

David's Great Sins

2 Samuel 11

Lesson Outline

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David's Sin of Adultery

2 Samuel 11:1-13

David's Shame: 2 Samuel 11:1-5

David Lingered in Jerusalem

In this chapter we encounter a terrible incident concerning David. Its record in God's Word will not allow it to be ignored. The year had expired, referring to the end of the Jewish year and the month Adar, which is equivalent to our February (1 Chronicles 20:1). The next month being Nisan, equivalent to our March, meant it was springtime. The rains were over, grass grew in the fields, fruit was found on the trees, and corn was ripe providing food for horse and men.¹ Previously the Ammonites mistreated David's ambassadors instigating war with Israel (2 Samuel 10:4-5). Joab and the army successfully defeated the Ammonites then besieged Rabbah, which was, "the metropolis of the nation, and the royal city, where the king kept his court."²

Instead of going to war with his men, David remained at Jerusalem. Why is unknown. He seemed to be healthy and able bodied. Perhaps he was comfortable and enjoyed his life of ease in the nation's capital. David's conduct weakened his resolve towards sin.

1. *David was derelict* – he should have led the army into battle instead of being idle in Jerusalem. Perhaps his prosperity led to neglect of other things including prayer, scripture reading, meditating on God's Word, and guarding against temptation.

¹ John Gill, "Gill's Commentary on the Bible: 2 Samuel," (Bible Truth Forum: E-book, 2002) p. 120

² Ibid, p. 111

2. *David was desensitized* – he disobeyed God concerning polygamy, choosing to live a life of self-indulgence collecting wives (Deuteronomy 17:17). It was only a matter of time before he coveted another man's wife.

The king arose from his bed at evening time to walk upon his roof. The noon rest was customary but to remain in bed until late in the day indicates idleness. There was nothing wrong with taking a stroll upon the roof at this time; actually it was common because the evening air was cooler. It does not appear David planned to sin, however being idle in the wrong place produced vulnerability (Proverbs 6:9-11). It has been well said, "If Satan tempts busy men, idle and luxurious men tempt Satan."³ Beware of idleness, because it only leads to problems (Proverbs 19:15).

David Looked upon Bathsheba

As he walked upon the roof of his house, David saw Bathsheba bathing. She may have been in the uncovered court of her house where wells were located or in a room with open windows. Either way both appear to be at fault. David saw into a private area and continued to look, while Bathsheba bathed in a visible area at evening time when it was customary for people to walk on their roofs.

David looked long enough to notice her beauty. He should have quickly shut his eyes or looked elsewhere (Isaiah 33:15-16). At this point David made another mistake, he continued to think on what was seen. He should have removed himself from the roof and forgotten her, instead he sought to fulfill the desires of his flesh. It is important to guard against temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:6; 1 Peter 4:7).

1. *Guard your eyes* – our generation is tempted greatly with modern technology, such as television, computers, and smartphones. Images are a large part of our society, so be careful what you look upon (Psalm 119:37).
2. *Guard your thoughts* – Immoral thoughts often give way to illicit conduct (Proverbs 23:7). If you control your thought life, you will be able to control your conduct (Philippians 4:8-9).

David discovered the woman was Bathsheba, believed to be the wife of Uriah. David was cautioned; she belonged to another and was off limits. Ignoring the warning, he summoned Bathsheba and they sinned before the LORD. There is no indication of force involved, she consented. Bathsheba may have been beautiful but her character was not equal to her physical appearance. It did not take long for her to realize she was with child and both likely understood they were guilty of a sin punishable by death (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). Even the best of men are not above sin (1 Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 6:1-2). In a moment of weakness, David sinned against the LORD. Never forget, the saved individual is regenerated but liable to fall to the temptations of the flesh (Romans 7:18, 23). The flesh in the believer is no different and no better than the flesh in an unbeliever.⁴

³ B. H. Carroll, "An Interpretation of the English Bible, Vol. 5," (Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1947) p. 180

⁴ Arthur W. Pink, "The Life of David, Volume 2," (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981) p. 16

David's Scheme: 2 Samuel 11:6-13**David Summoned Uriah**

David devised a deceitful plan to fool Uriah and the entire nation. Uriah had been away for a while and would probably remain until the army returned. At such time, he would discover his wife's adulterous behavior. Perhaps he would divorce her or worse, seek to have her judged according to the law, which resulted in stoning to death (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). He might even find out David was involved, if so he may have stirred up problems in the nation. David was prepared to do what was necessary to cover his sin, so he spent his time and energy on deception instead of serving the LORD (Proverbs 28:13). The king sent a message to Joab requesting Uriah's presence.

As ordered, Uriah delivered the report concerning the siege. The king, appearing to be generous, directed Uriah to go home and wash his feet. This indicates David offered him a short military leave. For a man in battle this was a blessing. Apparently David hoped Uriah would return home to his wife and later assume the child belonged to him. The devious plan failed because Uriah remained at the palace and slept at the door of the king's house. According to John Gill this refers to the palace bodyguards who watched over the gate.⁵

David Shamed by Uriah

David heard Uriah remained at the gate of the palace instead of going home and was displeased. Those living in sin often accuse the actions of those living correctly (Proverbs 29:27). David insinuated that it was good for him to go home. He had been at war and traveled a great distance. Since his service was not required, he was authorized by the king to return home. David did his best to convince Uriah he should return to his home. Uriah offered a response.

1. *His recognition* – the nation was at war so the soldiers and even the ark remained in a tent.
2. *His respect* – his fellow soldiers were encamped in open fields without luxuries.
3. *His refusal* – in good conscience, he could not partake while others sacrificed. He would not spend time with his wife because others were unable to spend time with their families.

Uriah's self-denial was an embarrassment to David's conduct. The king enjoyed pleasures, including sinful ones, while his men lived in open fields and fought for the nation. David should have recognized his sin and repented. Instead David persisted, feeding Uriah and making him drunk. Perhaps he hoped Uriah would forget his dedication and return home. This was wicked and sinful of David (Habakkuk 2:15-16). It was all for naught, Uriah remained with the soldiers and continued to practice self-denial.

⁵ John Gill, "Gill's Commentary on the Bible: 2 Samuel," (Bible Truth Forum: E-Book, 2002) p. 124

David's Sin of Murder

2 Samuel 11:14-27

David's Message to Joab: 2 Samuel 11:14-21

Joab's Orders

Knowing his sin would be made known, David arranged to have a brave, loyal, and valiant man killed. His refusal to repent of adultery opened the door for him to commit another sin. It is true, the lusts of the flesh lead to destruction (Proverbs 6:32). Not only did David plan to murder Uriah but allowed him to deliver the message demanding it. This is the same man that would not dare slay Saul, who had chased him from the palace into the fields and the same man that forgave Saul's family, blessing Mephibosheth for Jonathan's sake. Because of sin, David acted wickedly, planning the murder of a man who willingly followed his direction and harmed him in no way.

Uriah was to be placed in the front lines where Joab knew the fighting would be great. Being a dedicated man, Uriah would not retreat, and should be left to die. This was planned out with David taking time to write the order. This act was just as evil as Joab's murder of Absalom. One can only wonder what Joab thought of his uncle David who had publicly derided his action (2 Samuel 3:28-34). Why would David do such a wicked deed?

1. *Perhaps love for self* – he did not want his sin known since it would ruin his reputation.
2. *Perhaps love for the world* – he did not want to lose his position, power, or possessions.

David was not a cold-blooded murderer. If so, he would have ordered Uriah's death without bringing him home. David allowed the flesh to control, he attempted deception and when that failed he foolishly ordered Uriah's death. The believer's actions should be led by the Spirit instead of dictated by the flesh (Ephesians 5:18).

Joab's Obedience

Joab placed Uriah near the gate of the city where fighting would be difficult. It was guaranteed to produce Uriah's death, which was accomplished. Evidently it appeared to be a tactical mistake on Joab's part, so he detailed the events for David's benefit. The Ammonites attacked because Joab's men were close, then the Israelites pushed them back to the gate of the city where many good men were killed by the arrows of the Ammonite archers. Joab knew David understood warfare and might become upset with the apparent blunder, which resulted with the death of good men. The slain soldiers may have been out of place but it was for a reason, Uriah was with them. If David became angry, he knew this would calm him down.

Joab obediently followed David's direction, evidently trusting David in the matter. Perhaps he believed Uriah was guilty of a crime deserving death. Maybe he didn't care at all, so he carried out David's orders without question. Joab proved to have a murderous heart, and was guilty for his part in Uriah's death (2 Samuel 3:27, 20:9-10).

David's Message From Joab: 2 Samuel 11:22-27

David's Understanding

David received Joab's message, which was written to provide details concerning the siege and Uriah's death.

1. *It contained information concerning the war* – it appeared like a typical wartime message. This was done to prevent anyone questioning what had occurred.
2. *It contained information concerning the battle* – it was devastating due to the Ammonite archers killing many good soldiers, including Uriah.

At this point, David should have been upset with the loss of good men and should have mourned for them. But the king appeared more delighted than displeased. David encouraged Joab to continue the siege and overtake the city.

David's Wedding

Bathsheba was informed of Uriah's death and mourned for his loss, perhaps seven days (1 Samuel 31:13). There is no indication she knew of David's scheme or was involved. After her time of mourning, Bathsheba became David's wife. It was not unusual for a king to take a widow to wife immediately after the death of her husband. It was viewed as charitable, since the king would provide for her provisions and protection.⁶ In this case, it occurred immediately to hide their sin of adultery.

David appeared to be successful. His sins remained unknown and he married the beautiful Bathsheba; however, David displeased the LORD.

1. *His conduct was observed* – though his sin was hidden from the world, it was known by God (Psalm 139:1-4; 1 John 3:20).
2. *His conduct was incorrect* – he committed adultery and murder (Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 6:32-33; Exodus 20:13). Though he did not kill Uriah with his own hands, the LORD held him accountable for his death (2 Samuel 12:9).
3. *His conduct was damaging* – he is remembered for his sin. The world rejoices when Christians fall to temptation, leading to laughter, mocking, and gloating.

David loved the LORD and definitely belonged to Him. In a moment of weakness, he lost control over his passions and failed miserably. In this sad chapter we find "the psalmist, the king, the man, the lover of God, all trampled in the mire by one dark, wild, passionate outburst."⁷

⁶ John Butler, "David: The King of Israel," (Iowa: LBC Publications, 1998) p. 723

⁷ F. B. Meyer, "Great Men of the Bible, Volume 2," (Michigan: Zondervan, 1982) p.59