

DAVID'S SIN WITH BATHSHEBA (2 SAMUEL 11:1-5)

In 2 Samuel 10, the Ammonites humiliated David's men, leading to an Israelite coalition against them and the Syrians. Joab's leadership resulted in both enemy forces retreating. David's forces then joined the conflict, making the Syrians abandon the Ammonites and realign with King David (2 Samuel 10:19).

As chapter 11 begins, during wartime, David sends Joab and his troops to conclude the conflict with the Ammonites rather than going himself. David's decision not to fight may stem from recognizing Joab's strategic prowess or due to the kindness the Ammonites previously showed his family (2 Samuel 10:1).

One evening, David, at home, saw a woman, Bathsheba, bathing from his palace roof. She was exceptionally beautiful, a trait denoted sparingly in the Bible. Bathsheba is among the five most beautiful women in the Bible, including Sarah, Esther, Rachel, and Rebekah.

Bathsheba was "the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite" (v.3). She is the granddaughter of Ahithophel, one of David's advisors who later betrays him. Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, was a Hittite, an ancient civilization originating from modern-day Turkey. Although the Hittite kingdom had ceased to exist, Uriah's name, "Yahweh is my light," suggests he was fully assimilated into Jewish society.

David and Bathsheba succumb to temptation, leading to a one-time affair and pregnancy. Bathsheba's faithfulness to Jewish ritual purity laws is highlighted, contrasting with the moral impurity of the affair.

DAVID'S SIN WITH URIAH (2 SAMUEL 11:6-24)

David manipulates circumstances to bring Uriah home, aiming to pass off Bathsheba's pregnancy as Uriah's. Uriah's loyalty to his profession prevents him from spending the night at home, even when David attempts to get him drunk.

David's plot escalates as he orders Joab, the battlefield commander, to place Uriah in a deadly fight. Uriah unknowingly carries his own death warrant. Joab carries out the order, leading to Uriah's death, revealing the extent of David's desperation to cover his transgression.

Joab instructs his messenger to report Uriah's death to David, anticipating David's criticism of the military strategy. The news of Uriah's death pacifies David, who consoles Joab, saying, "the sword devours one as well as another" (v. 25), indicating his relief that his plan has worked.

MOVING ON (2 SAMUEL 11:26-27)

Upon hearing the news of her husband's death, Bathsheba mourns for Uriah. The details of David's plot are not revealed to her, leaving her to grapple

with her grief and the reality of her pregnancy. Her emotions must have been a complex mix of sorrow, fear, and uncertainty. Despite the tragic circumstances of Uriah's death and the impending scandal of her pregnancy, the narrative takes a seemingly positive turn as "David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son" (v. 27).

This would appear to be a "happy ending" to a tale filled with deception and tragedy. David has seemingly managed to keep his sin concealed. Joab might have had suspicions about the unusual events, but he would not have known the full extent of David's machinations. Moreover, in the societal context of those times, the timing of Bathsheba's pregnancy could have been kept under wraps, further maintaining the illusion of propriety.

However, the final line of the chapter signals that this tale is far from over. Despite David's attempts to cover up his sins, "the thing that David had done displeased the LORD." This statement sets the stage for the consequences that will unfold in the next chapter, serving as a stark reminder that while one may deceive their fellow man, nothing can be hidden from God.

LESSONS TO LEARN

From the narrative of 2 Samuel 12, we can glean several important lessons. First, no one is immune to sin. From the lowliest peasant to the mightiest king, each person is subject to the same temptations. Secondly, like David, most of us will attempt to hide our transgressions. Though announcing our wrongdoings from the hilltops may not be the best course of action, this story demonstrates the tangled web we weave when we try to cover up our sins. Thirdly, we must always be mindful of the potential consequences of our actions. In the next chapter, we will explore some of these consequences. However, it's important to note here that David is now beholden to Joab. After all, what would happen if Joab revealed the command he was given?

The fourth lesson is a reminder that God sees and knows everything. Whether or not He responds as He did in David's case, His knowledge is ever-present. Lastly, this story highlights the immense forgiveness that God extends to humanity. Despite our monumental mistakes, God, like with David, remains active in our lives. This serves as a reminder of the depth of God's love and forgiveness, even when we fail "royally."