Isaiah rightly conjectures, lest Absalom should pursue, or send pursuers after them, and slay them. Though others, as Kimchi, think this refers to the hill, and that the sense is, that the watchman saw them coming from the way which was behind the hill, and began to see them when they came to the side of it. Which was the way that led to the city surrounded by mountains (see Psalm 125:2).

Absalom was afraid for his own life because he killed Amnon. He fled to his grandfather for protection. These are the mules carrying the sons of David coming.

2 Samuel 13:35 "And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is."

For as they came nearer, it was plainly discovered that they were the king's sons; seen on the side of the hill.

"As thy servant said, so it is": He seems to applaud himself, and exult at his penetration and foresight.

Jonadab did not volunteer the fact that the whole plot of Amnon's was his idea. He does speak here, that David's other sons are coming. He knew that he was right, that Absalom had killed no one by Amnon.

2 Samuel 13:36 "And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore."

As soon as the above words were out of his mouth.

"That, behold, the king's sons came": Into the palace, and into the apartment where the king was.

"And lifted up their voice and wept:" Not being able to tell the sorrowful news with their mouths, but declared it by gestures.

"And the king also and all his servants wept very sore": They joined the king's sons in weeping, and were the more moved to it by their weeping. And the rather, since hereby the news of Amnon's murder was confirmed.

The weeping was in mourning for Amnon, but it is plain that David realizes this too, is punishment for him killing Uriah, and taking his wife. The sword is indeed, present in the life of David within his own home. They all wept for the loss of Amnon.

2 Samuel 13:37 "But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And [David] mourned for his son every day."

Talmai, his maternal grandfather (see note on 2 Sam. 3:2-5). This verse may be considered parenthetical: The king's sons came . . . and wept sore. ("Only Absalom fled and went to . . . Geshur.") In this case, the omission of "David" in the latter clause of the verse is explained, as the nominative is easily supplied (from 2 Sam. 13:36).

"For his son every day": Amnon is certainly the son here meant, for whom David continually mourned until his grief was gradually assuaged by the lapse of time.

Talmai was the father of Absalom's mother. This would be a safe place. David knew in his heart that again, he had made a mistake. If he had punished Amnon properly, he would still be alive and Absalom would not be a fugitive from his own father.

2 Samuel 13:38 "So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years."

This is the third time it is mentioned, and the reason of it here Abarbinel thinks is, that when he first fled to his grandfather, he used to stand openly in the court of his palace, and go with him wherever he went from place to place. But when he understood that his father mourned so for the death of Amnon, he was afraid he would send some person to lay hold on him, and take vengeance on him. Therefore he would go no more with the king from place to place, but went and abode in Geshur always, which was a fortified city, as it follows.

"And went to Geshur, and was there three years": And never went out of it, until he was fetched by Joab (as 2 Samuel 14:23 relates). Nor is there anything in (2 Samuel 13:37), disturbed and mutilated, as Spinoza intimates, but the whole is very expressive and emphatic.

2 Samuel 13:39 "And [the soul of] king David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead."

“Longed to go”: David gradually accepted the fact of Amnon’s death and desired to see Absalom again, but took no action to bring him back.

David’s love for his own, despite their faults, often clouded his good judgment (verse 21; 1 Kings 1:6). His yearning to see “Absalom” sets the stage for Absalom’s return and the resulting rebellion (Chapter 14).

David understood why Absalom had done this thing. After Absalom was gone three years, David longed to see him because he loved him. David blames himself, not Absalom, for the death of Amnon.

2 Samuel Chapter 13 Questions

1. What was the name of the sister of Absalom?
2. Who does verse 1 say, loved her?
3. What relation was Tamar to Amnon?
4. How badly does verse 2 say, Amnon wanted Tamar?
5. Why did he not have access to Tamar?
6. He is not thinking of her good, but his _____.
7. What was the name of Amnon's friend?
8. What advice did he give Amnon?
9. Who actually sent for Tamar to come to Amnon's quarters?
10. What was she supposed to be in Amnon's house for?
11. When he asked her to come and lie with him, what answer did she give him?
12. Incest is practiced in over _____ of the homes in America.
13. Adultery, or rape, was punishable by _____.
14. What did she tell him to do, if he truly loved her?
15. His feelings toward her were _____, not true love.

16. After he had raped her, how did his feelings change?
17. What did she say was a greater sin, than what he had done?
18. What did he do in reply to that?
19. How were the king's virgin daughters dressed?
20. What did the servant do to her?
21. How did Tamar mourn?
22. Who found her, and told her to not regard the thing?
23. How did David react, when he heard of what happened?
24. Absalom hated _____.
25. What went on at sheep-shearing time?
26. Did David go with Absalom?
27. Who did David let go with Absalom to celebrate?
28. What had Absalom told his servants to do, when Amnon got drunk?
29. What bad news came to David about his sons?
30. Who told David, that it was just Amnon who was dead?
31. What did David's sons ride?
32. Where did Absalom go for safety?