



DAVID

THE FALL



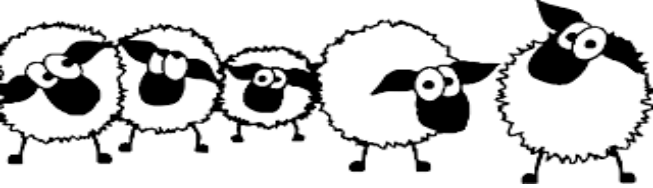
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LET'S START!





David Becomes King of All Israel

5 Then all the tribes of Israel went to David at Hebron and told him, "We are your own flesh and blood. ² In the past, when Saul was our king, you were the one who really led the forces of Israel. And the Lord told you, 'You will be the shepherd of my people Israel. You will be Israel's leader.'"

After "training for reigning" in Hebron, for 7 years, the elders of Israel finally recognized David's anointing and humbly asked him to be their king. Ironically, the northern tribes only turned to David because they had no other choice. With the murder of Ishbosheth, the royal line of Saul was now completely destroyed. In light of this horrific news, the elders of the 10 northern tribes hypocritically asserted they always knew David was destined to be the shepherd of Israel.

³ So there at Hebron, King David made a covenant before the Lord with all the elders of Israel. And they anointed him king of Israel.



The Lesson Of Waiting On God



Many years ago, in the little town of Bethlehem, the old prophet Samuel place his hands on young David and poured a flask of oil on his head. Approximately 21 years later, the united elders of Israel did the exact same thing. After many years of trials and tribulations, the prophetic Word of the Lord had fully come to pass because not one word from Samuel ever fell to the ground.

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. (1 Samuel 3:19)

At the time of his anointing, David could never imagine that it would take 21 years to finally experience the moment of his appointing. Yahweh does not see time the way we do. He is not in a rush to see His will come to pass. He waits for His perfect timing, and we must wait on the timing of the Lord also. When we attempt to help the will of the Lord with our worldly methods of manipulation, we end up with our own personal Ishmael. Not waiting on the



Wait patiently for the Lord.
Be brave and courageous.

Yes, wait patiently
for the Lord.

-Psalm 27:14



timing of the Lord cost Abraham greatly in the area of pain and suffering. Although he eventually received his promised son Isaac at the proper time, he lost his first beloved son Ishmael. The child of the flesh and the child of the spirit can't occupy the same space.

David waited many long years for the Lord to fulfill His promise. At this point, no one in all of Israel could say David took the throne by force. David waited patiently on the Lord, until the elders of Israel were forced to hand him what the Lord had given him 21 years earlier.

The coronation of David

At last, David had the full support of all of Israel. Chronicles described the impressive army that came to Hebron to pledge loyalty to King David and numbered the soldiers at over 340,000 men.

³⁸ All these men came in battle array to Hebron with the single purpose of making David the king over all Israel. In fact, everyone in Israel agreed that David should be their king. ³⁹ They feasted and drank with David for three days, for preparations had been made by their relatives for their arrival. ⁴⁰ And people from as far away as Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali brought food on donkeys, camels, mules, and oxen. Vast supplies of flour, fig cakes, clusters of raisins, wine, olive oil, cattle, sheep, and goats were brought to the celebration. There was great joy throughout the land of Israel. (1 Chronicles 12)



⁴ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in all. ⁵ He had reigned over Judah from Hebron for seven years and six months, and from Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years.

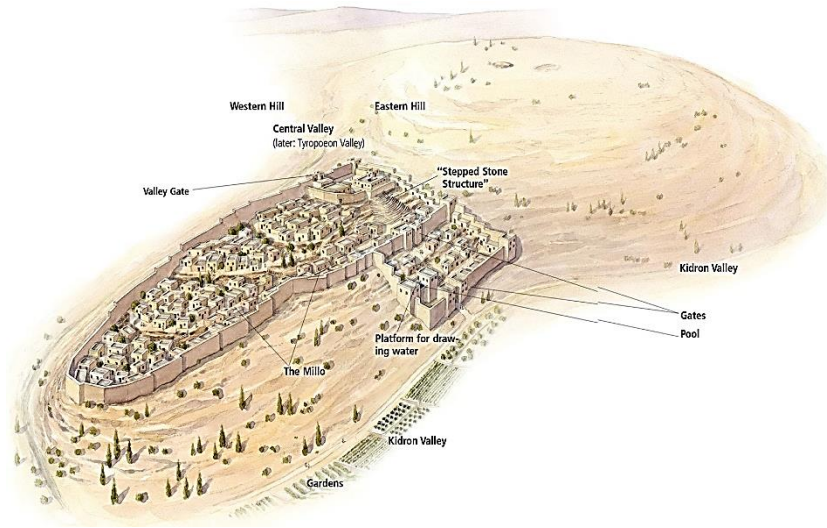
Old Jerusalem

The numbers mentioned in the timeline are very interesting. Yahshua also began his ministry at 30 years old and died at 33 years old. These similarities while perhaps coincidental, foreshadow the reign of the Son of David yet to come.

David Captures Jerusalem

6 David then led his men to Jerusalem to fight against the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land who were living there.

One of the first things David did as the commander of Israel was to capture a well defended city called Jerusalem. He wanted a central location to establish his capital city. He needed to overcome the ongoing mistrust between the 10 northern tribes of Israel and the 2 southern tribes of Benjamin and Judah. Up to this time, Jerusalem was still a small Canaanite city in the center of Israel. Some 400 years after God commanded Israel to take the whole land, this city was still in Canaanite hands.¹ It was a shame to the emerging nation of Israel to have a Canaanite stronghold still established in the middle of their territory.



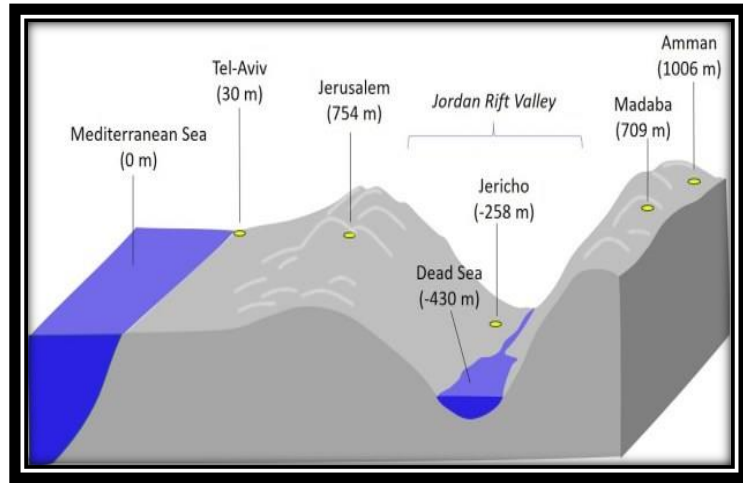
Why did King David choose Jerusalem?

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

The first reason King David desired Jerusalem as his national capital was because it had its own independent water supply. In a dry desert country, where water was always a precious commodity, Jerusalem was built in an extremely desirable location due to its unusual supply of fresh water from its natural underground springs. This made it possible for the city to endure a long siege completely surrounded by enemy armies, because of its abundant supply of water.

¹ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 5





Secondly, Jerusalem was strategically desirable because of its natural topographical defences. The deep valleys surrounding the city acted like a natural fortress. It was a strong and fortified location, making it an especially safe residence from which King David could govern the entire nation from a secure central location.

Third, Jerusalem was at a crossroads between north and south, east, and west. It was centrally located, making it accessible to all the Tribes of Israel, as well as foreigners who came to trade and worship Yahweh. In addition, it was a neutral location because it was not previously a part of Israelite territory, so it was equally accessible to all the 12 tribes.

The Jebusites taunted David, saying, "You'll never get in here! Even the blind and lame could keep you out!" For the Jebusites thought they were safe.

Because of its impressive landscape and independent water supply, the Jebusites were confident they could hold off David for an extended period of time. The Jebusites however, were gravely mistaken. Yahweh had predestined Jerusalem to become the most important city in the world. It would forever be called the "City of David" and would become the most sacred piece of land on the planet.

Jerusalem the Holy city of God



This was not the first time Jerusalem was mentioned in the Biblical text. Interestingly, the city was once ruled by a king, who was also a priest of Yahweh, called Melchizedek. The name of his city was Salem, which means "peace" in Hebrew.

18 And Melchizedek, the king of Salem and a priest of God Most High, brought Abram some bread and wine. 19 Melchizedek blessed Abram with this blessing:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.





20 And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you."

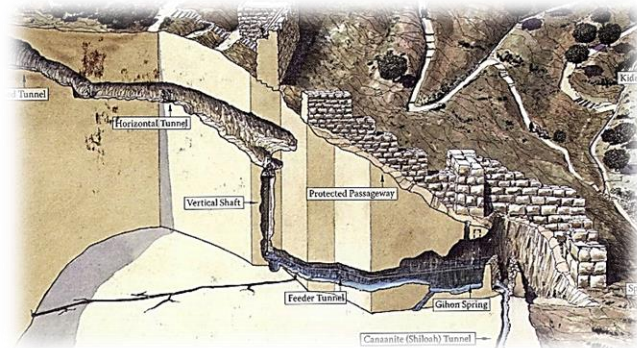
Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered. (Genesis 14)



The city of Jerusalem was prophesied to be the home of a future king the world would call the "Prince of Peace", who would offer bread and wine to the descendants of Abraham. The types and shadows connected to this majestic city are endless. It would forever be called Zion, the city on a hill where the light of Yahweh could be seen by all the nations. Moreover, in eternity, Yahweh and humanity will forever live together in the New Jerusalem, which Yahshua is presently preparing for those who love Him.

7 But David captured the fortress of Zion, which is now called the City of David. 8 On the day of the attack, David said to his troops, "I hate those 'lame' and 'blind' Jebusites. Whoever attacks them should strike by going into the city through the water tunnel." That is the origin of the saying, "The blind and the lame may not enter the house."

It was never a good idea to publicly antagonize a battle-hardened warrior like King David. This only served to motivate his loyal troops to aggressively capture the city. After evaluating the strong points of the fortified city, David found a single weak spot in its impressive defences. Based on the text, the water tunnel was not secured and likely provided an easy entry point for the mighty men of David to quickly overcome the Jebusite defenders and open the gates to an onslaught of Israelite troops.



The City of David

9 So David made the fortress his home, and he called it the City of David. He extended the city, starting at the supporting terraces and



The FAVOR of GOD

working inward. ¹⁰ And David became more and more powerful, because the Lord God of Heaven's Armies was with him.

After spending many years in his wilderness strongholds, like the Cave of Adullam, David definitely appreciated a strong, defensible position. Jerusalem would become his home, the capital city of Israel and his personal fortress. No expense would be spared to make Jerusalem a well fortified and defensible fortress to any future attack or possible rebellion.



CITY OF DAVID
ANCIENT JERUSALEM

The growing favor of David

¹¹ Then King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar timber and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built David a palace. ¹² And David realized that the Lord had confirmed him as king over Israel and had blessed his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

The overwhelming blessing of the Lord continuously poured into David's life as he prospered in everything he did. It should have taken the Israelite troops years to conquer a well fortified city like Jerusalem, but they miraculously accomplished this formidable task in just a few weeks. Moreover, the kings of the surrounding nations became afraid of the growing power of a united Israel, under the rule of a world-renowned warrior like David. The King of Tyre immediately wanted to make a peace treaty with Israel. He generously offered to build David a magnificent palace, even sending skilled engineers and an enormous supply of massive timbers that were not available in Israel.

David was convinced that Yahweh had kept His Word. Yahweh alone placed him on the throne of Israel. David's life was overwhelmed with blessings and his future was stunningly bright. Additionally, under



The **LORD** will make you the head, not the tail.

If you **pay attention** to the commands of the **LORD your God** that I give you this day

and carefully follow them,

you will always be **at the top**, never **at the bottom**.

Deuteronomy 28:13

WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

the authority of a Godly king like David, the future of Israel was glorious. As long as they submitted to God, they would be the head and never the tail. Their enemies would surrender and serve them, as outlined in the blessing of the Book of Deuteronomy. This was an amazing time to be an Israelite. What could possibly go wrong?

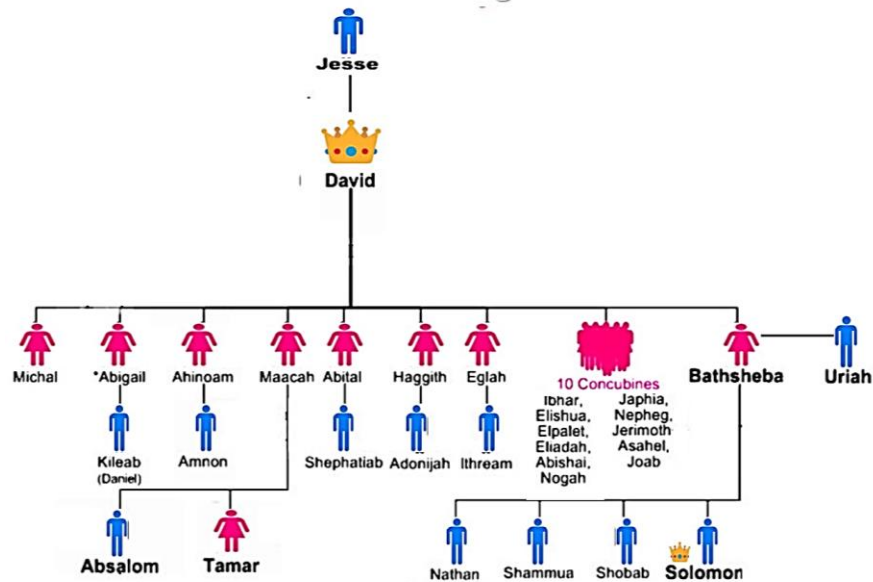
The first sign of trouble

¹³ After moving from Hebron to Jerusalem, David married more concubines and wives, and they had more sons and daughters. ¹⁴ These are the names of David's sons who were born in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶ Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

The Scripture already indicated that David took more wives in Hebron when he ruled over Judah. Now as the king of Israel, he married even more wives. Foolishly, he even kept many concubines for his selfish personal sexual gratification.

According to the regional traditions, a mighty king of that era needed many wives as a necessary expression of power and prestige. Marriage was a way of establishing political alliances, where women were exchanged like social contracts between nations. Nonetheless, corresponding to the warning recorded in Deuteronomy, an Israelite king was not supposed to copy the traditions of other pagan rulers. They were supposed to remain faithful to the Lord and depend on Yahweh for the defense of their nation. Furthermore, an Israelite king was never supposed to introduce foreign bloodlines into their family line by marrying princesses from the heathen nations.

David's Family Tree



The Problem of David's 8 Wives





16 "The king must not build up a large stable of horses for himself or send his people to Egypt to buy horses, for the Lord has told you, 'You must never return to Egypt.' **17** The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will turn his heart away from the Lord. And he must not accumulate large amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself. (Deuteronomy 17)

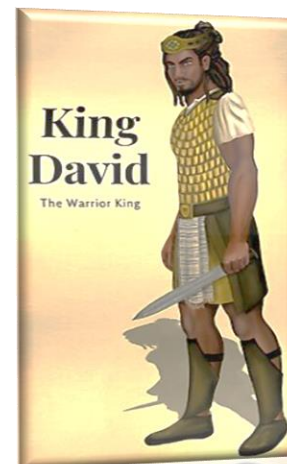


Certainly David (and everyone else) saw these many children as God's sign of blessing upon David and his many marriages. Yet most of the trouble to come in David's life came from his relationships with women and problems with his children.² Its noteworthy that in the midst of David's immense success, the seeds of his future downfall were already being planted by his casual disrespect of the Word of Yahweh.

David Conquers the Philistines

17 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king of Israel, they mobilized all their forces to capture him. But David was told they were coming, so he went into the stronghold.

The Philistines were never very far removed from the life of David. They were usually his greatest enemy, but sometimes his best friends. As the traditional enemies of Israel, they could not simply stand by and see them become a prosperous and militarily strong nation. After their enormous victory over the forces of King Saul, the Philistine army was extremely confident. It's important to note that David knew the Philistines were coming long before they arrived. Who told David the Philistines were marching on Jerusalem? David was likely informed of the advancing threat by Yahweh. Immediately, David entered into the stronghold of Jerusalem and prepared himself as he sought the Lord for a new battle plan.



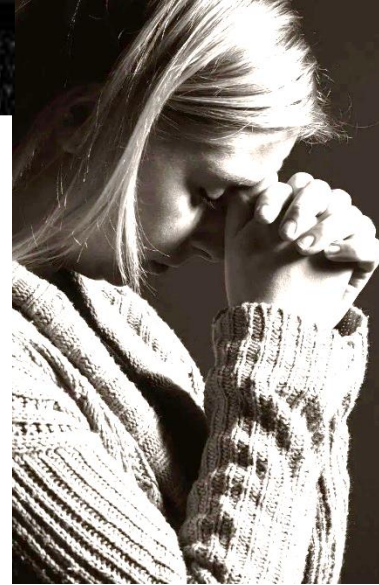
As David sought God and looked to Him for guidance, he was blessed. God honored David's dependence on Him and gave him the promise of victory.³

² David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 5

³ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 5



GOD WILL
Fight
YOUR
Battles



This was the life lesson he learned at Ziklag. As David remained humble and inquired of the Lord, he was invincible in battle. The Lord destroyed the enemies of Israel for the glory of His own mighty name.

18 The Philistines arrived and spread out across the valley of Rephaim. 19 So David asked the Lord, "Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"



The Lord replied to David, "Yes, go ahead. I will certainly hand them over to you."



20 So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. "The Lord did it!" David exclaimed. "He burst through my enemies like a raging flood!" So he named that place Baal-perazim (which means "the Lord who bursts through"). 21 The Philistines had abandoned their idols there, so David and his men confiscated them.

The Philistines showed up for the battle with an overwhelming military force and brought their gods with them for spiritual reinforcement. Nevertheless, their gods were powerless against the overwhelming will of Yahweh. Although the enemies of the Lord gathered in great multitudes, Yahweh easily crushed them. With the power of an oncoming flood, the Israeli warriors broke the ranks of the Philistines battle formation. This is why the land was called "the Lord who bursts through". The army of Israel overwhelmed the Philistine invaders with the power of a tidal wave, defeating the pagan aggressors as if they were, mere infestation of grasshoppers.



22 But after a while the Philistines returned and again spread out across the valley of Rephaim. 23 And again David asked the Lord what to do.



Even after winning a spectacular victory over all the powers of the enemy, David did not allow himself to become arrogant and prideful. As expected, after a season of peace and security, the enemy will always return to try again. Likewise, the Philistines amassed another massive army to undermine the prosperity of Israel. In an effort to take revenge for their humiliating defeat in the previous campaign, the Philistines envisioned another strategy and retooled their forces. If David was a prideful and hardhearted leader like King Saul, he would have done exactly what Israel did in their first victory.



A GOOD IDEA IS NOT ALWAYS A GOD IDEA.

However, this was not the heart of King David. He was a man after the heart of God. His great military strength was rooted in the fact that he would not act independently of Yahweh. Whenever he trusted in God, his victory was assured.



David's example reminds us that we should always seek supernatural revelation in our time of spiritual warfare. The battle does not belong to us, but it belongs to the Lord. Our humility and obedience to the sweet, small voice of the Holy Spirit, is the key to every victory we will ever have in the area of spiritual warfare.

AS SOON AS YOU HEAR THE SOUND OF MARCHING IN THE TOPS OF THE POPLAR TREES, MOVE QUICKLY, BECAUSE THAT WILL MEAN THE LORD HAS GONE OUT IN FRONT OF YOU...
-2 SAMUEL 5:24

"Do not attack them straight on," the Lord replied. "Instead, circle around behind and attack them near the poplar trees."

The enemies of the Lord were not foolish and without insight. They learned from their past mistakes and came up with new and innovative battle plans. The first time the Philistines were defeated, the Israelites aggressively charged their frontline positions directly and aggressively broke their ranks

entirely. It's likely the Philistine generals studied their previous defeat and spent a great deal of time and energy to reinforce their front lines, expecting that Israel would do the exact same thing. In their effort to strengthen their vulnerable positions, it's likely they repositioned their experienced troops to reinforce their forward defences; compromising their rear garrison, leaving it weakly defended. Yahweh advised David to exploit this specific strategy.

Israel did not merely wrestle with "flesh and blood armies" but stood against the gods of other nations. As mentioned in the confrontation between David and Goliath, there was no such thing in the Old Testament as a battle purely between nations. These conflicts were simultaneously battles between Yahweh and the pathetic regional gods of the pagan nations. As long as David listened to the voice of Yahweh, the plans of his enemies proved to be useless. There was no possible way Yahweh could be defeated by the inferior gods of the pagans, if the leadership of Israel inquired of Yahweh.

²⁴ When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, be on the alert! That will be the signal that the Lord is moving





ahead of you to strike down the Philistine army.”²⁵ So David did what the Lord commanded, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

According to the tradition of the Rabbis, the sound in the poplar trees was caused by the chariot of Yahweh, as the Captain of Yahweh’s unseen army led his angelic forces into battle. Once the power of the Philistines gods was defeated in spiritual warfare, it was a walk in the park for the physical army of Israel to clean up the battlefield.



For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. Isaiah 66:15 (KJV)



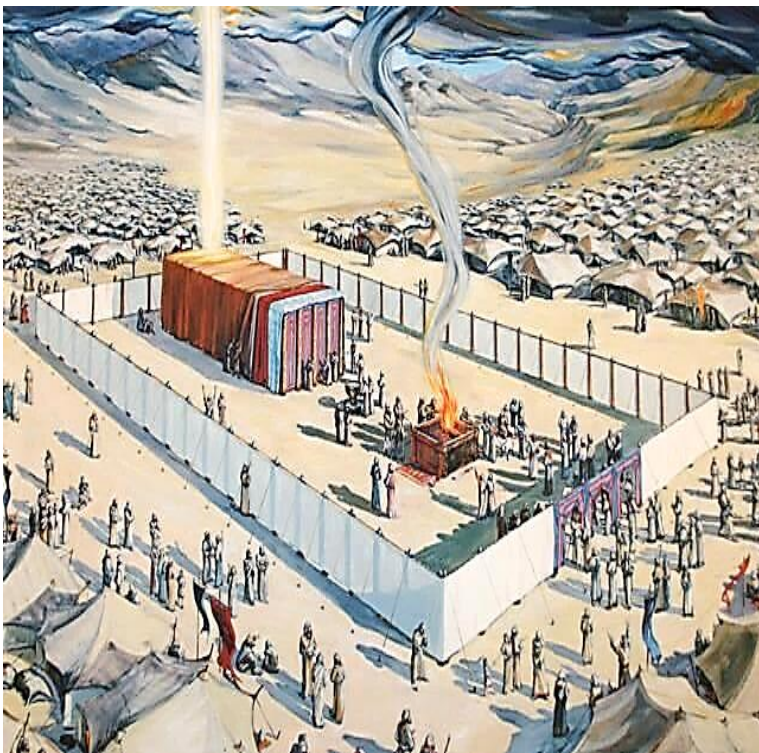
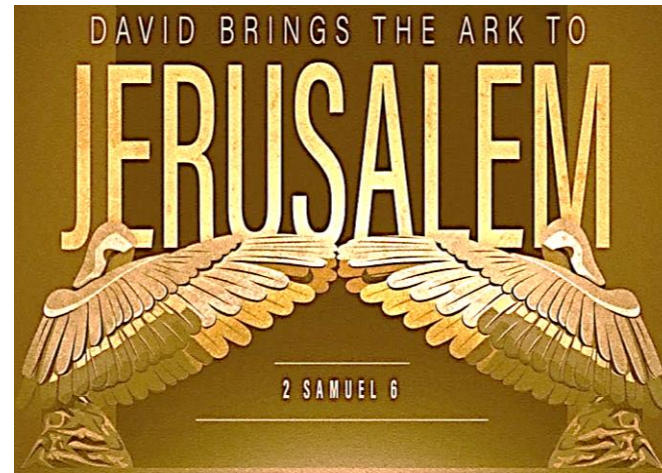
- 1. How does David's patience in waiting for God's timing to ascend the throne challenge your understanding of patience and timing in your life?**
- 2. As Christ followers, how can we cultivate an attitude of waiting on God's timing, as demonstrated by King David?**
- 3. David learned a great lesson from his Ziklag experience and sought God's guidance before going into battle with the Philistines. What can we learn from his approach to our decision-making?**
- 4. Were the many children added to the family of King David a blessing or a curse as the story unfolds? Why?**
- 5. How does "the sound of feet marching in the trees" apply to our understanding of spiritual warfare and the unseen realm?**



Moving the Ark to Jerusalem

6 Then David again gathered all the elite troops in Israel, 30,000 in all. ² He led them to Baalah of Judah to bring back the Ark of God, which bears the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim.

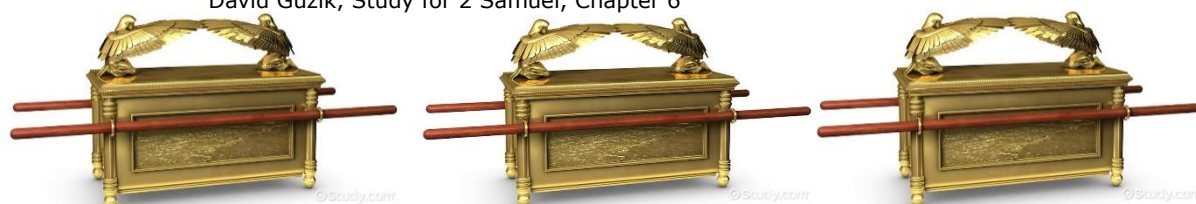
Over 400 years ago, Moses commanded that Israel build a tent for Yahweh to dwell among His beloved people. In the "Holy place" of this mobile tabernacle, an ark was constructed to be a throne for the presence of Yahweh to rest upon when He gloriously manifested among His people. For generations, this ark was abused and often misused because of the rebellious nature of the Israelite people. Nonetheless, under the government of King David, the ark of the Lord would finally be given a place of great honor among the Jewish people, in the prestigious city of Jerusalem.



David gathered so many of his best soldiers because bringing the ark to Jerusalem was an important step towards providing a central place of worship for all of Israel.⁴ Establishing the Tabernacle of Yahweh firmly in Jerusalem, merged the Jewish people into a single nation, united in the worship of Yahweh. Obviously, David had greater plans for the Ark of the Covenant. The glorious ark would need a new and impressive temple complex fit to fully represent the emerging power of David's growing kingdom.

³ They placed the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it from Abinadab's house, which was on a hill.

⁴ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 6



Following The Philistines

The Story **BEHIND** The Story

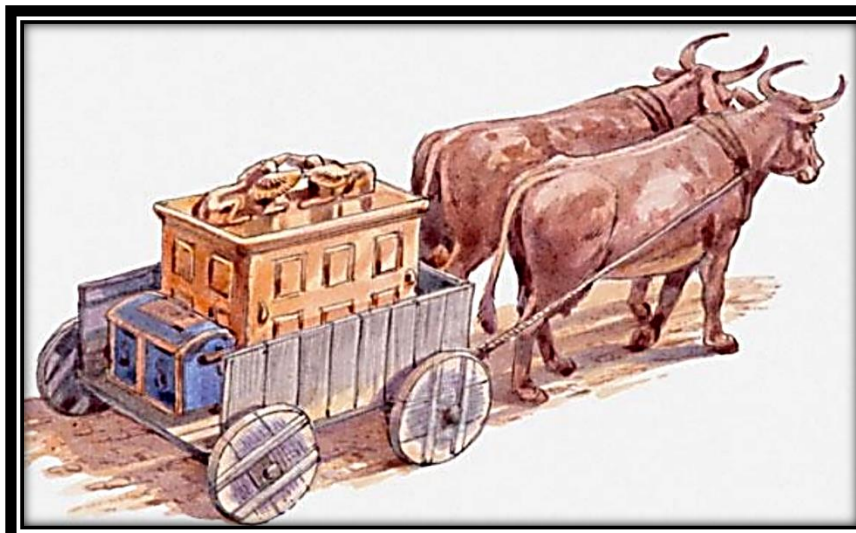
Many years ago, the Israelite army took the ark into battle against the Philistines as some kind of good luck charm. By attempting to manipulate the presence of Yahweh like mere witchcraft, the people of Israel insulted the glory of God. Consequently, Yahweh abandoned them, and they were soundly defeated in battle. Nevertheless, just because Israel was defeated by their enemy, did not mean Yahweh was no longer the God of all gods. When the Philistines placed the Ark

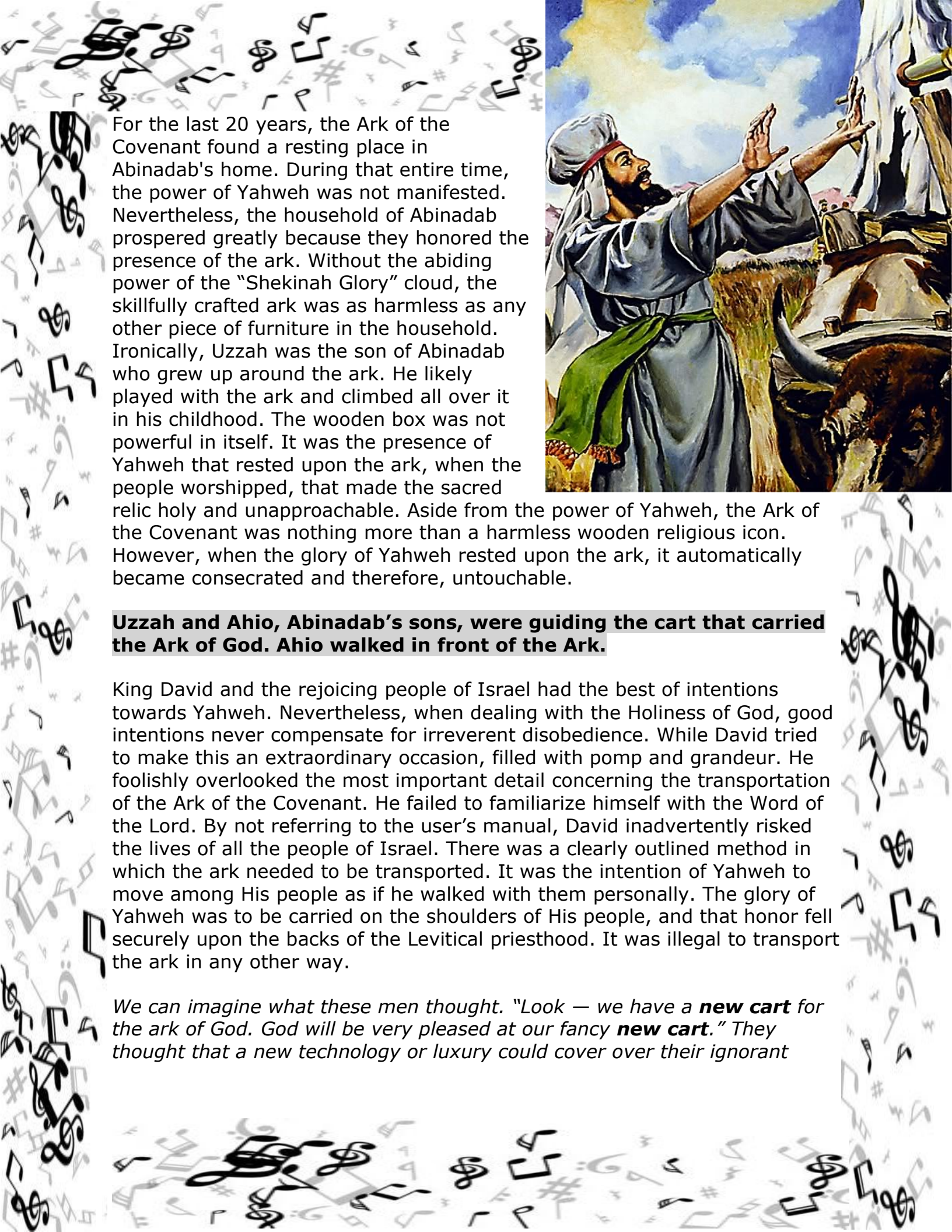
of the Covenant into the Temple of their puny god Dagon, Yahweh broke their blasphemous idol into pieces and even severed his head from his body. Eventually, the entire Philistine nation fell under a curse and the people were covered with malignant tumors.

In light of the plagues, the suffering Philistine people demanded that the Ark of the Covenant be returned to Israel immediately.

⁷ "Now build a new cart, and find two cows that have just given birth to calves. Make sure the cows have never been yoked to a cart. Hitch the cows to the cart, but shut their calves away from them in a pen. ⁸ Put the Ark of the Lord on the cart, and beside

it place a chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors you are sending as a guilt offering. Then let the cows go wherever they want. ⁹ If they cross the border of our land and go to Beth-shemesh, we will know it was the Lord who brought this great disaster upon us. If they don't, we will know it was not his hand that caused the plague. It came simply by chance." (1 Samuel 6)





For the last 20 years, the Ark of the Covenant found a resting place in Abinadab's home. During that entire time, the power of Yahweh was not manifested. Nevertheless, the household of Abinadab prospered greatly because they honored the presence of the ark. Without the abiding power of the "Shekinah Glory" cloud, the skillfully crafted ark was as harmless as any other piece of furniture in the household. Ironically, Uzzah was the son of Abinadab who grew up around the ark. He likely played with the ark and climbed all over it in his childhood. The wooden box was not powerful in itself. It was the presence of Yahweh that rested upon the ark, when the people worshipped, that made the sacred relic holy and unapproachable. Aside from the power of Yahweh, the Ark of the Covenant was nothing more than a harmless wooden religious icon. However, when the glory of Yahweh rested upon the ark, it automatically became consecrated and therefore, untouchable.



Uzzah and Ahio, Abinadab's sons, were guiding the cart that carried the Ark of God. Ahio walked in front of the Ark.

King David and the rejoicing people of Israel had the best of intentions towards Yahweh. Nevertheless, when dealing with the Holiness of God, good intentions never compensate for irreverent disobedience. While David tried to make this an extraordinary occasion, filled with pomp and grandeur. He foolishly overlooked the most important detail concerning the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant. He failed to familiarize himself with the Word of the Lord. By not referring to the user's manual, David inadvertently risked the lives of all the people of Israel. There was a clearly outlined method in which the ark needed to be transported. It was the intention of Yahweh to move among His people as if he walked with them personally. The glory of Yahweh was to be carried on the shoulders of His people, and that honor fell securely upon the backs of the Levitical priesthood. It was illegal to transport the ark in any other way.

*We can imagine what these men thought. "Look — we have a **new cart** for the ark of God. God will be very pleased at our fancy **new cart**." They thought that a new technology or luxury could cover over their ignorant*



To **obey** is better than **sacrifice**
1 Samuel 15:22

*disobedience.*⁵ While the new and elaborate cart was ceremonially impressive, it also communicated a casual disrespect for the Word of God.

The transportation of the ark was a holy exercise because worship was involved and something divine was being dealt with. As mentioned, when the glory of God was not resting upon the ark, it was simply an ancient wooden religious icon. However, when the glory of Yahweh manifested upon it, it automatically became a holy, fearful, an untouchable, representation of His immense glory and immeasurable power.

But how did Israel falsely conclude that Yahweh could be transported on an ox-drawn cart? Ironically, they learned this lesson from the Philistines. When the Ark of the Covenant was returned to Israel, the pagans sent it back on a new cart pulled by two bulls. This worked for the uneducated pagans, but such irreverence was totally unacceptable for the people of God. With greater knowledge came greater responsibility. *They got away with it because they were Philistines, but God expected more from His people. Israel was to take their example from God's Word, not from the innovations of the Philistines.*⁶




Aside from the word of God, any act of devotion to Yahweh outside of the prescribed manner to which Yahweh demands to be worshipped, is an act of rebellion and idolatry. This was the lesson Cain learned when he offered the wrong kind of sacrifice to God. We don't have the option to worship Yahweh anyway we want. Yahweh is a holy God, and He must be approached

⁵ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 6

⁶ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 6





with reverence on His own terms and conditions. The tragic death of Uzzah still stands as a powerful reminder that even when we have good intentions, we cannot become casual with the presence of the Lord.

⁵ David and all the people of Israel were celebrating before the Lord, singing songs and playing all kinds of musical instruments—lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals.

What went wrong here?

The Story **BEHIND** **The Story**

This elaborate spectacle was extremely important moment for King David in solidifying his position as the new King of Israel. Obviously, David loved God and this parade was a sincere act of genuine worship. Nevertheless, there were some underlying political motives that connected all the dots. David not only wanted Jerusalem to be his royal headquarters, but he also wanted it to be the religious centre of all of Israel. He hoped to move the nation away from its regional and tribal distinctiveness. The national worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem would unify the country with a collective identity based on their spiritual connection to God.

David put all his heart and soul into the musical procession that brought the Ark into Jerusalem. This was likely the most amazing worship experience the people of Israel ever had. It surely pleased all the spectators greatly with its pomp and ceremony! But was Yahweh pleased with the worship He received?

Judging from the importance of the occasion and all the instruments mentioned, this was quite a production. The atmosphere was joyful, exciting, and engaging. The problem was that none of it pleased God because it was all in disobedience to His word.⁷

As human beings, we can have the most amazing worship experience. We can be touched by the music and moved by our emotions, but our personal experience does not

⁷ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 6



mean that God is pleased with what we have to offer. Saul frequently made religious gestures to publicly show his dedication to God. Sadly, his grand and exaggerated sacrifices in honor of Yahweh, was not accompanied with a submissive and obedient heart. It's not that Yahweh despised such sacrifices, but He intently looks at the condition of the heart. The greatest sacrifice one can ever make to God is the offering of humility, demonstrated by our obedience to His word.

David's lack of obedience to the written word of God would have tragic consequences in the life of a dedicated and faithful young man. Furthermore, the spirit of the celebration would be dampened, bringing his parade to a grinding halt. At the end, the grand entrance of the Ark of the Covenant turned out to be a huge spiritual and political disaster, because it was done for the eyes of men, but not the glory of God.

6 But when they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out his hand and steadied the Ark of God. 7 Then the Lord’s anger was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him dead because of this. So Uzzah died right there beside the Ark of God.



Many commentaries indicate Uzzah was totally at fault, and essentially caused his own demise by being disrespectful to the glory of Yahweh. Although, Uzzah paid the ultimate price, the majority of the blame rested squarely on the shoulders of David. The decision to move the Ark was his idea. David needed to do the necessary research to understand what God required according to His word. David's lack of research displayed an unintentional disrespect of Yahweh's holiness. Yahweh must be approached with reverence and the casual violation of His procedures can result in death. This was a painful lesson Israel learned under the ministry of Aaron with the death of his two sons.

10 Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu put coals of fire in their incense burners and sprinkled incense over them. In this way, they disobeyed the Lord by



burning before him the wrong kind of fire, different than he had commanded. ² So fire blazed forth from the Lord's presence and burned them up, and they died there before the Lord. (Leviticus 10)



The holiness of Yahweh was not a plaything to the priests of the Lord when the presence of God rested upon the Tabernacle. The sons of Aaron bypassed the proper procedure outlined in the Law of Moses and took a shortcut in their worship. This shortcut was seen as an act of irreverence to the presence of Yahweh and fiery judgment fell upon them instantly. Likewise, Uzzah simply turned out to be in the wrong place, at the wrong time. He had a certain familiarity with the Ark of the Covenant because he spent his childhood around it. Yet, he did not understand that when the "Shekinah" glory of God manifested upon the ark as the people worshipped, the very nature of the ark itself began to change. Without the presence of God resting upon it, the ark was just an expensive wooden box created for ceremonial purposes. However, when the Shekinah, glory of God fell upon the ark as the people worshipped, the ark represented the throne of God on the earth. The Scripture says Yahweh dwells in the presence of His people. Unfortunately, Uzzah was not familiar with the manifest glory of God or how to act in the presence of His glory. Because he stretched out his hand and touched the ark, he inadvertently touched the glory of God. It's impossible for any mere human being to approach the glory of God without the covering of a blood sacrifice. Without the covering of blood, the holiness of God killed Uzzah, because no sinful man can touch the glory of a Holy God and live. Uzzah died because of a lack of discernment. He accidentally

touched something holy as if it was something common.

"He saw no difference between the ark and any other valuable article. His intention to help was right enough; but there was a profound insensibility to the awful sacredness of the ark, on which even its Levitical bearers





were forbidden to lay hands." (Maclaren)⁸

The Lesson Of Reverence

As developing leaders in the Kingdom of God we need to acquire a fearful reverence of Yahweh. The fear of the Lord does not mean we should be afraid of God, but we must have a healthy reverential respect for who He is. Treating something Holy as if it's common is a recipe for disaster. This idea was behind the stern warning Paul gave the Corinthian church concerning the disrespectful way they celebrated the Holy Communion.



27 So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. 29 For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

31 But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. 32 Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world. (1 Corinthians 11)

**THAT IS WHY MANY
AMONG YOU ARE WEAK
AND SICK, AND A NUMBER
OF YOU HAVE FALLEN
ASLEEP.**

- 1 CORINTHIANS 11:30



Paul strongly encouraged the Corinthian church to examine their own lives and how they showed love to other believers before they partook in breaking the bread at the Lord's table. Participating in Holy Communion without a sense of reverence undermines the holiness of what is being celebrated. Hence, a lack of reverence among the Corinthian church manifested in the premature death of many and sickness among the body of believers. Their physical death did not indicate a loss of salvation. Their premature death

⁸Maclaren, Alexander "2 Samuel: Expositions of Holy Scripture" Volume 2 (Deuteronomy to 2 Kings 7) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984)



was just a consequence of their irreverent behaviour towards the holiness of the body and blood of Christ.

This stern warning should be taken seriously in our contemporary church. As we approach the coming of Christ, Holy Spirit promised to present us to Christ without spot or wrinkle. This means that the church who is prepared for the bridegroom will be reverent and respectful to our Lord. It's amazing that after the death of Ananias and Sapphira revival broke out in the Jerusalem church.



¹² The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³ But no one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high regard for them. ¹⁴ Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. ¹⁵ As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. ¹⁶ Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed. (Acts 5)

The fact that the hypocrites were afraid to join them in worship only served to increase the power of the presence of the Spirit. When the hypocrites died or departed, more people were saved by the powerful preaching of the Gospel. This is the power of the Spirit that emerging leaders will encounter when the contemporary church learns what it means to truly fear the Lord.

given, much is expected.

⁸ David was angry because the Lord's anger had burst out against Uzzah. He named that place Perez-uzzah (which means "to burst out against Uzzah"), as it is still called today.

David obviously put a lot of time and energy into this elaborate celebration. To have it come to a crashing halt because of the death of one of his faithful servants was a tragic outcome. David's anger was rooted in the fact that he believed he did everything with good intentions to honor God. How could his good intentions result in the death of a faithful man? The fact that he did not intend to

JESUS
...WILL EXPECT MORE
FROM THOSE BELIEVERS WHO KNEW MORE.
ON THE MATTER OF CHRISTIAN
LIVING, I CANNOT THINK OF
MORE SOBERING WORDS.



Good intentions are not enough.

provoke the righteous judgment of God, did not excuse him for not knowing or rightly dividing the word of God. His intentions were good, but what he didn't understand came back to haunt him. This is why God does not only judge our intentions but looks at the results and consequences of our actions as well. A righteous God looks at both the intentions of our heart and the consequences of our actions, when He judges in perfect righteousness.

⁹ David was now afraid of the Lord, and he asked, "How can I ever bring the Ark of the Lord back into my care?" ¹⁰ So David decided not to move the Ark of the Lord into the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath. ¹¹ The Ark of the Lord remained there in Obed-edom's house for three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and his entire household.

When the fear of the Lord caused David to have a greater reverence for the presence of Yahweh, he humbled himself for three months and did the necessary research. The fact that David changed the method in which the ark was carried, showed that he did an intensive Bible Study. Exodus and Numbers clearly outlined how the ark should be specifically carried and who should carry it.

¹⁰ "Have the people make an Ark of acacia wood—a sacred chest 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches high. ¹¹ Overlay it inside and outside with pure gold, and run a molding of gold all around it. ¹² Cast four gold rings and attach them to its four feet, two rings on each side. ¹³ Make poles from acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. ¹⁴ Insert the poles into the rings at the sides of the Ark to carry it. (Exodus 25)

After David waited a few months to allow his emotions to settle, he decided to try again. This time, however, he did things according to the written Word of God. Instead of placing the ark on an ox driven cart, the ark was carried on the shoulders of the Levitical priesthood.

¹¹ Then David summoned the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, and these Levite leaders: Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. ¹² He said to them, "You are the leaders of the Levite families. You must purify yourselves and all your fellow Levites, so you can bring the Ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. ¹³ Because you Levites did not carry the Ark the first time, the anger of

**STUDY TO SHOW
YOURSELF APPROVED**



the Lord our God burst out against us. We failed to ask God how to move it properly." ¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites purified themselves in order to bring the Ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, to Jerusalem. ¹⁵ Then the Levites carried the Ark of God on their shoulders with its carrying poles, just as the Lord had instructed Moses. (1 Chronicles 15)

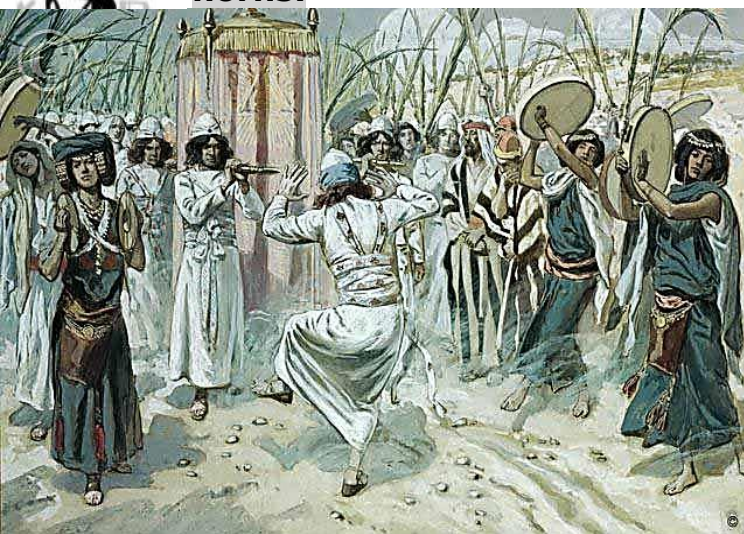
The presence of God can never be driven. His presence must be carried on the backs of His faithful people. As the people of God, the Levitical priests were the feet of the Lord. It was always Yahweh's desire to walk among His people. This is what He did in the cool of the day with his first human son Adam. This image was a type and shadow fully manifested in Yahshua. He was God in the flesh, walking among humanity.

¹² Then King David was told, "The Lord has blessed Obed-edom's household and everything he has because of the Ark of God." So David went there and brought the Ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the City of David with a great celebration. ¹³ After the men who were carrying the Ark of the Lord had gone six steps, David sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf.



If we take this description literally, from Obed-Edom's house to Jerusalem is between 12-15 km making it about 30,000 steps. That means David and the whole nation stopped and sacrificed approximately 5000 times! This would consist of two sacrifices of a bull and a calf, which would be 10,000 animals in total. This great celebration was also a bloody and horrific experience. The road leading to Jerusalem was soaked with pools of blood as David danced before the Lord.

¹⁴ And David danced before the Lord with all his might, wearing a priestly garment. ¹⁵ So David and all the people of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouts of joy and the blowing of rams' horns.



From the text it's obvious that David danced wearing a priestly robe like the other Levites. This celebration was not about David, but about Yahweh. There is some discussion among Biblical scholars if by the end of the long parade David had stripped down to an undergarment.

This speculation is due to the accusation made against him by his wife Michal.

Michal's Contempt for David



16 But as the Ark of the Lord entered the City of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked down from her window. When she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she was filled with contempt for him.

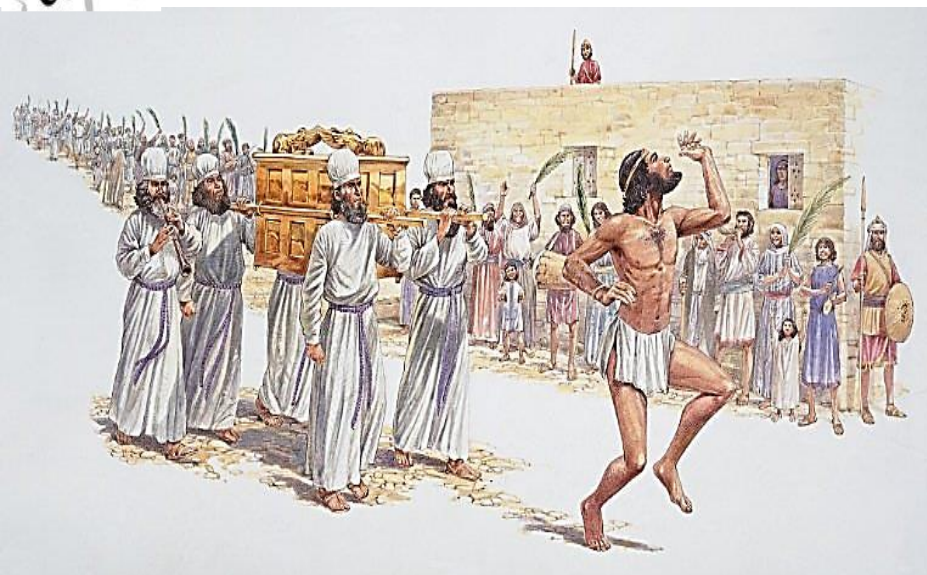
Michal was King Saul's younger daughter and was a princess from birth. She was accustomed to a dignified life living in the palace. David on the other hand, was raised among sheep. He was a shepherd at heart and didn't care much about other people's opinions. This was Saul's greatest weakness; he was far more interested in playing the part of the king, without having the heart of a king. Michal was obviously

disgusted by the way David danced. He celebrated like a common Israelite shepherd, instead of their dignified, culturally refined, king.

17 They brought the Ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the special tent David had prepared for it. And David sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. 18 When he had finished his sacrifices, David blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies. 19 Then he gave to every Israelite man and woman

in the crowd a loaf of bread, a cake of dates, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people returned to their homes.

This celebration was a great success in Israel. The Ark of the Covenant finally had a





permanent home in the heart of the nation. A vast abundance of meat left over from the sacrifices was generously distributed among all the people. Furthermore, David established a collective sense of national unity based around their shared culture and religion. This day could not have gone any better.

20 When David returned home to bless his own family, Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet him. She said in disgust, "How distinguished the king of Israel looked today, shamelessly exposing himself to the servant girls like any vulgar person might do!"

This blistering criticism perhaps had more to do with what David was wearing, instead of the way he was dancing. For David to remove his royal robes and to be dressed like common priest, presented the king on the same level as the ordinary people. Michal was strongly critical of the undignified way David presented himself before the crowd. To add some "pepper sauce" to her criticism, she accused him of being a vulgar pervert seeking the attention of the low-class women of Jerusalem.

Why did Michal hate David?

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

As mentioned in 1 Samuel, Michal was treated very unfairly by David, and she likely resented him for dehumanizing her when he demanded she be his "reward" as he negotiated with Abner to become the king of Israel.

13 "All right," David replied, "but I will not negotiate with you unless you bring back my wife Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come" (2 Samuel 3)

This negotiation was dark and underhanded. For the first time, we see a spiteful side of King David lurking under the surface. Why would he demand Michal as part of the deal? She was already married to another man for many years.

As mentioned, David had a disgusting tendency of collecting trophies as symbols of his many conquests. Like parading the head of Goliath through the streets on a stick, David wanted the daughter of Saul back because she legitimized his claim to the Throne of Israel. He had no concern for her feelings or any

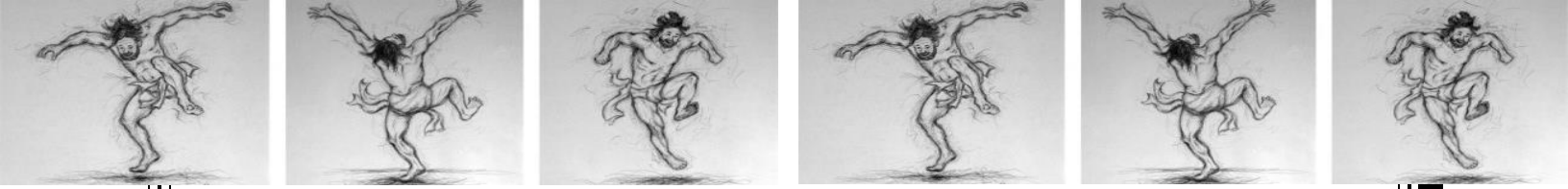


I hate you

King David



I hate you



desire for her affection. He wanted her for political gain and as another occasional sex toy.

¹⁴ David then sent this message to Ishbosheth, Saul's son: "Give me back my wife Michal, for I bought her with the lives of 100 Philistines." ¹⁵ So Ishbosheth took Michal away from her husband, Palti son of Laish. ¹⁶ Palti followed along behind her as far as Bahurim, weeping as he went. Then Abner told him, "Go back home!" So Palti returned. "(2 Samuel 3)

The helplessness of Palti is disheartening. He truly loved Michal and perhaps she loved him as well. Nevertheless, it would take very little for Abner to murder him for disobedience if he continued to follow after his wife. Michal once again, was being used as a tool, to meet the needs of prideful, powerful men. She was first used as an instrument of King Saul to trap David. Now, she was used again as an instrument of King David, to secure the throne of Israel. It's no wonder she despised David with all her heart. She knew she would never be loved by him, only used for occasional sex a few times a year.

²¹ David retorted to Michal, "I was dancing before the Lord, who chose me above your father and all his family!"

For those who assumed King David could do no wrong, they would easily excuse his sharp answer. Nevertheless, bringing up her dead family, crossed the line. Michal once genuinely loved David, but it's likely David never really loved her. Michal lost everything she cherished, and David added insult to injury. She lost her father, brothers and her loving husband who adored her. In the end she had nothing left but her bitter resentment towards David.

He appointed me as the leader of Israel, the people of the Lord, so I celebrate before the Lord. ²² Yes, and I am willing to look even more foolish than this, even to be humiliated in my own eyes! But those servant girls you mentioned will indeed think I am distinguished!"

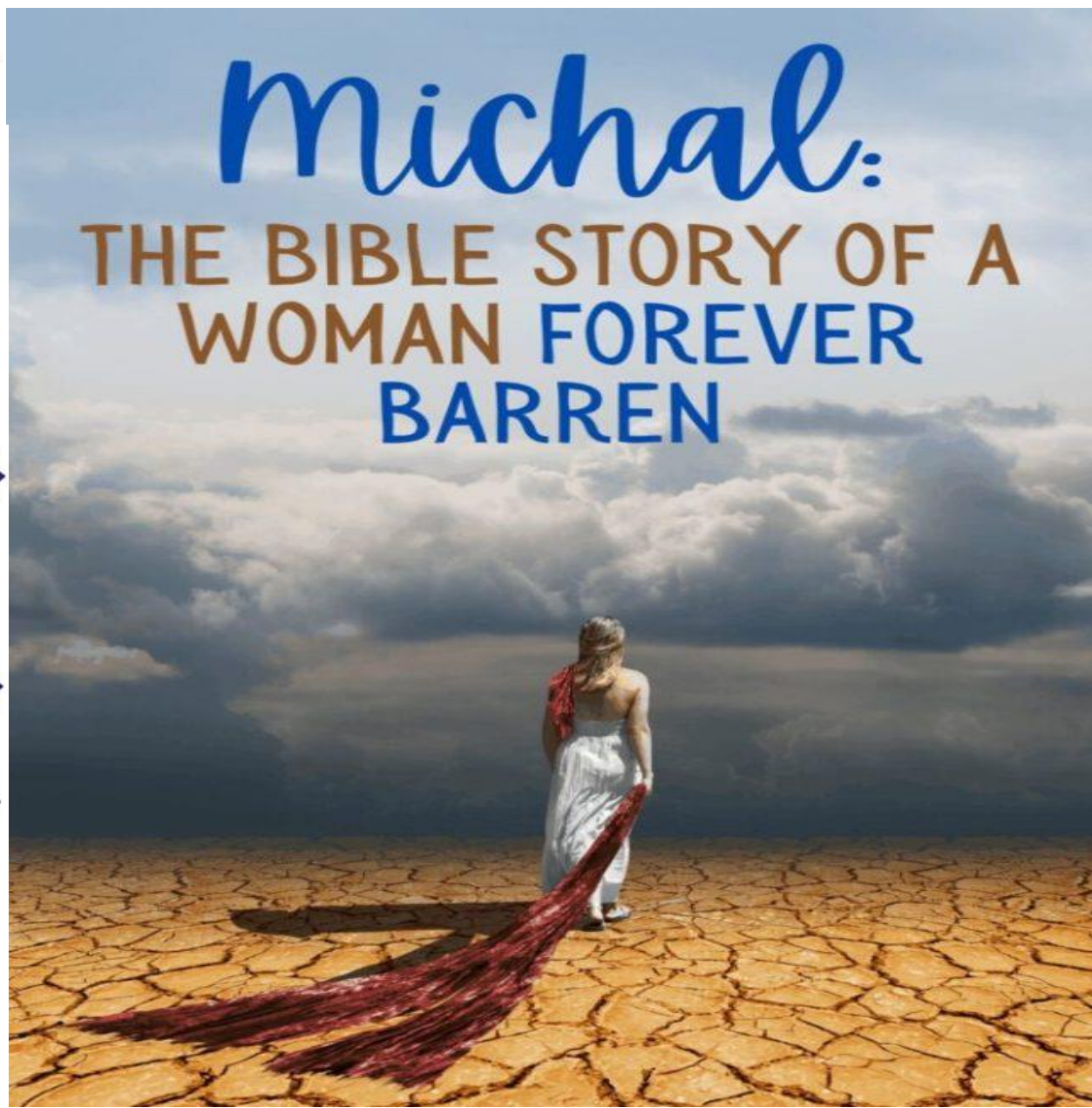
David rightly said he would be willing to look foolish if Yahweh was lifted up. He was not dancing before the people of Israel, but before his God who blessed him so greatly. Nevertheless, he did not need to mention being distinguished in the eyes of the servant girls. That was like saying "if you despise me, many other women want me". This showed King David had little or no respect for Michal as a person. He was completely indifferent towards her as a person. She was once a royal princess, but now she was reduced to being treated like a common concubine. Viciously, David broke up her



marriage with a man who adored her, only to neglect her or treat her like an occasional plaything.

²³ So Michal, the daughter of Saul, remained childless throughout her entire life.

Michal's barrenness was not necessarily the result of Divine judgment. It may be that David never had marital relations with her again. Nevertheless, the principle stands: there is often barrenness in the life and ministry of the overly critical.⁹ There is another unmentioned undertone hidden in the text. As the only remaining daughter of King Saul, it would have been very complicated if she had a son with King David. He would have a strong claim to the throne of Israel from both sides of his family line. His family line from David would have the support of the Tribe of Judah, while his family line from Saul would have the support from the Tribe of Benjamin. This was a complication King David obviously intended to avoid at all costs.



Michal:

THE BIBLE STORY OF A WOMAN FOREVER BARREN

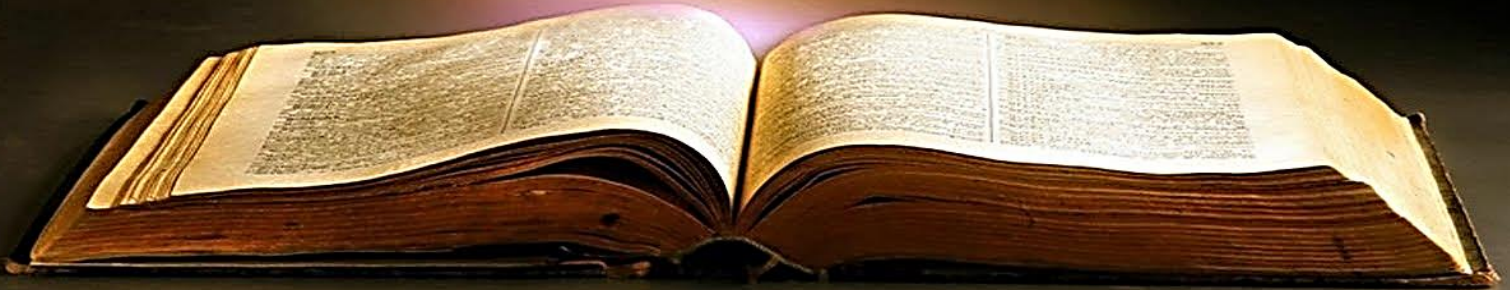


- 1. What does the story of Uzzah teach us about God's holiness and how we should approach Him?**
- 2. Was Yahweh unjust in the way He treated Uzzah for his mistake?**
- 3. How does the story of Uzzah and the sons of Aaron deepen our understanding of the fear of the Lord?**
- 4. What does the incident with Uzzah teach us about the importance of understanding God's Word before acting?**
- 5. Was King David justified in demanding that Michal be returned to him?**

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT



You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Psa 89:3-4 ESV



The Lord's Covenant Promise to David

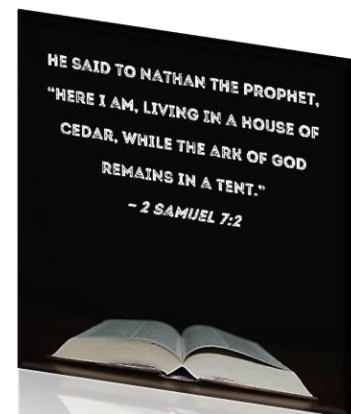
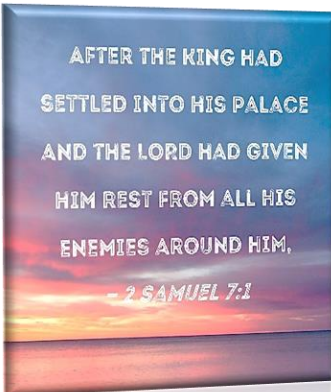
7 When King David was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies,

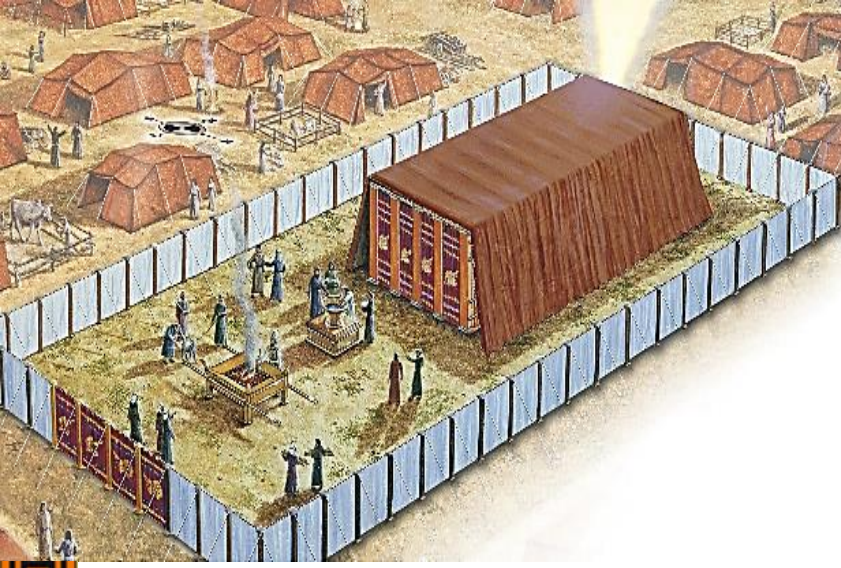
The Lord had not yet given David rest from all his enemies, but He would in the near future. This was a poetic summary of where the narrative was heading. David will still go to war in the following chapters, but he will eventually come to a place of rest. The intent of the author is to introduce another important segment in the life of King David. He desperately wanted to establish peace in the Promised Land, because he passionately desired to build Yahweh a house, where He could permanently live among His

people.

2 the king summoned Nathan the prophet. "Look," David said, "I am living in a beautiful cedar palace, but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!"

As previously mentioned Hiram the King of Tyre, built a magnificent palace for King David. He supplied all the expensive building materials, along with the most skilled





craftsmen of the day. Cedar was extremely rare in Israel and was considered the most extravagant wood obtainable. David was now living a lavish lifestyle, surrounded by spectacular opulence on every side. This troubled him greatly, because everything he achieved came from the hand of Yahweh, who was still worshiped in a tent.

Without saying the specific words, David told Nathan that he wanted to build a temple to replace the tabernacle. When Israel was in the wilderness more than 400 years before this, God commanded Moses to build a tent of meeting according to a specific pattern (Exodus 25:8-9). God never asked for a permanent building to replace the tent, but now David wanted to do this for God.¹⁰

³ Nathan replied to the king, "Go ahead and do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you."

Some people could say Nathan should be considered a false prophet because he told David to go ahead and build the Lord a house. Nathan, however, did not prophesy incorrectly, he simply spoke without fully inquiring of the Lord. Sometimes as fallen human beings, we speak emotionally or intellectually, without taking our time to seek the Lord. Nevertheless, Nathan was a man who could hear from God. In the still of the night, the Word of the Lord came to the prophet. He was instructed to bring an important message to King David, in regard to building the Lord a temple.

⁴ But that same night the Lord said to Nathan, ⁵ "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord has declared: Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? ⁶ I have never lived in a house, from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling. ⁷ Yet no matter where I have gone with the Israelites, I have never once complained to Israel's tribal leaders, the shepherds of my people Israel. I have never asked them, "Why haven't you built me a beautiful cedar house?""

God was pleased with the purity of David's intentions. Nevertheless, Yahweh had never asked David to build Him a magnificent house. It was always the

¹⁰ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 7

will of Yahweh to walk with His people. He lived in a tent made of skin, which was a type and shadow of God living in the flesh. Yahweh is eternally enthroned in heaven, but also desired to have intimate fellowship with His creation on earth. In the beginning, God visited with his son Adam in the cool of the day as they walked in the Garden of Eden. Likewise, Yahweh had no desire for a magnificent temple like the insecure pagan gods. He lived and forever lives, in unapproachable glory, surrounded by the adoration of His faithful angelic sons.

Though the Lord refused to David the realization of his wish, he did it in a most gracious manner. He did not put the idea away from him in anger or disdain, as though David had cherished an unworthy desire; but he honored his servant even in the non-acceptance of his offer.¹¹

⁸ “Now go and say to my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth!’

This is the amazing nature of our God. While David desired to make the name of Yahweh famous, it was the desire of Yahweh to make the name of David famous. Yahweh reminded David that he brought him from the sheepfold and made him the most feared king in all the world. It was Yahweh who destroyed all the enemies of Israel and gave David success in everything he did up to this point. Moreover, if David remained faithful to the Lord his God, his success would not end. Through his seed, Israel would become the most dominant nation in the entire world and the kingdom of David would be a generational empire.

¹⁰ And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won’t oppress them as they’ve done in the past, ¹¹ starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies.

Yahweh promised David, that under his reign, He would establish a permanent and secure place for Israel. God promised this first because He

¹¹Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)

The Lord
himself
will make
a house
for you

2 SAMUEL 7:11

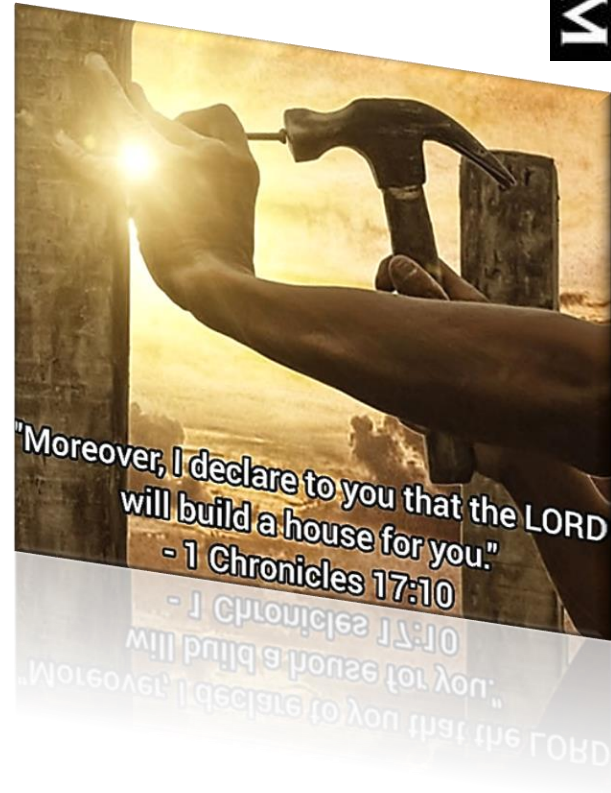
knew that David, being a godly shepherd, was first concerned about the welfare of his people.¹²

“Furthermore, the Lord declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings!

Although it pleased God that David desired to build Him a house, it was not the prophetic purpose of David's life. The true prophetic purpose of David's life would be to build a generational house for himself. By “a house”, the Lord meant a family line of kings. Through the family line of King David, the promised “seed” of David would finally arrive. This promised son, would also be the seed of Abraham, destined to be a blessing to the entire world. He would also be the seed of the woman, destined to crush the head of the serpent. Furthermore, He would be the coming king to whom all other kings will bow and confess that “He is Lord”. Through David, God would bring his prophetic purposes to pass, in his family line and through his seed.

¹² For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.

There are two levels to this prophetic promise. There was an immediate physical fulfillment, as well as an ultimate spiritual fulfillment. On the biological level, the son of David called Solomon, would build the physical temple of the Lord. This temple would be made with stones and bricks. However, as mentioned previously, the Lord always desired to live in a tent of skin, not a lifeless building made of cold stone. The ultimate spiritual fulfillment of this promise rested upon the Son of David called Yahshua. He would be Yahweh in the flesh and the fullness of God would dwell within Him. His body would be the eternal temple of Yahweh where God and man would become one. Through Christ, the Lord would dwell forever with His people, in His new and living temple.



¹² David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 7



Astonishingly, the Lord would not only live “among” His people, but in the near future the Spirit of the living God would actually live “within” His people.

The stump of Jesse

The family of David did rule over Israel for more than four centuries but was eventually removed because of evil added upon evil. Yet out of the “stump” of Jesse, God raised up a new branch that will reign for ever and ever.¹³

11 *Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot— yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.*

2 *And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11)*

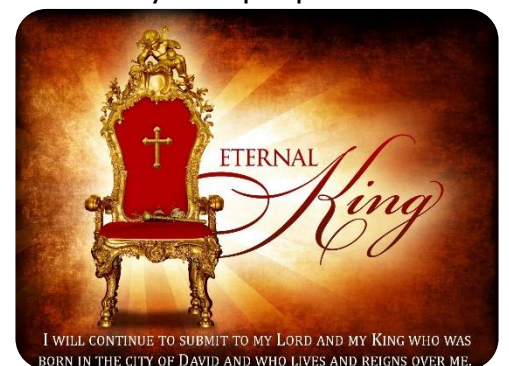
14 *I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do. ¹⁵ But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight.*



This prophetic promise was true concerning the physical son of King David. The Lord truly favored Solomon, even though he was a man who also sinned greatly. But the blessing of the Lord was never removed from him. In fact, Solomon’s judgment fell upon his children, because of the sins he personally committed.

16 *Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.”*

The second half of this prophetic promise was only fulfilled by the prophetic son of King David, Yahshua. It is through Christ, that the Kingdom of God will be established forever upon the earth. The Kingdom of Solomon was destroyed by the Babylonians, but the coming Kingdom of God will eventually abolish every other nation, and rule the world forever. It



¹³ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 7

is only through the Kingdom of Yahshua, that the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

⁵ "For the time is coming," says the Lord, "when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land."

⁶ And this will be his name: 'The Lord Is Our Righteousness.' In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. (Jeremiah 23)

The government of King Yahshua

⁶ For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

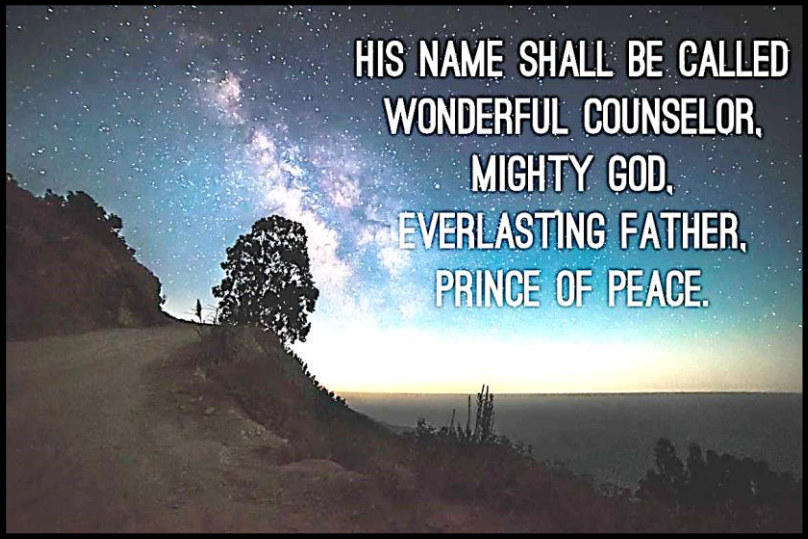
⁷ His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen! (Isaiah 9)

¹⁷ So Nathan went back to David and told him everything the Lord had said in this vision.

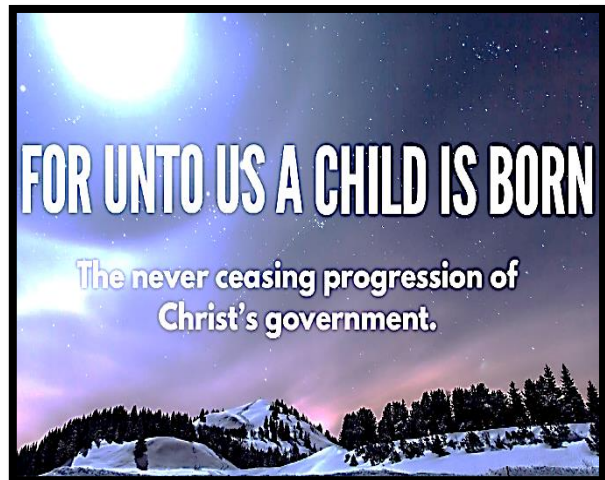
David's Prayer of Thanks

¹⁸ Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and prayed,

"Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? ¹⁹ And now, Sovereign Lord, in addition to



HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF PEACE.



YAHWEH

— THE LORD, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS —



everything else, you speak of giving your servant a lasting dynasty! Do you deal with everyone this way, O Sovereign Lord?

²⁰ “What more can I say to you? You know what your servant is really like, Sovereign Lord. ²¹ Because of your promise and according to your will, you have done all these great things and have made them known to your servant.

This humble prayer gives clear insight into the heart of King David. He was not a prideful man, but utterly understood the meaning of grace. It was Yahweh who brought David from among the “few” sheep and selected him to be the King of Israel. Everything David accomplished was because of the “anointing of the Lord.” Unlike King Saul, David never lost his deep sense of humility and his authentic reverence for the goodness of God.

²² “How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you! ²³ What other nation on earth is like your people Israel? What other nation, O God, have you redeemed from slavery to be your own people? You made a great name for yourself when you redeemed your people from Egypt. You performed awesome miracles and drove out the nations and gods that stood in their way. ²⁴ You made Israel your very own people forever, and you, O Lord, became their God.

²⁵ “And now, O Lord God, I am your servant; do as you have promised concerning me and my family. Confirm it as a promise that will last forever. ²⁶ And may your name be honored forever so that everyone will say, ‘The Lord of Heaven’s Armies is God over Israel!’ And may the house of your servant David continue before you forever.

It's interesting that David does not say I am unworthy. In the words of his future daughter Mary, David said “be it unto me” as you have said. Righteous men and women of God do not waste their time with false expressions of humility. They simply believe the Word of God and say “yes.”

²⁷ “O Lord of Heaven’s Armies, God of Israel, I have been bold enough to pray this prayer to you because you have revealed all this to your servant, saying, ‘I will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings!’ ²⁸ For you are God, O Sovereign Lord. Your words are truth, and you have promised these good things to your servant. ²⁹ And now, may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you have spoken, and when



you grant a blessing to your servant, O Sovereign Lord, it is an eternal blessing!"

The Lesson Of God Saying no



LESSONS
LEARNED

It was King David's greatest desire to build an extravagant temple for Yahweh in Jerusalem. This was his driving passion because he desperately wanted to honor God. Regardless of his amazing intentions, David's intents were not the will of the Lord for his life. Yahweh would indeed have a temple in Jerusalem, but it would not be built by him. David was a warrior and Israel needed to be at peace for an extended period of time. Construction of the temple could not be halted intermittently whenever a war broke out. Therefore, David was called to kill the enemies of Yahweh and not build a temple

with his battle-hardened hands. After struggling with disappointment for a season, David eventually accepted the will of the Lord. He realized that Yahweh will not be pressured into changing His mind. David understood that he was called for a specific purpose, and he need to complete the mission he was assigned. David explained to Solomon before he died why Yahweh denied him the honor of building His house. David said...

⁷ "My son, I wanted to build a Temple to honor the name of the Lord my God," David told him. ⁸ "But the Lord said to me, 'You have killed many men in the battles you have fought. And since you have shed so much blood in my sight, you will not be the one to build a Temple to honor my name. ⁹ But you will have a son who will be a man of peace. I will give him peace with his enemies in all the surrounding lands. His name will be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel during his reign. ¹⁰ He is the one who will build a Temple to honor my name. (1 Chronicles 22)

King David was instructed not to build the temple, but he had an extremely important part in the process. He spent his entire lifetime amassing the materials Solomon would need in order to complete the task with excellence.

⁴ "I have worked hard to provide materials for building the Temple of the Lord—nearly 4,000 tons of gold, 40,000 tons of silver, and so much iron and bronze that it cannot be weighed. I have also gathered timber and stone



When God says...

NO!

WHEN GOD SAYS

NO

WHEN GOD SAYS

for the walls, though you may need to add more. ¹⁵ You have a large number of skilled stonemasons and carpenters and craftsmen of every kind. ¹⁶ You have expert goldsmiths and silversmiths and workers of bronze and iron. Now begin the work, and may the Lord be with you!" (1 Chronicles 22)

David's reaction to the will of the Lord is an excellent example for us as well. We all have schemes and dreams. Perhaps we desire to do amazing things and we hope to accomplish much for God. Regardless of our good intentions, we need to be both anointed and appointed to accomplish anything of lasting value for God. Anything done for God in the flesh, will be burned up in judgment as "dead works." Without faith its impossible to please God and faith must be expressed in obedience. You may want to preach the Gospel to heathen nations or be a missionary to uncontacted Amazon tribes. While these are good and Godly desires, it must also be the will of Yahweh for your life. If Yahweh has called you to be a dentist and you want to be an evangelist, you will not be successful in evangelism because your anointing is to work with teeth.

While there are scriptures that promise us that we can have what we believe, our belief cannot run contrary to the will of God for our life. We can't believe that we will become the best basketball player in the world, when we are only 5 feet tall. If it was God's will for you to be best basketball player in the world, He would've given you outstanding talent, great genetics and extraordinary physical abilities. Likewise, Yahweh gave David everything he needed to be the best military leader Israel ever had. On the other hand, he was no temple builder and lacked the necessary skill needed to accomplish that task with excellence.


WHEN GOD SAYS

NO

Sometimes

**GOD CALLS YOU
TO LOSE**



A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red patterned top, is sitting on a beach at sunset. She is looking out at the ocean with her arms crossed and her head resting on her hands. The sky is a warm orange and yellow, and the water is dark with some whitecaps.

When God says no, we are sometimes tempted to wonder if He loves us. In reality, it's because He loves us, He sometimes says no.

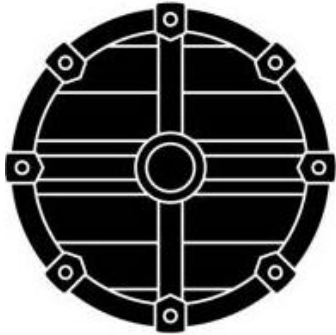
Sometimes,
God says,
"No."



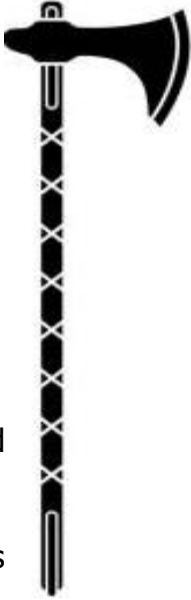
- 1. In what ways do you identify with David's desire to build a house for God? Do you plan to do something extraordinary for God with your own life?**
- 2. What role does the Prophet Nathan play in this chapter, and what does it teach us about the prophetic office in the Old Testament? Was he a false prophet?**
- 3. Reflecting on this chapter, how would you respond when your good intentions are not in line with God's plans or when God says no?**
- 4. David wanted to build Yahweh a *physical house*, but Yahweh wanted to build David a *spiritual house*. Discuss the Davidic covenant in light of the promised Messiah.**
- 5. How does God's prophetic promise to David foreshadow the coming of Jesus Christ as the promised Son of David?**



David's Military Victories



8 After this, David defeated and subdued the Philistines by conquering Gath, their largest town. ² David also conquered the land of Moab. He made the people lie down on the ground in a row, and he measured them off in groups with a length of rope. He measured off two groups to be executed for every one group to be spared. The Moabites who were spared became David's subjects and paid him tribute money.



King David loved the Lord and absolutely hated His enemies. In the Old Testament, an enemy of Israel was also an enemy of Yahweh. The ultimate enemy of Yahweh, ever since the children of Israel entered into the Promised Land, was the Philistines and their disgusting god Dagon. Under the rule of the Judges, the Philistines were a constant plague to the Israelite tribes. However, when King David ruled a united Israel, the Philistines were helpless prey to him and his and Mighty Men.

As a warrior, David was merciless in the way he treated the enemies of Israel. He was not afraid of the enemies of Yahweh and hated them with a passion. *"The thing that fascinates me about this complete victory is the utter contempt with which David treated the great power of his adversaries."*¹⁴ The psychological terror caused by laying the soldiers Moab on the ground and slaughtering them according to the random measurement of a rope, was considered brutal, even at that time.

To the East




³ David also destroyed the forces of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when Hadadezer marched out to strengthen his control along the Euphrates River. ⁴ David captured 1,000 chariots, 7,000 charioteers, and 20,000 foot soldiers. He crippled all the chariot horses except enough for 100 chariots.

To the east, David conquered all the land up to the Euphrates River bordering on modern day Iran. Yahweh commanded Israel not to trust in horses and chariots for their defense. Hence, David could not allow the war

¹⁴ Redpath, Alan "The Making of a Man of God: Studies in the Life of David" (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1962)





horses to roam wild and multiply. He could not leave such a precious resource in the hands of his enemy. Crippling the captured war horses was a wise and strategic move to keep the eastern side of the kingdom subdued.


To the North



⁵ When Arameans from Damascus arrived to help King Hadadezer, David killed 22,000 of them. ⁶ Then he placed several army garrisons in Damascus, the Aramean capital, and the Arameans became David's subjects and paid him tribute money. So the Lord made David victorious wherever he went.

⁷ David brought the gold shields of Hadadezer's officers to Jerusalem, ⁸ along with a large amount of bronze from Hadadezer's towns of Tebah and Berothai.

Although David was not given permission to build the Temple of Yahweh, he was instructed that his descendant would do it. To make this possible, David needed to stockpile substantial amounts of gold and silver for the massive construction project. Solid gold shields were extremely heavy and useless in battle. They were ceremonially displayed to demonstrate the great wealth of their king. The captured gold shields were a generous contribution to the treasury of the future temple.



⁹ When King Toi of Hamath heard that David had destroyed the entire army of Hadadezer, ¹⁰ he sent his son Joram to congratulate King David for his successful campaign. Hadadezer and Toi had been enemies and were often at war. Joram presented David with many gifts of silver, gold, and bronze.

A few wise rulers from the surrounding pagan nations welcomed the rule of David. The military strength of Israel brought lasting stability and justice to the region. According to an old saying, "the enemy of your enemy automatically becomes your friend." Many friendly kingdoms offered Israel tribute in the form of gold, silver and bronze; which David added to the treasury for the construction of the future temple.



¹¹ King David dedicated all these gifts to the Lord, as he did with the silver and gold from the other nations he had defeated— ¹² from





Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek—and from Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

¹³ So David became even more famous when he returned from destroying 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. ¹⁴ He placed army garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became David's subjects. In fact, the Lord made David victorious wherever he went.

A united Israel was a powerful force under the leadership of a God-fearing king. Unlike Saul, who spent his whole life fighting his own people, David disciplined the men of Israel and transformed them into the greatest military force on the planet. In the future, Yahshua will say "a divided kingdom can not stand." This was true for Israel in the past and is still presently true for the contemporary church.

¹⁵ So David reigned over all Israel and did what was just and right for all his people. ¹⁶ Joab son of Zeruiah was commander of the army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the royal historian. ¹⁷ Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were the priests. Seraiah was the court secretary. ¹⁸ Benaiah son of Jehoiada was captain of the king's bodyguard. And David's sons served as priestly leaders.

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

9 One day David asked, "Is anyone in Saul's family still alive—anyone to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

David's question proved he still had a great love for his deceased friend Jonathan. It was customary in those days for the king of a new dynasty to completely massacre anyone connected with the prior dynasty. *David went against the principle of revenge and against the principle of self-preservation and asked what he could do for the family of his enemy.*¹⁵



¹⁵ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 9





Even in death the binding power of the Covenant he made with Jonathan overshadowed anything Saul ever did to harm him. If there was a way to show undeserved favor to any living relative of Jonathan, David would find it.

The Lesson Of Keeping Your Promises



David loved Jonathan and remembered the covenant promise he made to bless his descendants, because he was destined to die. When David was established as the King of Israel, he desperately wanted to honor the memory of Jonathan by keeping his promise. It's important to note that David is the one who looked for Mephibosheth because he desires to honor the conditions of the covenant. Mephibosheth did nothing to earn David's favor, he was simply blessed because he was associated with Jonathan. David showed kindness to Mephibosheth. He treated him like an adopted son and gave

him a permanent place at the royal table. He received everything Jonathan deserved, if Jonathan was still alive to receive it. David was compelled to be a covenant keeper because his heart reflected the heart of Yahweh. Yahweh is a covenant keeping God.

Like, Mephibosheth we were all born morally crippled and unworthy of the kindness of God. Nevertheless, Yahshua made a blood covenant with Yahweh to pay the debt we owed because of the sins we committed. Because Yahshua lived a perfect life and died for our sins on the cross, we receive everything He deserved as beneficiaries of the Blood Covenant. Like Mephibosheth, we receive undeserved kindness based on the faithfulness of Christ. Moreover, because of the finished work of Christ, we are now completely and fully children of Yahweh, adopted in the royal family God. Mephibosheth did nothing to receive this promise. He simply believed the words of King David and accepted the grace offered to him by faith.

Know that Yahweh your
God is God,
the faithful God who keeps
His gracious covenant
loyalty for a thousand
generations with those who
love Him and keep His
commands.

Deuteronomy 7:9



MEPHIBOSHETH

² He summoned a man named Ziba, who had been one of Saul's servants. "Are you Ziba?" the king asked.

"Yes sir, I am," Ziba replied.

³ The king then asked him, "Is anyone still alive from Saul's family? If so, I want to show God's kindness to them."

Saul servant Ziba could only expect evil from the hand of King David. When David asked about any remaining descendants of Saul, Ziba was filled with fearful suspicion. He obviously assumed David was lying, using trickery to eliminate the last remaining members of Saul's bloodline.



Ziba replied, "Yes, one of Jonathan's sons is still alive. He is crippled in both feet."

Ziba wouldn't risk his life to save anyone. He was a completely dishonorable man, constantly looking out for himself. Immediately, he identified the last remaining son of Jonathan, but quickly indicated that he was not a threat to the throne, because he was nothing but a worthless cripple. Mephibosheth was previously mentioned earlier in the text. He was crippled as a baby when his nurse fell with him in her arms, as she fled after the tragically sudden death of both Saul and Jonathan. The nurse panicked because she was terrified. She was absolutely sure David would murder the only living son of Jonathan to secure his claim to the throne. *According to the previous dynasty, Mephibosheth had the right to the throne because he was the son of the first-born son of the king, and other potential heirs were dead. In a political sense David could see Mephibosheth as a rival or a threat.*¹⁶

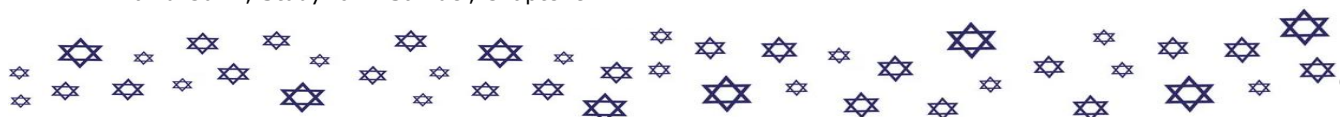
⁴ "Where is he?" the king asked.



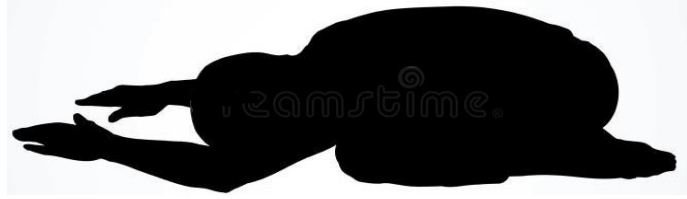
"In Lo-debar," Ziba told him, "at the home of Makir son of Ammiel."

It's been said that Mephibosheth was living "below the bar". He was so poor he could not afford a house of his own. He lived like a stray dog, surviving off the scraps of kindness offered to him. Moreover, he lived with the misguided understanding that the reason he was crippled, was because King David wanted to kill him. This was a disastrous situation for the son of a

¹⁶ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 9



MEPHIBOSHETH



noble warrior like Jonathan to endure such a pitiful life. His fearful suffering was especially tragic because his father Jonathan had an unconditional, unbreakable, covenant with the King of Israel.

⁵ So David sent for him and brought him from Makir's home. ⁶ His name was Mephibosheth; he was Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson. When he came to David, he bowed low to the ground in deep respect. David said, "Greetings, Mephibosheth."

Mephibosheth replied, "I am your servant."

The approach of the king's mighty warriors drove fear into the uncertain heart of Mephibosheth. He assumed his luck had gone from bad to worse, because the enemy of his grandfather Saul had finally located him. The long journey to Jerusalem was filled with terror and dread. Soon he would face his worst enemy, the man responsible for his crippled feet.

Upon arriving at the palace, he threw aside his crutches and crashed upon his face to openly emphasise his helpless condition. In a final act of desperation, he painfully begged King David to spare his miserable life or at least kill him mercifully.

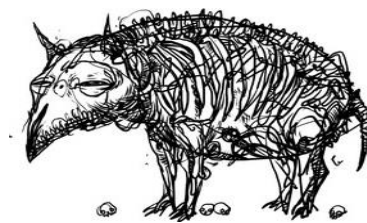
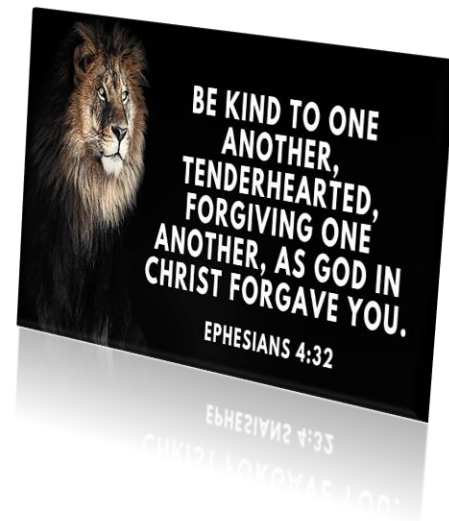
⁷ "Don't be afraid!" David said. "I intend to show kindness to you because of my promise to your father, Jonathan."

David would not say "don't be afraid" unless he knew Mephibosheth had every right to be terrified. David had a reputation of being merciless to his enemies, but he was also remarkably kind to his friends.

I will give you all the property that once belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will eat here with me at the king's table!"

⁸ Mephibosheth bowed respectfully and exclaimed, "Who is your servant, that you should show such kindness to a dead dog like me?"

The image of a dog was a graphic illustration. Dogs were despised, diseased creatures in ancient Israel. Moreover, being a "dead dog" was a specifically tragic image. Mephibosheth assumed his life was worth less than a dead despised animal.



David simply promised Mephibosheth would receive what was his. Mephibosheth knew about these lands all along, but he was afraid to take possession of them because it would expose him before the king. David went against all custom in showing such kindness to an heir of the former dynasty.¹⁷

9 Then the king summoned Saul's servant Ziba and said, "I have given your master's grandson everything that belonged to Saul and his family. 10 You and your sons and servants are to farm the land for him to produce food for your master's household. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, will eat here at my table." (Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.)

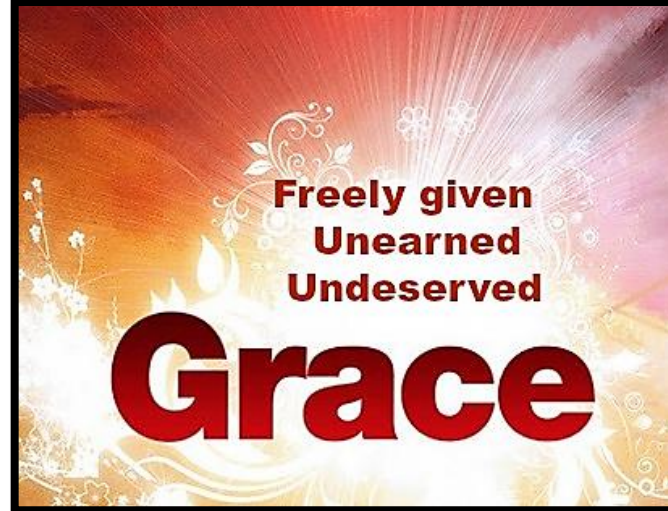
11 Ziba replied, "Yes, my lord the king; I am your servant, and I will do all that you have commanded." And from that time on, Mephibosheth ate regularly at David's table, like one of the king's own sons.

Mephibosheth was given his own house and land, with Ziba's family to serve him as well. Ironically, he would never be home to enjoy it. From that moment on, he would be considered a son of King David and enjoyed all the rights and privileges of the royal family. Furthermore, seated at the table with all the king's children, he would finally be seen as an equal. The shame of his crippled legs would be removed forever, covered by the table in the royal banquet hall.

12 Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. From then on, all the members of Ziba's household were Mephibosheth's servants. 13 And Mephibosheth, who was crippled in both feet, lived in Jerusalem and ate regularly at the king's table.

We need the kindness of God desperately in this troubled world. Christ-followers, having known the forgiveness and grace of God toward us in our brokenness, need to be the kindest people.

¹⁷ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 9



I am Mephibosheth

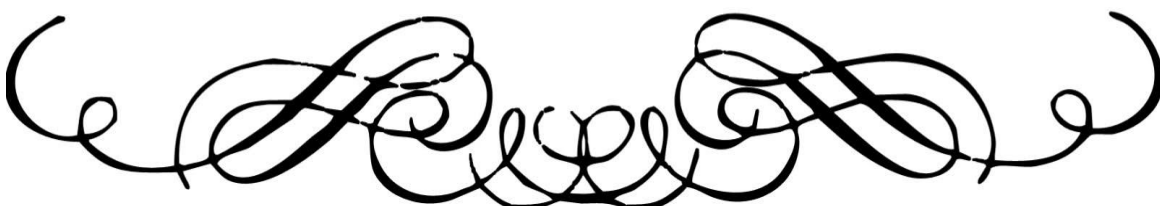
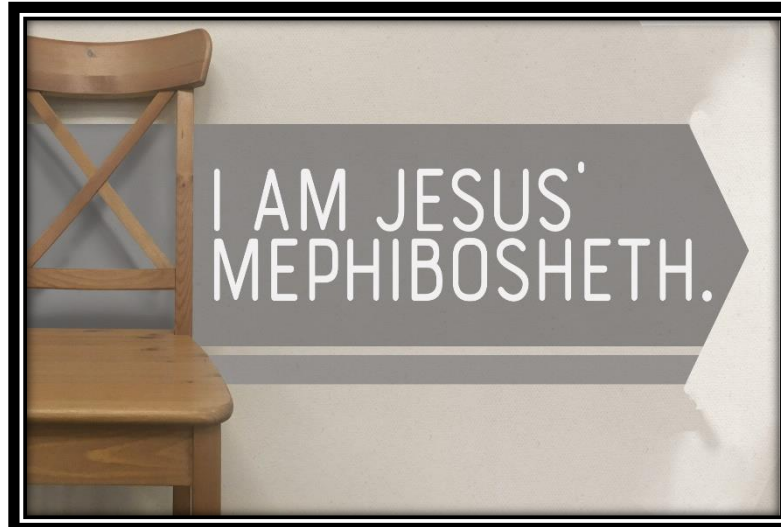
The Story
BEHIND
The Story

The story of Mephibosheth is a hidden type and shadow of the grace of God, embedded in the historical narrative of Scripture. As mentioned, Christ is concealed in the Old Testament but revealed in the New Testament. In the New Testament, we were all Mephibosheth because we were all separated from our birthright. We were all once enemies of God; separated from His kindness and remained excluded from the blessing of His generous covenant.

²¹ This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. (Colossians 1)

In our own ways, we were all poor, weak, and lame, pathetically living in our fearful, broken condition. When the king called us, we were all hiding from His amazing grace. Nevertheless, the king overlooked our pitiful condition and showed his great mercy. He intentionally sought after us to show us undeserved kindness. We were saved by grace and not by anything we did to deserve it. We did nothing to contribute to the salvation we received. Although we approached the throne of grace as mere beggars and servants, He extended His kindness to us and made us His children.

We have been given access to the table of the king. Because of the covenant we have with God's beloved Son, we are included into the family of Yahweh. For a short season, we may still endure the consequences of our sickness and weakness. However, in the fullness of time, everything we lost will be fully restored and we will enjoy fellowship with the king forever. We were once lost, counted to be nothing more than dead dogs, but now we are found and counted as royalty.





David Defeats the Ammonites

10 Some time after this, King Nahash of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king. ² David said, "I am going to show loyalty to Hanun just as his father, Nahash, was always loyal to me."

Biblical scholars are unsure of specifically what kindness Nahash did for David, because nothing was mentioned in the Scripture. Many commentaries assumed Nahash provided some kind of military assistance to David when he was hiding from King Saul. Regardless, David lived by the code of the warrior and was honor bound by loyalty to extend his friendship to the dead king's son, especially in his time of grief.

So David sent ambassadors to express sympathy to Hanun about his father's death. But when David's ambassadors arrived in the land of Ammon, ³ the Ammonite commanders said to Hanun, their master, "Do you really think these men are coming here to honor your father? No! David has sent them to spy out the city so they can come in and conquer it!"



It's hard to explain why these advisers to Hanun said this to the king of Ammon. It's possible that they genuinely suspected David, or they perhaps used this as a way to appear wise and cunning to King Hanun.¹⁸ As a young and inexperienced king, Hanun was possibly too eager to prove himself as a strong and assertive leader. This was a tragic mistake because it's never wise for a puppy to poke an old dog! Nevertheless, the drastic nature of his impulsive actions was beyond belief, according to the cultural norms of the day.

¹⁸ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 10



What is an ambassador?

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

The role of an ambassador in the ancient Hebrew culture was essential for communication between different kingdoms. An ambassador was not elected, but personally selected to occupy a position of honor in the place of the king. As ambassadors sent directly by King David, it was culturally understood that it was as if David came to offer respect and condolences to young King Hanun personally. Accordingly, it

was the ancient custom that the welcome extended to an official royal ambassador, would be exactly the same welcome you would extend to King David himself.

Stunningly, when King Hanun shaved and stripped David's ambassadors of their pants, culturally they also did it to King David personally. This was an outright act of war, with an equal level of disrespect as killing these men. King Hanun publicly attacked the manhood of David, challenging him to do something about it.

Likewise, the apostle Paul calls every believer an ambassador of Christ. Like King David's diplomats, we are called to represent our King and Kingdom by making peace with others on behalf of Christ. We are not responsible for how we

are received once we complete our mission.

20 So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" 21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5)

We are simply called to extend the invitation of peace and wait for the appropriate response. Unfortunately, things don't always go well for an ambassador. Some are welcomed, but many are despised, rejected, and even killed. This great honor comes with greater responsibility. Accordingly, it was an honor for the ambassadors of David to suffer shame and humiliation for their king. Likewise, when an ambassador of Christ suffers for representing the King of Kings, we should receive it as a great privilege.

THIS MEANS WAR

But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. (Romans 8:17)

That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. (Philippians 3:10)

4 So Hanun seized David's ambassadors and shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their robes at the buttocks, and sent them back to David in shame.

In a culture where a man's beard was an external symbol of masculinity, being shaved reduced David's ambassadors to the status of a mere slave. Furthermore, being shaved placed them on the same social status as a woman, which was not very high in ancient Hebrew culture.

With the value universally set upon the beard by the Hebrews and other Oriental nations, as being man's greatest ornament, the cutting off of one-half of it was the greatest insult that could have been offered to the ambassadors, and through them to David their king.¹⁹

Moreover, by exposing David's ambassadors publicly, "the shame of their nakedness might appear, and especially that of their circumcision".²⁰

A circumcised male was an astonishing sight in ancient culture. Furthermore, to mock the ambassadors of Israel is



¹⁹ Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. "2 Samuel: Commentary on the Old Testament" Vol. 2 (Joshua-2 Samuel) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984)

²⁰ Trapp, John "A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments" Volume 1 (Genesis to 2 Chronicles) (Eureka, California: Tanski Publications, 1997)



such a way, indirectly mocked their covenant with Yahweh.

⁵ When David heard what had happened, he sent messengers to tell the men, "Stay at Jericho until your beards grow out, and then come back." For they felt deep shame because of their appearance.

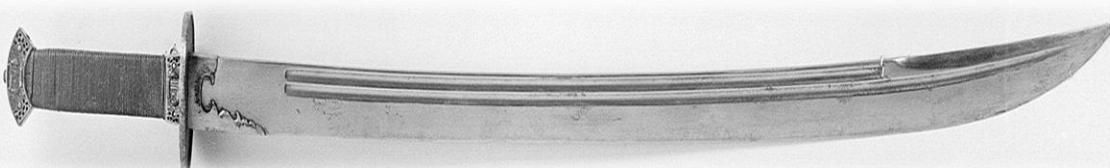
This insult was so great that David needed to hide his ambassadors until they could show themselves in public again. It took a long period of time before their beards were long enough for them to return to Israel with honor.

⁶ When the people of Ammon realized how seriously they had angered David, they sent and hired 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers from the lands of Beth-rehob and Zobah, 1,000 from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 from the land of Tob. ⁷ When David heard about this, he sent Joab and all his warriors to fight them. ⁸ The Ammonite troops came out and drew up their battle lines at the entrance of the city gate, while the Arameans from Zobah and Rehob and the men from Tob and Maacah positioned themselves to fight in the open fields.

Something strange is happening in the heart of King David. The Ammonite king humiliated his ambassadors and mocked their covenant with Yahweh. One would expect King David to personally lead his troops and cut the head off of King Hanun and bring it back to Jerusalem on a pole. Feasibly, David is maturing as he settles into the role of a politician instead of a feared warrior, but this strange absence is foreshadowing something yet to come.

⁹ When Joab saw that he would have to fight on both the front and the rear, he chose some of Israel's elite troops and placed them under his personal command to fight the Arameans in the fields. ¹⁰ He left the rest of the army under the command of his brother Abishai, who was to attack the Ammonites. ¹¹ "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then come over and help me," Joab told his brother. "And if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come and help you. ¹² Be courageous! Let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. May the Lord's will be done."

King David has a very strange relationship with Joab. They have a love hate relationship. David could not control Joab or fully trust him, but he needed him to do his dirty work. This was an impressive rebellion, especially counting the number of enemy troops. Perhaps, David has become slightly overconfident and a little too prideful because of all his past success.





On the other hand, Joab is filled with absolute confidence in his ability to crush any enemy of Israel. *It is interesting to observe that in his arrangements he made no allowance for the possibility of ultimate defeat in his conflict with Ammon... it does not seem to have occurred to him that the combination might have been too much for both of them.*²¹

13 When Joab and his troops attacked, the Arameans began to run away. 14 And when the Ammonites saw the Arameans running, they ran from Abishai and retreated into the city. After the battle was over, Joab returned to Jerusalem.

This was an impressive victory for Israel, but it was not decisive. They had won the battle but not the war. Their enemy escaped into their strongholds and had time to regroup to fight again another day.



15 The Arameans now realized that they were no match for Israel. So when they regrouped, 16 they were joined by additional Aramean troops summoned by Hadadezer from the other side of the Euphrates River. These troops arrived at Helam under the command of Shobach, the commander of Hadadezer's forces.

17 When David heard what was happening, he mobilized all Israel, crossed the Jordan River, and led the army to Helam. The Arameans positioned themselves in battle formation and fought against David. 18 But again the Arameans fled from the Israelites. This time David's forces killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers, including Shobach, the commander of their army. 19 When all the kings allied with Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they surrendered to Israel and became their subjects. After that, the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites.

²¹ Morgan, G. Campbell "An Exposition of the Whole Bible" (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1959)



When faced with the possibility of a full-scale rebellion, David finally mobilized all the troops at his disposal and personally led his armies against the Arameans. The battle was decisive, and Israel won a great victory! However, there is an implicit assumption embedded in the text. When King David is doing what he is supposed to be doing, leading his nation into battle, Israel will decisively win. On the other hand, when King David is distracted with other things, the nation will suffer. This powerful point will foreshadow the catastrophic occurrences of the next chapter of David's life.

Has David become distracted?

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

There is a reoccurring theme in the Biblical text that will cast some light on the next stage of King David's life. When he desired to build a house for Yahweh, God told him he was anointed to fight the enemies of the Lord because he was a man of war. His hands were stained with blood, and he had no experience with peace.

Whenever David went to war, he was doing what Yahweh anointed him to do and he was always remarkably successful. On the other hand, when David delegated his responsibility to Joab, Israel was only marginally successful. There is a subtle silhouette being cast in the narrative, which is intended to foreshadow events, yet to come to pass.

David has been at war since the day he cut the head off of the giant Goliath. Maybe, he assumed he deserved some rest and relaxation. Nonetheless, David was at his best when he was doing what he was anointed and appointed to do as the King of Israel. He was a man of war as Yahweh said, who needed to remain on the battlefield to keep out of personal trouble. When David was fighting the enemies of Yahweh, he had no time to fight his own personal demons. On the other hand, when he had too much personal time on his hands, he discovered things in his character he did not know existed. There is an old saying that proved to be true in the next chapter of David's life. The devil surely finds work for idle hands.





- 1. How does David's harsh treatment of the Moabites challenge or confirm your perception of him? How would you reconcile this with his image as a man after God's own heart?**
- 2. How do we reconcile David's violent victories with the New Testament teachings about peace and love?**
- 3. How does David's treatment of Mephibosheth reflect the concept of grace and covenantal faithfulness in respect to Christ and His church?**
- 4. Do you see yourself in the story of Mephibosheth? How?**
- 5. The ambassadors of David suffered humiliation and rejection for their king. Should we expect to suffer similarly for our king Yahshua? Would you count it as a privilege to suffer for Christ?**

...in the SPRING,
at the time
when KINGS
go out to war...



KINGDOMLIFE

David and Bathsheba



11 In the spring of the year, when kings normally go out to war, David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight the Ammonites. They destroyed the Ammonite army and laid siege to the city of Rabbah. However, David stayed behind in Jerusalem.

The author of 2 Samuel already has a hidden criticism of King David's attitude embedded in the text. In a society where wars were not normally fought in the winter, because of cold

weather and rainy weather conditions, the spring was a time to mobilize your forces and prepare for battle. Building on the principle established in the last chapter, David's place is clearly to be leading his troops into combat. Unfortunately, David once again has other plans, instead of doing what he is supposed to be doing. As an alternative to being where he is supposed to be, David once again surrendered his rightful place of authority to Joab and his mighty men, to do his dirty work.

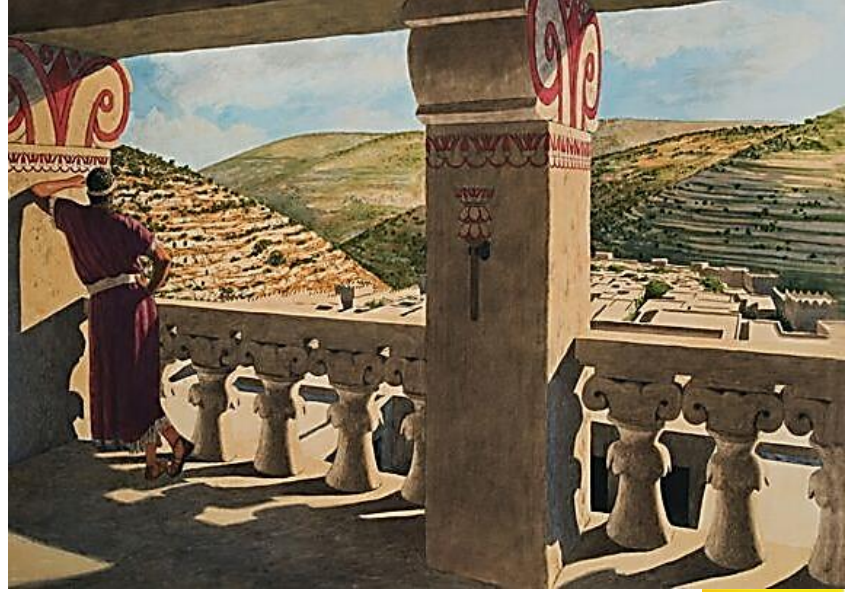
This was not considered unusual behavior for an ancient king. They were expected to remain in the palace and let their warriors fight their battles. However, David was supposed to be "unlike" all other ancient kings. He was not meant to become self-serving like King Saul. His heart was expected to be continuously pursuing after the presence of Yahweh. Since he was anointed the King of Judah, he dedicated his entire life to live for the glory of Yahweh and Israel. In Hebron, David never missed an opportunity to go to war and conquer the enemies of Yahweh. Now however, as the King of

WHEN KINGS GO TO WAR



Israel, something is slowly shifting in his heart. The severity of his past life is fading quickly, and he has become strangely accustomed to a more comfortable life, surrounded with many worldly pleasures appealing to the flesh.

² Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace.



The original text is filled with many implications unnoticed by the English Bible. The Hebrew word used for “walking” is better translated “pacing back and forth”. He is pacing back and forth like a lion in a cage at the zoo. Interestingly, he doesn’t know what to do with himself because he has never wasted time before.

As mentioned, David only found personal peace on the battlefield. Perhaps having too much time on his hands brought up uncomfortable memories about his painful childhood or the trauma of constantly dodging King Saul’s spear. While David is trying to relax, he seemed desperately uncomfortable like a lion longing for the hunt.

Regardless, this was the first time, since David was anointed by Samuel, that he was not conquering an enemy. Secondly, when the mighty men of Israel were comfortably camped in mud and blood surrounding an enemy city, David sleeps uncomfortably in a soft bed outside of the will of Yahweh.

As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath.



David’s sin was already manifesting in his heart, long before he saw the naked woman bathing in the heat of the afternoon sun. He was already uncomfortable, in the midst of all his personal comfort. That was exactly the problem. David was not designed for a comfortable and quiet life. He was Yahweh’s warrior, who was designed to be conquering the enemies of Israel. David was a natural born hunter, who



WARNING

WARNING

WARNING

WARNING

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WARNING

had a relentless desire to kill and eat. He lived on the edge of disaster all of his life. He was, therefore, unable to deal with the mundane predictability of normal civilian life. Sadly, the caged lion would find something to hunt that would poison him, rob his strength, and cost him more than he was willing to pay.

sin
IT TAKES YOU
WHERE YOU DONT WANT TO GO
IT KEEPS YOU
LONGER THAN YOU WANT TO STAY
IT COSTS YOU
MORE THAN YOU WANT TO PAY

Is it wrong to look?

The Story
BEHIND
 The Story

Looking was not the primary issue. Our eyes need to continually bounce off things of interest. The sight of a naked woman bathing outside was not unusual to the time or the culture. They did not have indoor plumbing and the rooftop was the most private place in the whole house. David had a high and exulted position, a position where Yahweh placed him. Overlooking all the homes of his mighty men below, David perhaps saw other women bathing, at different times in his life.



Sin is rooted in the heart, with the fruit manifesting in the eyes. When we are not satisfied with what God has given us and where God has placed us in life, we are tempted to focus on what we don't have instead of what we already have. Lust comes from a place of ungratefulness where we desire more than God has allowed us for this present season. David was not tempted by looking at a naked woman, he was tempted by the challenge of conquering someone who likely rejected his advances. He was tempted by the thrill of capturing something that didn't belong to him. The forbidden nature of Bathsheba made David want her even more, because he knew he could not have her, even though he was the king.

Many Biblical commentators, who are usually always men, blame Bathsheba for some kind of moral indiscretion. Similarly, to how Muslim men blame sexual temptation on uncovered women, men often tend to think attractive

DISTRACTED

DISTRACTED

Rejection

women are the cause of their lust. Consequently, David was not looking for a woman, nor was he really looking for sexual gratification. He had at least 6 to 8 wives, and an unknown number of concubines at his disposal. If he wanted to get his freak on, he could have had a freak fest! But what David truly longed for was an obstacle to conquer, a challenge to overcome, and something to do with the abundance of his time. He was a warrior after all, looking for something/someone to conquer.



OVERCOME The **SPIRIT** Of **REJECTION**

This was a giant that followed David from Bethlehem. David always had bonding issues deeply rooted in the rejection he suffered as a child. Furthermore, the trauma of this rejection was reinforced by his horrible relationship with King Saul. Aside from his friendship with Jonathan, David doesn't seem very close to anyone, especially his wives. Perhaps Saul's daughter Merab was the only woman David ever really desired. The rest he collected like trophies to be paraded around like Goliath's head after a

heroic battle. As illustrated in his relationship with Saul's second daughter Michal, David is not primarily motivated by sexual passion, but by power and control when it comes to women. This is a common problem with men who have no legitimate father figure, who never learn how to be married or have a family. David had a wonderful relationship with God, but he still had some hidden character flaws that the enemy of his soul waited for the perfect time to expose. When He was in the mud and the blood of the battlefield, his inner giants were manageable, because warfare kept him focused. However, when David was left alone with himself his unconquered giants resurfaced, especially when he was confronted with rejection once again.



Demon of Rejection



The Lesson Of Distraction



King David understood his assignment from the Lord but became momentarily distracted. He was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, doing the wrong thing! This temporary lapse in judgment had powerful and long-lasting consequences, that David could not have possibly imagined. He certainly



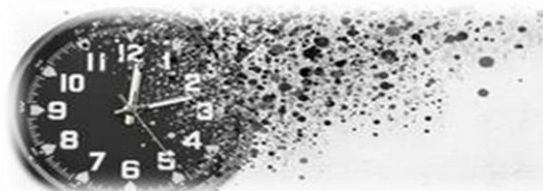
What you do in the dark comes to light

did not plan for Bathsheba to become pregnant. All he wanted was to exercise power over her, for a brief instant of time. He was perfectly happy to have her reunited with her faithful husband Uriah. For David, it was supposed to be nothing more than a forbidden sexual adventure but he became entangled in a web of lies that got tighter and tighter, the more he tried to escape. The more he tried to keep his dirty little secret concealed, was the deeper he descended into a pit of self deception. A brief distraction from the purposes of God, exploded into a sequence of events that would forever change the course of David's life. The Lord had promised him peace, but the consequences of this fatal decision would bring strife and confusion into his family and sow the seeds of rebellion in his kingdom.

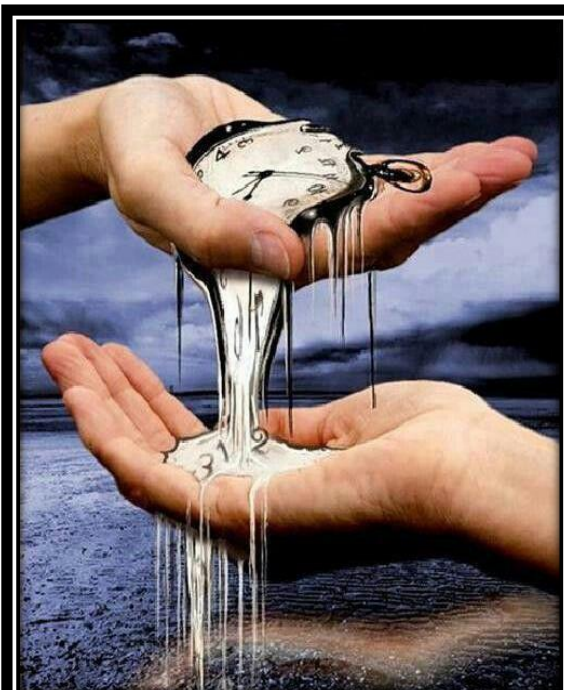
As developing leaders in the Kingdom of God, we must avoid the unnecessary distractions that change the trajectory of our focus. King David lost focus and thus, lost his purpose. When he should have been leading and discipling his mighty men, he was home sleeping with the wife of one of his most dedicated disciples.

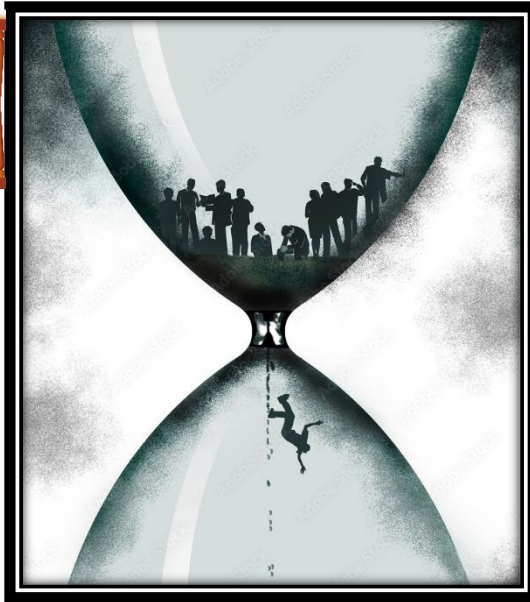
Likewise, Paul warned believers not to get "caught up", with sin and what he called the "affairs of life". King David was caught up in a sexual affair, but distraction does not have to be sinful to be dangerous. It's possible for a believer to be overly distracted by good things as well. Family, promotion, and prosperity can all become distractions from the purposes of God in the life of the believer if we lose our focus. Paul said...

³ Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ Soldiers don't get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them. ⁵ And athletes



DISTRACTED





cannot win the prize unless they follow the rules. ⁶ And hardworking farmers should be the first to enjoy the fruit of their labor. ⁷ Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand all these things. (2 Timothy 2)



Good things in themselves are not sinful until they become distractions. When good things become more important to us than God things, they are no longer objectively or morally good, because they lead the believer into idolatry. Even if your idol is your family, career, marriage, or ministry, it's sinful to love anything more than God. Moreover, it's also a sin to waste valuable time, as it is the most important thing you have, because it's always running out!



²⁹ But let me say this, dear brothers and sisters: The time that remains is very short. So from now on, those with wives should not focus only on their marriage. ³⁰ Those who weep or who rejoice or who buy things should not be absorbed by their weeping or their joy or their possessions. ³¹ Those who use the things of the world should not become attached to them. For this world as we know it will soon pass away. (Corinthians 7)



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."



If David simply wanted to find out more about this mysterious woman, he did not cross the line by just inquiring who this stunning woman was. Feasibly, if she was single, he could have married her or made her a concubine. In ancient near-eastern, culture, you could not turn down the request of the king. However, after clearly hearing who this woman was, the discussion should have stopped immediately! David should have immediately packed up his things and gone off to war.

SUPER



BAD IDEA



After asking who this “bombshell” of a woman was, David made aware of three strikes against ever speaking with this woman. From the beginning, he learned that she came from a politically powerful, upper-class family. *First, her father was Eliam, one of David’s Mighty Men. Second, her grandfather was Ahithophel — one of David’s chief wisest and most experienced counselors.*²² Finally, as if this could be even more wrong, her loving and devoted husband was one of David’s most dedicated disciples. Uriah was a convert to Judaism, who was a core member of his mighty men.



This whole situation was a car wreck waiting to happen. In sinning against God, David would also offend the 3 very important and powerful men who served him faithfully. What would David do in this tricky situation? Would he flee from sexual temptation like Joseph? Or would he fall into sexual sin and destroy his destiny like Samson?

Sin’s Slippery Slope



⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her;

As noted, David had already compromised his heart by backsliding from his commitment to lead the Lord’s armies to victory. *“As I think of what happened, of this I am sure, that it did not happen all at once. This matter of Bathsheba was simply the climax of something that had been going on in his life for twenty years.”*²³

Once one starts down a slippery slope, it’s not long before one falls. At this point, David deliberately runs 3 bright red stop signs and continues to keep going with reckless abandon. Sin usually manifests one step at a time. At this point, perhaps David deceived himself into thinking he just wanted to talk to her. But like a moth to a flame, David loved a chase too much to simply let this one go.



²² David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 11

²³ Redpath, Alan "The Making of a Man of God: Studies in the Life of David" (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1962)

MOTH TO A FLAME



and when she came to the palace, he slept with her.

Was it rape or seduction?

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

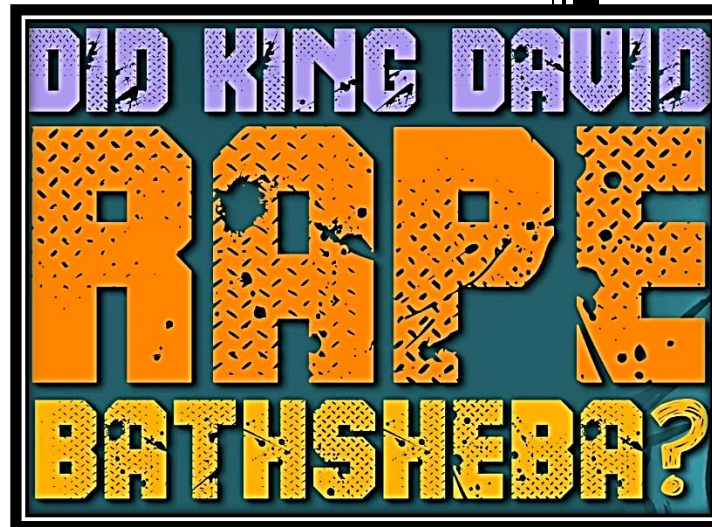
Many Bible scholars view Bathsheba with great suspicion. Some even go as far as to assert that she seduced David into sexual sin, by intentionally bathing naked, as if she should have been bathing with her clothes on. Other commentaries say Bathsheba knew when David would be roaming his rooftop balcony and deliberately planned her bath so she could be seen.

When the man who sinned so greatly is King David, it's hard not to try to defend his character to some degree, especially if you are a man. Historically, most bible commentaries were authored by men, so it not surprising that many have come to such biased conclusions.

A few scholars highlight that the text does not say that Bathsheba put up forceful resistance or screamed out "rape!" Therefore, because she did not stop it, she must have enjoyed herself.

In the expression he took her, and she came to him there is no intimation whatever that David brought Bathsheba into his palace through craft or violence, but rather that she came at his request without any hesitation, and offered no resistance to his desires. Consequently, Bathsheba is not to be regarded as free from blame.²⁴

First of all, we must remember there was a colossal power difference between an ancient Hebrew woman and powerful king like David. We can not read our own context into this text. It's true the bible did not say she resisted or screamed, but who in the king's palace would come to the rescue of a mere woman? Was she supposed to call the police? Could you even report the king to the police?

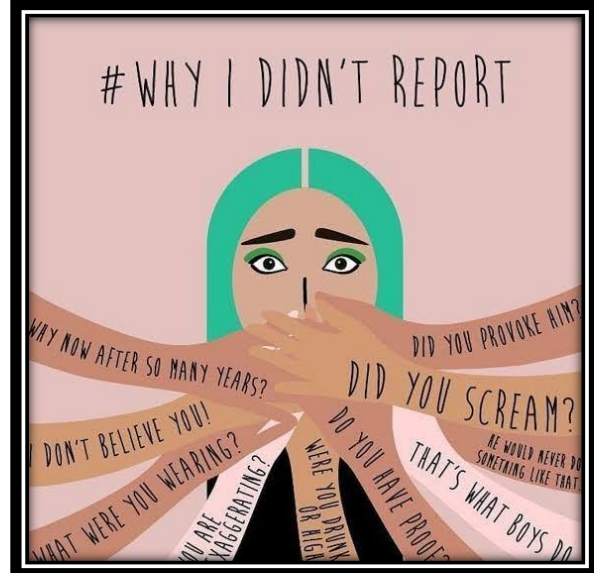


²⁴ Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. "2 Samuel: Commentary on the Old Testament" Vol. 2 (Joshua-2 Samuel) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984)





Assuming Bathsheba was partially responsible for the rape is sheer foolishness and obviously an attempt to blame the victim. How was she supposed to disobey a direct order from the King of Israel to come to his palace?



Secondly, if she did resist, what good would it do? Powerful men know how to surround themselves with powerful people who will be absolutely loyal, regardless of what they do. Money and power can easily buy your loyalty. What usually happens when high ranking politicians are accused of rape and sexual assault? Thirdly, if we said today that a woman was raped because she wore a short skirt, the fact that a woman was raped, does not change because of where she was or what she was wearing. Lastly, there is evidence embedded in the text that support the assertion that David forcefully raped Bathsheba. This was also conformed by the words of the Prophet Nathan and the resulting judgment that followed David's family line.

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 David a message, saying, "I'm pregnant."

In still another menacing sign of a coming storm, the author of 2 Samuel indicated specifically what type of bath she was having that afternoon. The Bible did not say how long it took for David to arrange their private encounter, but the text undoubtedly stated, she had just completed her menstrual period. David obviously did not use a condom, because they were not invented yet and Bathsheba was not on birth control, because the "pill" was also not invented.

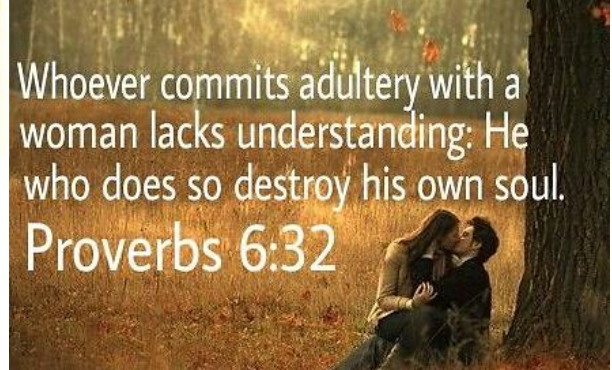
⁶ Then David sent word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent him to David.

Both David and Bathsheba had a common problem. Her message "involved an appeal to him to take the necessary steps to avert the evil consequences of the sin, inasmuch as the law required that both





Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding: He who does so destroy his own soul.
Proverbs 6:32



*the adulterer and adulteress should be put to death.*²⁵ Obviously, David understood the consequences of what he did, but now he simply went into protection mode. Like many leaders in a similar position, David wanted to protect the reputation of the monarchy instead of taking responsibility for his actions and publicly confessing his sin.



Proverb
of the day

Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?
 Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?
 So is he who sleeps with another man's wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.
 Proverbs 6: 27-29

When spiritual leaders sin, they often feel they have to protect something greater than themselves. This motivated David to cover up his sin and not completely repent. Although he was sorry Bathsheba was pregnant, he had not fully comprehended his great sin towards God. While David was just trying to move on with the business of ruling the Kingdom, Yahweh will not let this slip.

*³ When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long.
⁴ Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. (Psalm 52)*

The Psalm indicated that after David sinned, he was not himself, nor was he thinking straight. Nevertheless, he assumed he could fix everything if Uriah simply came home on "shore leave". After being at war for such a long time, he would surely have sex with his "bombshell" wife, the moment he was alone. Naturally, he would also assume he was the father of David's bastard child. It's interesting how this generational sin manifested down the family line. If David was also a bastard child, he would surely understand the seriousness of this sexual sin.

Why did Uriah not have sex with Bathsheba?



While David's honor is declining rapidly, Uriah is a man of discipline, and virtue. He learned how to become a noble warrior, following David's example. Ironically, one of David's traditions was that sexual gratification during times of warfare was strictly forbidden. He believed it weakened their will to fight and distracted his soldiers from their duty. When the priest offered David holy bread, he said they could eat it only

²⁵ Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. "2 Samuel: Commentary on the Old Testament" Vol. 2 (Joshua-2 Samuel) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984)

²⁷ Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?
 Proverbs 6:27 (KJV)





if they were not sexually unclean. David proudly replied, men at war do not engage in such carnal distractions.

4 "We don't have any regular bread," the priest replied. "But there is the holy bread, which you can have if your young men have not slept with any women recently." 5 "Don't worry," David replied. "I never allow my men to be with women when we are on a campaign. And since they stay clean even on ordinary trips, how much more on this one!" (1 Samuel 21)

For Uriah, spring was a season of warfare, when brave men died in service of their God and their king. How could he be home having sex in his own warm bed, when his best friends were sleeping in cold mud and blood on the front lines? This was a dishonorable act to a committed soldier of Yahweh. A warrior was called to a lifestyle of discipline and self-denial.

No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.

2 Timothy 2:4 NIV



URIAH THE HITTITE

2 SAMUEL II



7 When Uriah arrived, David asked him how Joab and the army were getting along and how the war was progressing. 8 Then he told Uriah, "Go on home and relax." David even sent a gift to Uriah after he had left the palace. 9 But Uriah didn't go home. He slept that night at the palace entrance with the king's palace guard.

It's highly unlikely that Uriah had any suspicion about King David. He idolized his master and relished the chance to be in his "glorious" presence. As long as he was stationed in Jerusalem, he would guard his king,

the faithful shepherd of Israel.

10 When David heard that Uriah had not gone home, he summoned him and asked, "What's the matter? Why didn't you go home last night after being away for so long?"

In another attempt to manipulate his noble disciple, David inquired "why did

you not go home to sleep in your warm bed, with your hot wife"? However, Uriah's answer subconsciously enflamed the anger of David. Similar to what happened with



his own brother Eliab, the words of a brave man makes a coward burn with rage.

¹¹ Uriah replied, "The Ark and the armies of Israel and Judah are living in tents, and Joab and my master's men are camping in the open fields. How could I go home to wine and dine and sleep with my wife? I swear that I would never do such a thing."

These words stabbed David in the heart deeper than Goliath's sword could ever. Remember, David wanted to build a house for the Lord because he was troubled by the amount of wealth and comfort he was now enjoying. David lived in an extravagant place, but the Ark of the Lord still occupied a humble tent.

Additionally, David's mighty men were all camped in the open field serving the Lord. Uriah asked David if anyone could be so dishonorable as to be having sex in the comfort of a warm bed when authentically brave and dedicated men, were out dying for the Lord? To add insult to injury, Uriah openly stated "I could never be so dishonorable"!

¹² "Well, stay here today," David told him, "and tomorrow you may return to the army." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ Then David invited him to dinner and got him drunk.

In a last-ditch attempt, David probably remembered the story of his dishonorable ancestor Lot and how he was seduced into having sex with his own daughters because of drunkenness. Thus, in another act of amazing hypocrisy, David does what seemed to be good, with an evil intention. According to the plan, the two friends drank, sang, and celebrated as they spoke of their honorable service to God. Treachery like this was not seen in Israel since the days King Saul tried to eliminate his faithful servant, David.



He did not go home...

By the end of the party, Uriah was completely intoxicated and headed off into the night.

But even then he couldn't get Uriah to go home to his wife. Again he slept at the palace entrance with the king's palace guard.

Even in a drunken state, Uriah spent the night guarding the king's door, to protect his master from any potential enemies.

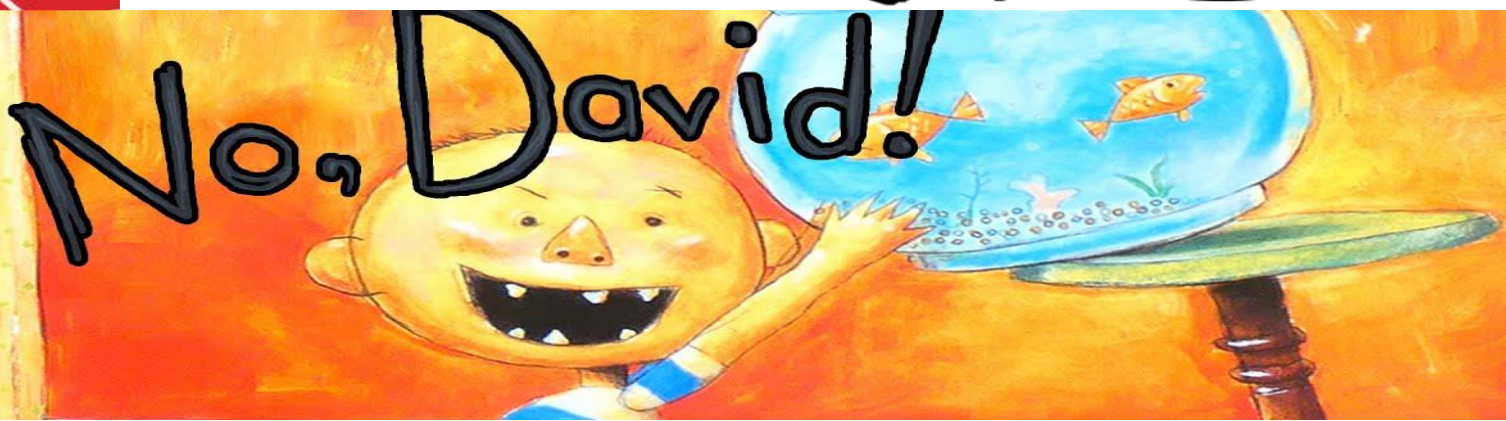
David Arranges for Uriah's Death

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

This was surely the most dishonorable moment of King David's life. When Saul attempted to murder David with the sword of the Philistines, David was powerless to disobey a direct order from his king. He knew Saul was out to kill him but obeyed his reckless orders anyway. Similarly, Uriah and several other brave warriors, were coldheartedly set up to die in battle, in a last-ditch effort to cover David's sexual sin.



PLEASE



LIKE SHEEP TO THE SLAUGHTER

Imagine, King David, the shepherd of Israel, murdering his own mighty men, who he personally disciplined into heroic warriors. These innocent men, like sheep to the slaughter, were needlessly sacrificed for the purpose of covering up David's dishonor.

David placed the execution order in Uriah's own hand

By placing the execution order directly into Uriah's care, David was absolutely certain Uriah would not open it. Absurdly, Uriah the Hittite was a man of flawless honor, while David, the man after God's own heart, has been reduced to cowardly murderer. *This was the sum of treachery and villainy. He made this most noble man the carrier of letters which prescribed the mode in which he was to be murdered.*²⁶ Even at the height of King Saul's deceitfulness, he was not as cold-hearted as King David was at this moment. Is this what it means to become the King of Israel? Is it the nature of power that corrupts good men?

18 Then Joab sent a battle report to David. 19 He told his messenger, "Report all the news of the battle to the king. 20 But he might get angry and ask, 'Why did the troops go so close to the city? Didn't they know there would be shooting from the walls? 21 Wasn't Abimelech son of Gideon killed at Thebez by a woman who threw a millstone down on him from the wall? Why would you get so close to the wall?' Then tell him, 'Uriah the Hittite was killed, too.'"

Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

- Lord Acton

How did Uriah die?

The biblical text gives us all the details of Uriah's tragic execution. Joab ordered a company of men to charge the walls of a well defended city. The brave men who fearlessly charged the walls were expecting the support of additional reinforcements, who were supposed to bring ladders to climb to the top. Uriah and his company of brave soldiers charged the wall and looked around for the expected reinforcements.

But they never came. The company of men were left defenceless at the base of the stone wall, as they were showered with arrows and a hailstorm of falling rocks. They were completely defenceless and led to their deaths as sheep to the slaughter.

²⁶ Clarke, Adam "Clarke's Commentary: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with a Commentary and Critical Notes" Volume 2 (Joshua-Esther) (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1827)

The messenger was afraid to bring this horrific news to King David because the army of Israel lost many brave and mighty soldiers for nothing on that disastrous day. Normally, the commander in charge would be executed for such foolish strategy. Yet, Joab is strangely confident about sending the letter because he knows the king will be secretly overjoyed.



22 So the messenger went to Jerusalem and gave a complete report to David. 23 "The enemy came out against us in the open fields," he said. "And as we chased them back to the city gate, 24 the archers on the wall shot arrows at us. Some of the king's men were killed, including Uriah the Hittite."

25 "Well, tell Joab not to be discouraged," David said. "The sword devours this one today and that one tomorrow! Fight harder next time, and conquer the city!"

These final words are quite chilling considering the faithfulness of his servant Uriah. Did becoming the king make David into the same type of person King Saul became? Was there any hope for the redemption of King David? Would he end up like Saul, tormented and insane because of his own personal guilt and spiritual rebellion?

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

It's highly debated by many Biblical scholars if Bathsheba sincerely mourned for the death of her husband. Nevertheless, she obviously felt extremely guilty about how her marriage to Uriah ended. *We have no reason to believe that Bathsheba knew that David arranged the death of her husband. It is likely that David concealed all this from Bathsheba. At the same time, she was partly relieved to hear of her husband's death.*²⁷ Furthermore, David was so morally lost at this moment that he "played the God card" and convinced the grieving Bathsheba, that this was the will of Yahweh all along. Perhaps he said, "Yahweh knew Uriah was destined to die and did not want you to be alone, so God brought us together so we could have a child"!

²⁷ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 11

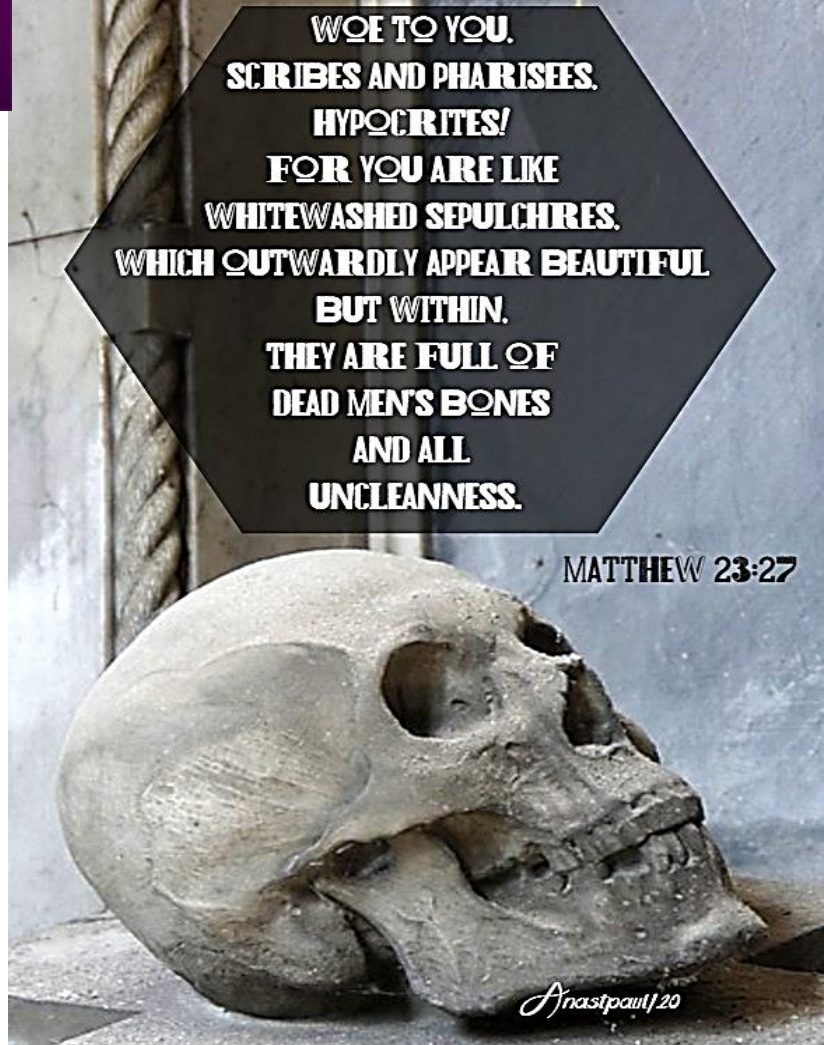


27 When the period of mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to the palace, and she became one of his wives. Then she gave birth to a son. But the Lord was displeased with what David had done.

King David learned hypocrisy well from his mentor Saul. He would not waste this golden opportunity to look good before all the people of Israel. *David is sort of a hero now, in the eyes of the people. He has taken into his harem, the poor, pregnant wife, the widow of one of his fallen captains, so that the people say, "My look at the way he stands behind his men! He takes care of their widows when they are killed in battle. My what a marvelous king!"*²⁸

**WOE TO YOU,
SCRIBES AND PHARISEES,
HYPOCRITES!
FOR YOU ARE LIKE
WHITEWASHED SEPULCHRES,
WHICH OUTWARDLY APPEAR BEAUTIFUL
BUT WITHIN,
THEY ARE FULL OF
DEAD MEN'S BONES
AND ALL
UNCLEANNES.**

MATTHEW 23:27



Anastpaul/20

**WOE TO YOU,
TEACHERS OF THE LAW AND PHARISEES, YOU HYPOCRITES!
YOU TRAVEL OVER LAND AND SEA
TO WIN A SINGLE CONVERT,
AND WHEN YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED,
YOU MAKE THEM TWICE AS MUCH
A CHILD OF HELL AS YOU ARE.**

MATTHEW 23:15

²⁸ Smith, R. Payne "2 Samuel: The Pulpit Commentary" Volume 4 (Ruth-2 Samuel) (McLean, Virginia: MacDonald Publishing, 1985)



- 1. Why do you think David stayed in Jerusalem instead of leading his army into battle as was customary for kings? What does this say about the dangers of comfort and complacency?**
- 2. Did King David really rape Bathsheba, or did she have a part to play in this situation?**
- 3. How does this chapter change your view of David? Can a man after God's own heart also be a rapist?**
- 4. How does David's sin remind us that even the most devoted followers of God are susceptible to temptation and moral failure?**
- 5. David's attempts to cover his sin led to further wrongdoing. Discuss a time when you've seen or experienced this "snowball effect" of sin.**

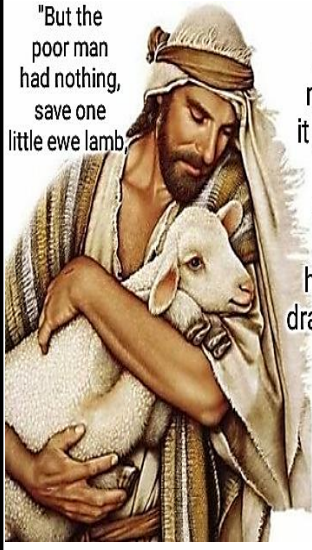
Nathan Rebukes David

12 So the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to tell David this story:

From an outside perspective, everything is going according to plan. On the inside, David is a shell of his former self. At this point, David was so unresponsive to his own conscience that the Lord had to send His Word through the voice of Nathan the prophet. Nathan could not completely trust David's reaction if he confronted him directly. David was in such an unpredictable state of mind, Nathan was unsure of how he would respond. Would King David murder Nathan as well to hide his horrible sin? Therefore, the wise prophet decided to entertain the king with a parable about something he heard happened in the kingdom.



"But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb,



which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and his children; it did eat of his own food, and drank of his own cup, and was unto him as a daughter."
- 2 Samuel 12:3

"There were two men in a certain town. One was rich, and one was poor. ² The rich man owned a great many sheep and cattle. ³ The poor man owned nothing but one little lamb he had bought. He raised that little lamb, and it grew up with his children. It ate from the man's own plate and drank from his cup. He cuddled it in his arms like a baby daughter. ⁴ One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. But instead of killing an animal from his own flock or herd, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and prepared it for his guest."

This parable enraged David from the very beginning. He immediately related to the poor, powerless, victim, who was callously abused by the rich and powerful bully. He understood what it was like to care for a "few sheep", when other rich and powerful people had more than they could manage.

To add insult to injury, the powerful rich man, stole the one lamb the poor man cuddled in his arms at night. Nathan's emphasis of the word "stole" carried the implication of rape. When something is stolen, it is taken by force or taken without permission. The rich man had many lambs, but was so



YOU ARE THAT MAN!

greedy, he could not be satisfied until he had the “one and only” lamb the poor man loved and cherished. As Nathan continued this twisted tale, the righteous anger of King David flared into a burning flame of vengeance, until he shouted out in rage.

Nathan did not ask for a judicial judgment on the matter. He simply told a heartbreaking story to the king. Impulsively, David in his anger, passed judicial judgment anyway. Embarrassingly, we are often most hard on the sins we struggle with ourselves. David foolishly condemned his own sin, without the extension of grace or mercy and instantly demanded the death penalty for this honourless villain.

⁵ David was furious. “As surely as the Lord lives,” he vowed, “any man who would do such a thing deserves to die! ⁶ He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no pity.”

The man who did this horrific thing did deserve to die. But as the righteous judge of Israel, David knew the Law of Moses by heart and applied it to “others” quite well.

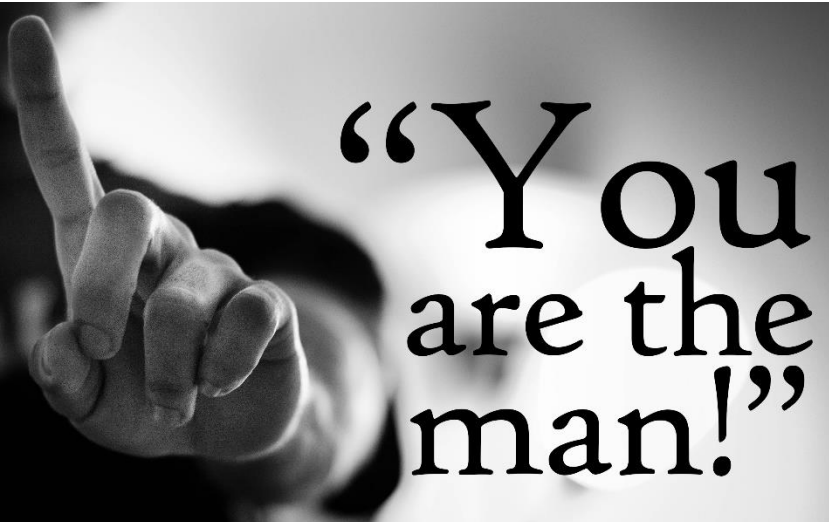
If someone steals an ox or sheep and then kills or sells it, the thief must pay back five oxen for each ox stolen, and four sheep for each sheep stolen. (Exodus 22:1)

Theft was first a sin against the Word of God. Secondly, it was a trespass against the entire community. Finally, it was also a crime against the individual. The greatest consequences of breaking the Law of God were not about if you got caught or not! It was about breaking Israel’s fellowship with Yahweh. When individuals sinned in the Old Testament, the entire community often suffered for the consequences of that one person’s

transgression. David was compelled to judge this thief, because his personal sin could have national consequence if he did not repent and restore the wronged individual.

⁷ Then Nathan said to David, “You are that man!”

Yahweh was extraordinarily kind to his servant David. After examining Nathan’s parable, line by line, the Word of the Lord was like a mirror



“You are the man!”

YOU ARE THAT MAN!

YOU ARE THAT MAN!

YOU ARE THAT MAN!

“How the mighty have fallen!”?

that allowed David to see a clear reflection of who he really had become. The man in the mirror enraged David. He was everything David learned to hate when he was a struggling young shepherd. He hated when the rich and the powerful families of Israel, oppressed and abused the poor, the weak and the helpless members of the society.

How did King David fall so far, so fast, without realizing it himself? This is often the trap of privilege, power, and prestige. Pride sinks into our hearts so slowly, that we fail to recognize how much we have been changed. When David finally passed righteous judgment upon himself, he realized the heart of God concerning the matter. Furthermore, David's own words and his own application of the Jewish law, forever stood in judgment against him. The prophet Nathan did not dare pass judgment upon the King of Israel. Like David, in his younger days, he refused to touch the Lord's anointed. Nevertheless, Nathan allowed the Lord's anointed, to pass judgment upon himself.

The Lord, the God of Israel, says: I anointed you king of Israel and saved you from the power of Saul. ⁸ I gave you your master's house and his wives and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much more. ⁹ Why, then, have you despised the word of the Lord and done this horrible deed?

With extraordinary wisdom, the Word of the Lord came to King David to publicly expose his secret sin. Surprisingly, Yahweh indicated that the root of David sin was not lustful sexual gratification. He was not looking for sex that day on his rooftop, but his internal restlessness was caused by something much deeper and far more hidden. The root of the cancer that quickly consumed his morality was actually a lingering feeling of ungratefulness. David had become ungrateful despite all his blessings and therefore looked for something more, something forbidden, something the Lord had not given him. His was the same temptation that caused Adam and Eve to forfeit paradise and to embrace pain.

David always suffered from a nagging sense of rejection. It was the unconquered giant that secretly followed him since Bethlehem. He constantly medicated this lingering feeling of rejection with military accomplishments and the consumption of sexual pleasure. David only found momentary acceptance when he conquered giants and conquered women.



2 Samuel 12:10 ASV

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.



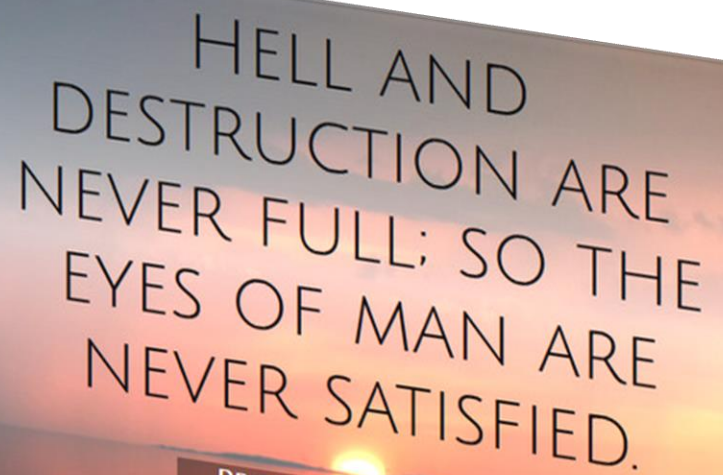
Consequently, when left alone for an extended period of time, the giant that David failed to kill in Bethlehem returned with fierce vengeance.

Sexual sin is not always rooted in lust, especially when one already has a wife. Sexual sin is often rooted in ungratefulness. Sexual sin can never be satisfied, because the object of our lust will never quench the thirst. Lust of any kind can never be satisfied because lust is always empowered by a spirit of ungratefulness.

As long as we are ungrateful for what the Lord has given us, we can never have the peace and stability that we should enjoy as believers. The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and our insatiable desire to feed our pride can never be satisfied. It is a vast, bottomless pit that leads its victim into total destruction.

For you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and stolen his wife. ¹⁰ From this time on, your family will live by the sword because you have despised me by taking Uriah's wife to be your own.

The Word of the Lord is clear and concise concerning David's accountability in this matter. Nothing is said about the tempting nakedness of Bathsheba or the fact that she did not scream rape. Yahweh told David that he personally held the sword that killed Uriah, with the hand of the Amorites. Moreover, David was the man who forcefully broke into the home of Uriah and stole his wife from his very arms. The gravity of this tremendous sin would have tremendous consequences, not only in the lifetime of David, but also in his family line in generations to come. The sin of David would not simply be a passing matter to be endured by David alone. It would unfortunately create a legacy in his family line because as David mentioned, the Law of God demanded a fourfold restitution for the theft of the one stolen sheep.



HELL AND
DESTRUCTION ARE
NEVER FULL; SO THE
EYES OF MAN ARE
NEVER SATISFIED.

PROVERBS 27:20 KJV

БРОЛЕВЪСЪ СЪСО КЪЛ



DANGERS OF
InGratitude

Malachi 2:2

Then David said to Nathan,
"I have sinned against the Lord."

Then David said to Nathan,
"I have sinned against the Lord."

11 "This is what the Lord says: Because of what you have done, I will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man before your very eyes, and he will go to bed with them in public view. 12 You did it secretly, but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel."

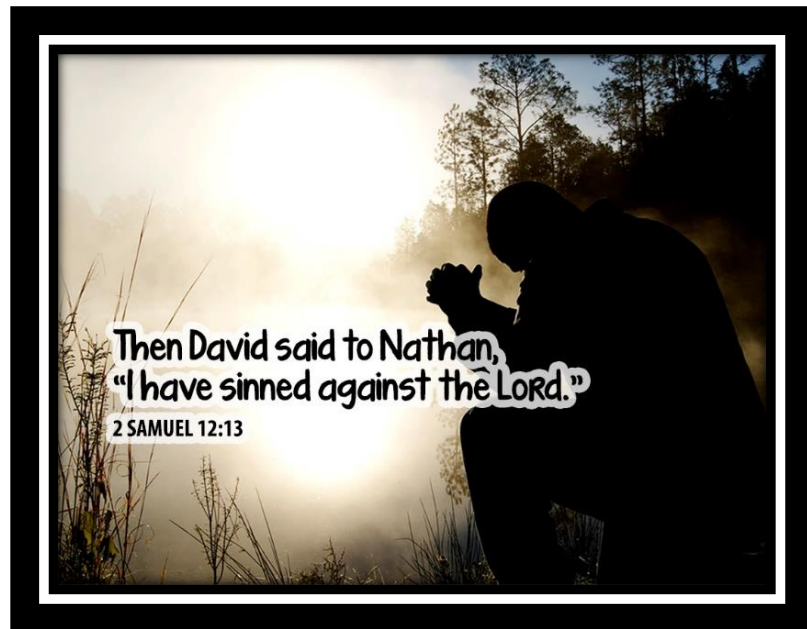
In yet another burning indication of guilt. Yahweh said that He will do publicly to David, what David did privately to Uriah. Just as David raped Uriah's wife and she was powerless to stop him, the wives of King David will be raped publicly. Bathsheba may have cried silently, but David's wives will scream loudly. For what David did secretly behind closed doors, someone else will do publicly. In the future, an unknown villain will rape David's wives visibly, for all of Israel to see. This prophetic judgment seemed impossible at the time; how could such a tragic and graphic thing happen to the most powerful monarch in the region? Who could possibly be strong enough and bold enough, to rape the wives of the King of Israel? Could this judgment ever come to pass?

David Confesses His Guilt

13 Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."

The words are very few, but that is a good sign of a thoroughly broken spirit. There is no excuse, no hiding, no concealment of the sin. There is no searching for a loophole, no pretext put forward, no human weakness pleaded. He acknowledged his guilt openly, candidly and without any denial of truth²⁹

Nathan replied, "Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin. 14 Nevertheless, because you have shown utter contempt for the word of the Lord by doing this, your child will die."



Then David said to Nathan,
"I have sinned against the Lord."

²⁹ Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. "2 Samuel: Commentary on the Old Testament" Vol. 2 (Joshua-2 Samuel) (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1984)

Then David said to Nathan,
"I have sinned against the Lord."

Create in me

The graciousness of Yahweh was overwhelming in this situation. In light of the grievous depth of David's sin, the Lord instantly forgave him. The fact that the Lord spared the life of His beloved son David, was evidence enough that he was truly forgiven, the moment he repented. Nevertheless, the forgiveness of sin, does not necessarily mean we also have the removal of the consequences. At the moment of his confession, David was completely righteous, and his slate was wiped clean in the eyes of Yahweh. On the other hand, David had opened many doors and had given the enemies of his soul opportunities to torment his life.

The initial consequence that resulted from David's sin, was that the first of his sheep, would be 'stolen' as retribution. His illegitimate child with Bathsheba would get sick and die as a result of his transgression.

The fiery judgment which followed David all the days of his life was part of the Lord's refining process. David did not do well surrounded by comfort, without having enemies to fight. The Lord would use the rest of David's life to purge him of ungratefulness and sexual sin. From this moment onward, we hear nothing more about King David struggling with selfishness and lust. Instead, for the rest of his natural life, he would survive one tragedy after another. His family life would be a source constant torment to him, because of reoccurring sexual sin manifesting in his family line.

¹⁵ After Nathan returned to his home, the Lord sent a deadly illness to the child of David and Uriah's wife. ¹⁶ David begged God to spare the child. He went without food and lay all night on the bare ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household pleaded with him to get up and eat with them, but he refused.



The text seems to clearly indicate that the private sin of David was made public. The fact that the author mentions the child was fathered by David with Uriah's wife, illustrated Yahweh did not recognize his marriage with Bathsheba as legitimate. Bathsheba would forever be called Uriah's wife, to remind David of his sin.

¹⁸ Then on the seventh day the child died. David's advisers were afraid to tell him. "He wouldn't listen to reason while the child was ill," they said. "What drastic thing will he do when we tell him the child is dead?"

a clean heart

a clean heart

Create in me

The biblical writers did not struggle to outline the implications of the Law of Moses. According to the Old Testament, the sins of the fathers were passed down to the generations that followed. Therefore, according to the Old Covenant, the initial consequence of David's sin was manifested in the death of his unborn child. We can assume this child passed directly into paradise, but David would spend the rest of his life in the hell he created specifically for himself.

19 When David saw them whispering, he realized what had happened. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

20 Then David got up from the ground, washed himself, put on lotions, and changed his clothes. He went to the Tabernacle and worshiped the Lord. After that, he returned to the palace and was served food and ate.

David's loyal inner circle were definitely worried for his emotional and spiritual well-being. He had gone through a horrific season of trial and testing. At this point, they were worried to tell David the truth about the death of his son. Their apparent nervousness indicated David's psychological instability might lead him to contemplate suicide. Nonetheless, David handled the news of his child's death remarkably well.

21 His advisers were amazed. "We don't understand you," they told him. "While the child was still living, you wept and refused to eat. But now that the child is dead, you have stopped your mourning and are eating again."

22 David replied, "I fasted and wept while the child was alive, for I said, 'Perhaps the Lord will be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But why should I fast when he is dead? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him one day, but he cannot return to me."

Even from an Old Testament perspective, David had a remarkable understanding of spiritual things. He mourned and fasted for his son, leaning on the amazing grace of Yahweh. He hoped, perhaps, Yahweh would change his mind and sympathetically withhold His righteous judgment. On the other hand, after his son died, there was no longer any need for praying and fasting. David knew he only lost his son temporarily. His child was gone to paradise, and David knew he would see him in the future. Although he grieved the fact, he would never again hold his son in this lifetime, he was



see you on
the other side

absolutely confident that he would see him again, when he also went to be with Abraham in Paradise, when his life journey was completed.

24 Then David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and slept with her. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and David named him Solomon. The Lord loved the child ²⁵ and sent word through Nathan the prophet that they should name him Jedidiah (which means "beloved of the Lord"), as the Lord had commanded.

The concluding paragraph in this twisted story makes absolutely no sense according to our human understanding of justice. After losing their first child as an act of righteous judgment, their second child was conceived in humility and repentance. This child would be the 'chosen' seed of David. Solomon would be beloved of the Lord, and he would be the prophesied son of David, chosen to build a Temple for Yahweh. Stunningly, a child that came from the womb of Uriah's stolen wife, would be counted worthy to be in the lineage of Christ the Messiah of Israel.

David Captures Rabbah

26 Meanwhile, Joab was fighting against Rabbah, the capital of Ammon, and he captured the royal fortifications. ²⁷ Joab sent messengers to tell David, "I have fought against Rabbah and captured its water supply. ²⁸ Now bring the rest of the army and capture the city. Otherwise, I will capture it and get credit for the victory."

David's tragic story ended exactly where it began. For a full year, the men of Israel struggled unsuccessfully to overcome the fortifications of Rabbah. Until David confessed his sin, Yahweh withheld victory from Israel. After his moral restoration, Joab reminded David where he should have been all along. If David went to war with his men in the springtime, the unnecessary pain which followed him for the rest of his life would have never happened. The trajectory of David's life would have been totally different, if only he went to war with his men on that dreadful spring day. But now, David would return to do what he was destined to do from the very beginning, he would lead Israel into victory as the warrior of Yahweh.

29 So David gathered the rest of the army and went to Rabbah, and he fought against it and captured it. ³⁰ David removed the crown from the king's head, and it was placed on his own head. The crown was made of gold and set with gems, and it weighed seventy-five

REPENTANCE

is the

pounds. David took a vast amount of plunder from the city. ³¹ He also made slaves of the people of Rabbah and forced them to labor with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and to work in the brick kilns. That is how he dealt with the people of all the Ammonite towns. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.

The Lesson Of Repentance



King David's ability to repent sincerely made him a completely different individual from King Saul. Saul was sorry because of the consequences of his action. David, on the other hand, grieved over his broken fellowship with God.

¹ *Have mercy on me, O God,
because of your unfailing love.
Because of your great compassion,
blot out the stain of my sins.*
² *Wash me clean from my guilt.*

Purify me from my sin.
³ *For I recognize my rebellion;
it haunts me day and night.*

When David was living in sin, he was tormented day and night because he knew this was not the lifestyle, he wanted for himself. He did not enjoy living in sin and he was completely miserable and depressed.

⁴ *Against you, and you alone, have I sinned;
I have done what is evil in your sight.
You will be proved right in what you say,
and your judgment against me is just.*
⁵ *For I was born a sinner—
yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.*
⁶ *But you desire honesty from the womb,
teaching me wisdom even there.*

Interesting, David says he was also conceived in sin. Some scholars assert that was a subtle confession that he was also an illegitimate child, the product of an affair Jessie had with another unnamed woman.

David clearly understood the sin he committed against both Uriah and Bathsheba, but he was far more broken because he shattered his intimate friendship with God. He also knew Yahweh was right in the judgment He

RIGHT RESPONSE

to our SIN

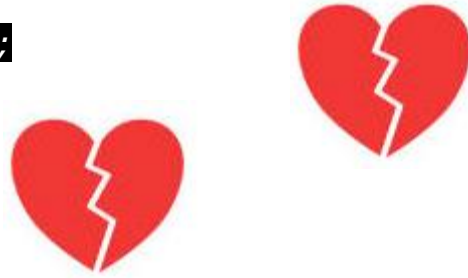


placed on David because of his transgression. He accepted the discipline he deserved with humility and reverence.

⁷ Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Oh, give me back my joy again;
you have broken me—
now let me rejoice.

⁹ Don't keep looking at my sins.
Remove the stain of my guilt.



¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Renew a loyal spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not banish me from your presence,
and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.

David saw what happened to Saul after the Spirit had departed from him. He was a shell of his former self and was tormented psychologically until he died. David was terrified he would suffer a similar outcome if he continued in his rebellion. To an extent, he was grateful to finally be exposed by the

Nathan, because he was able to publicly confess his sin and move on with his life.

¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.

¹³ Then I will teach your ways to rebels,
and they will return to you.

¹⁴ Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves;
then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness.

¹⁵ Unseal my lips, O Lord,
that my mouth may praise you.



¹⁶ You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.

¹⁷ The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

¹⁸ Look with favor on Zion and help her;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then you will be pleased with sacrifices offered in the right spirit—
with burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings.

Then bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar. (Psalm 51)



David offered the sacrifice that Yahweh desired. His heart was broken when he realized he was the wicked sheep stealer. The Word of the Lord was like a mirror and David clearly saw his own reflection for the first time. He hated the person he had become and desperately wanted to be washed clean and restored back into fellowship with God.

The Rape of Tamar

13 Now David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar. And Amnon, her half brother, fell desperately in love with her. ² Amnon became so obsessed with Tamar that he became ill. She was a virgin, and Amnon thought he could never have her.

The **apple** doesn't fall far from the **TREE**

While David was a hard man, who grew up facing many difficult circumstances, the generation that followed him were actually quite pitiful. His eldest son, Amnon, was a spoiled, rich brat. He was so obsessed with a perverted crush on his half sister, that he became physically/psychologically sick. He was so emotionally overwhelmed at the thought of never being able to fulfill his sexual desires with Tamar, that he fell into deep depression. Surprisingly, David did not train his own children as soldiers, because Amnon was at the age of military service. Perhaps, if he was on the battlefield fending for his own life, he would not have been so infatuated with his sister.

David was a strong man, acquainted with suffering, who faced many obstacles and trials during his childhood. Sadly, the generation that followed him were self-centred, immature children, consumed with their own selfish passions and desires.

³ But Amnon had a very crafty friend—his cousin Jonadab. He was the son of David's brother Shimea. ⁴ One day Jonadab said to Amnon, "What's the trouble? Why should the son of a king look so dejected morning after morning?" So Amnon told him, "I am in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." ⁵ "Well," Jonadab said, "I'll tell you what to do. Go back to bed

HARD TIMES CREATE STRONG MEN
STRONG MEN CREATE GOOD TIMES
GOOD TIMES CREATE WEAK MEN
WEAK MEN CREATE HARD TIMES

and pretend you are ill. When your father comes to see you, ask him to let Tamar come and prepare some food for you. Tell him you'll feel better if she prepares it as you watch and feeds you with her own hands."

Amnon was a wretched soul, who implicated his own father in the rape of his sister. King David should have never condoned such emotional weakness in his own children. He would have been better off beating the depression out of Amnon with a stick! However, David seemed to be strangely distant from whatever was happening in his own palace. Remarkably, David managed an entire nation with excellence, but failed to manage his own household with any deep and lasting sense of interest. Regardless, the fact that David gave Amnon permission to be alone in his room Tamar would haunt him in the years to come.

The rape of his own daughter, at the hands of his eldest son, is yet another indication of what happened secretly between David and Bathsheba. Yahweh said what David did in secret, others would do publicly. The fact that this twisted sexual sin manifested itself in David's first and eldest son is significant to the text. Sexual sin will run in the royal family line of King David, and it would only become worse in generations to follow.

⁶ So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. And when the king came to see him, Amnon asked him, "Please let my sister Tamar come and cook my favorite dish as I watch. Then I can eat it from her own hands." ⁷ So David agreed and sent Tamar to Amnon's house to prepare some food for him.

⁸ When Tamar arrived at Amnon's house, she went to the place where he was lying down so he could watch her mix some dough. Then she baked his favorite dish for him. ⁹ But when she set the serving tray before him, he refused to eat. "Everyone get out of here," Amnon told his servants. So they all left.

This situation is strangely similar to what has taken place previously in the text. Did King David invite Bathsheba over to the palace for an intimate conversation, only to dismiss his staff and send his trusted servants away? If Bathsheba screamed, was there anyone there to hear her cry? Likewise, Tamar is in a situation where she was also absolutely helpless and can do nothing to prevent what is about to happen.

Unlike the questionable situation with Bathsheba, the biblical commentaries will not suggest Tamar tempted Amnon by bathing naked in plain sight. She

NO means NO



would not be blamed for not resisting enough. There would be no victim shaming or victim blaming in this situation. Even if she screamed all night, there was nobody around to hear her cry.

¹⁰ Then he said to Tamar, "Now bring the food into my bedroom and feed it to me here." So Tamar took his favorite dish to him. ¹¹ But as she was feeding him, he grabbed her and demanded, "Come to bed with me, my darling sister."

¹² "No, my brother!" she cried. "Don't be foolish! Don't do this to me! Such wicked things aren't done in Israel. ¹³ Where could I go in my shame? And you will be called one of the greatest fools in Israel."

Tamar proved herself to be a wise and virtuous woman. At first, she tried to reason with her half brother, reminding him of the lasting consequences of this single foolish action. This single selfish choice will change the rest of their lives forever. She would be socially disgraced, treated like used merchandise, never to have an honorable marriage or a respected family of her own. Her name Tamar, which means "fruitful palm tree", would be cut down and disgraced permanently.

Again and again, she pleaded with Amnon not to destroy his life. As the eldest son of David, he was the crown prince of Israel, the first in line to wear the crown. This action would scar his reputation forever. Amnon means "faithful and stable". He proved to be the opposite of his name. He was emotionally weak, sexually insecure, and mentally unstable in his depressed condition.

"Please, just speak to the king about it, and he will let you marry me."


When reason failed, Tamar desperately tried her hand at deception. She indicated that she would be willing to marry Amnon, but this was simply a ploy to escape. Hebrew religious law strictly prohibits the intermarriage of half brothers and sisters. This was something that occasionally happened among the pagan nations, but it would be strictly forbidden in the royal household of Israel.

¹⁴ But Amnon wouldn't listen to her, and since he was stronger than she was, he raped her. ¹⁵ Then suddenly Amnon's love turned to

NO means NO


NO means NO

NO means NO




hate, and he hated her even more than he had loved her. "Get out of here!" he snarled at her.

In this case, chickens finally came home to roost. Although King David struggled with sexual temptation, his first-born son is dominated by lust. Although he emotionally deceived himself into believing he loved his sister, real love is impossible to demonstrate by rape. Love had nothing to do with what he wanted to satisfy. Tamar was forbidden fruit to Amnon, and this made him want her all the more. Was this how David felt when he understood Bathsheba was married to one of his mighty men?



Moreover, after his burning erotic desire was quenched and the emptiness set in. Amnon suddenly realized he jeopardized his entire future, for a moment of physical pleasure. Immediately, he blamed Tamar and accused her of being the source of his problem. Instantly, his love turned to hate, and his sensual passion turned to bitter resentment. He threw her out of his house like a bag of garbage sending her home in permanent shame and public disgrace.




¹⁶ "No, no!" Tamar cried. "Sending me away now is worse than what you've already done to me."


But Amnon wouldn't listen to her. ¹⁷ He shouted for his servant and demanded, "Throw this woman out, and lock the door behind her!"

¹⁸ So the servant put her out and locked the door behind her. She was wearing a long, beautiful robe, as was the custom in those days for the king's virgin daughters. ¹⁹ But now Tamar tore her robe and put ashes on her head. And then, with her face in her hands, she went away crying.

Her rape was bad enough, but the rejection that followed was even worse. She was stripped of everything, including her virginity. In her culture, she would never carry a high bridal price or be worthy of a noble prince. The garment she wore indicated she was a Royal Princess and chaste virgin. In a moment, she was stripped naked of everything that mattered to her. Therefore, she would spend the rest of her life in disgrace as one permanently soiled and covered in ashes.



²⁰ Her brother Absalom saw her and asked, "Is it true that Amnon has been with you? Well, my sister, keep quiet for now, since he's your brother. Don't you worry about it." So Tamar lived as a desolate woman in her brother Absalom's house.



LIKE Father LIKE Son

In stark contrast to Amnon, Absalom is David's most virtuous son. Of all of David's children, he is most like his father as he is an honorable and strong young man. He had royal blood on both sides of his family line. Moreover, Absalom was a warrior by nature, had a kingly personality and was incredibly good looking. He cared for his sister with loving compassion for the rest of her life, although she would never receive a bridal price. She would be forced to live in his house without children.

21 When King David heard what had happened, he was very angry. 22 And though Absalom never spoke to Amnon about this, he hated Amnon deeply because of what he had done to his sister.

The fact that King David knew about the rape of Absalom's baby sister and did nothing about it, caused him to boil with anger. Not only did David give his eldest son permission to summon Tamar to his house, but he also did nothing to avenge the rape of his own daughter. The Scripture said Absalom hated Amnon with a passion because of the seemingly unresponsive attitude of his father. This further infuriated Absalom because he viewed it as unjust favoritism.

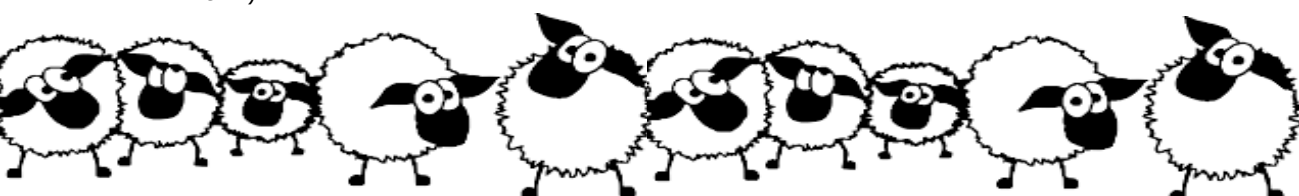
David's lack of connection with his own children, who were living in his own household, was absolutely shocking. Obviously, he had no practical understanding of what it meant to have a family. As a young man, raised among the few sheep, David knew nothing about living in a household or dealing with interpersonal family problems. David was a master on the battlefield, but a weak and confused father, in his own household. Perhaps he tried to avoid family problems, rather than face them. Likewise, he buried the rape of his daughter Tamar and never openly confronted the guilt of his oldest son. What David failed to do privately; Absalom will take into his own hands publicly.

Why did David do nothing?

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

*They say a man never hears his own voice till it comes back to him from the phonograph. Certainly, a man never sees the worst of himself until it reappears in his child.*³⁰ Biblical scholars have presented many reasons as to why David did nothing about the rape of his daughter Tamar. Some say according to Jewish law, there needed to be at least two witnesses to verify the crime. However, this is a weak and

³⁰ Meyer, F.B. "David: Shepherd, Psalmist, King" (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1977)



lifeless argument. The reason why King David did nothing about the rape in his own family, was because he believed he had lost the moral authority to make a judgment in this situation. How could he possibly judge his eldest son, for something he was guilty of doing himself? Perhaps he didn't even want to think about it anymore and hoped it would just disappear. As mentioned, the things we don't deal with tend to grow and follow us for the rest of our life. David should have taken responsibility and at least sent away Amnon to diffuse the situation with Absalom. By refusing to do anything David preserved his relationship with Amnon, but completely shattered his relationship with Absalom. Between his two sons, Amnon was a weakhearted, pathetic young man. On the other hand, Absalom was a strong, noble, and courageous young prince. Tragically, David forfeited the courage of his strongest son, to protect the contemptible character of his weakest son. This strategy would eventually backfire completely. In the course of time, David would lose both of his sons because of his indifference, and inability to control his own household.

The Lesson Of Inaction

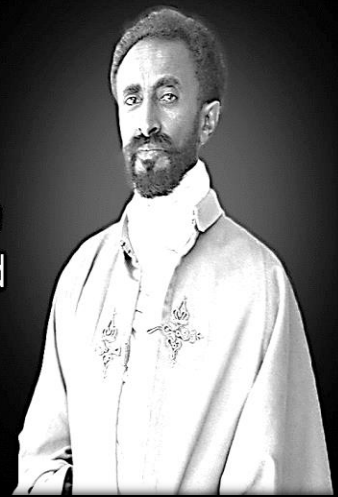
As developing leaders, we have already established that giants get bigger over time. What we fail to deal with immediately, becomes more difficult to confront, the longer we ignore the problem. David was unsure of what to do regarding the rape of Tamar, so he did the worst possible thing; nothing. As mentioned, David

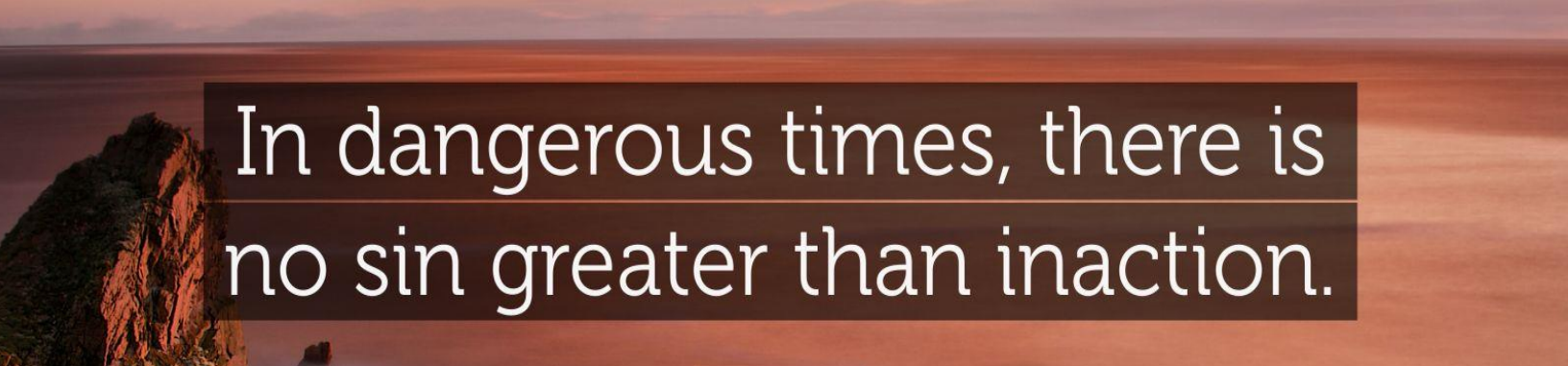
should have removed Amnon from the succession to the kingship of Israel and banished him from Israel. This would have settled Absalom's demands for justice to be carried out and made the stronger son the crowned prince. On the other hand, David did not want another sexual scandal circulating around the nation of Israel about the Royal Family.



Throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who could have acted; the indifference of those who should have known better; the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most; that has made it possible for evil to triumph.

– Haile Selassie





In dangerous times, there is
no sin greater than inaction.

Another disgrace was bad for his image as king, because how could he rule an empire if he could not maintain order in his own household?

David lost his moral authority in his own household because he was still embarrassed of his own sinful past. David needed to forget his past, just as God had forgiven him and protect his own children. His own failure to act opened the door to demonic emotion as Absalom felt rejected when he assumed David favored Amnon. In reality, David favored David in this matter and did what was solely in his own best interest. He was not thinking about his family, he was consumed with the consequences to the crown of Israel.

If David only knew that one rape would cost him the lives of two of his sons, he would have taken the matter more seriously. But as David did in the past, like when Joab murdered Abner in cold blood, he buried the situation and hoped it would simply go away. Inaction is an action that always makes thing worse over time. For years David assumed things had calmed down, while Absalom patiently plotted the perfect revenge, until the situation went from bad to worse.

As leaders, we must be willing to make the hard calls when needed to protect the interest of others. Sometimes, we just want to avoid another church scandal, but this makes the situation worse in the process. Moreover, in our effort to hide things, the situation often becomes inflamed and out of control when the truth is revealed.

— **EVIL** PREVAILS —
WHEN GOOD MEN
DO NOTHING —



- 1. How do you see David's response to his sin as a model of repentance in your own life?**
- 2. Why do you think God chose to punish David so harshly? Was the judgment of four dead children, for one rape and one murdered man, fair in your eyes?**
- 3. Yahweh forgave David for his sins, but he still suffered the consequences of his transgression for the rest of his life. How can we come to terms with this fact?**
- 4. Reflect on Amnon's destructive desire towards Tamar compared to David's destructive desire towards Bathsheba. Were the situations similar or different?**
- 5. Why do you think King David did not take any action against Amnon? How might David's own past sin with Bathsheba affect his ability to administer justice in this situation?**

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Absalom's Revenge on Amnon

²³ Two years later, when Absalom's sheep were being sheared at Baal-hazor near Ephraim, Absalom invited all the king's sons to come to a feast. ²⁴ He went to the king and said, "My sheep-shearers are now at work. Would the king and his servants please come to celebrate the occasion with me?"

²⁵ The king replied, "No, my son. If we all came, we would be too much of a burden on you." Absalom pressed him, but the king would not come, though he gave Absalom his blessing.

²⁶ "Well, then," Absalom said, "if you can't come, how about sending my brother Amnon with us?"

"Why Amnon?" the king asked. ²⁷ But Absalom kept on pressing the king until he finally agreed to let all his sons attend, including Amnon. So Absalom prepared a feast fit for a king.

This story is actually quite sad. As mentioned, on the battlefield, King David is a magnificent and competent individual. In his home however, he seems childlike and indecisive. Perhaps, he is simply hoping for the best and praying that things will turn around in his family life.

For two years, Absalom had not mentioned anything about the rape of his sister. Hoping for the best, David assumed he had finally forgiven his half brother. This was not the case; just as Amnon cunningly plotted, over an extended period of time, to rape Tamar, Absalom waited patiently in the shadows to avenge her. Like Amnon, Absalom also deceived his father into participating in the underhanded crime. For years, David lived with the haunting guilt that he was the one who gave permission for Amnon to bring Tamar into his house. Now his burden of guilt would be increased, with the knowledge that he personally sent Amnon to his own slaughter.

The shadows of the past continue to surround the tragic circumstances of King David's family life. *As David had committed adultery, made Uriah drunk, and then murdered him: so Amnon committeth incest, is made*



POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

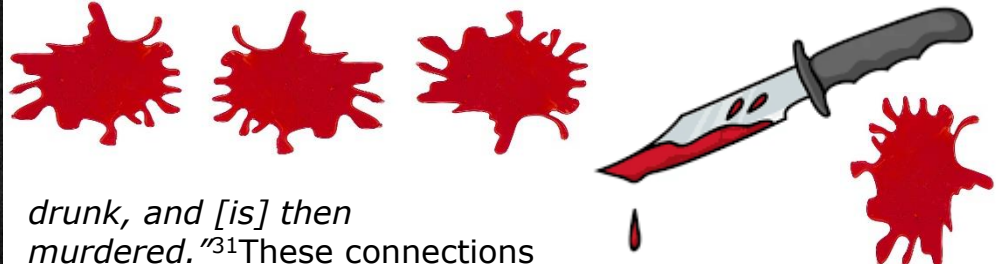
POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS

The best revenge is to have enough self-worth not to seek it.



Spirit Science



drunk, and [is] then murdered.”³¹ These connections are far more than coincidental. They show the consequences of David’s tragic sin, manifesting in his family line, right before his eyes.

²⁸ Absalom told his men, “Wait until Amnon gets drunk; then at my signal, kill him! Don’t be afraid. I’m the one who has given the command. Take courage and do it!” ²⁹ So at Absalom’s signal they murdered Amnon. Then the other sons of the king

jumped on their mules and fled.

³⁰ As they were on the way back to Jerusalem, this report reached David: “Absalom has killed all the king’s sons; not one is left alive!” ³¹ The king got up, tore his robe, and threw himself on the ground. His advisers also tore their clothes in horror and sorrow.

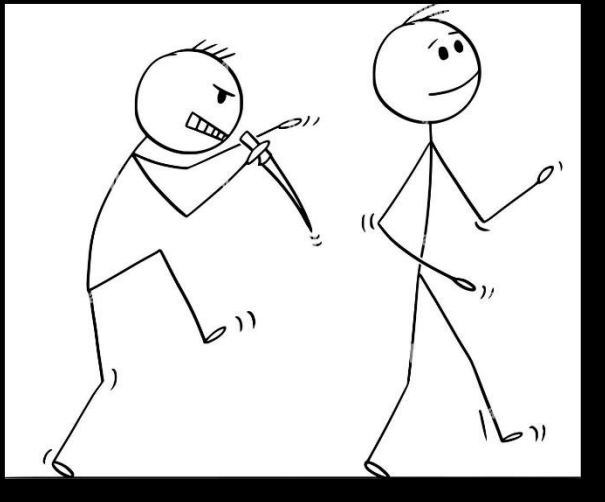
King David wept bitterly for the tragedy unfolding in his family. Nevertheless, his indifference made him partially responsible. According to the Law of Moses, rape was a crime that needed to be punished. The law demanded that the rapist pay the bridal price for the victim. If Amnon was forced to pay the bridal price for his half sister, she would have at least been able to live with some form of dignity. By covering up the situation to defend the reputation of his eldest son, David made things worse instead of better. Absalom would have never murdered Amnon if David administered a punishment that was appropriate to his transgression.

³² But just then Jonadab, the son of David’s brother Shimea, arrived and said, “No, don’t believe that all the king’s sons have been killed! It was only Amnon! Absalom has been plotting this ever since Amnon raped his sister Tamar. ³³ No, my lord the king, your sons aren’t all dead! It was only Amnon.” ³⁴ Meanwhile Absalom escaped.

Then the watchman on the Jerusalem wall saw a great crowd coming down the hill on the road from the west. He ran to tell the king, “I see a crowd of people coming from the Horonaim road along the side of the hill.”



³¹ Trapp, John "A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments" Volume 1 (Genesis to 2 Chronicles) (Eureka, California: Tanski Publications, 1997)



35 "Look!" Jonadab told the king. "There they are now! The king's sons are coming, just as I said."

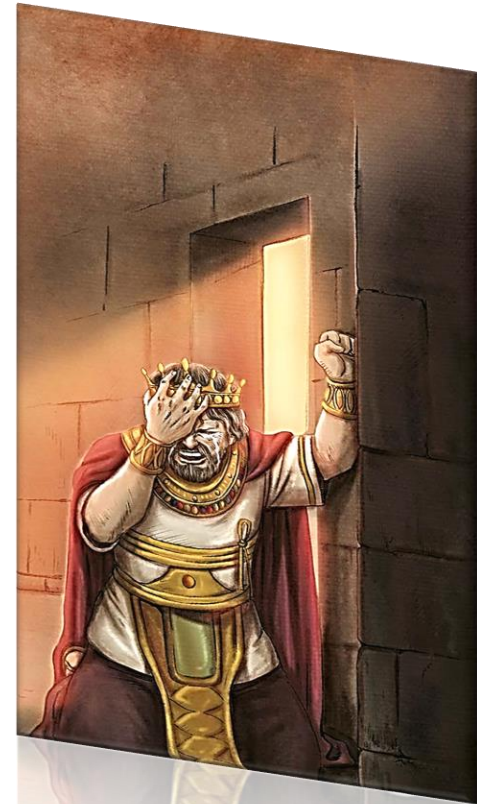
36 They soon arrived, weeping and sobbing, and the king and all his servants wept bitterly with them. 37 And David mourned many

days for his son Amnon.

Absalom fled to his grandfather, Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. 38 He stayed there in Geshur for three years. 39 And King David, now reconciled to Amnon's death, longed to be reunited with his son Absalom.

Absalom escaped to live under the protection of his grandfather, where he spent three years away from his family. The text said David longed to be reunited with his son Absalom. Yet, as expected with King David, he did nothing to express his true feelings to his son. He longed in silence for his son to return, but never made an effort to communicate this to him directly.

Like many fathers, David's inability to make an emotional connection with his children, increased their desire for rebellion. Absalom simply wanted attention from his father. He wanted to be heard and to express the pain caused by the rape of his sister. On the other hand, he received nothing but silence from David. While the author of the biblical text communicated David longed to see his son, Absalom had no clue his father missed him or even loved him.



Joab Arranges for Absalom's Return

14 Joab realized how much the king longed to see Absalom.

The old saying, "like father, like son", surely applied to David and Absalom.



Woman of Tekoa

Absalom longed for a father figure but was too stubborn to admit it and make the first move. Similarly, David desired to be united with Absalom, but was too prideful to say it. *In the case of Absalom and the king, the relationship remained virtually deadlocked, neither side having the spiritual incentive to break it.*³² Finally, Joab took the initiative and got the ball rolling towards their unification.

² So he sent for a woman from Tekoa who had a reputation for great wisdom. He said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning; wear mourning clothes and don't put on lotions. Act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time. ³ Then go to the king and tell him the story I am about to tell you." Then Joab told her what to say.

⁴ When the woman from Tekoa approached the king, she bowed with her face to the ground in deep respect and cried out, "O king! Help me!"

⁵ "What's the trouble?" the king asked.

"Alas, I am a widow!" she replied. "My husband is dead. ⁶ My two sons had a fight out in the field. And since no one was there to stop it, one of them was killed. ⁷ Now the rest of the family is demanding, 'Let us have your son. We will execute him for murdering his brother. He doesn't deserve to inherit his family's property.' They want to extinguish the only coal I have left, and my husband's name and family will disappear from the face of the earth."

⁸ "Leave it to me," the king told her. "Go home, and I'll see to it that no one touches him."

The woman brilliantly played the role of a depressed widow in a desperate situation. David was always able to clearly judge royal matters from the perspective of the king. On the other hand, he lost all perspective when it came to interpersonal matters, especially concerning his own family. The widow's heart-breaking story made King David think about the concept of exercising justice unfairly. It was unjust for this poor woman to lose both of her sons for one fatal transgression.

³² Baldwin, Joyce G. "1 and 2 Samuel: An Introduction and Commentary" Volume 8 (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries) (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988)

Likewise, David's desire to protect the royal reputation of his family, overshadowed his responsibility to judge the situation correctly. His lack of leadership caused Absalom to take matters into his own hands. If David failed to act quickly once again, he would be the one to lose two sons, for one fatal transgression.

⁹ "Oh, thank you, my lord the king," the woman from Tekoa replied. "If you are criticized for helping me, let the blame fall on me and on my father's house, and let the king and his throne be innocent."

¹⁰ "If anyone objects," the king said, "bring him to me. I can assure you he will never harm you again!"

¹¹ Then she said, "Please swear to me by the Lord your God that you won't let anyone take vengeance against my son. I want no more bloodshed." "As surely as the Lord lives," he replied, "not a hair on your son's head will be disturbed!" ¹² "Please allow me to ask one more thing of my lord the king," she said. "Go ahead and speak," he responded. ¹³ She replied, "Why don't you do as much for the people of God as you have promised to do for me? You have convicted yourself in making this decision, because you have refused to bring home your own banished son. ¹⁴ All of us must die eventually. Our lives are like water spilled out on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God does not just sweep life away; instead, he devises ways to bring us back when we have been separated from him.

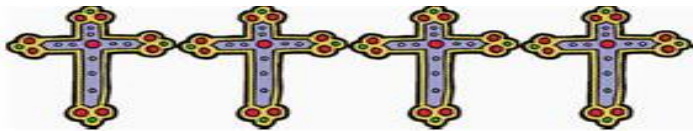
The woman skillfully and strategically trapped David by his own reasoning. She additionally reminded him that life is short, like spilled water. Although, God can use whatever time we have left to redeem the past. If David could forgive her son for murder, why could he not forgive his own son Absalom?

This placed David in a difficult position. He was a loving father who wanted to forgive both his wayward sons. On the other hand, he was the King of Israel and the righteous judge of his people. How could he be a loving father and a righteous judge at the same time?

Yahweh's rebellious son Adam

This was the same problem Yahweh had with his rebellious son Adam. Yahweh was the most loving father ever, while still being the righteous judge of the universe. He desperately wanted to forgive His beloved children for their willful

The Story
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The Story



transgression of the cosmic law, but He was also the one responsible for upholding universal justice. The concept of grace and justice don't seem to go together. To uphold one, do you necessarily need to ignore the other?

The answer to the cosmic contradiction between mercy and justice is the cross of Christ. On the cross, mercy and justice are not at odds. Christ extended mercy to all cosmic criminals by taking the righteous judgment of sin upon Himself. He extended merciful grace to sinners by receiving in his own body, the consequences of our sin. At the cross, justice is fully satisfied and grace is fully extended simultaneously.

**For HE made Him
who knew NO SIN
to be sin for US,
that we might BECOME
the righteousness
of GOD in Him.**

2 Corinthians 5:21



15 "I have come to plead with my lord the king because people have threatened me. I said to myself, 'Perhaps the king will listen to me ¹⁶ and rescue us from those who would cut us off from the inheritance God has given us. ¹⁷ Yes, my lord the king will give us peace of mind again.' I know that you are like an angel of God in discerning good from evil. May the Lord your God be with you."

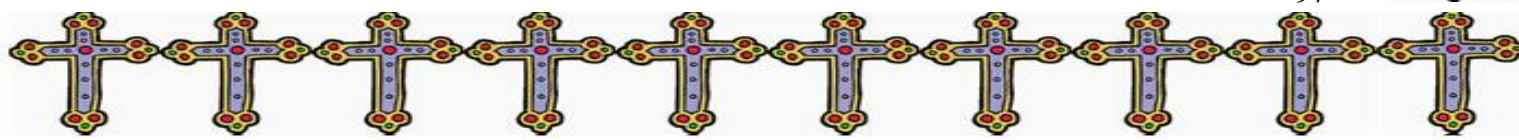
David's inability to forgive his own son will cut off his family's future inheritance. He wisely forgave Saul's general Abner, when he offered him the loyalty of the Tribes of Israel. He forgave Nabal when confronted by the wise words of Abigail. So why was it so difficult to forgive his own son for standing up for truth and justice in response to David's own weakness and inequality?

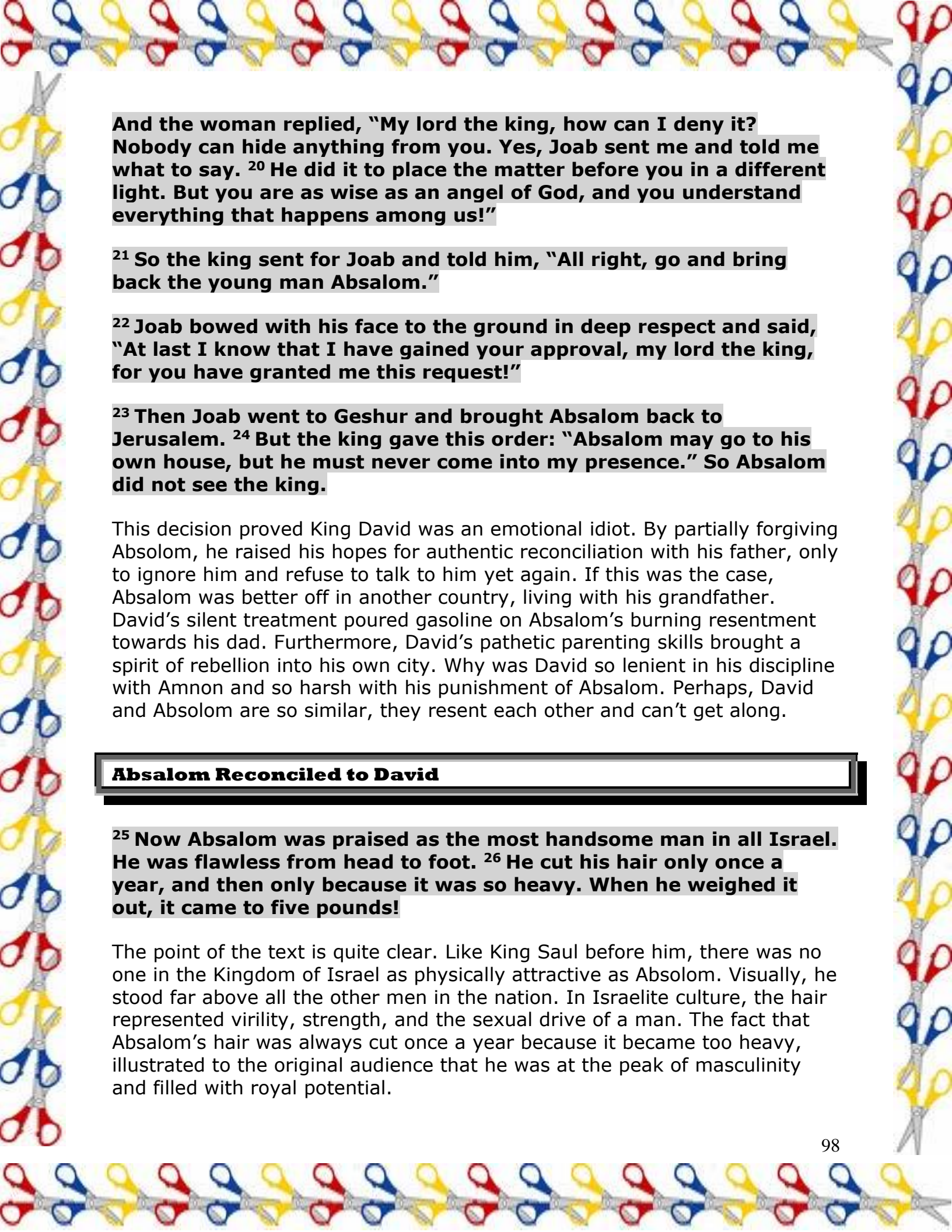
David is likely overly concerned about his public image. He did nothing concerning justice in regard to his first son Amnon. Now he wants to overcompensate for his first mistake, by applying harsh justice in respect to Absalom. Sadly, between the two sons, Absalom is far more honorable and truly deserves more grace.

18 "I must know one thing," the king replied, "and tell me the truth."

"Yes, my lord the king," she responded.

19 "Did Joab put you up to this?"





And the woman replied, "My lord the king, how can I deny it? Nobody can hide anything from you. Yes, Joab sent me and told me what to say. ²⁰ He did it to place the matter before you in a different light. But you are as wise as an angel of God, and you understand everything that happens among us!"

²¹ So the king sent for Joab and told him, "All right, go and bring back the young man Absalom."

²² Joab bowed with his face to the ground in deep respect and said, "At last I know that I have gained your approval, my lord the king, for you have granted me this request!"

²³ Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. ²⁴ But the king gave this order: "Absalom may go to his own house, but he must never come into my presence." So Absalom did not see the king.

This decision proved King David was an emotional idiot. By partially forgiving Absalom, he raised his hopes for authentic reconciliation with his father, only to ignore him and refuse to talk to him yet again. If this was the case, Absalom was better off in another country, living with his grandfather. David's silent treatment poured gasoline on Absalom's burning resentment towards his dad. Furthermore, David's pathetic parenting skills brought a spirit of rebellion into his own city. Why was David so lenient in his discipline with Amnon and so harsh with his punishment of Absalom. Perhaps, David and Absalom are so similar, they resent each other and can't get along.

Absalom Reconciled to David

²⁵ Now Absalom was praised as the most handsome man in all Israel. He was flawless from head to foot. ²⁶ He cut his hair only once a year, and then only because it was so heavy. When he weighed it out, it came to five pounds!

The point of the text is quite clear. Like King Saul before him, there was no one in the Kingdom of Israel as physically attractive as Absalom. Visually, he stood far above all the other men in the nation. In Israelite culture, the hair represented virility, strength, and the sexual drive of a man. The fact that Absalom's hair was always cut once a year because it became too heavy, illustrated to the original audience that he was at the peak of masculinity and filled with royal potential.

Absalom was also a man of political destiny. He was the third son of David. The firstborn Amnon was gone, and we hear nothing more of Chileab, the second born. It is likely that Absalom was the crown prince, next in line for the throne.³³

He named his daughter Tamar

²⁷ He had three sons and one daughter. His daughter's name was Tamar, and she was very beautiful.

The lasting memory of the rape of his sister Tamar followed young Absalom relentlessly. He named his own daughter Tamar, after his unmarried sister, as perhaps a final act of redemption. Like her aunt, she was also astonishingly beautiful.

²⁸ Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years, but he never got to see the king. ²⁹ Then Absalom sent for Joab to ask him to intercede for him, but Joab refused to come. Absalom sent for him a second time, but again Joab refused to come. ³⁰ So Absalom said to his servants, "Go and set fire to Joab's barley field, the field next to mine." So they set his field on fire, as Absalom had commanded.

David allegedly forgave his son and allowed him to return home to his house. But Absalom did not only want a house, but he also wanted a father and a greater purpose for his life. He was his father's son and was a warrior by nature. Furthermore, he was the crown prince of Israel and needed his father's mentorship to develop as a leader. The fact that he was being simply ignored by everyone of influence in his life, set a fire under this young man that could never be contained, until his flame was prematurely extinguished by death. If Absalom could not get his father's attention in a positive way, surely, he would get it in a negative way.

³¹ Then Joab came to Absalom at his house and demanded, "Why did your servants set my field on fire?"

The reason is obvious, Absalom will not be ignored by King David indefinitely. If he is continually rejected by his father, his anointing will become destructive, and he will eventually burn the palace down.

³³ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 14



At the same time, sometimes God gets our attention by setting our "barley field" on fire. "He, knowing that we will not come by any other means, sendeth a serious trial — he sets our barley-field on fire, which he has a right to do, seeing our barley-fields are far more his than they are ours." ³⁴

³² And Absalom replied, "Because I wanted you to ask the king why he brought me back from Geshur if he didn't intend to see me. I might as well have stayed there. Let me see the king; if he finds me guilty of anything, then let him kill me."

It was better for a young man like Absalom to die for something, than to live for nothing. Unlike his weak and pathetic brother Amnon, Absalom was not comfortable in the palace but needed to lead brave men into battle. David did not provide an opportunity for Absalom to prove himself as a warrior. He simply intended for him to disappear behind the palace walls. This was impossible for a young man like him. He was overflowing with undeveloped potential that would be used for either good or evil.

³³ So Joab told the king what Absalom had said. Then at last David summoned Absalom, who came and bowed low before the king,

Absalom outwardly submits to David, but David's two-year refusal to reconcile left a legacy of bitterness in Absalom that turned out badly for David, for Absalom, and for Israel. ³⁵ In this "last ditch" effort to have an authentic emotional connection and reconciliation with his father, Absalom wanted to be heard and to discuss his unresolved issues about the past. Would David allow himself to be so emotionally vulnerable as to open up about his own dark secrets? Did he even have the capability to do so?

and the king kissed him.



³⁴ Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)

³⁵ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 14

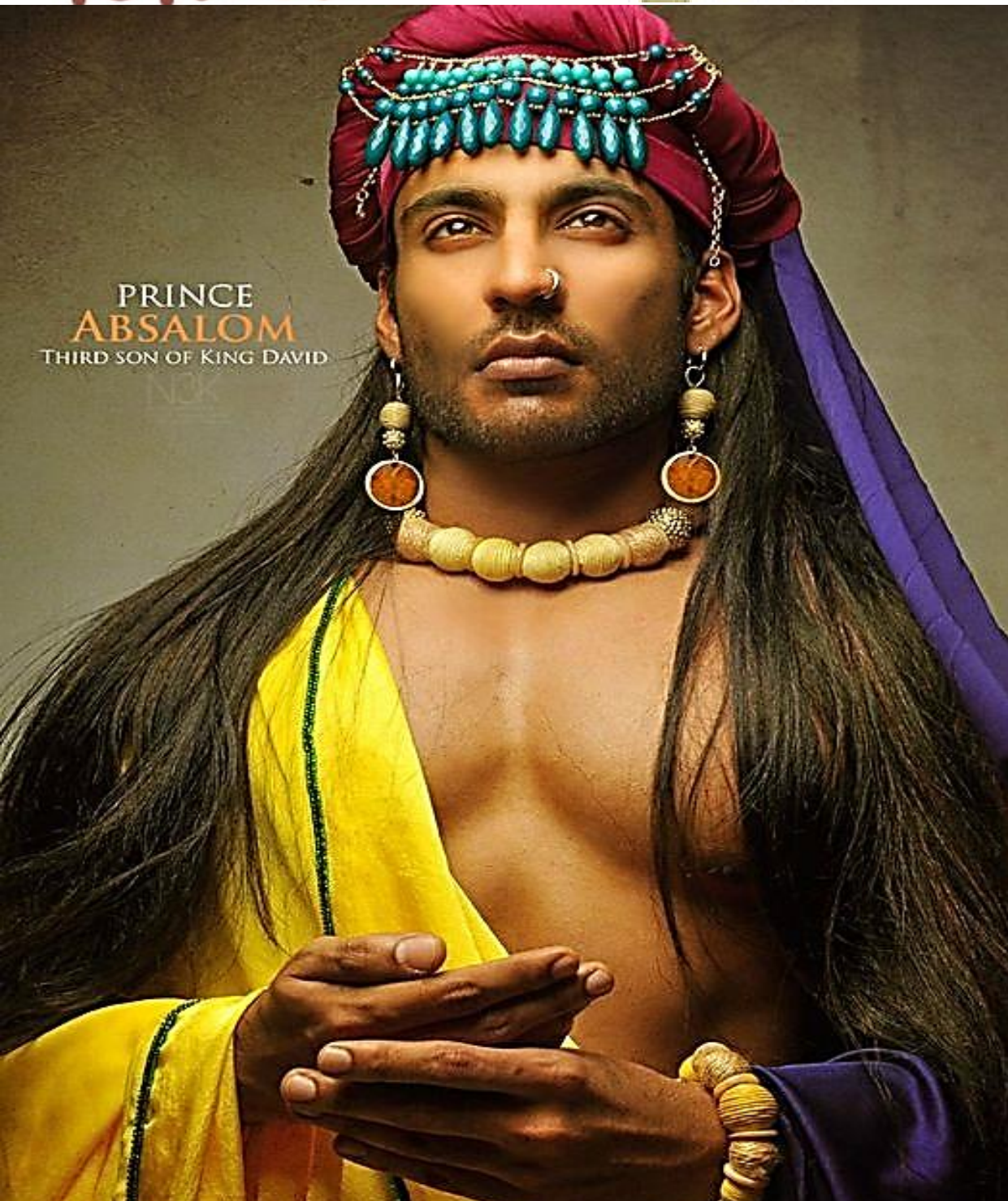


A Little Too Late

The chapter ends with a glimmer of hopefulness that blows out quickly. Unfortunately, the delayed kiss was too little, too late. The seeds of rebellion were deep rooted and already growing in his hostile heart.

like
father

like →
son



PRINCE
ABSALOM
THIRD SON OF KING DAVID

Like father, like son: every
good tree maketh good fruits.



- 1. Absalom's revenge resulted in murder. Discuss alternative approaches Absalom could have taken for justice.**
- 2. Of all of King David's children, Absalom is a warrior like his father. Was he in any way justified in murdering Amnon because of David's inaction?**
- 3. King David is trapped between his responsibility as a father and a king. Do you see a tension between raising a family and radically following Yahshua in the New Testament?**
- 4. David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem but would not talk to him. Did this decision make the situation better or worse?**
- 5. David was a brutal warrior on the battlefield but avoided conflict in his own home. What are the potential consequences of avoiding direct confrontation of our personal issues as shown in this chapter?**

Absalom's Rebellion

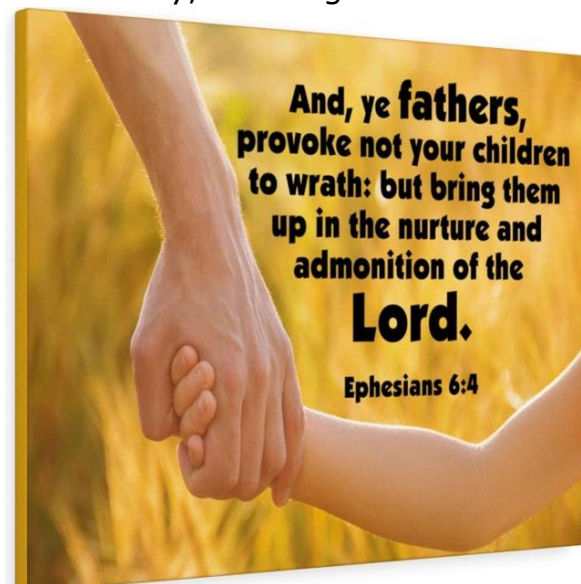
15 After this, Absalom bought a chariot and horses, and he hired fifty bodyguards to run ahead of him.

From this point onward, reconciliation with David was no longer an option for young Absalom. Unlike his father, he would take his political destiny by force. The image of an astonishingly attractive young man riding a chariot surrounded by 50 powerful bodyguards, was nothing but political propaganda.

Earlier in the text, Absalom's hair was mentioned as a symbol of his youth and strength. At this point, his hair has become a symbol of his growing pride and rebellion. Absalom is no longer seeking reconciliation with King David, but now demanded to dominate the entire Kingdom of Israel. In his heart, he viewed David as an unjust monarch, unable to rightly rule over his own family. Consequently, if he could not govern correctly over his own family, what right did he have to

govern over a mighty nation?

2 He got up early every morning and went out to the gate of the city. When people brought a case to the king for judgment, Absalom would ask where in Israel they were from, and they would tell him their tribe. **3** Then Absalom would say, "You've really got a strong case here! It's too bad the king doesn't have anyone to hear it. **4** I wish I were the judge. Then everyone could bring their cases to me for judgment, and I would give them justice!"



The Kingdom of Israel had judges to settle legal matters in the government, however, if the case was not settled the king was the "supreme court" of the land. Absalom waited for disgruntled people who felt they suffered an injustice under the leadership of King David, only to imply that the king does not care about the affairs of the common people.

This was a personal vendetta for Absalom. He actively painted King David in a bad light and transferred his own feelings of rejection and anger unto the people of Israel. *Absalom stirred up dissatisfaction with David's government and campaigned against David by promising to provide justice that David (supposedly) denied the people.*³⁶

⁵ When people tried to bow before him, Absalom wouldn't let them. Instead, he took them by the hand and kissed them. ⁶ Absalom did this with everyone who came to the king for judgment, and so he stole the hearts of all the people of Israel.

Everything Absalom did intentionally undermined the position of his father. By hugging and kissing all the people he encountered, he presented himself as a man of the common people. Absalom was a born prince with monarchs on both sides of his family line. There was absolutely nothing common about him. He was simply a masterful politician plotting a rebellion to take the kingdom by force and kill the Lord's Anointed king. He intended to present himself as the rising star in Israel, compared to the slowly fading image of his father.

*Absalom appeared to be the real and was the undisputed heir to the throne; David could not, in the course of nature, live very long; and most people are more disposed to hail the beams of the rising, than exult in those of the setting, sun.*³⁷

⁷ After four years, Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and fulfill a vow I made to him. ⁸ For



³⁶ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 15

³⁷ Clarke, Adam "Clarke's Commentary: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with a Commentary and Critical Notes" Volume 2 (Joshua-Esther) (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1827)

GHOSTS FROM THE PAST

while your servant was at Geshur in Aram, I promised to sacrifice to the Lord in Hebron if he would bring me back to Jerusalem."

Absalom was a patient man if nothing else. He waited until the perfect time to kill his brother Amnon. Likewise, he plotted quietly for 4 years since hugging his father, waiting for any suspicion to settle. Under the cover of religious devotion, Absalom asked David permission to go to Hebron, the capital city of Judah, to sacrifice to Yahweh. Everything he did was strategic and extremely intentional, because he knew if he won the loyalty of Judah, he would completely undermine the support of King David.

"All right," the king told him. "Go and fulfill your vow."

So Absalom went to Hebron. ¹⁰ But while he was there, he sent secret messengers to all the tribes of Israel to stir up a rebellion against the king. "As soon as you hear the ram's horn," his message read, "you are to say, 'Absalom has been crowned king in Hebron.'" ¹¹ He took 200 men from Jerusalem with him as guests, but they knew nothing of his intentions. ¹² While Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel, one of David's counselors who lived in Giloh. Soon many others also joined Absalom, and the conspiracy gained momentum.

Absalom gathered 200 powerful men from Jerusalem around him who knew nothing about the rebellion. Nevertheless, they would not dare speak out publicly while surrounded by Absalom's bodyguards. When Ahithophel, a well respected elder in Israel, enthusiastically supported Absalom, the rebellion gained momentum.

The past comes back to haunt you

There is an old saying that "chickens come home to roost". It means that sometimes you do things in the past that come around to haunt you in the future. The rape of Bathsheba is something that never seems to go away, but relentlessly follows David all the days of his life.

Ahithophel was politically respected and known for his great wisdom. His administrative insight mattered greatly to the people of Israel. He probably carried a deep sense of resentment towards King David for many years. Bathsheba was his granddaughter, and the way she was treated totally insulted his family. This burning sense of bitterness finally erupted when he had a chance to get revenge on the man who raped his

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

GHOSTS FROM THE PAST

grandchild. Although David does everything he can to distance himself from his past. The tragic consequences continue to follow him and manifest. If only David knew the outcome of his indiscretion and the consequences that would follow that tragic day, he would have ran from Bathsheba with all haste.

Lesson Of Consequences

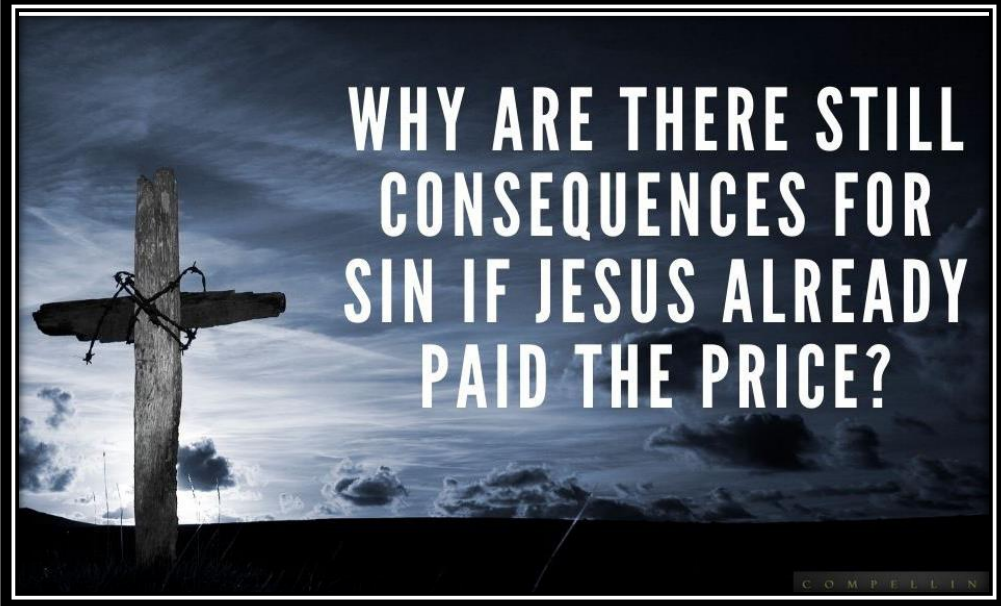
God instantly forgives us of our sins the moment we repent. In eternity, there will be no record of the wrong we have done once our sins are forgiven. However, our actions have causal reactions in the physical realm. If one becomes pregnant before marriage, that is a sin that can be forever forgiven by God. Nevertheless, the child will still be born and the responsibility of raising a child will not be erased. If the mother is tempted to have an abortion, it proved that she never repented of the first sin, because you can't cover one sin with a greater sin.



LESSONS
LEARNED

Yahweh is not angry at David. He is not continually punishing David for a sin that has already been forgiven. David, on the other hand, unintentionally opened a door in the unseen realm and invited horrific consequences that always followed him. The sin of rape will manifest in his 2 oldest sons and 4 of his sons in all would die, as a consequence of the innocent man he murdered. David wanted everything to just go away, but that only made the situation worse.

The more David tried to avoid his shaded past, was the more it tormented him. If David had spoke openly about his sexual transgression and made it a



**WHY ARE THERE STILL
CONSEQUENCES FOR
SIN IF JESUS ALREADY
PAID THE PRICE?**

life lesson for his children, things would not have gone so badly. On the other hand, his continual silence on the matter of his past carnal sins made things worse, because he was unwilling to deal with the issue of sexual sin in his own family. It's possible David assumed he had no right to correct anyone on the issue of sexual sin, because he lost all credibility. This may be partially true in his function as a leader of Israel, but as a father, he needed to parent his children and had a responsibility to lead them in the right moral path.

David Escapes from Jerusalem

¹³ A messenger soon arrived in Jerusalem to tell David, "All Israel has joined Absalom in a conspiracy against you!"

¹⁴ "Then we must flee at once, or it will be too late!" David urged his men.

"Hurry! If we get out of the city before Absalom arrives, both we and the city of Jerusalem will be spared from disaster."

¹⁵ "We are with you," his advisers replied. "Do what you think is best."

¹⁶ So the king and all his household set out at once. He left no one behind except ten of his concubines to look after the palace. ¹⁷ The king and all his people set out on foot, pausing at the last house ¹⁸ to let all the king's men move past to lead the way. There were 600 men from Gath who had come with David, along with the king's bodyguard.

King David was again emotionally crushed and broken-hearted as he left Jerusalem. His own son and his most trusted political adviser, both stabbed him in the back. Like Yahshua, King David was a man intimately acquainted with grief, sorrow, and rejection.

⁹ Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me. (Psalm 41)



ON! • CAUTION! • CAUTION! • CAUTION! • CAUTION!

On the other hand, the men he mentored and disciplined from his days in the cave of Adullam always remained faithful to him. They were his “ride or die” crew. They followed David when the only thing he had to offer was his friendship and devotion. The “mighty men” defended their king until death because they were truly devoted with uncompromised loyalty.

24 *There are “friends” who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother. (Proverbs 18)*

Protecting Jerusalem

David could have remained safe in the stronghold of Jerusalem, but he wanted to protect the city where the Ark of the Covenant rested more than his own life. He had great plans for the future of Jerusalem, and would not suffer to see it destroyed at the centre of a long siege. Moreover, David knew the wilderness like the back of his hand. He was most secure in the desert, hiding in the same network of caves where Saul relentlessly pursued him for years.

19 **Then the king turned and said to Ittai, a leader of the men from Gath, “Why are you coming with us? Go on back to King Absalom, for you are a guest in Israel, a foreigner in exile.”**

At this moment, David subconsciously called Absalom the king. This was astonishing considering the level of betrayal he just suffered. Unlike Saul, David did not need to desperately fight to remain the King of Israel. It was always in the hand of Yahweh. Furthermore, being the king was not a happy time in the life of David. He was only peaceful in the battlefield killing the enemies of Yahweh. David was obviously trusting in God, not in the power of his sword. He lived in the wilderness for years before, and if necessary, he would do it again.

20 **You arrived only recently, and should I force you today to wander with us? I don’t even know where we will go. Go on back and take your kinsmen with you, and may the Lord show you his unfailing love and faithfulness.”**

21 **But Ittai said to the king, “I vow by the Lord and by your own life that I will go wherever my lord the king goes, no matter what happens—whether it means life or death.”**



22 David replied, "All right, come with us." So Ittai and all his men and their families went along.

During a time of crisis, you know who your true friends are. David had many loyal advocates who lived with a "ride or die" attitude. These men committed to follow David, even if they and their families died in the service of their king.



In the New Testament, Christ followers should have the same attitude. We are not just serving a mortal king, but the eternal King of Kings. How much more should we recklessly serve King Jesus, regardless of the consequences, or the loss of what we love the most.

23 Everyone cried loudly as the king and his followers passed by. They crossed the Kidron Valley and then went out toward the wilderness.

24 Zadok and all the Levites also came along, carrying the Ark of the Covenant of God. They set down the Ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until everyone had passed out of the city.



In yet another remarkable demonstration of the "ride or die" spirit of David's faithful followers, all the priests faithfully followed their king into the wilderness with the Ark of Yahweh. If Absalom succeeded in his rebellion, they would die for their loyalty to David. They could have remained safe and comfortable in Jerusalem, serving whoever emerged as king. But they were compelled to serve the true anointed King of Israel, not his upstart son.

25 Then the king instructed Zadok to take the Ark of God back into the city. "If the Lord sees fit," David said, "he will bring me back to see the Ark and the Tabernacle again. 26 But if he is through with me, then let him do what seems best to him."

27 The king also told Zadok the priest, "Look, here is my plan. You and Abiathar should return quietly to the city with your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan. 28 I will stop at the shallows of the Jordan River and wait there for a report from you." 29 So Zadok and Abiathar took the Ark of God back to the city and stayed there.



If David was a superstitious man, he would have jumped at the chance to have the Ark of the Covenant with him in the wilderness. It would have been a strong political symbol showing he had the support of Yahweh. However, David was not superstitious and realized the ark was not a magical box. He did not need the Ark of Yahweh; he desperately needed the presence of Yahweh. If God was with him, he had everything he needed to succeed.

Regardless, David's loyal supporters rallied around their king and brought him everything he needed to make a stand against the rebellion of Absalom. God provided the right people, at the right time, to support David during his time of extreme crisis.

³⁰ David walked up the road to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered and his feet were bare as a sign of mourning. And the people who were with him covered their heads and wept as they climbed the hill.

Both King David and his future son King Jesus, found comfort on the Mount of Olives as they wept bitterly from the pain of betrayal. *When Jesus went from the Last Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, He essentially traced these same steps of David. Both David and Jesus suffered for sin, but Jesus suffered for our sins and David suffered for his own.*³⁸

³¹ When someone told David that his adviser Ahithophel was now backing Absalom, David prayed, "O Lord, let Ahithophel give Absalom foolish advice!"

This was a powerful prayer. Absalom was young, strong, and prideful. His long flowing locks demonstrated his youthful strength, but also his prideful lack of wisdom. If he would succeed in his rebellion, he would need the advice of older and wiser men who had more life experience. This is where the battle would be won or lost. If Absalom respectfully listened to the advice of an experienced man like Ahithophel, David would be easily crushed before he could regroup. Hence, David prayed that Yahweh would confuse their communication and give him the time he needed to escape.

³⁸ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 15

When you face a crisis, you know who your true friends are.

True friends are like stars; you can only recognize them when it's dark around you.

³² When David reached the summit of the Mount of Olives where people worshiped God, Hushai the Arkite was waiting there for him. Hushai had torn his clothing and put dirt on his head as a sign of mourning. ³³ But David told him, "If you go with me, you will only be a burden. ³⁴ Return to Jerusalem and tell Absalom, 'I will now be your adviser, O king, just as I was your father's adviser in the past.' Then you can frustrate and counter Ahithophel's advice. ³⁵ Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, will be there. Tell them about the plans being made in the king's palace, ³⁶ and they will send their sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan to tell me what is going on." ³⁷ So David's friend Hushai returned to Jerusalem, getting there just as Absalom arrived.

As mentioned, Absalom would live or die based on the council he received. Therefore, David sent Hushai to purposefully contradict the wise counsel of Ahithophel. It's one thing to have the strength of youth, but another thing to have wisdom. This battle would be won based on wisdom and discernment, not strength and courage alone. Sadly, Absalom did not have a father figure to teach him these important things in his developmental years.

Depending on God in a time of crisis

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

Many events in the life of David are recorded in the songs he wrote during both the good and bad seasons of his life. During the time, David was not grasping onto the kingdom, but placed his destiny firmly in the hands of God. If it was God's will for Absalom to be the king, David would accept it and worship God anyway. Even during this traumatic time, David found comfort in the Lord and was able to sleep at night

knowing that everything was under control.

**¹ O Lord, I have so many enemies;
so many are against me.**

**² So many are saying,
"God will never rescue him!" Interlude**

**³ But you, O Lord, are a shield around me;
you are my glory, the one who holds my head high.**

*⁴ I cried out to the Lord,
and he answered me from his holy
mountain. Interlude*

*⁵ I lay down and slept,
yet I woke up in safety,
for the Lord was watching over me.*

*⁶ I am not afraid of ten thousand enemies
who surround me on every side.*

*⁷ Arise, O Lord!
Rescue me, my God!
Slap all my enemies in the face!
Shatter the teeth of the wicked!*

*⁸ Victory comes from you, O Lord.
May you bless your people. (Psalm 3)*

In peace I will lie down
and sleep, for you
alone, LORD, make me
dwell in safety.

Psalm 4:8



I will not be afraid of
ten thousands of people
who have set themselves
against me round about.

Psalm 3:6





- 1. If you were in David's shoes, how would you handle Absalom's rebellion?**
- 2. Why does David choose to flee Jerusalem instead of confronting Absalom? What can we learn from this situation about handling conflict?**
- 3. In what ways do you think David might have felt responsible for Absalom's rebellion?**
- 4. Absalom had a strong anointing but had no character to maintain his talents and abilities. Discuss the dangers of pride which impacts young leaders.**
- 5. How would you counsel someone dealing with betrayal by a close family member or friend, based on David's experience? Have you ever been betrayed by someone close to you and how did you learn to forgive?**



Fake Friends!

David and Ziba



16 When David had gone a little beyond the summit of the Mount of Olives, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, was waiting there for him. He had two donkeys loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100 clusters of raisins, 100 bunches of summer fruit, and a wineskin full of wine.

2 "What are these for?" the king asked Ziba.

Ziba replied, "The donkeys are for the king's people to ride on, and the bread and summer fruit are for the young men to eat. The wine is for those who become exhausted in the wilderness."

3 "And where is Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson?" the king asked him. "He stayed in Jerusalem," Ziba replied. "He said, 'Today I will get back the kingdom of my grandfather Saul.'"

This report from Ziba hurt David, because in this time of crisis the last thing he needed to hear was that *another* friend had turned against him. *Ziba was utterly despicable, and the more so because at the moment the sorrow he brought to the heart of David was his feeling that his kindness toward Mephibosheth was ill requited.*³⁹

4 "In that case," the king told Ziba, "I give you everything Mephibosheth owns."

"I bow before you," Ziba replied. "May I always be pleasing to you, my lord the king."

What is Opportunism?

Behavior that is Exploitative - Selfish - Unprincipled - Inconsiderate



Taking advantage of circumstances with little regard for principles or concern for others

³⁹ Morgan, G. Campbell "Searchlights from the Word" (New York: Revell, 1926)



TWO-FACED FRIENDS.

The Lesson Of Ziba's



LESSONS
LEARNED

As future leaders, you will always have to look out for people like Ziba. They are the people who will wait for your personal moment of crisis to get something for themselves.

Ziba has his own agenda and hides like a snake under the cover of friendship and kindness. He cares nothing about the welfare of David, but is only looking out for himself. He saw an opportunity to selfishly gain from David's personal crisis, even at the expense of Mephibosheth's reputation. At a moment of emotional weakness, Ziba intentionally stabbed David in the heart with the news of yet another betrayal, from his adopted son Mephibosheth. Ziba intended to manipulate the situation to appear loyal to King David so he could steal the inheritance of Mephibosheth.

When you are a leader, people will enthusiastically surround you in the good times and desert you in the bad times. Moreover, people will see your emotional vulnerability as an opportunity to get something for themselves, at your personal expense. Likewise, we must always be careful of people who show up at exactly the right time, with what we need. Not everything good comes from God in your moment of desperation. Sometimes it's a setup.



As kingdom people we must always have our trust rooted and grounded in God. People will fail us, especially in our weakest moments. But Yahweh is eternally faithful to those who place their trust in Him.

PEOPLE NEVER REALLY CHANGE,



THEY JUST TAKE OFF THEIR MASKS!



TWO-FACED FRIENDS.



Shimei Curses David



⁵ As King David came to Bahurim, a man came out of the village cursing them. It was Shimei son of Gera, from the same clan as Saul's family. ⁶ He threw stones at the king and the king's officers and all the mighty warriors who surrounded him. ⁷ "Get out of here, you murderer, you scoundrel!" he shouted at David. ⁸ "The Lord is paying you back for all the bloodshed in Saul's clan. You stole his throne, and now the Lord has given it to your son Absalom. At last you will taste some of your own medicine, for you are a murderer!"

As mentioned, you will know who your true friends are in a time of crisis. Likewise, you will also see who your real enemies are, cowards will come out of hiding to kick a leader when he is down. *It is very hard to bear a cowardly attack. One is very apt to reply and use hard words to one who takes advantage of your position and deals you the coward's blow. Only the coward strikes a man when he is down.*⁴⁰

These words only serve to increase the pain in David's heart. So many people have lied to him and about him. But David humbled himself and accepted being mocked, because he knew Yahweh would justify him if he was truly innocent. Like Yahshua, King David did not open his mouth to defend himself, but trusted in the justice of God.

⁹ "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?" Abishai son of Zeruiah demanded. "Let me go over and cut off his head!"

¹⁰ "No!" the king said. "Who asked your opinion, you sons of Zeruiah! If the Lord has told him to curse me, who are you to stop him?"

Joab and Abishai tend to solve everything with violence. Perhaps one of the stones pelted at David hit Abishai, as he protected his king. This gave the

⁴⁰ Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)





hot-tempered Abishai, every right to disembowel the man who touched the Lord's anointed. But David refused to stop Shimei from cursing him.

If he was speaking prophetically, David could not stop the Word of the Lord from coming out of his mouth. If David was indeed guilty, why would he try to hide it? On the other hand, if he was being falsely accused, then judgment would rest in the hand of Yahweh.

11 Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "My own son is trying to kill me.

Doesn't this relative of Saul have even more reason to do so? Leave him alone and let him curse, for the Lord has told him to do it. 12 And perhaps the Lord will see that I am being wronged and will bless me because of these curses today." 13 So David and his men continued down the road, and Shimei kept pace with them on a nearby hillside, cursing and throwing stones and dirt at David.

Imagine allowing an angry, vengeful man to curse you and throw dirt on you in your time of greatest emotional weakness. Yet, David did not strike back. He was more crushed that his own son was trying to kill him, than over the words of this pathetic man. David demonstrated how a righteous man must use power. Righteous people need to use force carefully, even when we think we have the right.

David could take this fellow's head off in a moment, and yet he said, 'Let him alone. Let him curse.' And this makes a splendid example. *If you can revenge yourself, DON'T. If you could do it as easily as open your hand, keep it shut. If one bitter word could end the argument, ask for grace to spare that bitter word.*"⁴¹

14 The king and all who were with him grew weary along the way, so they rested when they reached the Jordan River.

Ahithophel Advises Absalom

15 Meanwhile, Absalom and all the army of Israel arrived at Jerusalem, accompanied by Ahithophel. 16 When David's friend



⁴¹ Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)



THE VERY REAL Consequences OF SIN

Hushai the Arkite arrived, he went immediately to see Absalom. "Long live the king!" he exclaimed. "Long live the king!"

17 "Is this the way you treat your friend David?" Absalom asked him. "Why aren't you with him?"

18 "I'm here because I belong to the man who is chosen by the Lord and by all the men of Israel," Hushai replied. 19 "And anyway, why shouldn't I serve you? Just as I was your father's adviser, now I will be your adviser!"

Hushai was an undercover snake in the grass sent to manipulate Absalom. Instantly he appealed to his pride, to overcome Absalom's suspicion, by calling him the one chosen by the Lord.

20 Then Absalom turned to Ahithophel and asked him, "What should I do next?"

21 Ahithophel told him, "Go and sleep with your father's concubines, for he has left them here to look after the palace. Then all Israel will know that you have insulted your father beyond hope of reconciliation, and they will throw their support to you."

This was actually great advice if you wanted your men to fight for you with bravery. David and Absalom had a rocky relationship for years. But everyone knew that David adored his son and would seek to reconcile at all costs. Ahithophel wanted to show the people of Israel that Absalom absolutely hated his father, and nothing would ever fix their broken relationship. Hence, he advised Absalom to publicly disgrace his father with the most disrespectful, reprehensible, act imaginable.

The last thing the supporters of Absalom wanted, was to get involved in a family dispute and have them reconcile. By publicly raping David's wives, Absalom would accomplish three important goals. First, he would finally enact revenge over the fact that David gave permission for Amnon to be alone with Tamar, indirectly causing her to be raped. Secondly, David would experience what it was like to see someone you were supposed to protect, be raped, and lack the ability to do anything about it. Finally, raping David's wives would solidify the support of his men knowing that the potential for reconciliation was forever gone.



**Blood is thicker
than water**

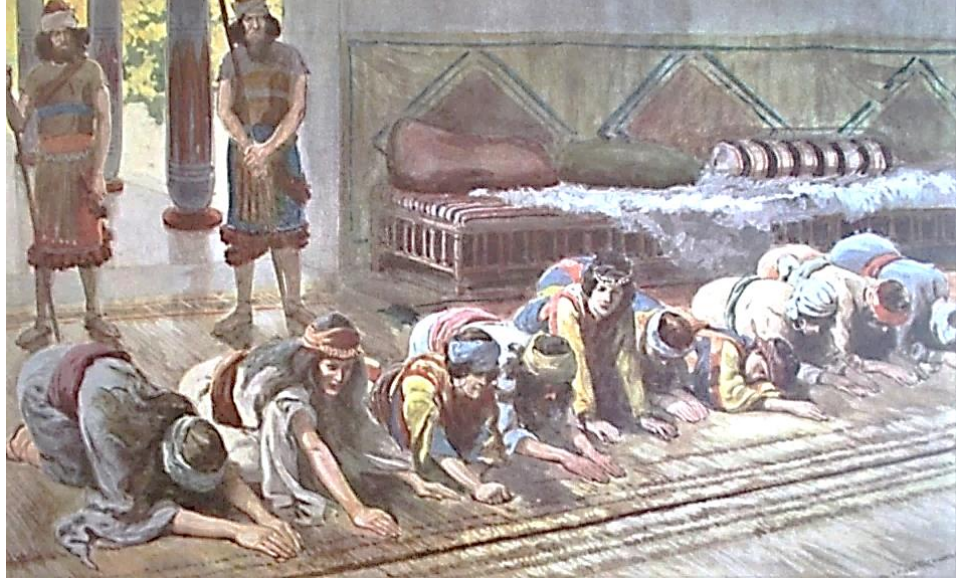
BEYOND

REPAIR

RAPE

STOP

22 So they set up a tent on the palace roof where everyone could see it, and Absalom went in and had sex with his father's concubines.



Many years ago, David began to amass numerous concubines to satisfy his sexual desires along with many wives to have legitimate children. This act of disobedience led to this tragic day when his own son would publicly rape his wives. This act dreadful fulfilled the word of Nathan when he said, "what you did in private, will be done to you in public".

23 Absalom followed Ahithophel's advice, just as David had done. For every word Ahithophel spoke seemed as wise as though it had come directly from the mouth of God.

Living under the shadow of rape

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

This disgraceful act said a lot about Absalom, who actually did it. It also said a lot about Ahithophel, who must have had a strange sense of satisfaction in seeing David's women violated in a similar way to how his granddaughter Bathsheba was violated.⁴²

Both Absalom and Ahithophel were powerless victims in respect to defending the honor of the people they loved. Absalom truly loved his baby sister Tamar, even naming his own daughter after her. Moreover, Ahithophel loved his granddaughter Bathsheba. She was living an honorable life, married to an honorable warrior. How David treated her disrespected his entire family line and caused a burning bitterness in Ahithophel's heart that could only be satisfied by brutal revenge.

Unforgiveness is choosing to stay trapped in a jail cell of bitterness, serving time for someone else's crime.

⁴² David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 16

Unforgiveness
is like taking poison,

but expecting
someone else to die.



Unforgiveness

The outcome of unforgiveness is destruction to everyone involved. It's been said that unforgiveness is like the offended person drinking poison, to revenge the wrong they suffered. Unforgiveness does not hurt the person who did the crime, it only continues to hurt the victim. If only Absalom and Ahithophel could have found the strength to forgive David for his transgression, everything would have turned out differently.

17 Now Ahithophel urged Absalom, "Let me choose 12,000 men to start out after David tonight. ² I will catch up with him while he is weary and discouraged. He and his troops will panic, and everyone will run away. Then I will kill only the king, ³ and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride returns to her husband. After all, it is only one man's life that you seek. Then you will be at peace with all the people." ⁴ This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel.

Ahithophel was clearly a gifted strategist and an experienced military tactician. He understood that if David crossed the Jordan River and escaped into his wilderness stronghold, their opportunity was lost. At this specific moment, David was weak and tired after running all night long. If Absalom opted for a quick and decisive strike aimed at killing David, a long civil war could be avoided. This was excellent military advice.



Hushai Counters Ahithophel's Advice

⁵ But then Absalom said, "Bring in Hushai the Arkite. Let's see what he thinks about this." ⁶ When Hushai arrived, Absalom told him what Ahithophel had said. Then he asked, "What is your opinion? Should we follow Ahithophel's advice? If not, what do you suggest?"

Hushai was a traitor, loyal to King David. The advice Absalom received was dead on and Hushai knew it. He needed to think quickly to undermine the wisdom of Ahithophel.

⁷ "Well," Hushai replied to Absalom, "this time Ahithophel has made a mistake. ⁸ You know your father and his men; they are mighty warriors. Right now they are as enraged as a mother bear who has been robbed of her cubs. And remember that your father is an experienced man of war. He won't be spending the night among the



wise as snakes
and innocent as doves

troops. ⁹ He has probably already hidden in some pit or cave. And when he comes out and attacks and a few of your men fall, there will be panic among your troops, and the word will spread that Absalom's men are being slaughtered. ¹⁰ Then even the bravest soldiers, though they have the heart of a lion, will be paralyzed with fear. For all Israel knows what a mighty warrior your father is and how courageous his men are.

Wisely, Hushai reminded Absalom of the mighty man of war his father once was, not focusing on the emotionally broken, battle weary, man his father actually is. It's quite possible at this point, David does not care if he lives or dies. Hushai tried to put fear into Absalom, and constantly reminded him of David's past strength. In reality, Hushai knew by experience, that David and his men were on the point of physical and emotional collapse. Nevertheless, he told Absalom to do the opposite of what needed to be done in this specific situation.

¹¹ "I recommend that you mobilize the entire army of Israel, bringing them from as far away as Dan in the north and Beersheba in the south. That way you will have an army as numerous as the sand on the seashore. And I advise that you personally lead the troops. ¹² When we find David, we'll fall on him like dew that falls on the ground. Then neither he nor any of his men will be left alive. ¹³ And if David were to escape into some town, you will have all Israel there at your command. Then we can take ropes and drag the walls of the town into the nearest valley until every stone is torn down."

¹⁴ Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "Hushai's advice is better than Ahithophel's." For the Lord had determined to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, which really was the better plan, so that he could bring disaster on Absalom!

Hushai had a secret weapon. He wanted to give David more time to escape into the wilderness to regroup his forces. And he needed to appeal to Absalom's pride to make this happen. The description of Absalom victoriously riding his war chariot into battle, followed by his faithful bodyguard and all the armies of Israel, appealed to his enormously growing pride. Absalom pictured his long flowing locks dancing in the wind behind his chariot, as he victoriously overran the defensive positions of David's forces. In Absalom's childlike imagination, he would personally kill his father in hand-to-hand combat, in



Pride comes before
**THE
FALL**



pride comes

the sight of all of Israel. At this moment, Absalom is in a fantasy world. He has not faced the reality of the battlefield where the mud and the blood intermingle among the dead bodies of fallen heroes.

This is one of the great principles of life which every page of the Bible emphasizes and illustrates. Men cannot escape God. They go their own way, but that way never sets them free

from the authority and the invincible power of God.⁴³

Absalom will not listen to good advice, because he was blinded by his own pride. He was successful in his scheme to take Jerusalem, although David intentionally gave up the city without a fight. Now with growing confidence in his own ability to lead an army, he longs for his epic battlefield confrontation with his father David. Finally, he would prove to David once and for all, that he was a great warrior. Scripture warns that pride always results in a sudden fall, because Absalom is ultimately in rebellion to God.

Hushai Warns David to Escape

¹⁵ Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, what Ahithophel had said to Absalom and the elders of Israel and what he himself had advised instead. ¹⁶ "Quick!" he told them. "Find David and urge him not to stay at the shallows of the Jordan River tonight. He must go across at once into the wilderness beyond. Otherwise he will die and his entire army with him."

¹⁷ Jonathan and Ahimaaz had been staying at En-rogel so as not to be seen entering and leaving the city. Arrangements had been made for a servant girl to bring them the message they were to take to King David. ¹⁸ But a boy spotted them at En-rogel, and he told Absalom about it. So they quickly escaped to Bahurim, where a man hid them down inside a well in his courtyard. ¹⁹ The man's wife put a cloth over the top of the well and scattered grain on it to dry in the sun; so no one suspected they were there.

²⁰ When Absalom's men arrived, they asked her, "Have you seen Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

⁴³ Morgan, G. Campbell "Searchlights from the Word" (New York: Revell, 1926)



The woman replied, "They were here, but they crossed over the brook." Absalom's men looked for them without success and returned to Jerusalem.

21 Then the two men crawled out of the well and hurried on to King David. "Quick!" they told him, "cross the Jordan tonight!" And they told him how Ahithophel had advised that he be captured and killed. 22 So David and all the people with him went across the Jordan River during the night, and they were all on the other bank before dawn.

If David was attacked at this point, he would have surely been defeated by the overwhelming military force of Absalom. Nevertheless, David was overshadowed by the unseen hand of God. Everything worked in the favor of King David, allowing his tired army to escape into the wilderness and regroup on the other side of the Jordan.

23 When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey, went to his hometown, set his affairs in order, and hanged himself. He died there and was buried in the family tomb.

Ahithophel lived in bitterness and died because of it. He knew the battle was lost. Young, prideful Absalom had fallen into a trap. Regardless, Ahithophel would not allow David to humiliate his family again. Instead he opted to die a most dishonorable death. *Suicide is always the ultimate action of cowardice. In the case of Saul, and in many similar cases, it is perfectly natural; but let it never be glorified as heroic. It is the last resort of the man who dare not stand up to life.*⁴⁴

24 David soon arrived at Mahanaim. By now, Absalom had mobilized the entire army of Israel and was leading his troops across the Jordan River. 25 Absalom had appointed Amasa as commander of his army, replacing Joab, who had been commander under David. (Amasa was Joab's cousin. His father was Jether, an Ishmaelite. His mother, Abigail daughter of Nahash, was the sister of Joab's mother, Zeruihah.) 26 Absalom and the Israelite army set up camp in the land of Gilead.

Absalom had an inexperienced commander leading his army. Furthermore, Absalom also intended to personally lead his armed forces to victory, regardless of the fact that he had no military training and never fought in a

⁴⁴ Morgan, G. Campbell "Searchlights from the Word" (New York: Revell, 1926)



serious battle. Absalom was like a little boy playing with toy soldiers, about to face hardened killers like Joab and the mighty men. This would not end well for the little toy soldiers.

27 When David arrived at Mahanaim, he was warmly greeted by Shobi son of Nahash, who came from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and by Makir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and by Barzillai of Gilead from Rogelim. 28 They brought sleeping mats, cooking pots, serving bowls, wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans, lentils, 29 honey, butter, sheep, goats, and cheese for David and those who were with him. For they said, "You must all be very hungry and tired and thirsty after your long march through the wilderness."

It likely took many months for Absalom to gather the army of Israel and to locate the exact position of King David. This worked to David's advantage because it allowed his unstable emotions to settle. He and his men regained their strength with the help of supplies that came from faithful supports. By the time Absalom was ready for war, David and his mighty men were well rested and fortified in the wilderness, ready for the upcoming battle. Joab especially was longing for the mud and blood. He had a personal score to settle with Absalom, for burning his field and betraying his trust when he urged David to bring him back home.





Questions To Ponder



- 1. Was Ahithophel's advice to publicly rape David's wives good political instruction or was it just motivated by a desire for revenge?**
- 2. Why did Absalom follow Ahithophel's advice, and what does this reveal about the nature of his rebellion? Did Absalom really hate his father that much?**
- 3. How would you handle a situation where a friend betrayed you, like Ahithophel betrayed David? Can you give a personal example?**
- 4. Compare and contrast Ahithophel's and Hushai's counsel. Why does Absalom find one strategy more appealing than the other?**
- 5. Ahithophel commits suicide when his advice is not taken. Why is he absolutely certain that Absalom's rebellion will fail?**



Absalom's Defeat and Death

18 David now mustered the men who were with him and appointed generals and captains to lead them. ² He sent the troops out in three groups, placing one group under Joab, one under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and one under Ittai, the man from Gath. The king told his troops, "I am going out with you."

³ But his men objected strongly. "You must not go," they urged. "If we have to turn and run—and even if half of us die—it will make no difference to Absalom's troops; they will be looking only for you. You are worth 10,000 of us, and it is better that you stay here in the town and send help if we need it."

⁴ "If you think that's the best plan, I'll do it," the king answered. So he stood alongside the gate of the town as all the troops marched out in groups of hundreds and of thousands.

The text strongly contrasts the humility of David and the pride of Absalom. David divided his army into 3 camps under the command of his most experienced, battle-hardened warriors. He knew from experience that he was prone to distraction and wanted to personally lead his army into battle. On the other hand, he respectfully submitted to the collective wisdom of his generals. David was too valuable to place on the front lines. This was now the place for his younger, stronger, mighty men. David needed to lead from the rear, where his experience would be most needed.

⁵ And the king gave this command to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai: "For my sake, deal gently with young Absalom." And all the troops heard the king give this order to his commanders.

David wanted Absalom to be captured

The Story
BEHIND
The Story

King David made it abundantly clear to all his men that they were not supposed to kill Absalom but only capture him. This command would have been clearly respected by all of David's men, except Joab. As demonstrated in the past, Joab had enough dirt on David to act independently of the king's authority. Consequently, Joab always did what was in his own best interest. At this point, he did not think it was politically





prudent for David to show compassion to the man who publicly raped his wives. This would make Israel seem weak in the eyes of the pagan nations. King David was supposed to be an internationally recognized warrior, known for his fierce brutality. The belief that Israel's king had gone soft, would be a catastrophic disaster for the reputation of the kingdom.

David always had trouble controlling Joab in the past. At times, the sons Zeruihah worked for themselves and their own best interest. They were extremely loyal to David when they agreed with his leadership. On the other hand, they were not afraid to disobey David when it served their own political interest.

***38** Then King David said to his officials, "Don't you realize that a great commander has fallen today in Israel? **39** And even though I am the anointed king, these two sons of Zeruihah—Joab and Abishai—are too strong for me to control. So may the Lord repay these evil men for their evil deeds." (2 Samuel 3)*

6 So the battle began in the forest of Ephraim, **7** and the Israelite troops were beaten back by David's men. There was a great slaughter that day, and 20,000 men laid down their lives. **8** The battle raged all across the countryside, and more men died because of the forest than were killed by the sword.



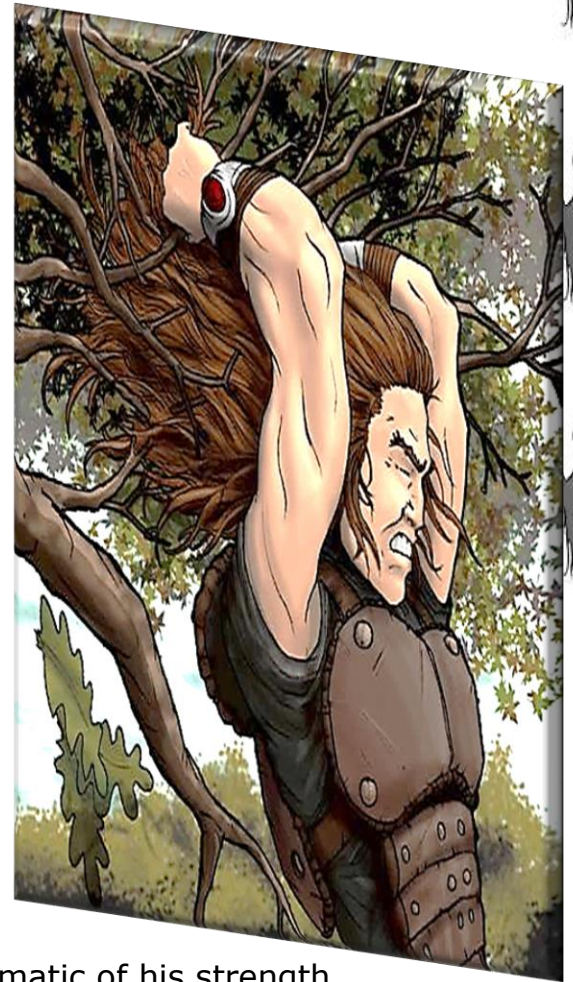


The text suggested that even the dense forest fought on the side of King David. This was much more than a poetic way of saying, the battle did not go well for young Absalom. In a poetic way, Yahweh fought against prideful Absalom and used the forest as an enemy against his retreating soldiers. *It is generally supposed that, when the army was broken, they ran into the wood, fell into pits, swamps, and so forth, and being entangled, were hewn down by David's men.*⁴⁵ Other traditional sources record that Absalom's men were supernaturally attacked by wild animals and this increased the confusion among his troops.

⁹ During the battle, Absalom happened to come upon some of David's men. He tried to escape on his mule, but as he rode beneath the thick branches of a great tree, his hair got caught in the tree. His mule kept going and left him dangling in the air. ¹⁰ One of David's men saw what had happened and told Joab, "I saw Absalom dangling from a great tree."

As mentioned, even the forest was fighting against prideful Absalom. This image communicated that the Hand of the Lord was fighting for David, as Absalom is shamefully plucked from his mule by the branch of an enemy tree. This was not the glorious image Absalom had in his mind.

His mighty war chariot was useless in the forest, where he was forced to ride a mule. Moreover, he did not even get close to King David; he was defeated by a mere tree. As mentioned by the author previously, Absalom's thick long hair was the source of his appeal to the people of Israel. Like Samson, his hair was emblematic of his strength and sadly, his pride. Similarly to Samson, pride will turn your greatest strength into your greatest weakness if left unchecked. The fact that Yahweh used his long thick hair as the means of his own demise was biblical irony. In the end Absalom the mighty rebel warrior, was left hanging helplessly



⁴⁵ Clarke, Adam "Clarke's Commentary: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with a Commentary and Critical Notes" Volume 2 (Joshua-Esther) (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1827)

from a tree. This was a tragic and humiliating sight, illustrating how the proud are brought down to nothing, by the Hand of God.

11 "What?" Joab demanded. "You saw him there and didn't kill him? I would have rewarded you with ten pieces of silver and a hero's belt!"

The military belt was the chief ornament of a soldier, and was highly prized in all ancient nations; it was also a rich present from one chieftain to another.⁴⁶

12 "I would not kill the king's son for even a thousand pieces of silver," the man replied to Joab. "We all heard the king say to you and Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake, please spare young Absalom.' 13 And if I had betrayed the king by killing his son—and the king would certainly find out who did it—you yourself would be the first to abandon me."

This man understood the ruthless nature of Joab. If David found out Absalom was murdered, helplessly hanging from a tree, he would be enraged. In this case, Joab would be first to sell him out and deny he ever told anyone to kill the king's son.

14 "Enough of this nonsense," Joab said. Then he took three daggers and plunged them into Absalom's heart as he dangled, still alive, in the great tree. 15 Ten of Joab's young armor bearers then surrounded Absalom and killed him.

Absalom was a horrible warrior, but he was a strong young man. Perhaps he begged Joab to see King David one last time before he died. But Joab would not allow this to happen again. Imagine: Absalom was still alive after having three daggers planted into his chest. In the end, he needed to be killed by ten of Joab's men. Truly, this young man was the strongest and most noble son of King David.

Absalom only received what he deserved. He was a murderer, a traitor, and a rapist. Joab knew that David was generally indulgent towards his children and would never punish Absalom. "He had seen David's action toward his sons characterized by lack of



⁴⁶ Clarke, Adam "Clarke's Commentary: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with a Commentary and Critical Notes" Volume 2 (Joshua-Esther) (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1827)



*discipline. In the highest interests of the kingdom his hand was raised to slay Absalom.*⁴⁷

16 Then Joab blew the ram's horn, and his men returned from chasing the army of Israel. 17 They threw Absalom's body into a deep pit in the forest and piled a great heap of stones over it. And all Israel fled to their homes.

Joab would not even allow David to see the body of his beloved son again. He did not want anyone to feel sorry for Absalom or ask any questions about how he died. He intentionally buried his body in the forest so that he would never be remembered in Israel again.

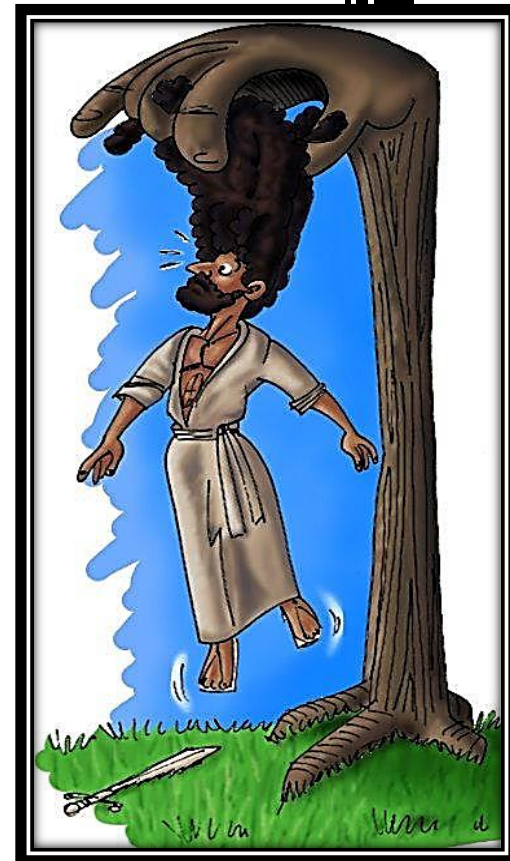
18 During his lifetime, Absalom had built a monument to himself in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to carry on my name." He named the monument after himself, and it is known as Absalom's Monument to this day.

The Lesson Of Absalom



There is a tragic lesson to be learned in the life of Absalom. It's great to have a charismatic anointing, and to be gifted. However, if your anointing is not tempered by character, your talent will take you to places where you can't stay. In the past, many gifted leaders have been destroyed by their own anointings because they did not mature to the point where they could handle their own gifting.

When a leader is promoted too quickly, this opens up that individual to pride. Pride is the easiest thing in the human heart for Satan to manipulate. Therefore, the Scripture warns about prematurely promoting leaders, especially young men, before their time. Absalom was not raised or mentored by his father David. He had absolutely no discipleship, and therefore could not develop his anointing properly. He was filled with talent and potential, but sadly died the death of a fool



⁴⁷ Morgan, G. Campbell "An Exposition of the Whole Bible" (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1959)

because no one took the time to notice this gifted young man.

In the New Testament, Paul reminded Timothy that positions in leadership, should not be granted hastily. Furthermore, Paul warned that a young believer should never be promoted to the position of an elder until their character is fully tested. Regardless of the gifting one might have, character is something that needs to be developed over time. Your gifting alone should not bring you to a position of leadership, because this is a place where only your character can keep you.

⁶ A church leader must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall. (1 Timothy 3)

David Mourns Absalom's Death



¹⁹ Then Zadok's son Ahimaaz said, "Let me run to the king with the good news that the Lord has rescued him from his enemies."

²⁰ "No," Joab told him, "it wouldn't be good news to the king that his son is dead. You can be my messenger another time, but not today."

²¹ Then Joab said to a man from Ethiopia, "Go tell the king what you have seen." The man bowed and ran off.

²² But Ahimaaz continued to plead with Joab, "Whatever happens, please let me go, too."

"Why should you go, my son?" Joab replied. "There will be no reward for your news."

²³ "Yes, but let me go anyway," he begged.

Joab finally said, "All right, go ahead." So Ahimaaz took the less demanding route by way of the plain and ran to Mahanaim ahead of the Ethiopian.

Ahimaaz desperately wanted to share the good news with the king. David had once again defeated his enemies, and the Lord





had showed him great mercy. He ran faster than the Ethiopian warrior, because he wanted to be the first to bring good news to the king.

24 While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates of the town, the watchman climbed to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked, he saw a lone man running

toward them. 25 He shouted the news down to David, and the king replied, "If he is alone, he has news."

As the messenger came closer, 26 the watchman saw another man running toward them. He shouted down, "Here comes another one!" The king replied, "He also will have news."

27 "The first man runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok," the watchman said. "He is a good man and comes with good news," the king replied.

28 Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, "Everything is all right!" He bowed before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise to the Lord your God, who has handed over the rebels who dared to stand against my lord the king."

29 "What about young Absalom?" the king demanded. "Is he all right?" Ahimaaz replied, "When Joab told me to come, there was a lot of commotion. But I didn't know what was happening."

Wisely, Ahimaaz came to his senses when King David asked about his son Absalom. The text clearly said he knew Absalom was dead, but at this moment he refused to tell the king. Perhaps he was unsure about David's reaction to this tragic news. Therefore, he played dumb and said he had no idea what happened to young Absalom.

30 "Wait here," the king told him. So Ahimaaz stepped aside.

31 Then the man from Ethiopia arrived and said, "I have good news for my lord the king. Today the Lord has rescued you from all those who rebelled against you."



**No matter how tall
a son grows, he will
always look up to his dad.**





32 "What about young Absalom?" the king demanded. "Is he all right?"



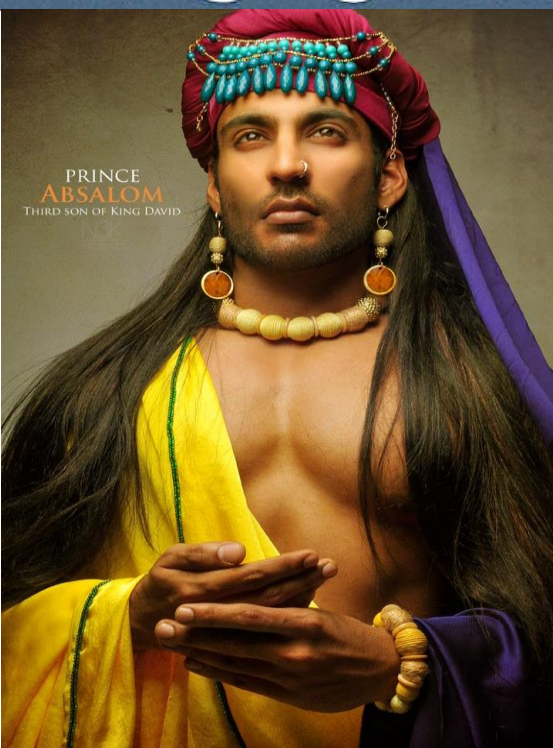
And the Ethiopian replied, "May all of your enemies, my lord the king, both now and in the future, share the fate of that young man!"

The Ethiopian messenger was faithful to his task. He was sent to deliver a message and to speak truthfully to King David. Regardless of his response, the Ethiopian carried out his duty with dignity and told David the truth.



33 The king was overcome with emotion. He went up to the room over the gateway and burst into tears. And as he went, he cried, "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son."

Dear son,
I have so much left
to say to you..



This was a disgraceful display motivated by the pain of a broken-hearted father. David always had trouble being the King of Israel and a good father to his children. As the king of Israel, he should have been happy about the defeat of his rebellious son. As a father, he grieved over the mistakes he made raising his son to be rebellious. King David contributed to the death of his son Absalom in many ways. At times he was too lenient. At other times, he was too strict. He drove his son farther into rebellion, by the inconsistency of his poor parenting. He never mentored or developed this young man, similarly to the way Saul refused to mentor him. Only a loving father can understand the heart of King David's cry for his son Absalom. Absalom was at times his mortal enemy, but also always remained his little baby boy.

Our children may plunge into the worst of sins, but they are our children still. They may scoff at our God; they may tear our heart to pieces with their wickedness; we cannot take complacency in them,



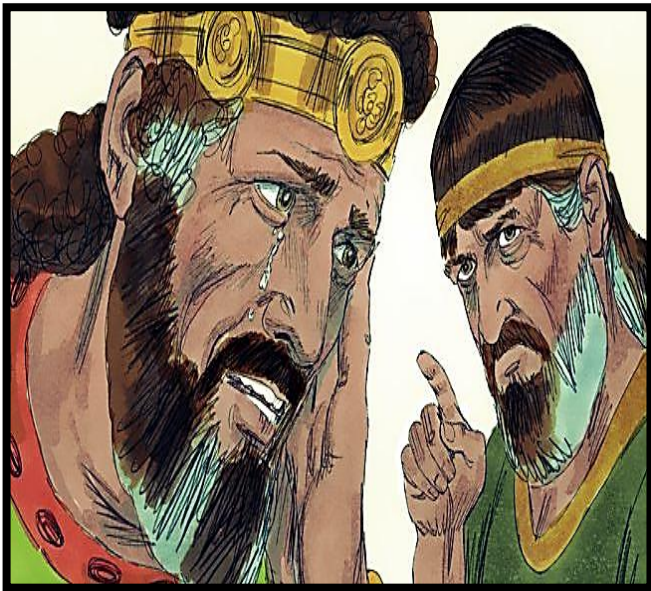
TEARS ARE WORDS

but at the same time we cannot unchild them, nor erase their image from our hearts."⁴⁸

The words "My son, my son Absalom" carry more meaning than a million words can express. Absalom was David's son in both his strength and weakness. All David can say at this moment is "my son, my son".

*This surely had a deeper note in it than that of the merely half-conscious repetition of words occasioned by personal grief. The father recognized how much he was responsible for the son. It is as though he had said: He is indeed my son, his weaknesses are my weaknesses, his passions are my passions, his sins are my sins.*⁴⁹

Joab Rebukes the King



19 Word soon reached Joab that the king was weeping and mourning for Absalom. ² As all the people heard of the king's deep grief for his son, the joy of that day's victory was turned into deep sadness. ³ They crept back into the town that day as though they were ashamed and had deserted in battle. ⁴ The king covered his face with his hands and kept on crying, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

This was actually a disgraceful moment in the life of King David. This was yet another reminder of the difficulty in living two separate lives. On the one hand, he had a private life as he mourned relentlessly for the catastrophic loss of his third son. On the other hand, he had a public life, where he needed to celebrate his military victory.

Why did Absalom's life mean more to King David, than the brave men who gave their lives in battle, defending his Kingdom? If David made his mighty

⁴⁸ Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)

⁴⁹ Morgan, G. Campbell "An Exposition of the Whole Bible" (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1959)



PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER MAN!

men feel ashamed of defending his Kingdom, they had every right to walk away from him that day. Many other young, bright, and promising men died that day in the service of David. As a king, he had no right to publicly mourn the loss of his rebellious son, who caused all the bloodshed in the first place. As a father, he lamented his mistakes and wished he could do things differently.

Nevertheless, David needed to be the King of Israel at this specific moment or his loyal troops would desert him. Luckily, Joab was there to talk some sense into the broken-hearted king.

⁵ Then Joab went to the king's room and said to him, "We saved your life today and the lives of your sons, your daughters, and your wives and concubines. Yet you act like this, making us feel ashamed of ourselves. ⁶ You seem to love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that your commanders and troops mean nothing to you. It seems that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died, you would be pleased. ⁷ Now go out there and congratulate your troops, for I swear by the Lord that if you don't go out, not a single one of them will remain here tonight. Then you will be worse off than ever before."

This sharp rebuke was necessary to pull David out of his deep self pity. His grief and depression would do nothing to restore Absalom. Moreover, it was better for him to be dead than alive. It would have been a total political nightmare if David attempted to pardon Absalom after raping his wives publicly. As a man of God, David was not free to express his feelings any way he wanted. David was the King of Israel and the Lord's anointed. He had a duty to God that was greater than his love for his family. Even Aaron was forbidden to mourn the death of his two sons, because he had to uphold his position as High Priest. In the service of God, duty comes before feelings.

⁶ Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not show grief by leaving your hair uncombed or by tearing your clothes. If you do, you will die, and the Lord's anger will strike the whole community of Israel. However, the rest of the Israelites, your relatives, may mourn because of the Lord's fiery destruction of Nadab and Abihu. ⁷ But you must not leave the entrance of the Tabernacle or you will die, for you have been anointed with the Lord's anointing oil. (Leviticus 10)

If your dear ones are dead you cannot restore them to life by your unbelief; and if they still survive, it will be a pity to be downcast and unbelieving when there is no occasion for it. 'Your strength is to sit still.' Remember that you

are a Christian, and a Christian is expected to be more self-possessed than those who have no God to fly to.⁵⁰

⁸ So the king went out and took his seat at the town gate, and as the news spread throughout the town that he was there, everyone went to him.

Joab's rebuke was strong, but necessary. The position of the king demanded that David put away his personal feelings and complete his duty. As servants of God, we need to understand that our families do not come first when it comes to the things of God. Both David and Aaron needed to demonstrate their loyalty publicly, and keep their personal feelings to themselves.

Weak hearted believers may see this type of discipline as unreasonable because what in the world could be worth more than your own child? According to the New Testament, your commitment to God is worth far more than your commitment to your family. This was Yahshua's undeniable point when He said...

³⁷ "If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁸ If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. ³⁹ If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it. (Matthew 10)

Meanwhile, the Israelites who had supported Absalom fled to their homes. ⁹ And throughout all the tribes of Israel there was much discussion and argument going on. The people were saying, "The king rescued us from our enemies and saved us from the Philistines, but Absalom chased him out of the country. ¹⁰ Now Absalom, whom we anointed to rule over us, is dead. Why not ask David to come back and be our king again?"

After the civil war, Israel was once again divided; some being loyal to David, and others who had sided with Absalom. Now that Absalom was dead and the rebellion was over, and the nation needed to be united once again.

¹¹ Then King David sent Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to say to the elders of Judah, "Why are you the last ones to welcome back the king into his palace? For I have heard that all Israel is ready. ¹² You are my relatives, my own tribe, my own flesh and blood! So why are

⁵⁰ Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)



you the last ones to welcome back the king?" ¹³ And David told them to tell Amasa, "Since you are my own flesh and blood, like Joab, may God strike me and even kill me if I do not appoint you as commander of my army in his place."

¹⁴ Then Amasa convinced all the men of Judah, and they responded unanimously. They sent word to the king, "Return to us, and bring back all who are with you."

David knew Joab was truly responsible for the death of his son Absalom. Who else would disobey the direct order of the king and still live? This was David's opportunity to finally get rid of Joab as his commander, and replace him with a man he could easily control. By promoting Amasa; who was Absalom's general, as his commander and chief, David offered a peace treaty to all the rebellious men of Israel.

The Spirit of Joab



Joab was both a blessing and a curse to King David. He was David's most loyal soldier, but he could not control him. Joab always acted in the best interest of Joab. When David needed somebody to do his dirty work, he always turned to Joab. When David needed Uriah to die in battle, he sent the message to Joab. When David needed a city conquered, he placed Joab in charge of his army.



COLD BLOODED KILLER

On the other hand, Joab conceivably kept the letter David sent to him concerning the execution of Uriah, as a "get out of jail free card". David could never publicly accuse Joab of murder because they had too much dirt on one another. Therefore, they had a necessary relationship and needed each other. Joab would tell David the truth, in his moment of crisis, to protect his kingdom, while also being the one who disobeyed a direct order, not to kill Absalom. When Joab believed he was acting in the best interest of the Kingdom of Israel, and his position as the leader of Israel's army, he openly defied the desires of King David. Like Absalom, Joab was rebellious, and obeyed David according to his own interest. He did not want however, to be the King of Israel. He wanted to hold power from behind the curtain.

A leader needs to be aware of the power of a Joab like spirit. Joab hurt David many times because he would not submit to his authority. When David promoted Abner, Joab murdered him. When David forbade his men from harming young Absalom, Joab murdered him. When David made Amasa, the commander of Israel's army, Joab also murdered him. Joab was completely loyal to David when he agreed with his decisions. However, when Joab disagreed or was threatened by David's decision making, he did what was best for himself.

So why did Joab become so powerful in the kingdom? He became a necessary evil, because David always used him to do his dirty work. In leadership, information is power. The more information someone has about the leader, is the more power they have to destroy their reputation. Joab had enough dirt on David to severely damage his political status. Therefore, they tolerated each other, but did not trust one another. There is a saying, "don't make a deal with the Devil".

David made a "deal with the devil" called Joab and lived to regret it for many years. He could not escape his contract with Joab as long as he lived. Nevertheless, he advised his son Solomon to kill Joab quietly so he would not fall under his spell.



"DON'T DEAL WITH THE DEVIL"



5 "And there is something else. You know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me when he murdered my two army commanders, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He pretended that it was an act of war, but it was done in a time of peace, staining his belt and sandals with innocent blood. 6 Do with him what you think best, but don't let him grow old and go to his grave in peace. (1 Kings 2)

Solomon took David's advice to heart and executed Joab promptly for supporting his brother Adonijah, in his bid to become the King of Israel. Solomon would not share his power with an uncontrollable general and took the necessary steps to eliminate his influence immediately.


David's Return to Jerusalem

15 So the king started back to Jerusalem. And when he arrived at the Jordan River, the people of Judah came to Gilgal to meet him and escort him across the river. 16 Shimei son of Gera, the man from Bahurim in Benjamin, hurried across with the men of Judah to welcome King David. 17 A thousand other men from the tribe of Benjamin were with him, including Ziba, the chief servant of the house of Saul, and Ziba's fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed down to the Jordan to meet the king. 18 They crossed the shallows of the Jordan to bring the king's household across the river, helping him in every way they could.

David's Mercy to Shimei

As the king was about to cross the river, Shimei fell down before him. 19 "My lord the king, please forgive me," he pleaded. "Forget the terrible thing your servant did when you left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. 20 I know how much I sinned. That is why I have come here today, the very first person in all Israel to greet my lord the king."





This is a strange situation. Shimei clearly deserved to die because he threw dirt on David and cursed the King of Israel, but David quickly forgave him. In the past, David was unable to completely forgive Absalom. But David knew he needed to extend forgiveness for the sake of the unity of his kingdom.

21 Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said, "Shimei should die, for he cursed the Lord's anointed king!"



22 "Who asked your opinion, you sons of Zeruiah!" David exclaimed. "Why have you become my adversary today? This is not a day for execution, for today I am once again the king of Israel!"

Revealing his frustration with Joab and Abishai, David lamented over their desire to solve everything with violence. Israel had enough violence to last them for a long time. What the nation needed was peace and reconciliation.

23 Then, turning to Shimei, David vowed, "Your life will be spared."

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

24 Now Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, came down from Jerusalem to meet the king. He had not cared for his feet, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes since the day the king left Jerusalem. 25 "Why didn't you come with me, Mephibosheth?" the king asked him.

26 Mephibosheth replied, "My lord the king, my servant Ziba deceived me. I told him, 'Saddle my donkey so I can go with the king.' For as you know I am crippled. 27 Ziba has slandered me by saying that I refused to come. But I know that my lord the king is like an angel of God, so do what you think is best. 28 All my relatives and I could expect only death from you, my lord, but instead you have honored me by allowing me to eat at your own table! What more can I ask?"



29 “You’ve said enough,” David replied. “I’ve decided that you and Ziba will divide your land equally between you.”

30 “Give him all of it,” Mephibosheth said. “I am content just to have you safely back again, my lord the king!”

David eventually realized that he was deceived by Ziba, but does not want to stir up unnecessary controversy at this time. Nevertheless, Mephibosheth proved his innocence by giving away his claim to the land. He was truly an honorable son to David, just like his faithful father Jonathan.

David’s Kindness to Barzillai

31 Barzillai of Gilead had come down from Rogelim to escort the king across the Jordan. 32 He was very old—eighty years of age—and very wealthy. He was the one who had provided food for the king during his stay in Mahanaim. 33 “Come across with me and live in Jerusalem,” the king said to Barzillai. “I will take care of you there.”

34 “No,” he replied, “I am far too old to go with the king to Jerusalem. 35 I am eighty years old today, and I can no longer enjoy anything. Food and wine are no longer tasty, and I cannot hear the singers as they sing. I would only be a burden to my lord the king. 36 Just to go across the Jordan River with the king is all the honor I need! 37 Then let me return again to die in my own town, where my father and mother are buried. But here is your servant, my son Kimham. Let him go with my lord the king and receive whatever you want to give him.”

Barzillai demonstrated the heart of a loyal friend. Unlike the wicked Ziba, his service to the king was selfless. He gave away vast amounts of resources when he helped David in his time of need. He was not storing up his wealth, but spent it on something that mattered for eternity.

Moreover, he did not want to be rewarded for his service. What does a reward mean to an old man ready for death? Will wealth, honor and rewards add a single day to the life of an old man? He was rewarded with the knowledge David was alive and well. Now he could go home and die peacefully knowing he served his king faithfully during his lifetime.

38 “Good,” the king agreed. “Kimham will go with me, and I will help him in any way you would like. And I will do for you anything you want.” 39 So all the people crossed the Jordan with the king. After



David had blessed Barzillai and kissed him, Barzillai returned to his own home.

⁴⁰ The king then crossed over to Gilgal, taking Kimham with him. All the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel escorted the king on his way.

An Argument over the King

⁴¹ But all the men of Israel complained to the king, "The men of Judah stole the king and didn't give us the honor of helping take you, your household, and all your men across the Jordan."

⁴² The men of Judah replied, "The king is one of our own kinsmen. Why should this make you angry? We haven't eaten any of the king's food or received any special favors!"

⁴³ "But there are ten tribes in Israel," the others replied. "So we have ten times as much right to the king as you do. What right do you have to treat us with such contempt? Weren't we the first to speak of bringing him back to be our king again?" The argument continued back and forth, and the men of Judah spoke even more harshly than the men of Israel.

The seeds of Rebellion do not die quickly once planted. In the beginning, David did an amazing job in uniting the tribes of Israel into one nation. Absalom, destroyed much of the unity David had built over the years. The distrust among the tribes resurfaced after the Civil War. Judah and the men of Israel competed for the loyalty of the king. But this had nothing to do with King David. They were competing among themselves for future political power, because David would eventually die.

REBELLION



- 1. Discuss the implications of David's instructions to his generals regarding Absalom. Was he justified in asking that his son be spared?**
- 2. What were the implications of Absalom hanging from a tree by his hair? What did this picture reveal to you about youthful pride?**
- 3. How did Joab's decision to kill Absalom conflict with David's orders, and what does this indicate about his values and motivations? Was he protecting David or harming him?**
- 4. How does the news of Absalom's defeat and death affect David? Compare his reaction to the expected reaction of a king whose throne has just been secured.**
- 5. Was David justified in weeping for his son, in light of the brave men who died that same day defending his kingdom?**



The Revolt of Sheba

20 There happened to be a troublemaker there named Sheba son of Bicri, a man from the tribe of Benjamin. Sheba blew a ram's horn and began to chant:

**"Down with the dynasty of David!
We have no interest in the son of
Jesse.
Come on, you men of Israel,
back to your homes!"**

² So all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed with their king and escorted him from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

David tried his best to make this a peaceful day. The return of the king was supposed to be a celebration of national reconciliation and unity. However, the prideful warriors of Judah were totally disrespectful to the leaders of the 10 northern tribes of Israel. Their lack of respect reignited the historic division between the tribes. Consequently, Sheba, man from the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe of King Saul, instantly started another rebellion.

³ When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to look after the palace and placed them in seclusion. Their needs were provided for, but he no longer slept with them. So each of them lived like a widow until she died.

Ironically, David's 10 concubines lived with the same shame Tamar suffered with all her life. The reoccurring themes of this biblical narrative is amazing.



4 Then the king told Amasa, "Mobilize the army of Judah within three days, and report back at that time." 5 So Amasa went out to notify Judah, but it took him longer than the time he had been given.

General Amasa was a weak and incompetent military leader. First, he failed miserably to defend Absalom against the mighty men of David. Secondly, he failed to rally the forces of Judah to crush the rebellion of Sheba. Obviously, Amasa needed to be replaced quickly.

6 Then David said to Abishai, "Sheba son of Bicri is going to hurt us more than Absalom did. Quick, take my troops and chase after him before he gets into a fortified town where we can't reach him."

7 So Abishai and Joab, together with the king's bodyguard and all the mighty warriors, set out from Jerusalem to go after Sheba. 8 As they arrived at the great stone in Gibeon, Amasa met them. Joab was wearing his military tunic with a dagger strapped to his belt. As he stepped forward to greet Amasa, he slipped the dagger from its sheath.

When General Amasa finally arrived on the battlefield with his troops, they were late because Joab had already prepared for battle. Pretending to welcome him, Joab already intended to murder him in cold blood.

9 "How are you, my cousin?" Joab said and took him by the beard with his right hand as though to kiss him. 10 Amasa didn't notice the dagger in his left hand, and Joab stabbed him in the stomach with it so that his insides gushed out onto the ground. Joab did not need to strike again, and Amasa soon died. Joab and his brother Abishai left him lying there and continued after Sheba.

Joab once again demonstrated how merciless he was. He did not even want to finish off his rival, but left him at the side of the road with his intestines hanging out. His brutality would stand as a warning to anyone else who applied for his position as commander and chief.

The pulling of the beard was a friendly gesture in Hebrew culture; it was how close friends greeted one another. Like Judas, Joab murdered an innocent man with a kiss.

11 One of Joab's young men shouted to Amasa's troops, "If you are for Joab and David, come and follow Joab." 12 But Amasa lay in his



CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS



blood in the middle of the road, and Joab's man saw that everyone was stopping to stare at him. So he pulled him off the road into a field and threw a cloak over him. ¹³ With Amasa's body out of the way, everyone went on with Joab to capture Sheba son of Bicri.

Joab could murder a man and sleep like a baby in the night. Killing was what he did for a living, it was his profession, and he was very good at his job. David always needed Joab and Joab always needed David. Nevertheless, Judah had a new and competent commander to lead David's troops into battle. *For all his ruthless devotion to David, Joab was a brilliant general. The soldiers naturally followed the commander who successfully led them many times before.*⁵¹

¹⁴ Meanwhile, Sheba traveled through all the tribes of Israel and eventually came to the town of Abel-beth-maacah. All the members of his own clan, the Bicrites, assembled for battle and followed him into the town. ¹⁵ When Joab's forces arrived, they attacked Abel-beth-maacah. They built a siege ramp against the town's fortifications and began battering down the wall. ¹⁶ But a wise woman in the town called out to Joab, "Listen to me, Joab. Come over here so I can talk to you." ¹⁷ As he approached, the woman asked, "Are you Joab?"

"I am," he replied.

So she said, "Listen carefully to your servant."

"I'm listening," he said.

¹⁸ Then she continued, "There used to be a saying, 'If you want to settle an argument, ask advice at the town of Abel.' ¹⁹ I am one who is peace loving and faithful in Israel. But you are destroying an important town in Israel. Why do you want to devour what belongs to the Lord?"

²⁰ And Joab replied, "Believe me, I don't want to devour or destroy your town! ²¹ That's not my purpose. All I want is a man named Sheba son of Bicri from the hill country of Ephraim, who has revolted



⁵¹ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 20





against King David. If you hand over this one man to me, I will leave the town in peace.”

“All right,” the woman replied, “we will throw his head over the wall to you.” ²² Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off Sheba’s head and threw it out to Joab. So he blew the ram’s horn and called his troops back from the attack. They all returned to their homes, and Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

Joab and the woman were both reasonable people. She did not want her town destroyed and Joab just wanted the head of Sheba. Obviously, Sheba had overestimated his popularity and the loyalty of his men. It was an easy decision for the community. Throw Sheba’s head over the wall and everyone goes home alive!

²³ Now Joab was the commander of the army of Israel. Benaiah son of Jehoiada was captain of the king’s bodyguard. ²⁴ Adoniram was in charge of forced labor. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the royal historian. ²⁵ Sheva was the court secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. ²⁶ And Ira, a descendant of Jair, was David’s personal priest.

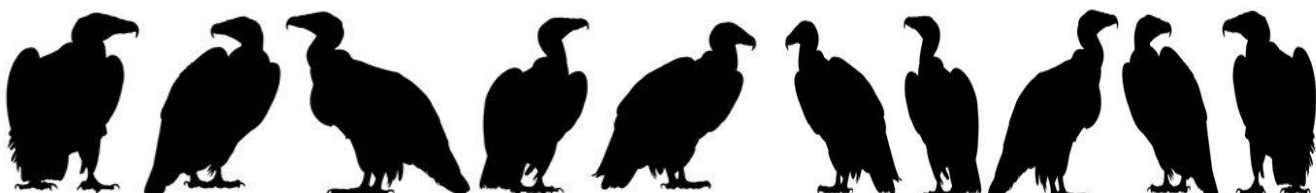
To David’s surprise, Joab marched into Jerusalem with the head of his enemy on a stick to display to the king. This was both a happy day for King David and a sad one as well. Would David ever rid himself of his ruthless commander Joab?

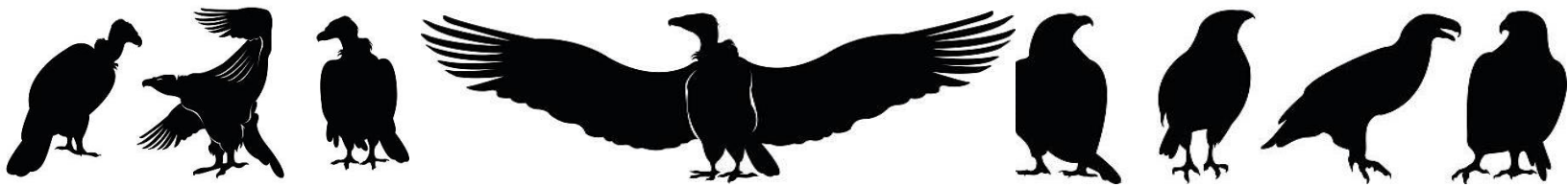


David Avenges the Gibeonites

21 There was a famine during David’s reign that lasted for three years, so David asked the Lord about it. And the Lord said, “The famine has come because Saul and his family are guilty of murdering the Gibeonites.”

1000 years earlier, the Gibeonites made a covenant with Joshua to be servants of Israel forever. Even though they tricked Joshua into making this covenant, it was binding agreement and lasted for many generations. In his





raging madness, Saul possibly saw the Gibeonites as a threat to Israel and slaughtered them mercilessly.

The indiscriminate slaughter of the defenseless Gibeonite people, placed a curse on the ground that needed to be avenged. Israel owed a debt to the people of Gibeon that needed to be repaid for the curse to be removed.

² So the king summoned the Gibeonites. They were not part of Israel but were all that was left of the nation of the Amorites. The people of Israel had sworn not to kill them, but Saul, in his zeal for Israel and Judah, had tried to wipe them out. ³ David asked them, “What can I do for you? How can I make amends so that you will bless the Lord’s people again?”

⁴ “Well, money can’t settle this matter between us and the family of Saul,” the Gibeonites replied. “Neither can we demand the life of anyone in Israel.” “What can I do then?” David asked. “Just tell me and I will do it for you.” ⁵ Then they replied, “It was Saul who planned to destroy us, to keep us from having any place at all in the territory of Israel. ⁶ So let seven of Saul’s sons be handed over to us, and we will execute them before the Lord at Gibeon, on the mountain of the Lord.”

The Gibeonites made it clear that they didn’t want money or direct retribution. Though Saul made a wholesale slaughter of the Gibeonites, they didn’t ask for the same among the people of Israel.⁵²

“All right,” the king said, “I will do it.” ⁷ The king spared Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth, who was Saul’s grandson, because of the oath David and Jonathan had sworn before the Lord. ⁸ But he gave them Saul’s two sons Armoni and Mephibosheth, whose mother was Rizpah daughter of Aiah. He also gave them the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab, the wife of Adriel son of Barzillai from Meholah. ⁹ The men of Gibeon executed them on the mountain before the Lord. So all seven of them died together at the beginning of the barley harvest.

The text said David spared Mephibosheth, but later it said he handed over Mephibosheth to be executed. According to most commentaries this was a popular name in Saul’s family. The first Mephibosheth was Jonathan’s son

⁵² David ended the psalm understanding his position in mercy. Though earlier in the psalm he proclaimed his own righteousness, he came back to the foundation of God’s mercy. David’s relationship with God was based on God’s great mercy, not upon David’s own righteousness.



who was crippled. Armoni and the second Mephibosheth were Saul's sons from a woman called Rizpah.

¹⁰ Then Rizpah daughter of Aiah, the mother of two of the men, spread burlap on a rock and stayed there the entire harvest season. She prevented the scavenger birds from tearing at their bodies during the day and stopped wild animals from eating them at night. ¹¹ When David learned what Rizpah, Saul's concubine, had done, ¹² he went to the people of Jabesh-gilead and retrieved the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. (When the Philistines had killed Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa, the people of Jabesh-gilead stole their bodies from the public square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hung them.) ¹³ So David obtained the bones of Saul and Jonathan, as well as the bones of the men the Gibeonites had executed. ¹⁴ Then the king ordered that they bury the bones in the tomb of Kish, Saul's father, at the town of Zela in the land of Benjamin. After that, God ended the famine in the land.

Battles against Philistine Giants

¹⁵ Once again the Philistines were at war with Israel. And when David and his men were in the thick of battle, David became weak and exhausted. ¹⁶ Ishbi-benob was a descendant of the giants; his bronze spearhead weighed more than seven pounds, and he was armed with a new sword. He had cornered David and was about to kill him.

This was a sad situation for the once mighty King David. While in battle with another Philistine giant, a giant much smaller than his famous rival Goliath. David had become too old and too weak to overcome his adversary. Just before David would have been killed in battle, his life was spared by Abishai, the brother of Joab.





This story stands to remind us that even the strongest young men eventually grow weak and weary. David was the light of Israel and had his time in the sun. Now it was the season for the younger and stronger men to go out to war. Although David desperately wanted to remain on the battlefield, he could not because he was a liability to his men. Sadly, even the mighty King

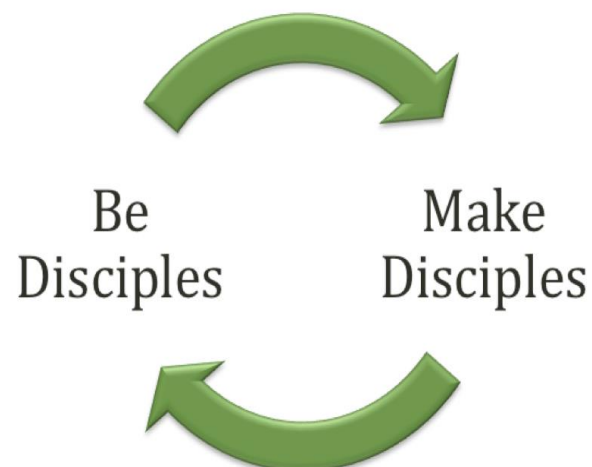
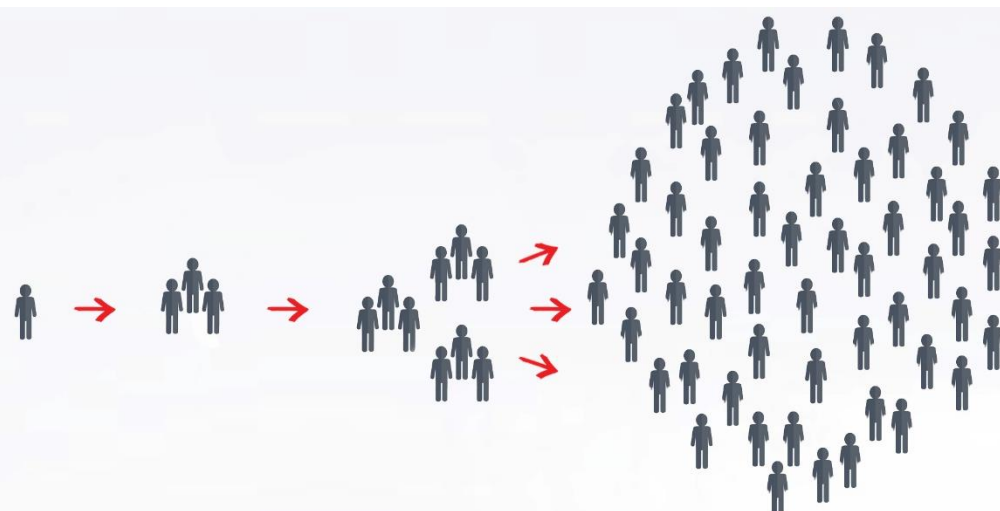
David had become too old, too weak, and too slow to remain on the front line, doing what he always loved to do.

17 But Abishai son of Zeruah came to David's rescue and killed the Philistine. Then David's men declared, "You are not going out to battle with us again! Why risk snuffing out the light of Israel?"

The Bible tells us to serve the Lord when we are young. Many years ago, David stayed home when his men went off to battle. He regretted this decision every day of his life. Now in his later years, David wanted to go to battle but was physically too old. This reminds us that we need to serve God when we are young and strong. The time will come, when we want to serve God, but our bodies will not allow us.

18 After this, there was another battle against the Philistines at Gob. As they fought, Sibbecai from Hushah killed Saph, another descendant of the giants.

19 During another battle at Gob, Elhanan son of Jair from Bethlehem killed the brother of Goliath of Gath. The handle of his spear was as thick as a weaver's beam!



²⁰ In another battle with the Philistines at Gath, they encountered a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in all, who was also a descendant of the giants. ²¹ But when he defied and taunted Israel, he was killed by Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimea.



²² These four Philistines were descendants of the giants of Gath, but David and his warriors killed them.

The magnificent story of king David ends with a humble reminder. David grew too old to kill giants, but he raised up a generation of disciples who were willing and able to do what David could no longer do. One of the greatest testimonies of David's legacy was the fact that his mighty men could also kill giants. Israel did not have to forever rely on King David to fight their enemies, because he had successfully mentored a generation of capable warriors. Regardless, the story reminds us to cherish our youth and to serve Yahweh when we are strong, because the day will come when we wish we could.

Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble
come and the years approach
when you will say,
"I find no pleasure in them".
Ecclesiastes 12:1



David's Song of Praise

22 David sang this song to the Lord on the day the Lord rescued him from all his enemies and from Saul. ² He sang:

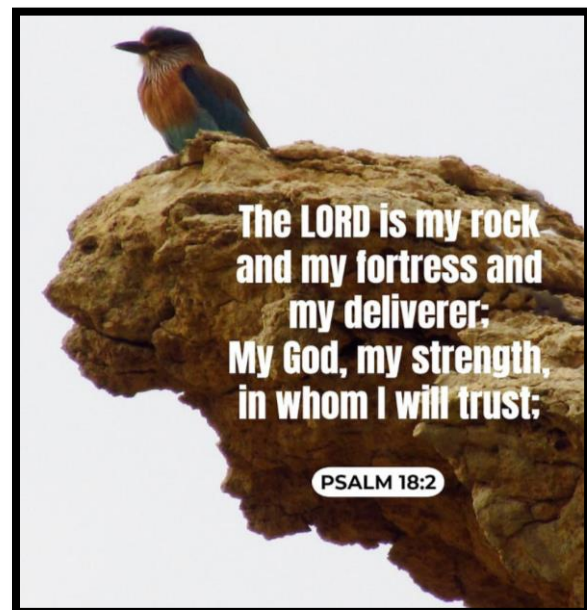
**"The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;
³ my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.
He is my refuge, my savior,
the one who saves me from violence.
⁴ I called on the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my enemies.**

This Psalm is similar to Psalm 18 which he composed many years ago. Perhaps, David recycled his material depending on the celebration and circumstances. We have another form of this Psalm with significant variations... and this suggests the idea that it was sung by David at different times when he reviewed his own remarkable history, and observed the gracious hand of God in it all.⁵³

Regardless of when it was written, the idea of Yahweh being David's rock held true all the days of David's life.

**⁵ "The waves of death overwhelmed me;
floods of destruction swept over me.
⁶ The grave wrapped its ropes around me;
death laid a trap in my path.
⁷ But in my distress I cried out to the Lord;
yes, I cried to my God for help.
He heard me from his sanctuary;
my cry reached his ears.**

David had endured many years of suffering and heartache. At times he seemed to be sinking in sorrow and despair. Yet the Lord had brought him to the end of his journey, and he still managed to praise the Lord.



⁵³ Spurgeon, Charles Haddon "The New Park Street Pulpit" Volumes 1-6 and "The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit" Volumes 7-63 (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1990)



IN MY DISTRESS I CALLED UPON THE LORD

8 "Then the earth quaked and trembled.

The foundations of the heavens shook; they quaked because of his anger.

9 Smoke poured from his nostrils; fierce flames leaped from his mouth.

Glowing coals blazed forth from him.

10 He opened the heavens and came down; dark storm clouds were beneath his feet.

11 Mounted on a mighty angelic being, he flew, soaring on the wings of the wind.

12 He shrouded himself in darkness, veiling his approach with dense rain clouds.

13 A great brightness shone around him, and burning coals blazed forth.

14 The Lord thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded.

15 He shot arrows and scattered his enemies; his lightning flashed, and they were confused.

16 Then at the command of the Lord, at the blast of his breath, the bottom of the sea could be seen, and the foundations of the earth were laid bare.

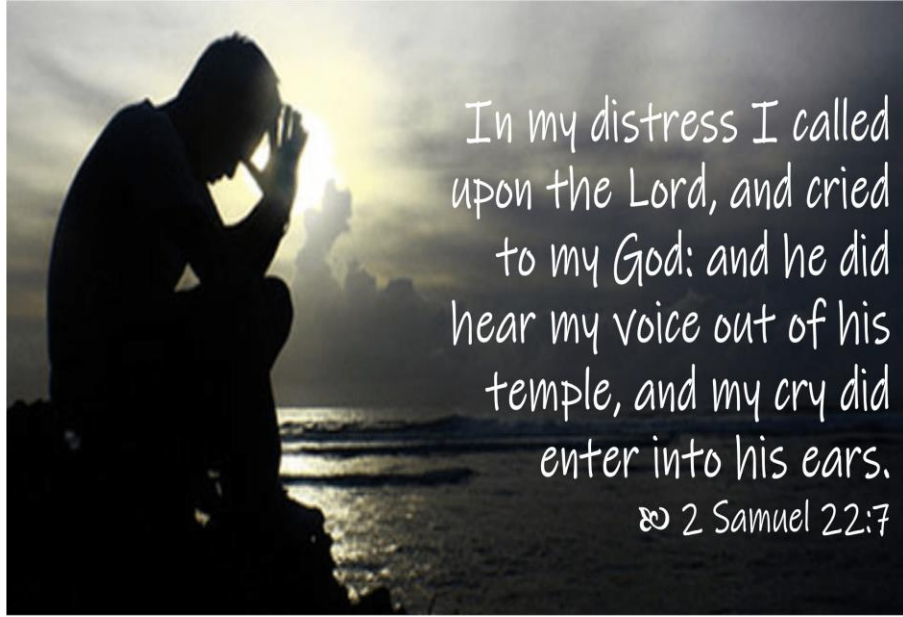
17 "He reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters.

18 He rescued me from my powerful enemies, from those who hated me and were too strong for me.

With his amazing skills as a poet and songwriter, David recalled how Yahweh had mercy on him and rescued him many times in his life. He rejoiced greatly in the faithfulness of God, as his days drew to a close.

19 They attacked me at a moment when I was in distress, but the Lord supported me.

20 He led me to a place of safety; he rescued me because he delights in me.



In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.

2 Samuel 22:7

IN MY DISTRESS I CALLED UPON THE LORD

IN MY DISTRESS I CALLED UPON THE LORD

IN MY DISTRESS I CALLED UPON THE LORD



**21 The Lord rewarded me for doing right;
he restored me because of my innocence.**

Many tragic things happened in the life of David, but he never doubted that his sins were forgiven. He lost 3 sons so far, and would lose another in time, but he confessed his innocence because he knew his sins were blotted out; never to be remembered again.

**22 For I have kept the ways of the Lord;
I have not turned from my God to follow evil.**

**23 I have followed all his regulations;
I have never abandoned his decrees.**

**24 I am blameless before God;
I have kept myself from sin.**

**25 The Lord rewarded me for doing right.
He has seen my innocence.**

If anyone reminded David of great sin with Bathsheba, he would acknowledge the consequences, but not the sin. He patiently endured the consequences of his sin all his life, while simultaneously embracing the fact that he was totally forgiven.

**26 "To the faithful you show yourself faithful;
to those with integrity you show integrity.**

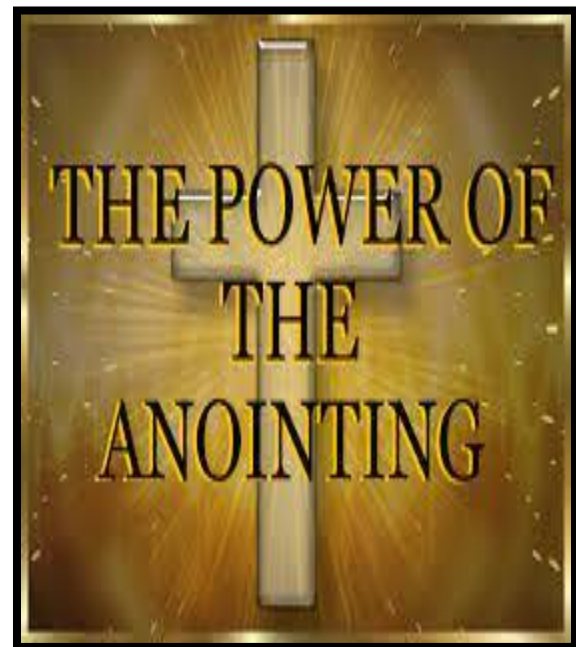
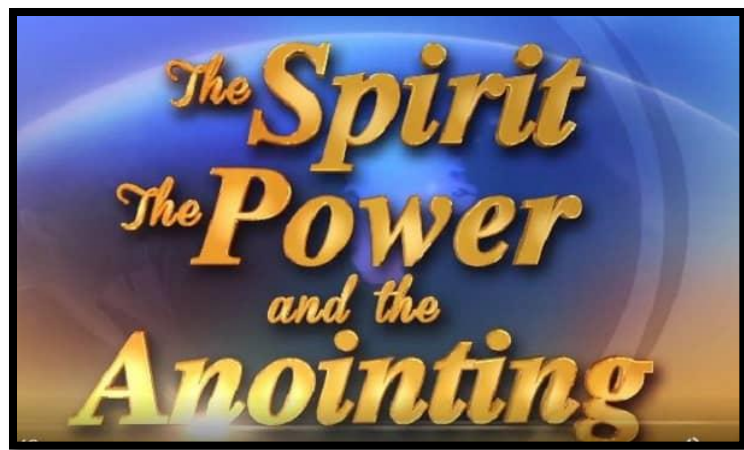
**27 To the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.**

**28 You rescue the humble,
but your eyes watch the proud and humiliate them.**

**29 O Lord, you are my lamp.
The Lord lights up my darkness.**

**30 In your strength I can crush an army;
with my God I can scale any wall.**

Unlike Saul and Absalom, David always understood his strength was connected to his anointing. Everything David accomplished came from the power of the Spirit that rested upon his life. Without the Spirit, David could do nothing.



**31 "God's way is perfect.
All the Lord's promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who look to him for
protection.**

**32 For who is God except the Lord?
Who but our God is a solid rock?**

**33 God is my strong fortress,
and he makes my way perfect.**

**34 He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
enabling me to stand on mountain heights.**

**35 He trains my hands for battle;
he strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow.**

**36 You have given me your shield of victory;
your help has made me great.**

**37 You have made a wide path for my feet
to keep them from slipping.**

David the mighty warrior, attributed his great success to the power of Yahweh. It was Yahweh who gave him the strength to kill the giant and defeat his numerous enemies. It was Yahweh who taught him how to fight his enemies and win in battles.

**38 "I chased my enemies and destroyed them;
I did not stop until they were
conquered.**

**39 I consumed them;
I struck them down so they did not get
up;
they fell beneath my feet.**

**40 You have armed me with strength for
the battle;
you have subdued my enemies under
my feet.**

**41 You placed my foot on their necks.
I have destroyed all who hated me.**

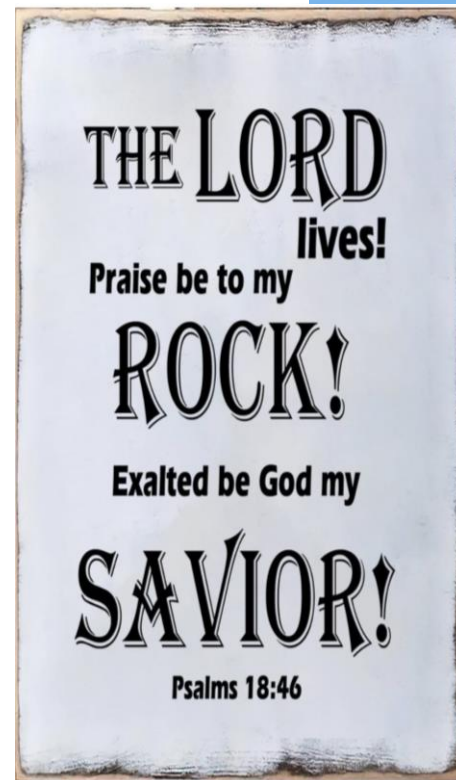
**42 They looked for help, but no one came
to their rescue.**

**They even cried to the Lord, but he
refused to answer.**

**43 I ground them as fine as the dust of the earth;
I trampled them in the gutter like dirt.**

I will praise you, LORD,
among the nations;
I will sing of you among
the peoples.

Psalm 108:3



**44 "You gave me victory over my accusers.
You preserved me as the ruler over nations;
people I don't even know now serve me.
45 Foreign nations cringe before me;
as soon as they hear of me, they submit.
46 They all lose their courage
and come trembling from their strongholds.**

**47 "The Lord lives! Praise to my Rock!
May God, the Rock of my salvation, be exalted!
48 He is the God who pays back those who harm me;
he brings down the nations under me
49 and delivers me from my enemies.
You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies;
you save me from violent opponents.
50 For this, O Lord, I will praise you among the nations;
I will sing praises to your name.
51 You give great victories to your king;
you show unfailing love to your anointed,
to David and all his descendants forever."**

David ended the psalm understanding his position in mercy. Though earlier in the psalm he proclaimed his own righteousness, he came back to the foundation of God's mercy. David's relationship with God was based on God's great mercy, not upon David's own righteousness.⁵⁴ David's entire life was a combination of goodness and mercy, complimented with much suffering and grief. Is it possible to have a life filled with both suffering and joy, disappointment, and praise? According to David, this was the testimony of his entire life.

"You Anoint My Head With Oil" - Psalm 23:5

⁵⁴ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 22





- 1. Analyze the insightful conversation between Joab and the wise woman. What can we learn about peaceful conflict resolution from this dialogue?**
- 2. How can we apply the principle of honoring our promises in our lives today, as demonstrated by David's respect for his oath with Jonathan?**
- 3. When David realized he was too old to kill giants, did he regret all the time he wasted in his short life? Do you regret the time you wasted in your life? Discuss.**
- 4. How can David's description of God as a rock and fortress be applied in your life today?**
- 5. What can you learn from David's gratitude towards God in every circumstance, even those that included much pain and suffering?**

David's Last Words

23 These are the last words of David:

This is the last record poetic Psalm David recorded in his life. They are words of fading man just about to stand in the presence of his loving God.

**"David, the son of Jesse, speaks—
David, the man who was raised up so high,
David, the man anointed by the God of Jacob,
David, the sweet psalmist of Israel.**

**² "The Spirit of the Lord speaks through me;
his words are upon my tongue.**

**³ The God of Israel spoke.
The Rock of Israel said to me:**

David wanted the reader of the Psalm to know that these words specifically came from the Spirit of Yahweh, to encourage future generations of leaders who would follow in the path of righteousness.

**'The one who rules righteously,
who rules in the fear of God,
⁴ is like the light of morning at sunrise,
like a morning without clouds,
like the gleaming of the sun
on new grass after rain.'**

From one perspective David's reign was a disaster. He suffered from a dark scandal during his reign, he suffered under repeated family crises, under an attempted insurrection from his own son, under another civil war, and from three years of famine.⁵⁵ Yet he remained a "man after God's own heart" until his last breath. In a way, David is like everyone who ever desired to love God. We are weak and fragile people in ourselves, but through the power of the Spirit, God can even use broken and imperfect people to bring glory to his mighty Name.

**⁵ "Is it not my family God has chosen?
Yes, he has made an everlasting covenant with me.**

⁵⁵ David Guzik, Study for 2 Samuel, Chapter 23

DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

and how to be one

His agreement is arranged and guaranteed in every detail.


He will ensure my safety and success.

**⁶ But the godless are like thorns to be thrown away,
for they tear the hand that touches them.**

**⁷ One must use iron tools to chop them down;
they will be totally consumed by fire."**

We can say that because of his sin and its consequences, David's light dimmed towards the end of his life, but it was not extinguished. He shined until the end. *"In the Divine dealing with us, there is no mistake, no lapse. Nothing has been permitted which has not been made to serve the highest purpose. This is so even of our failures, if, like David, in true penitence we have forsaken them and confessed them. It is certainly so of all our sorrows and trials."*⁵⁶

The Lesson Of Endurance



David's mighty men were drawn to him at the lowest point in his life. They did not come as the greatest army in the history of Israel. They were social misfits; the broken and the rejected. Yet they found a community with David, and he molded them into their God-ordained potential. David's anointing was contagious, and it spread to everyone in close relationship with him.

These men stuck by King David and supported him through every stage of his life. They walked with him in the high places of glorious victory and cried with him in the darkest valleys of depression. Their faithfulness to their king was remarkable. This is why their names are forever recorded in Scripture. Their service stands eternally as a monument to a life well lived. The history of redemption will always make note of faithful warriors who served their king with honor.

In our day, we have the privilege of serving a greater king than David. We are all called to be in the service of the King of Kings. Moreover, our service to the king is being recorded and will be evaluated when we stand before Christ to make an account.

¹² Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. ¹³ But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a

⁵⁶ Morgan, G. Campbell "An Exposition of the Whole Bible" (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1959)

person's work has any value. ¹⁴ If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames. (1 Corinthians 3)

Like the heroes of old, our service is being recorded in books and our great and mighty deeds will be forever remembered. We will receive our just rewards for being faithful to our King Jesus as we serve him faithfully during our entire life. The days of the mighty men of God are not concluded. We are all presently writing a chapter in our own story, with the life we presently live.

The day for mighty men and women — heroic men and women for God — has not ended. "The triumph of the church as a whole depends upon the personal victory of every Christian. In other words, your victory, your life, your personal testimony, are important to the cause of God today. What happens out in New Guinea, down in the Amazon jungle, and over in undisturbed rainforest of Congo, is not unrelated to what happens in your own personal relationship with God and your personal battle against the forces of darkness. Victory for the church on the whole world-front depends upon victory in your life and in mine; 'home' and 'foreign' situations cannot be detached.

Every believer is called to participate in the mighty acts of God. We are all called to accomplish different tasks in the kingdom. But we will all be rewarded for serving the king with excellence.

*¹⁰ Yes, the Sovereign Lord is coming in power.
He will rule with a powerful arm.
See, he brings his reward with him as he comes. (Isaiah 40)*

David's Mightiest Warriors

⁸ These are the names of David's mightiest warriors.

LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND THE SIN WHICH SO
EASILY ENSNARES US, AND LET US
RUN WITH ENDURANCE
THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US.



Jashobeam

The first was Jashobeam the Hacmonite, who was leader of the Three—the three mightiest warriors among David’s men. He once used his spear to kill 800 enemy warriors in a single battle.

Imagine the anointing that rested on this mighty warrior as he killed 800 enemies of Yahweh in a single battle. Even King David could not claim to have killed so many men at one time. The anointing on him was greater than the anointing that rested on David when he killed Goliath.



Eleazar

⁹ Next in rank among the Three was Eleazar son of Dodai, a descendant of Ahoah. Once Eleazar and David stood together against the Philistines when the entire Israelite army had fled. ¹⁰ He killed Philistines until his hand was too tired to lift his sword, and the Lord gave him a great victory that day. The rest of the army did not return until it was time to collect the plunder!

Eleazar stood with his king when everyone else fled the battle. Eleazar and David stood back-to-back and killed Philistines all day long. The anointing empowered them until the victory was won. At the end, they were too tired to life their arms in triumph.



Shammah

¹¹ Next in rank was Shammah son of Agee from Harar. One time the Philistines gathered at Lehi and attacked the Israelites in a field full of lentils. The Israelite army fled, ¹² but Shammah held his ground in the middle of the field and beat back the Philistines. So the Lord brought about a great victory.

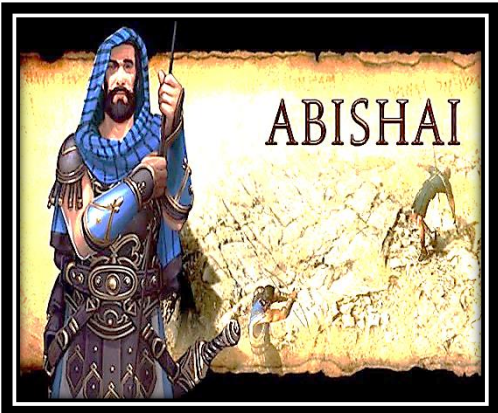
Shammah refused to retreat form the enemy and fought against all odds. He alone stood against an onslaught of Philistine soldiers and beat them back until the army was able to regroup.

¹³ Once during the harvest, when David was at the cave of Adullam, the Philistine army was camped in the valley of Rephaim. The Three (who were among the Thirty—an elite group among David’s fighting men) went down to meet him there. ¹⁴ David was staying in the stronghold at the time, and a Philistine detachment had occupied the town of Bethlehem.

¹⁵ David remarked longingly to his men, “Oh, how I would love some of that good water from the well by the gate in Bethlehem.” ¹⁶ So the Three broke through the Philistine lines, drew some water from the well by the gate in Bethlehem, and brought it back to David. But he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out as an offering to the Lord. ¹⁷ “The Lord forbid that I should drink this!” he exclaimed. “This water is as precious as the blood of these men who risked their lives to bring it to me.” So David did not drink it. These are examples of the exploits of the Three.

Three faithful men risked their lives because their king was thirsty. Their bravery flattered King David because their love and devotion for him was demonstrated by their actions and not just their words.

David’s Thirty Mighty Men



¹⁸ Abishai son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab, was the leader of the Thirty. He once used his spear to kill 300 enemy warriors in a single battle. It was by such feats that he became as famous as the Three. ¹⁹ Abishai was the most famous of the Thirty and was their commander, though he was not one of the Three.

He saved David’s life when he rescued him from a Philistine giant. Shortly afterwards, David retired from giant killing. He left that up to his brave disciples.

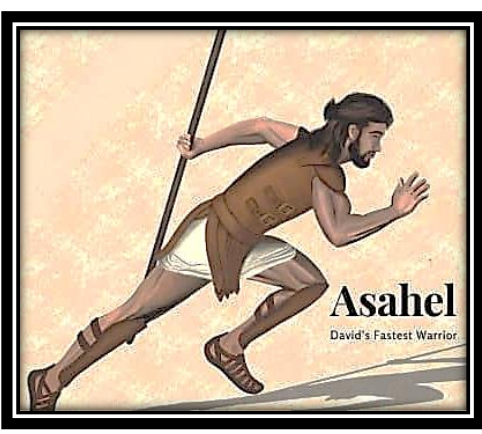


²⁰ There was also Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant warrior from Kabzeel. He did many heroic deeds, which included killing two champions of Moab. Another time, on a snowy day, he chased a lion down into a pit and killed it. ²¹ Once, armed

only with a club, he killed an imposing Egyptian warrior who was armed with a spear. Benaiah wrenched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with it. ²² Deeds like these made Benaiah as famous as the Three mightiest warriors. ²³ He was more honored than the other members of the Thirty, though he was not one of the Three. And David made him captain of his bodyguard.

David's mighty men killed lions, killed giants, and served their master with honor. Scripture records their names forever for their mighty deeds and their love for their king.

²⁴ Other members of the Thirty included:



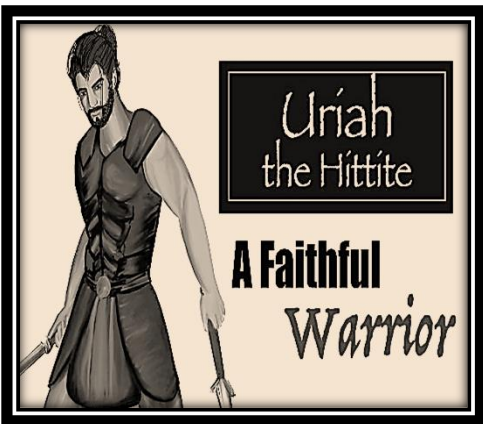
- Asahel, Joab's brother;
- Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem;
- ²⁵ Shammah from Harod;
- Elika from Harod;
- ²⁶ Helez from Pelon;
- Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa;
- ²⁷ Abiezer from Anathoth;
- Sibbecai from Hushah;
- ²⁸ Zalmon from Ahoah;
- Maharai from Netophah;
- ²⁹ Heled son of Baanah from Netophah;
- Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah (in the land of Benjamin);



- ³⁰ Benaiah from Pirathon;
- Hurai from Nahale-gaash;
- ³¹ Abi-albon from Arabah;
- Azmaveth from Bahurim;
- ³² Eliahba from Shaalbon;
- the sons of Jashen;
- Jonathan ³³ son of Shagee from Harar;
- Ahiam son of Sharar from Harar;
- ³⁴ Eliphelet son of Ahasbai from Maacah;
- Eliam son of Ahithophel from Giloh;
- ³⁵ Hezro from Carmel;
- Paarai from Arba;
- ³⁶ Igal son of Nathan from Zobah;
- Bani from Gad;
- ³⁷ Zelek from Ammon;
- Naharai from Beeroth, the armor bearer of Joab son of Zeruiah;



**38 Ira from Jattir;
Gareb from Jattir;**



39 Uriah the Hittite.

Uriah the Hittite was murdered by King David, but his lasting legacy was not forgotten by Yahweh. His name is forever recorded in the pages of Scripture to remind future

generations of his magnificent bravery. His name means "Yah is light" or "Yahweh is my light".

There were thirty-seven in all.



Uriah
the Hittite

Rest In Peace



MIGHTY MEN OF DAVID?

David Takes a Census

24 Once again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he caused David to harm them by taking a census. "Go and count the people of Israel and Judah," the Lord told him.





The biblical commentaries are divided over who specifically the “he” referred to in the text, really is. Some translations assume the “he” referenced Yahweh, who caused David to take the census. Others assume the person who tempted David to take the census was Satan.

² So the king said to Joab and the commanders of the army, “Take a census of all the tribes of Israel—from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south—so I may know how many people there are.”

³ But Joab replied to the king, “May the Lord your God let you live to see a hundred times as many people as there are now! But why, my lord the king, do you want to do this?”

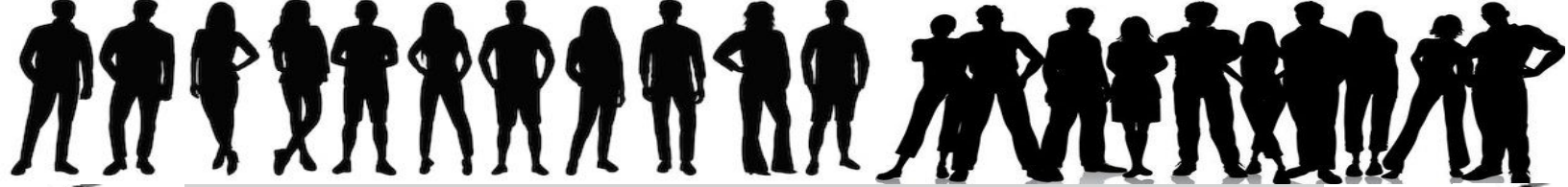
We can see from the text that Joab strongly objected to David’s motives for taking this census. He felt it was unnecessary and should not be done. The text foreshadowed that something bad was about to happen. Why did King David wait until his final days to count the people of God?

So late in his reign, David was tempted to take some of the glory in himself. He looked at how Israel had grown and prospered during his reign — it was remarkable indeed. The count was a way to take credit to himself. “The spirit of vainglory in numbers had taken possession of the people and the king, and there was a tendency to trust in numbers and forget God.”⁵⁷

⁴ But the king insisted that they take the census, so Joab and the commanders of the army went out to count the people of Israel. ⁵ First they crossed the Jordan and camped at Aroer, south of the town in the valley, in the direction of Gad. Then they went on to Jazer, ⁶ then to Gilead in the land of Tahtim-hodshi and to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon. ⁷ Then they came to the fortress of Tyre, and all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites. Finally, they went south to Judah as far as Beersheba.

⁸ Having gone through the entire land for nine months and twenty days, they returned to Jerusalem. ⁹ Joab reported the number of

⁵⁷ Morgan, G. Campbell "An Exposition of the Whole Bible" (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Revell, 1959)



people to the king. There were 800,000 capable warriors in Israel who could handle a sword, and 500,000 in Judah.

At the end of the census, Joab reported Israel could gather a standing army of 1,300,000 fighting men. They had an estimated population of 6 million people, among the 12 tribes. However, the counting of the people, greatly displeased the Lord. At that time, kings assumed they owned their subjects and counted their population to measure their power. At the end of David's life, he possibly wanted to know exactly how great his kingdom had become. This was specifically the problem. The Kingdom of Israel belonged to Yahweh, and only He had the right to count His people. What David did dishonored the Lord because he subconsciously considered the people of Israel his own.

Judgment for David's Sin

¹⁰ But after he had taken the census, David's conscience began to bother him. And he said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly by taking this census. Please forgive my guilt, Lord, for doing this foolish thing."

¹¹ The next morning the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, who was David's seer. This was the message: ¹² "Go and say to David, 'This is what the Lord says: I will give you three choices. Choose one of these punishments, and I will inflict it on you.'"

¹³ So Gad came to David and asked him, "Will you choose three years of famine throughout your land, three months of fleeing from your enemies, or three days of severe plague throughout your land? Think this over and decide what answer I should give the Lord who sent me."

¹⁴ "I'm in a desperate situation!" David replied to Gad. "But let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great. Do not let me fall into human hands."

¹⁵ So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel that morning, and it lasted for three days. A total of 70,000 people died throughout the nation, from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. ¹⁶ But as the angel was preparing to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord relented and said to the death angel, "Stop! That is enough!" At that moment the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.



17 When David saw the angel, he said to the Lord, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong! But these people are as innocent as sheep—what have they done? Let your anger fall against me and my family."

David Builds an Altar

18 That day Gad came to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

19 So David went up to do what the Lord had commanded him. **20** When Araunah saw the king and his men coming toward him, he came and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. **21** "Why have you come, my lord the king?" Araunah asked.

David replied, "I have come to buy your threshing floor and to build an altar to the Lord there, so that he will stop the plague."

22 "Take it, my lord the king, and use it as you wish," Araunah said to David. "Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and you can use the threshing boards and ox yokes for wood to build a fire on the altar. **23** I will give it all to you, Your Majesty, and may the Lord your God accept your sacrifice."

24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing." So David paid him fifty pieces of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen.

25 David built an altar there to the Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the Lord answered his prayer for the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.



Death is the end of a stage, not the end of the journey. The road stretches on beyond our comprehension.

David in His Old Age

1 King David was now very old, and no matter how many blankets covered him, he could not keep warm. **2** So his advisers told him, "Let us find a young virgin to wait on you and look after you, my lord. She will lie in your arms and keep you warm."

3 So they searched throughout the land of Israel for a beautiful girl, and they found Abishag from Shunem and brought her to the king. **4** The girl was very beautiful, and she looked after the king and took care of him. But the king had no sexual relations with her.



In a final demonstration of biblical irony, David, in his old age, had a beautiful young virgin lying with him in bed, but he only wanted to be warm. The sexual desire of his youth has disappeared, and he now fights the looming giants of old age. No longer would he be tempted by a naked woman, bathing on a rooftop. As David approached the sunset of his long and difficult life, he only wanted a warm bed so he could sleep.

Adonijah Claims the Throne

5 About that time David's son Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, began boasting, "I will make myself king." So he provided himself with chariots and charioteers and recruited fifty men to run in front of him. **6** Now his father, King David, had never disciplined him at any time, even by asking, "Why are you doing that?" Adonijah had been born next after Absalom, and he was very handsome.

In a final note about David's horrible parenting skills, the author of the text mentioned that David did not ever discipline his children and allowed them to do as they pleased. As his father's death approached, Adonijah followed in the footsteps of the rebellious Absalom and prematurely declared himself the King of Israel.

⁷ Adonijah took Joab son of Zeruiah and Abiathar the priest into his confidence, and they agreed to help him become king. ⁸ But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and David's personal bodyguard refused to support Adonijah.

As David declined physically, even the outwardly loyal Joab showed his true colors and jumped ship. As mentioned many times before, Joab did what was in his own best interest. When he could gain nothing more from his relationship with David, he quickly sided with who he assumed would be the next king. This impulsive decision would be the beginning of the end for Joab and his violent family.

⁹ Adonijah went to the Stone of Zoheleth near the spring of En-rogel, where he sacrificed sheep, cattle, and fattened calves. He invited all his brothers—the other sons of King David—and all the royal officials of Judah. ¹⁰ But he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the king's bodyguard or his brother Solomon.

¹¹ Then Nathan went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and asked her, "Haven't you heard that Haggith's son, Adonijah, has made himself king, and our lord David doesn't even know about it? ¹² If you want to save your own life and the life of your son Solomon, follow my advice. ¹³ Go at once to King David and say to him, 'My lord the king, didn't you make a vow and say to me, "Your son Solomon will surely be the next king and will sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' ¹⁴ And while you are still talking with him, I will come and confirm everything you have said."

The Lord had already made it clear to King David that Solomon would build His house. This obviously indicated that Yahweh had chosen Solomon to be the next King of Israel. For some unknown reason, David did not make this clear to anyone else. In yet another failure to communicate, David will be indirectly responsible for the death of his fourth son in the sibling rivalry that follows.

¹⁵ So Bathsheba went into the king's bedroom. (He was very old now, and Abishag was taking care of him.) ¹⁶ Bathsheba bowed down before the king.

"What can I do for you?" he asked her.

¹⁷ She replied, "My lord, you made a vow before the Lord your God when you said to me, 'Your son Solomon will surely be the next king and will sit on my throne.' ¹⁸ But instead, Adonijah has made himself

king, and my lord the king does not even know about it. ¹⁹ He has sacrificed many cattle, fattened calves, and sheep, and he has invited all the king's sons to attend the celebration. He also invited Abiathar the priest and Joab, the commander of the army. But he did not invite your servant Solomon. ²⁰ And now, my lord the king, all Israel is waiting for you to announce who will become king after you. ²¹ If you do not act, my son Solomon and I will be treated as criminals as soon as my lord the king has died."

Bathsheba was aware of the prophetic declaration concerning Solomon and demanded that David make his personal choice clear. She knew her family would be dead the moment David died and did everything she could to protect her own son.

²² While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived. ²³ The king's officials told him, "Nathan the prophet is here to see you."

Nathan went in and bowed before the king with his face to the ground. ²⁴ Nathan asked, "My lord the king, have you decided that Adonijah will be the next king and that he will sit on your throne? ²⁵ Today he has sacrificed many cattle, fattened calves, and sheep, and he has invited all the king's sons to attend the celebration. He also invited the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest. They are feasting and drinking with him and shouting, 'Long live King Adonijah!' ²⁶ But he did not invite me or Zadok the priest or Benaiah or your servant Solomon. ²⁷ Has my lord the king really done this without letting any of his officials know who should be the next king?"





David Makes Solomon King

²⁸ King David responded, "Call Bathsheba!" So she came back in and stood before the king. ²⁹ And the king repeated his vow: "As surely as the Lord lives, who has rescued me from every danger, ³⁰ your son Solomon will be the next king and will sit on my throne this very day, just as I vowed to you before the Lord, the God of Israel."

Knowing the will of Yahweh, David finally announced publicly that he had chosen Solomon to be the next king. This meant that David had to act fast to avoid another long and painful civil war.

³¹ Then Bathsheba bowed down with her face to the ground before the king and exclaimed, "May my lord King David live forever!"

³² Then King David ordered, "Call Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came into the king's presence, ³³ the king said to them, "Take Solomon and my officials down to Gihon Spring. Solomon is to ride on my own mule. ³⁴ There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet are to anoint him king over Israel. Blow the ram's horn and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' ³⁵ Then escort him back here, and he will sit on my throne. He will succeed me as king, for I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

When Solomon sat on the Throne of David, he had the support of the priesthood and the prophets. When the horn announced the crowning of Solomon, it was official. He was the new King of Israel.

³⁶ "Amen!" Benaiah son of Jehoiada replied. "May the Lord, the God of my lord the king, decree that it happen. ³⁷ And may the Lord be with Solomon as he has been with you, my lord the king, and may he make Solomon's reign even greater than yours!"

³⁸ So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and the king's bodyguard took Solomon down to Gihon Spring, with Solomon riding on King David's own mule. ³⁹ There Zadok the priest took the flask of olive oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon with the oil. Then they sounded the ram's horn and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" ⁴⁰ And all the people followed Solomon into Jerusalem, playing flutes and shouting for joy. The



celebration was so joyous and noisy that the earth shook with the sound.

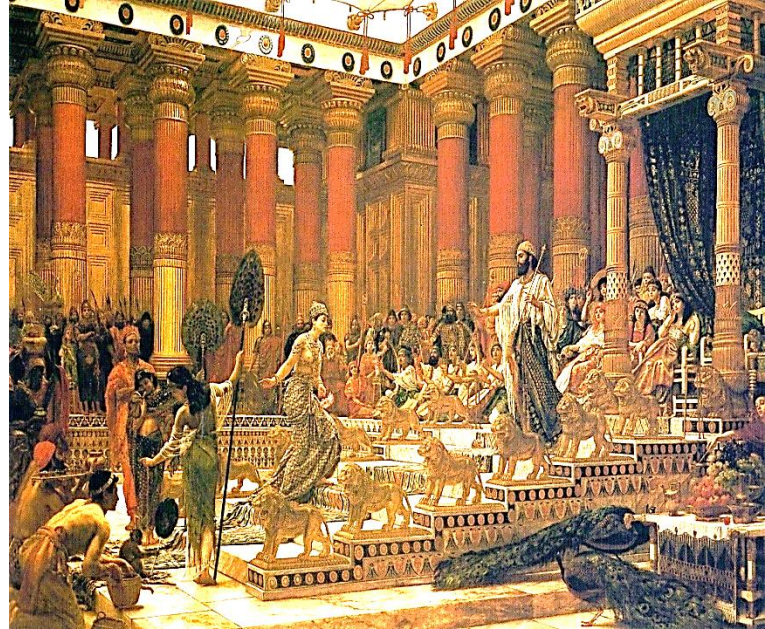
⁴¹ Adonijah and his guests heard the celebrating and shouting just as they were finishing their banquet. When Joab heard the sound of the ram's horn, he asked, "What's going on? Why is the city in such an uproar?"

⁴² And while he was still speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. "Come in," Adonijah said to him, "for you are a good man. You must have good news."

⁴³ "Not at all!" Jonathan replied. "Our lord King David has just declared Solomon king!" ⁴⁴ The king sent him down to Gihon Spring with Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, protected by the king's bodyguard. They had him ride on the king's own mule, ⁴⁵ and Zadok and Nathan have anointed him at Gihon Spring as the new king. They have just returned, and the whole city is celebrating and rejoicing. That's what all the noise is about. ⁴⁶ What's more, Solomon is now sitting on the royal throne as king. ⁴⁷ And all the royal officials have gone to King David and congratulated him, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's fame even greater than your own, and may Solomon's reign be even greater than yours!' Then the king bowed his head in worship as he lay in his bed, ⁴⁸ and he said, 'Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, who today has chosen a successor to sit on my throne while I am still alive to see it.'"

⁴⁹ Then all of Adonijah's guests jumped up in panic from the banquet table and quickly scattered. ⁵⁰ Adonijah was afraid of Solomon, so he rushed to the sacred tent and grabbed on to the horns of the altar. ⁵¹ Word soon reached Solomon that Adonijah had seized the horns of the altar in fear, and that he was pleading, "Let King Solomon swear today that he will not kill me!"

⁵² Solomon replied, "If he proves himself to be loyal, not a hair on his head will be touched. But if he makes trouble, he will die." ⁵³ So King Solomon summoned Adonijah, and they brought him down from the altar. He came and bowed respectfully before King Solomon, who dismissed him, saying, "Go on home".



David's Final Instructions to Solomon



2 As the time of King David's death approached, he gave this charge to his son Solomon:

2 "I am going where everyone on earth must someday go. Take courage and be a man. **3** Observe the requirements of the Lord your God, and follow all his ways. Keep the decrees, commands, regulations, and laws written in the Law of Moses so that you will be successful in all you do and wherever you go. **4** If you do this, then the Lord will keep the promise he made to me. He told me, 'If your descendants live as they should and follow me faithfully with all their heart and soul, one of them will always sit on the throne of Israel.'

5 "And there is something else. You know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me when he murdered my two army commanders, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He pretended that it was an act of war, but it was done in a time of peace, staining his belt and sandals with innocent blood. **6** Do with him what you think best, but don't let him grow old and go to his grave in peace.

At the end of his life, David had some unfinished business to settle. First of all, he always remembered it was Joab who killed his son Absalom. Therefore, he gave Solomon specific instruction to kill him immediately. David did not want Joab to work his manipulative witchcraft on King Solomon. Therefore, he was the first to go.

7 "Be kind to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead. Make them permanent guests at your table, for they took care of me when I fled from your brother Absalom.

8 "And remember Shimei son of Gera, the man from Bahurim in Benjamin. He cursed me with a terrible curse as I was fleeing to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, I swore by the Lord that I would not kill him. **9** But that oath does not

make him innocent. You are a wise man, and you will know how to arrange a bloody death for him.”

Secondly, David still remembered the day Shimei pelted him with stones. He kept his word that he would never kill him in retaliation. Nevertheless, if Solomon decided to kill him for what he did to David, that would be great! As a special favor, David requested that he die a horrifically bloody death.

¹⁰ Then David died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. ¹¹ David had reigned over Israel for forty years, seven of them in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. ¹² Solomon became king and sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established.

Solomon Establishes His Rule

¹³ One day Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, came to see Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother. “Have you come with peaceful intentions?” she asked him.

“Yes,” he said, “I come in peace. ¹⁴ In fact, I have a favor to ask of you.”

“What is it?” she asked.

¹⁵ He replied, “As you know, the kingdom was rightfully mine; all Israel wanted me to be the next king. But the tables were turned, and the kingdom went to my brother instead; for that is the way the Lord wanted it. ¹⁶ So now I have just one favor to ask of you. Please don’t turn me down.”

“What is it?” she asked.

¹⁷ He replied, “Speak to King Solomon on my behalf, for I know he will do anything you request. Ask him to let me marry Abishag, the girl from Shunem.”

¹⁸ “All right,” Bathsheba replied. “I will speak to the king for you.”

¹⁹ So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak on Adonijah’s behalf. The king rose from his throne to meet her, and he bowed down before her. When he sat down on his throne again, the king ordered



that a throne be brought for his mother, and she sat at his right hand.

²⁰ "I have one small request to make of you," she said. "I hope you won't turn me down."

"What is it, my mother?" he asked. "You know I won't refuse you."

²¹ "Then let your brother Adonijah marry Abishag, the girl from Shunem," she replied.

²² "How can you possibly ask me to give Abishag to Adonijah?" King Solomon demanded. "You might as well ask me to give him the kingdom! You know that he is my older brother,

and that he has Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah on his side."

²³ Then King Solomon made a vow before the Lord: "May God strike me and even kill me if Adonijah has not sealed his fate with this request. ²⁴ The Lord has confirmed me and placed me on the throne of my father, David; he has established my dynasty as he promised. So as surely as the Lord lives, Adonijah will die this very day!" ²⁵ So King Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada to execute him, and Adonijah was put to death.



The End





- 1. How can we apply the courage and selflessness shown by the Mighty Men to our lives today? Do you want to be a Mighty Man in your generation?**
- 2. How can we cultivate the values of loyalty, courage, and integrity, as seen in David and his Mighty Men, in our present context?**
- 3. Who inspired David to take a census in his final days? Was it Satan or God? Discuss.**
- 4. Discuss the repercussions of David's decision to take a census on the people of Israel. What does this teach us about the effects of our leaders' decisions?**
- 5. Was Solomon justified in killing Adonijah for asking to marry David's former wife? Why or why not?**