

15. David Dishonors the LORD

(2 Samuel 11-12)

5 David's Great Sin and the Birth of Solomon (2 Sam 11–12)

- **David > The Nation** - “As goes the King, so goes the Nation”
This section is the **turning point** in David's story. Whereas David had been blessed by the LORD, now he would experience some of the Torah curses - fracture and loss of family (see Deut 28:18) and even exile (see Deut 28:64–67). These events also *foreshadow* the history of Israel to come: fracture of the Nation leading to Exile. But this section ends on a positive, hopeful note in Chapter 20 with David returning to Jerusalem from East of the Jordan to the difficult task of rebuilding the Nation. So too, Israel would go into Exile in the East, in Babylon, but the LORD in His grace would bring them back to the long, difficult task of rebuilding what was lost.

5.1 David commits adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:1-5)

- 11:1 This section begins in the Spring, in the middle of the “Ammonite campaign.” In Chapter 10, Joab had forced the Ammonites to retreat into their capitol city of Rabbah. Now, the battle focuses on taking that city. ***A siege could take months or even years to complete*** which sets the context for these chapters.
- 11:1 - “David remained in Jerusalem...”
“The king's absence from the battlefield at this time should not be understood as dereliction of duty. David had previously remained in Jerusalem when the Ammonites were attacked (cf. 10:7). Furthermore, at some point in David's military career—quite possibly prior to the events of this passage—David's men had pleaded with him to avoid an active role in military campaigns (cf. 21:17) out of concern for the king's safety and the best interests of the nation.”
[Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 364]
- 11:3 - **Bathsheba** - “daughter of the oath/seven/abundance”?
was the daughter of one of David's best fighters Eliam (23:34), the granddaughter of his most trusted counselor Ahithophel (16:23; 23:34), and the wife of one of his inner circle of faithful, honored soldiers, Uriah (23:39).

Uriah - “YHWH is my light” - Uriah was most likely not from the “Hittites” of Canaan set under destruction (see Deut 7:1–2). He could have been from the Neo-Hittite kingdom from the north or of the “sons of Heth” that had assimilated into Israel at this time. *The term “hittite” is often ambiguous in the OT.*

- 11:4 - **Adultery** was forbidden in Torah (see Exod 20:14; Lev 18:20; Deut 5:18) and it's penalty was DEATH (see Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22)

5.2 **David tries to trick Uriah but he remains faithful** (2 Sam 11:6-13)

- 11:6 - Uriah would have made about a 40 mile trip back to Jerusalem.
- 11:9 - Uriah did not go to his house...
David had earlier required his men to remain abstinent since military action was seen as a service to the LORD (see 1 Sam 21:5; Exod 19:15). Because the military camp was considered a place of divine presence ("For the Lord your God moves about in your camp... therefore your camp must be holy," Deut. 23:15), soldiers had to adhere to specific purity rules, which included abstaining from sexual relations. ***Uriah is being faithful in contrast to David here.***
- 11:13 - Since his first scheme didn't work, David gets Uriah drunk in hopes that he would relax his principles. ***Interestingly and ironically, this is the same scheme that the daughters of Lot used that produced the Ammonites, the very people Israel is fighting!!!*** (see Gen 19:30-38)

5.3 **David conspires to have Uriah killed** (2 Sam 11:14-21)

5.4 **David is told of Uriah's death and he takes Bathsheba as his wife, all of which the LORD sees as evil** (2 Sam 11:22-27)

- 11:14-27 - Although it was David who deserved death, Uriah pays for David's treachery with his life. Taking Bathsheba as his wife could have outwardly been perceived as a good action - David acting as a type of "kinsman redeemer." However, the LORD sees through to the heart and this whole affair greatly *displeased the LORD* - literally, "**was evil in the eyes of the YHWH.**" A similar thing was said about Onan's sexual sin which resulted in his death (see Gen 38:10).

5.5 **The LORD sends Nathan to confront David** (2 Sam 12:1-6)

- Nathan confronts David with a parable - a *mashal* - a form which, like political cartoons of our day, could be used to "speak truth to power" (see Judges 9:6-13) or bring harsh judgment (see Ezek 17:2-10)
- 12:3 - the reference to the ewe lamb being like a "daughter" to the man and sleeping in his arms is a less that subtle hint at Bath-sheva - the "bath" her name meaning "daughter."
- 12:5 - Clearly, David's indignation - though based in the commands of Torah - is completely ironic.

5.6 **Nathan pronounces the LORD's judgment against David**

(2 Sam 12:7-15a)

- The Inciting Moment:
 “**This event sets in motion the rest of the story** (chs. 13–20) in two ways. **First**, watch how illicit sexuality, murder, and intrigue are multiplied in David’s family, as Nathan’s prediction (12:10–12) is fulfilled. In turn there is rape, fratricide, treachery, rebellion, seizure of David’s concubines, and civil war, and the fissures between north and south portrayed in 19:8b–20:26 anticipate the unbridgeable chasm related in 1 Kings 12. And **second**, observe how this whole series of events is related to the question later raised by Bathsheba in 1 Kings 1:20: “Who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?” [Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*, 89]
- 12:7-8 - “Thus says the LORD God of Israel” - Nathan’s words are from the Lord addressing a breach of Covenant - the Sinai Covenant, the Torah. Nathan begins by listing all the gracious blessings of the LORD to David.
- 12:9 - “You have despised the word of the LORD...”
 This calls to mind Saul’s treachery. But even more so, David’s sin is not just against the LORD, but also against Uriah and Bathsheba. *Sin pollutes and corrupts every relationship it touches.*

 “[...] you] have killed him with sword of the Ammonites.” Although the Ammonites were the “sufficient” cause of Uriah’s death, David was the *responsible* cause.
- 12:10 - The Sword will not depart...
 “All told, four of David’s sons would experience premature death—an unnamed son (cf. 12:18), Amnon (cf. 13:29), Absalom (cf. 18:14–15), and Adonijah (cf. 1 Kgs 2:25). Traditional Jewish and Christian interpretation of this passage has correlated the death of the four sons to be the “fourfold” of v. 6.” [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 372]
- 12:9, 10 - David has *despised / shown contempt* for the LORD’s Word and the LORD himself!!! This echoes back to the sin of **Hophni** and **Phineas** in 1 Samuel 2:17.
- 12:11 - 12 - the LORD would bring evil against him from his own house - the next several chapters will show how David’s sexual sin is amplified through his own family.

- 12:13 - **David's confession** - "I have sinned against the LORD." David had sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba, but those were outcomes of the primary sin: *rejecting the LORD's word*.
- 12:13 - "**The LORD has put away your sin, you will not die**" This is one of the most amazing statements in the whole section. First, the LORD removes David sin without requiring sacrifice first. Then He removes the penalty of death that the sin deserves under the Torah/Law. David meditates on these incredible ideas in **Psalm 51** and **103**

Psalm 51:16–17

51:16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalm 103:10–12

103:10 He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. 103:11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

5.7 **David's child dies** (2 Sam 12:15b-23)

- David's fasting may indicate that the life of his child was more precious than food. He is clearly showing remorse before the LORD, intervening for his son (see 12:22)
- 12:18 - the seventh day - one day short of the prescribed day for circumcision and most likely naming.

5.8 **Solomon [Jedidiah] is born** (2 Sam 12:24-25)

- Solomon = "peaceful" | Jedidiah = "beloved of YHWH"
*both David's name and Jedidiah are based on the verb *dwd* - indicating that Solomon/Jedidiah would be David's heir.

"Of David's fifteen sons mentioned by name in 2 Samuel, only of Solomon is it stated that "the LORD loved him" (2 Samuel 12:24–25). Solomon is also the only child who was given the rare privilege of being renamed by the Lord—an event not seen since the days of the Torah patriarchs." [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 42]

5.9 **Rabbah the capital of the Ammonites is captured**
(2 Sam 12:26-31)