CHIASTIC STRUCTURE: 2 Samuel 10-12

(A1) Comfort: David's good intention to comfort Hanun (a son grieving a father)

   (B1) Humiliation: Hanun humiliates David's men

      (C1) War with Ammon and Syria

         (D) War with Syria

      (C2) War with Ammon (Siege of Rabbah) ———

   (B1) Comfort* (for a father grieving a son)

(A2) Humiliation: David humiliates the Ammonites

(1a) David's sins

   (2) God pronounces judgment

(1b) Consequences
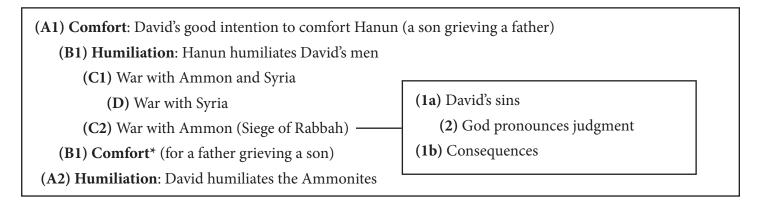
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*In this chiastic structure, the order is switched in the final elements. Instead of mirroring the beginning pattern, the humiliation and comfort elements get switched. The comfort element is found in 2 Samuel 12:24-25, and the humilition element ends the chapter in 2 Samuel 12:26-31 with the taking of Rabbah.

The switch is made for a point. God pronounced judgment on David for his lenghty list sins, but when David repented, God "put away" his sins, that is, He transferred them to the son and the son died in David's place. But, having been forgiven so much, David then returned to Rabbah to demand payment in full for the slight against him. David is the model of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18, and like the unforgiving servant, suddenly finds his fortune reversed as the weight of the LORD's judgments returns on him with devastating losses. I think the switch in the chiastic structure helps draw our attention to and reinforce the unforgiving servant lesson.

David's Sins

(A1) David takes Bathsheba, illegitimately, and she conceives

   (B1) Bathsheba delivers bad news to David

      (C1) David schemes unsuccessfully to cover his sin

         (D1) David sends word to Joab to kill Uriah

            (E) Joab obeys the command; Uriah dies in battle

         (D2) Joab sends word to David that Uriah is dead

      (C2) David's scheme is a success

   (B2) Bathsheba receives bad news and weeps for her husband

(A2) David makes her his wife, legitimately; she bears him the son

God Pronounces Judgment

(A1) God sends Nathan

   (B1) Nathan's parable of the lamb that was killed

      (C1) David pronounces judgment on the (fictitious) man

         (D) God pronounces judgment on David

      (C2) David repents

   (B2) God relents, but takes the life of David's lamb (son) instead

(A2) Nathan departs

Consequences

(A1) The child becomes ill

   (B1) David laments for the child

      (C1) The child dies

   (B2) David ceases to lament, comforts Bathsheba

(A2) A new son is born