

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

2 SAMUEL 11:1-27

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Text:

2 Samuel 11:1-27,

- 1. In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.**
- 2. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,**
- 3. and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"**
- 4. Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home.**
- 5. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."**
- 6. So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David.**
- 7. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going.**
- 8. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him.**
- 9. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.**
- 10. When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?"**

11. Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

12. Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next.

13. At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

14. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah.

15. In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

16. So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were.

17. When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.

18. Joab sent David a full account of the battle.

19. He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle,

20. the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall?

21. Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.' "

22. The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say.

23. The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate.

24. Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

25. David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab."

26. When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.

27. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD. (NIV)

Introduction:

I. One of the Ten Commandments is, "You shall not commit adultery."
(Exodus 20:14)

A. This command is ranked right along with, "You shall have no other gods before me" and "You shall not murder." (Exodus 20:3, 13)

B. David well knew the seriousness of this sin, but he did it anyway!

1. The Ten Commandments address "felony", not "misdemeanor" matters!

a. Punishment up to and including eternal punishment in a lake of fire and brimstone is the penalty for violating this command!

II. "Up until this chapter," Coffman observed, "the sacred narrative has been one unbroken account of the successes and honors of David the king of Israel; but beginning with the episode related in this chapter, there follows a long and tragic record of the lustful sin that displeased

the Lord and resulted in a series of the most grievous divine punishments as a consequence.”

A. These included the murder of Uriah, the death of the child conceived by the adulterous union of David and Bathsheba, the rape of Tamar by her half-brother, Amnon, and his murder by Absalom, Absalom’s rebellion and the rebellion of Sheba.

B. David was called a “man after God’s own heart,” but there is no biblical record of David’s being so called by the Lord after this adulterous and murderous event, Coffman stated.

C. David’s punishments were certainly not lessened because of his being king and because of his former acts of righteousness.

III. God’s standards are unchanging!

A. Worldly conduct does not alter God’s law.

B. God knows nothing about “situational ethics.”

C. God takes no vote on what is right and wrong.

IV. God values:

A. Marriage,

B. Chastity, holiness, and . . .

C. Faithfulness, keeping of vows, covenants and contracts.

1. Christians are to be people whose word is their bond, who are reliable and dependable.

Commentary:

2 Samuel 11:1, In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. (NIV)

I. “Israel achieved a great victory over Medeba in the autumn, but with winter coming on, Joab returned to Jerusalem, no doubt intending to renew the siege of Rabbah in the spring.” (Coffman)

A. Other pressing concerns delayed the resumption of the siege of Medeba/Rabbah and the Ammonites until the spring of the following year.

1. Winter was the rainy season making roads muddy and troop movements difficult.

2. Spring facilitated travel. Pasture for horses was plentiful.

B. Confident that Joab could bring victory to Israel, David remained at ease in Jerusalem/Zion.

1. The sordid events that follow may never have happened if David had been with his troops.

2. “All Israel” indicates that soldiers from every tribe were present in this army, military venture. (Smith)

2 Samuel 11:2-5, One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her.

(She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant." (NIV)

I. It was customary for people in Israel to take a siesta in the heat of the day. (Smith)

A. 2 Samuel 4:5, Now Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out for the house of Ish-Bosheth, and they arrived there in the heat of the day while he was taking his noonday rest. (NIV)

B. Evidently upon awakening David went up the rooftop, a flat porch-like place. (Smith)

1. 1 Samuel 9:25, After they came down from the high place to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the roof of his house. (NIV)

II. Was Bathsheba discreet in bathing in such an exposed place?

A. "Rooftops were often secluded, private areas." (Smith)

B. Most commentators blame David, pointing out that, "In the East, it was improper for one neighbor to look over the battlements of his house into the inner court of the adjacent building." (Coffman)

1. Was David a "peeping Tom"? ... a voyeur?

C. This was certainly not a fleeting glance!

1. He should have looked in another direction.

2. Bathsheba was very beautiful!

D. David had a harem of at least twenty (20) women all of which were available to David's beck and call.

1. 1 Chronicles 3:1-9, These were the sons of David born to him in Hebron: The firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel; the second, Daniel the son of Abigail of Carmel; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah. These six were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months. David reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years, and these were the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. These four were by Bathsheba daughter of Ammiel. There were also Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet—nine in all. All these were the sons of David, besides his sons by his concubines. And Tamar was their sister. The Kings of Judah (NIV)

III. "Bathsheba's father Amiel is also said to be the son of Ahithophel which goes a long way to explain Ahithophel's opposition to David during the rebellion of Absalom. He would have resented the shame and disgrace that David had brought upon his beautiful granddaughter Bathsheba." (Coffman)

1. 2 Samuel 17:1-4, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "I would choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all; all the

people will be unharmed." This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel. (NIV)

2. 2 Samuel 23:34, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "I would choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all; all the people will be unharmed." This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel. (NIV)

IV. Uriah was a Hittite, one of David's mighty men, who had married the Israelite Bathsheba and lived next to the king's palace.

A. 2 Samuel 23:1a, 34, 39, These are the last words of David: "The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High. Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite, Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, and Uriah the Hittite. There were thirty-seven in all. (NIV)

B. "The fact that Bathsheba was a married woman, and that her husband was a trusted servant of the king did not deter David." (Smith)

V. David sent messengers to (take) get Bathsheba.

A. There is no indication that she objected.

B. She evidently went with the messengers willingly.

C. Bathsheba was purifying herself from her menstrual ceremonial uncleanness.

1. This fact absolutely eliminated Uriah as father of the child that was conceived. (Smith)

D. “And he lay with her.”

1. David and Bathsheba committed a capital crime. (Smith)
2. “From that day, David’s house was the scene of horrible crimes, feuds, scandals, miseries of every kind. The sword would never depart from David’s house.” (Smith)
3. This sin is dated to 995 B. C. when David was forty-five (45) years of age.

E. If Bathsheba had not conceived, would this affair have been relegated to a “one night stand?”

VI. Bathsheba sent word to David, “I am with child.”

A. Leviticus 20:10, " 'If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death. (NIV)

B. What would a mighty man like Uriah have done in this situation if he had not been murdered?

C. These are the only words spoken by Bathsheba during this entire matter. (Smith)

2 Samuel 11:6-13, So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the

palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?" Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home. (NIV)

I. Uriah's determination **not** to visit his wife has led some commentators to suppose that Uriah may have heard rumors of his wife's adultery.

A. Soldiers on duty were sometimes forbidden from engaging in sexual relations.

1. **1 Samuel 21:5, David replied, "Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men's things are holy even on missions that are not holy." (NIV)**

2. David released Uriah from this stipulation.

3. Was Uriah truly this dedicated to his military duties?

a. If so, he was certainly a man of integrity and dedication.

II. David was intent on being able to claim that Bathsheba's unborn child was Uriah's.

A. DNA could resolve the question today.

B. David was totally hypocritical.

1. David made it appear that he had sent for Uriah to obtain a report of the battle.
2. David made it appear that he truly appreciated Uriah's military service.
3. David instructed Uriah to go home and "wash his feet," that is, enjoy time with his wife.

a. **Song of Solomon 5:3, I have taken off my robe— must I put it on again? I have washed my feet— must I soil them again? (NIV)**

b. David sent a present to Uriah's house.

i. **Genesis 43:32-34, They served him by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians. The men had been seated before him in the order of their ages, from the firstborn to the youngest; and they looked at each other in astonishment. When portions were served to them from Joseph's table, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's. So they feasted and drank freely with him. (NIV)**

C. If Uriah had had sexual relations with Bathsheba, would David have ever married Bathsheba?

1. How often does this kind of thing happen?

III. Uriah refused to sleep with his wife staying rather with David's servants who no doubt would be interested in learning about the progress of the war and the welfare of friends and relatives in the army. (Smith)

A. David's spies informed David of these developments.

B. David told Uriah to stay in town **"today and tomorrow."**

C. David invited Uriah to dinner, got him drunk in the hope Uriah would then go home and have relations with his wife.

1. Habakkuk 2:15, 16, "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies. You will be filled with shame instead of glory. Now it is your turn! Drink and be exposed! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you, and disgrace will cover your glory. (NIV)

D. One sin led to another and to another as David engaged in his hypocritical games of subterfuge.

IV. The ark of the covenant was with the soldiers in the field indicating this was considered a *holy war*.

A. Deuteronomy 23:10-15, If one of your men is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, he is to go outside the camp and stay there. But as evening approaches he is to wash himself, and at sunset he may return to the camp. Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement. For the LORD your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your

camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you. (NIV)

B. 1 Samuel 21:5, David replied, "Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men's things are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!" (NIV)

C. 1 Samuel 4:3-4, When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the LORD bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from Shiloh, so that it may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies." So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. (NIV)

2 Samuel 11:14-21, In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. Joab sent David a full account of the battle. He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall? Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.' " (NIV)

I. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab.

A. “This act of treachery on David’s part was exceedingly despicable in that he even sent the letter by the hand of Uriah ordering his murder.” (Coffman)

B. The LXX specifies eighteen (18) men died ... including Uriah, of course.

II. Joab complicit in this murder, hypocrisy and cover up?

A. He sent a report to David saying that men including Uriah had been killed in battle.

B. Do people who do right always prosper, come out ahead?

C. Can you always trust “God’s people” to treat you right?

2 Samuel 11:22-25, The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate. Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead." David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab." (NIV)

I. No doubt David hoped this would be the end of the matter.

A. He sluffed it off by saying “...**the sword devours now one and now another.**”

B. Joab’s report indicated he knew his strategy was not wise.

1. He attempted to explain his strategy to David who may have become extremely angry at the loss of eighteen (18) men under these circumstances.

2. Judges 9:50-53, Next Abimelech went to Thebez and besieged it and captured it. Inside the city, however, was a strong tower, to which all the men and women—all the people of the city—fled. They locked themselves in and climbed up on the tower roof. Abimelech went to the tower and stormed it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire, a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull. (NIV)

2 Samuel 11:26, 27, When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD. (NIV)

I. When Bathsheba heard that Uriah was dead she “bawled like a baby.”

A. “...made lamentation for her husband.”

B. “Crocodile” tears?

II. David now was left no choice but to marry Bathsheba, a thing he had evidently not previously planned to do.

A. Politicians have trouble with “cover up” attempts and so do the rest of us.

B. Very likely this affair had become the gossip of Jerusalem!

III. The thing David **had done displeased the Lord!**

Conclusion:

I. Solomon, Bathsheba's son, became king. What's fair about that?

A. 1 Chronicles 29:26-28, David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. He ruled over Israel forty years—seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. He died at a good old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor. His son Solomon succeeded him as king. (NIV)

II. Abishag

A. 1 Kings 1:1-4, When King David was old and well advanced in years, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him. So his servants said to him, "Let us look for a young virgin to attend the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that our lord the king may keep warm." Then they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful girl and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. The girl was very beautiful; she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no intimate relations with her. (NIV)

1. David was no longer sexually active!

III. Do our lives reflect God's values?

Questions

2 Samuel 11:1-27

(Questions based on NIV text.)

1. List all the sins mentioned in 2 Samuel 11 and specify the individuals who committed each one. _____

2. How serious is adultery? _____

3. What were the consequences of David's sins? _____

4. Which innocent people mentioned in 2 Samuel 11 suffered because of the sins of the guilty? _____

5. Did David get off easier because he was king and because of his previous acts of righteousness? Remember that David and Bathsheba were not executed. _____

6. Does the Bible teach situational ethics? Explain your answer. _____

7. Adultery is sinful because God values _____,
_____ and _____.

8. Why did David remain in Jerusalem when his army was in battle? Would the sins of 2 Samuel 11 have been committed if David had been with his troops? _____

9. Was Bathsheba discreet in bathing on the rooftop? _____

10. Was David a “peeping Tom”? _____

11. What is the significance of the fact that Bathsheba’s menstrual period had just been completed? _____

12. How did Bathsheba’s relatives interact with David later in his reign?

13. Who were the Hittites? Give other interactions of the Hittites and Israelites. _____

14. If Bathsheba had not conceived, would David have continued his relationship with her? Give reasons for your answer. _____

15. King David sent messengers to get Bathsheba. Did she know what he wanted with her? What would have been the consequences of her saying, “No?” Did she go willingly? _____

16. Bathsheba sent word to David, “_____.”

17. What else is Bathsheba quoted as having said in 2 Samuel 11?

18. When Uriah was called to Jerusalem, why did he not go home to his wife? _____

19. If Uriah had had sexual relations with Bathsheba, would David have ever married her? _____

20. What did David do to “cover up” his sin with Bathsheba? How successful were these efforts? _____

21. What does the Bible say about getting someone drunk in order to entice that person to sin? _____

22. David’s order to murder Uriah was delivered to Joab by Uriah’s own hand! How horribly despicable is that? _____

23. Was Joab complicit in this murder, hypocrisy and cover up? _____

24. Do people who do right always prosper, come out ahead? _____

25. Can you always trust “God’s people” to treat you right? Explain and give examples to support your answer. _____

26. What was unwise about Joab’s military strategy? _____

27. When Bathsheba heard of Uriah’s death, she “made lamentation for her husband.” Were these “crocodile tears”? _____

28. David thought Uriah's death would have been the end of his problems, but "The _____
the _____!" This made all the difference.

29. What bad things happened to Bathsheba because she "slept with the king? What good things happened to Bathsheba because she "slept with the king?" _____

30. In what ways do our lives reflect and fail to reflect God's value system? _____
