

David and Bathsheba
(David's Stroll and the Wife He Stole)

Bill Fallon - Free@FreeGraceResources.org

The book of II Samuel covers much of King David's adult life. It can be partially outlined as follows:

- I. David's Triumphs (chapters 1-10)
- II. David's Trespasses (chapters 11-12)
- III. David's Troubles (chapters 13-20)

Though David's triumphs were numerous and varied, the intent of the following will be to concentrate on his "mid-life crisis." This could be outlined as follows:

- I. Rebellion
- II. Rebuke
- III. Results

There is much to be learned from the victories that David experienced during his lifetime, but there is also much for us to learn from his defeats that in some ways turned into victories. We do not intend to glorify his sin nor to "kick a good man while he is down."

From the start we see a pattern emerging in David's life as being one of a repetition of trials, battle, and victory. He courageously defended the sheep placed under his care as a youth. He became a national hero for God's glory because of his victorious confrontation with Goliath the Godzilla. He could have written an adventure serial concerning his encounters with Saul while in exile. His military conquests are unparalleled. As a king he had wealth and prestige that few could imagine. He could hardly have been considered a born loser. What happened?

II Samuel 11:1-5

- 1 And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.
- 2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.
- 3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And *one* said, /s not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?
- 4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.
- 5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I *am* with child.

Perhaps David experienced difficulty sleeping. He arose from his bed and went for a walk on the roof. He saw a woman bathing and she was beautiful to look at. You might ask what he was doing walking on his roof. Actually, that was a reasonable pastime for the local culture. It might be somewhat akin to the rural American custom of sitting on the front porch swing. I tend to ask two questions about the actions stated in verses 1 and 2; 1. Why was Bathsheba bathing where she could be seen? 2. Why was David even there when he should have been leading the troops in battle instead of keeping someone else's

home fire burning? If I were Sherlock Holmes (no, that is not a housing development) I would deduce that Bathsheba could plead guilty to only one of two charges:

1. Attempted seduction. She may have been where she should not have been and looking for some action.
2. Terminal ignorance. She, along with many “nice” young ladies of today, for some reason did not realize how the male mind functions. They dress, or almost dress to attract attention and seem oblivious to what kind of attention they are getting. They send a message to men that is inconsistent with their true character. If the latter was the problem, we probably cannot fault her with laying with the King. In that culture, to disobey the king may have been the last thing a person would have been able to do.

In regards to the question of why David was there in the first place, I believe that this is one of the problems that relate to more far-reaching problems. David had misplaced priorities. He should have been where Joab was. Perhaps he had reached a time in his life when he had conquered so much on the battlefield that he had lost the thrill of winning military battles. Could he have been looking for a different type of conquest?

He perhaps was unwise in his accumulation of several wives. He would have been better off spiritually if he had collected stamps or baseball cards instead of wives. He had already compromised in the sexual area and it is usually easy to do just a little bit more. The compromise in little areas was another contributing factor to his fall. Could there be a connection to the next generation in this area of sin and weakness? Solomon seemed to be wise in every area except in the arena of sexual activities. That became his “Waterloo.”

Another reason why David was there could be that he may have started to over-enjoy the plush ease of life to which he had begun to become accustomed. An air-conditioned palace sounds a lot better than muddy foxholes. I Timothy 6:17 tells us that it is God that gives us richly all things to enjoy but also warns us of pride and trusting in our riches.

Verse 2 states, “...and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.” I do not think that seeing Bathsheba was a sin for David, for we, as believers should be alert to what is going on around us. The New Testament even admonishes us to “walk circumspectly...” (Eph. 5:15). The sin began when he started *looking*. Dr. Bob Jones Sr. is quoted as saying, “It isn’t a sin to let the birds fly over our head. It’s a sin when we let them nest in our hair.” Though I am not one to judge David in this, when he chose to start playing with sin, he was already 90% beaten. At that moment, he let Satan gain a strong foothold (cf. Eph. 4:27). Under the Holy Spirit’s control, it is actually possible for a red-blooded male to look at an attractive woman and walk away thinking, “There goes a soul whom God loves and He sure gave her a beautiful earth-suit.”

David then sent for the woman and found that she was someone else’s wife. This is a “no, no.” A big red flag should have gone up in his mind. Maybe it did and he was not paying attention. At this moment he had chosen to figuratively jump off a high cliff. Only an externally induced miracle could save him. The miracle was not forthcoming. He had chosen to become 99% beaten and probably had little resistance left for the remaining 1%. The logical progression is that one sin leads to another. Frequently we entwine ourselves into Satan’s web with progressively more serious offenses.

This observation is vividly brought out by the ensuing series of events. When David finds out that she was “with child” he, probably in a panic, attempts to cover his tracks which now are visible and becoming too widespread to effectively cover. This must have caused some emotional conflict and contradictions in David’s mind. When he was walking in God’s will he had encountered much more formidable foes than this and had been victorious. Why could not such a great and powerful man as David just make things go away?

The only way out seemed to be to deceitfully place the blame for the child on Bathsheba’s husband. Yet with all of David’s power he could not get faithful Uriah to sleep with his wife. The only way out of that dilemma was to have Uriah murdered (II Samuel 11:6-25). Sin has a way of warping our reasoning and making the situation worse.

Now that David had buried himself about as deep as he could get, along comes Nathan with a poignant prophecy. He tells David of a poor man who had just one lamb that he had raised with his children and it had become like family to him (kind of like his own flesh and wool). There also was a rich man, who had a large flock. The rich man wanted a meal. He refused to take of his own plentiful flock but, instead, barbecued the poor mans lamb. “And David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity” (II Samuel 12:1-6).

Then Nathan said to him, “Thou art the man.” (12:7). What a stinging rebuke! When we are not spiritually right we acquire warped vision or even spiritual blindness (II Peter 1:5-9). David could see this terrible transgression in someone else but not in himself. Could that be why Jesus tells us to take the 2 by 4 out of our own eye before we worry about the splinter in someone else’s eye? (Matt. 7:3-5; transliterated by this writer).

Nathan prophesies the results of these sins:

II Samuel 12:7-15

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8 And I gave thee thy master’s house, and thy master’s wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and *if that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

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

11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

12 For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that* is born unto thee shall surely die.

15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

All these prophecies came to pass. The child soon died. All sorts of adversity such as incest, rape, bloodshed, betrayal, jealousy, etc. plagued his household from that time forward. David repented and was restored to fellowship but never to as great a place in God's service. Even though God forgave David it is sad to realize that God was lovingly desiring restoration long before David was moved to that point. In spite of all of God's blessings that had been bestowed upon him, according to verse 8, God was anxious to find an obedient child on which he could dump many more blessings.

What an awesome responsibility David had and that we have that the Almighty God has allowed us to be partially responsible for His reputation. By David's deeds He had, "given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme" (v14).

What can we learn and apply from David's errors? The following is a summary of what has been covered:

1. Just because God has greatly used us, it does not mean that we are invincible. God is no respecter of persons. He requires faithfulness. Not everyone can become king of Israel but each of us can be obedient to God. (I Corinthians 4:2).

2. David had misplaced priorities. We are told in Colossians 3:2 to "set our minds on things above" (cf. Matt 6:33).

3. He compromised in little areas. It is the little foxes that spoil the vines. It is doubtful that David got up that morning and decided that he would later embark on a series of sins that would devastate himself and innocent people and plunge his family into turmoil for the rest of his life. But he accomplished just that by little compromises. We are so vulnerable to the same mindset. It is deadly. (Rom. 13:14)

4. He may have become materialistic. I Timothy 6:9 tells us that those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare. The word "desire" as used here is more than just a wish but it is an intent or goal of life. We live in a society that inundates us with a constant barrage of materialistic encouragement. These messages are seldom altruistic in intent but are frequently convincing. (I Timothy 6:6-11). "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil..." (I Tim. 6:10). In order to be the object of this verse one does not have to be rich (richness is a relative term). One can be broke and still possess a sinful love of money or the power it brings in our society.

5. "...Be sure your sin will find you out." (Numbers 32:23) This is a general principle that we seem to forget as we plow recklessly through the experiences of life. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that will he also reap." (Galatians 6:7) It is likely that David did not clearly think of this until hearing Nathan's penetrating reminder in II Samuel 12:12, "For you did *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun."

6. He was fooled by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:13). Sin appears to be so attractive. Probably because many times it is fun or it temporarily satisfies some desire. Moses chose to obey God rather than to "enjoy the passing pleasures of sin" (Hebrews 11:25, 26). Sin *does* pay (Romans 6:23) but the results are not what we are so often

promised. We are also frequently deceived by the time lapse between sowing and reaping (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

7. God desires to bless us but He cannot bless disobedience. As mentioned in II Samuel 12:8, God would have given him so much more if only he would not despise God's commandment. How much do we miss out on when God wants us to grow and be blessed and we rigidly defy Gods loving efforts for our own maturity and good? (Hebrews 12:5,6, 11). The self-application of I Corinthians 11:31 in our lives would save us a lot of pain. "For if we judge ourselves, we would not be judged."

David rebelled against God, he was rebuked by God through Nathan, and though forgiven by God, many of the results were tragic. Though this did not remove some of the results of his sin he still had the opportunity to regain joy and fruitfulness in the Lord. You and I have this same privilege. It starts with I John 1:9 then continues with Galatians 5:16 (confession of sin and obedience). Can God use you and me even though we have "blown it?" God still used David and even used the lineage of Bathsheba and Solomon in which to make his earthly incarnation. There is still hope for you and me. David had not out-sinned God's grace and neither have we. "...But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." (Romans 5:20b)