

Perspectives on the story in 2 Samuel 12.1-4

"You are the man":

"...he means many things at once: David was the wayfarer, 'the one who comes,' insofar as his past dealings with God are concerned (12:7-8); he is the rich man when his present crimes are brought into the picture (12:9-10); and he will be the poor man when God's punishing future for him and his house arrives (12:11-12) ... the parable shifts in meaning as it structures the various phases of the royal history."

(—Polzin p. 126)

David's "overinterpretation" (Schipper) (12.5-6)

Rich man = Joab

Poor man = Bathsheba

Ewelamb = Uriah (linked by "eat," "drink" and "lie down")

Traveler = David

Nathan's reply in YHWH's "voice" of remembrance (12.7-8)

Rich man = YHWH

Poor man = Saul

Ewelamb = Saul's women

Traveler = David

Nathan's reply in YHWH's "voice" of judgment (12.9)

Rich man = David

Poor man = Uriah

Ewelamb = Bathsheba

Traveler = ?

Nathan's reply in YHWH's "voice" of punishment (12.11-12)

Rich man: YHWH

Poor man: David

Ewelamb: David's women

Traveler: "your neighbor" (= Absalom)

Readers' perspective (given knowledge of the wider narrative that follows, Polzin)

Rich man = David

Poor man = Uriah

Ewelamb = Bathsheba (connected by "take")

Traveler = Judah, to whom Solomon is "given"