

## DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

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with Pastor Dan Betzer

On many occasions, I have led our Israeli tourist groups from the summit of the Mount of Olives through the famed Kidron Valley to the Pool of Siloam - which is quite a hike, by the way. Our jaunt takes us deep into the Kidron Valley where, on each side, very steep hills hold big housing areas. Those hills are so steep that it appears that the houses stand on top of each other.

It was in this area that King David had his palace, which gave him an excellent view to all the houses below. It's apparently where he was when this happened:

II Samuel 11:1-5 [New Living Bible]

*The following spring, the time of year when kings go to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to destroy the Ammonites. In the process they laid siege to the city of Rabbah. But David stayed behind in Jerusalem.*

*[2] Late one afternoon David got out of bed after taking a nap and went for a stroll on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. [3] He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." [4] Then David sent for her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her. (She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period.) Then she returned home. [5] Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent a message to inform David.*

As the Bible teaches, the armies of Israel (which should have been led by King David) were at war against the Ammonites at Rabbah - part of what we know today as Ammon, the capital of Jordan - about 50 miles east of Jerusalem.

1 By this time, David already had a number of wives and girlfriends  
2 (concubines, as the Bible labels them). From Scripture we know he had at  
3 least seven wives BEFORE her, plus other women. God was not pleased  
4 with it and David would pay a dreadful price for his womanizing.

5  
6 Bathsheba was already a married woman when David saw her. Some  
7 scholars believe she was probably in her late teens at that time but we  
8 don't know that for sure. But when David summoned her, she had no  
9 choice really because he was the king. If he commanded her to go to bed,  
10 his actions would have constituted rape. If the affair was consensual, it  
11 was still adultery and committing it shattered the Ten Commandments:

12

13 James 2:10

14 ***For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he***  
15 ***is guilty of all. As soon as David took Bathsheba to bed, he had broken***  
16 ***every single commandment.***

17

18 Soon after the encounter, Bathsheba sent word to David that she was now  
19 pregnant. David would continue on offending God, this time by  
20 committing murder.

21

22 Bathsheba's husband was Uriah, a good soldier in the Israeli army who  
23 was serving his country in Jordan (remember just about 50 miles to the  
24 east). So, David concocted this brilliant idea of bringing Uriah home on  
25 furlough, knowing the man would go home to his beautiful wife and have  
26 sex with her. But the king underestimated that brave man:

27

28 II Samuel 11:8-11

29 ***Then he told Uriah, "Go on home and relax." David even sent a gift to***  
30 ***Uriah after he had left the palace. [9] But Uriah wouldn't go home. He***  
31 ***stayed that night at the palace entrance with some of the king's***  
32 ***other servants.***

33 ***[10] When David heard what Uriah had done, he summoned him and***  
34 ***asked, "What's the matter with you? Why didn't you go home last night***  
35 ***after being away for so long?"***

1 ***[11] Uriah replied, “The Ark and the armies of Israel and Judah are***  
2 ***living in tents, and Joab and his officers are camping in the open fields.***  
3 ***How could I go home to wine and dine and sleep with my wife? I swear***  
4 ***that I will never be guilty of acting like that.”*** (New Living Bible)

5  
6 Now David faced a monumental dilemma: how to get Uriel with his wife  
7 so that he, David, could not be blamed for Bathsheba’s pregnancy. The  
8 solution? Murder. Sin escalates!

9  
10 II Samuel 11:14-17

11 ***So the next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and gave it to Uriah to***  
12 ***deliver. [15] The letter instructed Joab, “Station Uriah on the front lines***  
13 ***where the battle is fiercest. Then pull back so that he will be killed.” [16]***  
14 ***So Joab assigned Uriah to a spot close to the city wall where he knew***  
15 ***the enemy's strongest men were fighting. [17] And Uriah was killed***  
16 ***along with several other Israelite soldiers.***

17  
18 See here how sin affects innocent people? Those who would die had no  
19 idea the soldier next to them by the wall was a set-up. Not only would that  
20 new guy perish, but so would they.

21  
22 II Samuel 11:23-27

23 ***“The enemy came out against us,” he (the messenger sent by General***  
24 ***Joab to King David) said. “And as we chased them back to the city gates,***  
25 ***[24] the archers on the wall shot arrows at us. Some of our men were***  
26 ***killed, including Uriah the Hittite.”***

27 ***[25] “Well, tell Joab not to be discouraged,” David said. “The sword***  
28 ***kills one as well as another! Fight harder next time, and conquer the***  
29 ***city!”*** (What a phony!)

30 ***[26] When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned***  
31 ***for him. [27] When the period of mourning was over, David sent for her***  
32 ***and brought her to the palace, and she became one of his wives. Then***  
33 ***she gave birth to a son. But the Lord was very displeased with what***  
34 ***David had done.***

1 Was God ever displeased! Now it was payback time. David thought the  
2 who issue was over and done with... but it was not!

3

4 Galatians 6:7

5 ***Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that***  
6 ***shall he also reap.***

7

8 Bathsheba's husband was dead; the terrible crime against God was now  
9 under the rug, and David could relax. Or... so he thought:

10

11 II Samuel 12:1-12

12 ***And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said***  
13 ***unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other***  
14 ***poor. [2] The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: [3] But***  
15 ***the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had***  
16 ***bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with***  
17 ***his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and***  
18 ***lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. [4] And there came***  
19 ***a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and***  
20 ***of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him;***  
21 ***but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come***  
22 ***to him. [5] And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and***  
23 ***he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing***  
24 ***shall surely die: [6] And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he***  
25 ***did this thing, and because he had no pity.***

26 ***[7] And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord***  
27 ***God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out***  
28 ***of the hand of Saul; [8] And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy***  
29 ***master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of***  
30 ***Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto***  
31 ***thee such and such things. [9] Wherefore hast thou despised the***  
32 ***commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah***  
33 ***the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and***  
34 ***hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. [10] Now***  
35 ***therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou***  
36 ***hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy***

1 *wife. [11] Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee*  
2 *out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and*  
3 *give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight*  
4 *of this sun. [12] For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before*  
5 *all Israel, and before the sun.*

6

7 Four-fold punishment! That's what David decreed, having no idea that he  
8 was announcing his own sentence; for he truly would pay over and over  
9 for his twin crimes adultery and murder.

10

11 1. The child in Bathsheba's womb died.

12 2. One of David's sons raped his half-sister Tamar:

13

14 II Samuel 13:10-14 (New Living Bible)

15 *Then he said to Tamar, "Now bring the food into my bedroom and feed*  
16 *it to me here." So Tamar took it to him. [11] But as she was feeding him,*  
17 *he grabbed her and demanded, "Come to bed with me, my*  
18 *darling sister."*

19 *[12] "No, my brother!" she cried. "Don't be foolish! Don't do this to*  
20 *me! You know what a serious crime it is to do such a thing in Israel.*

21 *[13] Where could I go in my shame? And you would be called one of the*  
22 *greatest fools in Israel. Please, just speak to the king about it, and he*  
23 *will let you marry me."*

24 *[14] But Amnon wouldn't listen to her, and since he was stronger than*  
25 *she was, he raped her.*

26

27 Oh... the reaping has only begun!

28

29 3. When Absalom heard what his half-brother Amnon had done to  
30 his sister Tamar, he assassinated him!

31

32 II Samuel 13:28-30

33 *Absalom told his men, "Wait until Amnon gets drunk; then at my signal,*  
34 *kill him! Don't be afraid. I'm the one who has given the command. Take*

1 *courage and do it!” [29] So at Absalom's signal they murdered Amnon.*  
2 *Then the other sons of the king jumped on their mules and fled.*  
3 *[30] As they were on the way back to Jerusalem, this report reached*  
4 *David: “Absalom has killed all your sons; not one is left alive!”*

5  
6 No, it’s not over yet. David did not have Absalom pay with his life for the  
7 murder of his brother; however, from that time on, Absalom sought to  
8 have David dethroned – his own father! He was banished from Israel and,  
9 during those years, he planned how he would go about this daring plan:

10

11 II Samuel 15:4-6

12 *I wish I (Absalom) were the judge. Then people could bring their*  
13 *problems to me, and I would give them justice!” [5] And when people*  
14 *tried to bow before him, Absalom wouldn't let them. Instead, he took*  
15 *them by the hand and embraced them. [6] So in this way, Absalom stole*  
16 *the hearts of all the people of Israel.*

17

18 David had to flee for his life. For a time he was a man without a country,  
19 without the throne God had granted him.

20

21 Sin does not pay. God knows. And - sooner or later - so does the sinner!