

2 Samuel 12:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

Analysis

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

This verse contributes to the narrative of Nathan's Rebuke, emphasizing conviction, repentance, consequences. Nathan's prophetic confrontation using parable demonstrates effective rebuke methodology. David's immediate repentance ("I have sinned against the LORD") contrasts with Saul's defensive self-justification. The child's death demonstrates that forgiveness doesn't eliminate all consequences. Theological themes include God's hatred of sin, the necessity of repentance, the distinction between eternal and temporal consequences, and God's grace that continues despite devastating sin.

Historical Context

The historical setting of 2 Samuel 12 occurs during David's reign (circa 1010-970 BCE) over Israel's united monarchy. Archaeological discoveries, including the Tel Dan inscription mentioning the 'House of David,' corroborate biblical historicity. Ancient Near Eastern customs regarding conviction, repentance, consequences

provide crucial background. The geopolitical situation involved regional powers—Philistines, Ammonites, Arameans, Moabites, Edomites—as David consolidated and expanded Israel's territory. Cultural practices concerning kingship, warfare, covenant relationships, family dynamics, and religious observance differed significantly from modern Western contexts, requiring careful attention to avoid anachronistic interpretation while extracting timeless theological principles applicable across cultures and eras.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen your understanding of conviction, repentance, consequences?
2. What does this verse reveal about God's character, and how should that shape your worship and obedience?
3. In what specific ways can you apply this truth to your current circumstances and relationships this week?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֹהִים And there came	אֵלָנָה a traveller	לְעֵמֶל it for the man	לֹא אִשְׁעַר unto the rich	בַּעֲשֵׂר the rich	לְאֵלָמָד and he spared	לְאֵלָמָד to take
H935	H1982	H376	H6223	H2550	H3947	
מִצְאָנוּ of his own flock	וְמִבְּקָרָיו ¹ and of his own herd	וְעִיטָּשׁ בָּהּ and dressed	לְאֵלָמָד for the wayfaring man			
H6629	H1241	H6213	H732			
וְאֵלָמָד And there came	לְאֵלָמָד to take	אֶת לְאֵלָמָד H853	כְּבָשָׂת lamb	לֹא אִשְׁעַר it for the man	בַּעֲשֵׂר the poor	
H935	H0	H3947	H3535	H376	H7326	
וְעִיטָּשׁ בָּהּ and dressed	לֹא אִשְׁעַר it for the man	וְאֵלָמָד And there came				
H6213	H376	H935				

Additional Cross-References

James 1:14 (Parallel theme): But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

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