

David and Bathsheba

II Samuel 11:1-27

This is the darkest moment in the life of our hero, David which is anything but heroic. In personal Bible reading as I approach the 11th chapter of II Samuel, my heart always begins to dread what I am about to read. Although I know the story, I wish it never had happened. In my heart, I whisper, "Don't do it, David; please don't do it." David is the most famous character of Christ's ancestry. And if you were thinking that surely King David, of whom Christ was referred as the Son of David, would have a pristine testimony of purity, think again. The best man is still a man at best. Disappointment in those who represent God can serve as a time to magnify Jesus! A dark background brings the painting in the foreground to a richer, more brilliant and more beautiful display. The dark velvet that a jeweler places a diamond upon for presentation only makes the diamond more radiant and dazzling. By the same token, let the following narrative allow us take a better and closer look at the sinless Savior, Who alone holds the title of the most brilliant and radiantly beautiful in moral pure lifestyle. Christ alone is worthy of total admiration, yea worship! When compared with all others in the world, we would agree with the Shulamite maiden who prophetically spoke of Jesus when she said in Song of Solomon 5:10, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." I agree with the 18th century English pastor, Samuel Stennett, who wrote the beautiful hymn *Majestic Sweetness*: "No mortal can with Him compare, among the sons of men; fairer is He than all the fair."

In I Corinthians 10 we observe that God is warning us through Paul of the failure of Israel that we should not "...lust after evil things..." (I Corinthians 10:6b). He went on to say "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed..." (I Corinthians 10:8a). God gives the promise that we may have victory over even the strongest temptations (I Corinthians 10:13). As a source of encouragement God's Word informs us in I Corinthians 10:11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." God has given us lessons from the past to teach us how to live in this present age. Therefore the story of David and Bathsheba should serve as an admonition, which means a cautionary reminder and warning to help keep us from taking that same downward spiral into what David himself called, "...the great transgression..." (Psalm 19:13).

1. Seed

II Samuel 11:1

David was at the wrong place at the wrong time. David was in bed when he needed to be in battle. This is the seed that germinated into the greatest downfall of his life. The Bible clearly states in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 the prohibitions of a future king of Israel. In the matter of morals, it says in Deuteronomy 17:17a, "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away...." David disobeyed this direct command. II Samuel 5:13a: "And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem...." The seed was

planted when David entered into polygamy. Galatians 6:7, 8a: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption....”

The multiple wives did turn David’s heart away from God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the martyr wrote in his book *Temptation*, “In our members there is a slumbering inclination toward desire, which is both sudden and fierce. With irresistible power, desire seizes mastery of the flesh. All at once a secret, smoldering fire is kindled. The flesh burns and is in flames. It makes no difference whether it is a sexual desire, or ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money....At this moment God is quite unreal to us. He loses all reality, the only desire for the creature is real. The only reality is the Devil. Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.”

2. Greed

II Samuel 11:2

It was too early for bed, the evening was just beginning. He decided to take a nap, perhaps a power nap for only ten to twenty minutes. Perhaps in his twilight he was basking in the thoughts that the kingdom he was king over was the most formidable in the earth at that time. He was living the dream. Nothing had been denied him. And now in his greed, he wants more. David takes a walk on his roof patio and spots Bathsheba. She was a woman of extraordinary physical attraction. David took that second look or that long lingering lustful look that turned not only his head, but heart further from God and deeper into sin. This is the fulfillment of James 1:15: “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

3. Conceived

II Samuel 11:3-5

Research has revealed when David inquired about Bathsheba he found out that she was the daughter of Eliam, one of David’s “thirty mighty men” (II Samuel 23:34), the granddaughter of Ahithophel, one of his senior counselors (II Samuel 16:23; 23:34), and the wife of Uriah, one David’s best soldiers, also one of “the thirty mighty men” (II Samuel 23:39). In this sin, David also betrayed three of his most valued leaders. Sin always hurts others, usually many others.

The question has been debated for years, i.e., was Bathsheba complicit in the deed? The Bible doesn’t say. There is however an uncontested truth and that is that David used his power to orchestrate the despicable act. There is a wording that reveals David’s willingness to abuse his authority and take advantage of Bathsheba: “...And David sent messengers, and took her...” (II Samuel 11:4a). Also, in Nathan’s identifying David as the perpetrator and driving force in this sin (II Samuel 12:1–5), he likened David to one who was a thief who had taken the life of a little ewe lamb.

4. Deceived

II Samuel 11:6-14

Someone has said, "David was like a majestic forest tree that was blown over by a rather light wind. As one wonders why this great tree was blown over until he walks over to the fallen tree and sees that decay has been working for a long time in the midst of the tree.

David was not being led by God in these atrocities. David had forgotten the words he had written those many years ago. Psalm 23:2: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." Matthew Henry commented on that verse: "God leads his people, not to the standing waters which corrupt and gather filth, not to the troubled sea, nor to the rapid rolling floods, but to the silent purling waters; for the still but running waters agree best with those spirits that flow out towards God and yet do it silently."

David is being very deceitful. If he wanted to know how the battle was going, he could have sent for "General Joab" not "Corporal Uriah." Uriah was an incredibly righteous young man. Were he to be intimate with his wife, he would be declared unclean and unfit for war (Leviticus 15:16-17). According to the law he would have to keep a far distance from the ark of the covenant and the ark was with Joab and the fighting men. II Samuel 11:11: "And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing." David tried to get Uriah to be with his wife one more time, even by getting him drunk. But Uriah would not compromise. How sad! Drunken Uriah was more righteous than David was when he was sober!

Sir Walter Scott wrote, "Oh what a tangled web we weave; When first we practice to deceive."

4. Bereaved

II Samuel 11:15-27

David planned the death of Uriah with the help of Joab. David ends up breaking three of the Ten Commandments. (1) Exodus 20:17a: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife...." (2) Exodus 20:14: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (3) Exodus 20:13: "Thou shalt not kill."

Great bereavement takes place as we mourn the death of David's mighty man, Uriah, the defilement of Bathsheba and the criminal activity of a man who God called "...after His own heart." The closing verse of II Samuel 11 marks this as one of the saddest chapters in the Bible. II Samuel 11:27: "And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD."

-Pastor Pope-