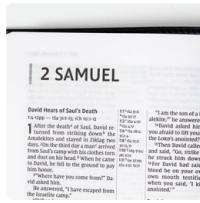


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## 2 Samuel 10 - 12



### 2 Samuel - Steve Gregg

In 2 Samuel chapters 10-12, King David faces a series of battles and personal struggles. After the death of the Ammonite king, his son takes the throne and Joab leads a successful battle against the Ammonites. However, David's subsequent affair with Bathsheba and plot to cover it up by having her husband Uriah killed invites the wrath of God, as it is seen as an evil deed. David's actions demonstrate that even heroes are human and susceptible to wrongdoing. Ultimately, he confronts and repents for his sins.

### Transcript

The story continues in 2 Samuel chapter 10. We're going to read in this chapter about some more wars. This time it's a war that is provoked by the king of Ammon by insulting David's messengers.

The war breaks out and the Syrians come to the aid of the Ammonites. David has to respond to that. This is not a war that David has provoked.

This is a war provoked by his enemies, but he beats them of course. Then he is done with his wars. That's in a sense too bad.

When David felt like he didn't have to fight in wars anymore, that's when he got a little flabby, spiritually and otherwise. 2 Samuel 10. It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died.

And Hanun his son reigned in his place. Then David said, I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me. So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father.

And David's servants came into the land of the people of Ammon. Then the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their king, their lord, Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not rather sent his servants to you to search out the city, to spy it out and to overthrow it? Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle at their buttocks and sent them away. Then they told David, when they told

David he sent to meet them because the men were greatly ashamed.

And the king said, wait at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return. In those days it would be a shameful thing for a man not to have a beard. Now cutting off half of a man's beard of course would make him look ridiculous.

But to remedy it by shaving the other half off, which would be the obvious choice, was not obvious at all to them. To have no facial hair would be just unheard of. In ancient times men wore beards.

It was the Greeks I think who first began to shave men. And I remember reading when I was in junior high I think some letter that was written by a Russian who had visited Alexander's empire. And had written back about the Greeks and how the men shaved their faces and wore bare faces like women have.

And I don't know what got the Greeks to do that. Maybe convenience, I don't know, but it doesn't seem convenient to me. But in any case it has become extremely normal for men to shave their beards now.

But we have to understand in the mindset of the people in those days it was not normal. For a man to have no beard was to have a face like a woman. And to have half a beard was ridiculous.

So these men were greatly humiliated and couldn't even go home to Jerusalem. They didn't want to show their faces, literally. And so they stayed there.

And cutting off their garments at the buttocks, it's not really clear if that means, since they probably wore robes, if it was cut all the way around the waist at the level of the buttocks. Or whether they cut off the back side so that their buttocks were showing. In any case it was a huge indignity and it was an act of war.

When somebody sends ambassadors to you and without any provocation you show them that kind of indignity. And shame them, then you're asking for war. Now David didn't initiate a war.

He just told these men to wait in Jericho until their beards grew back and then they could come home again. But it says when the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, that shouldn't have surprised them by their action. It seems like that's exactly what they were hoping to do.

Then the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zobah 20,000 foot soldiers and from King Maakah 1,000 men and from Ishtob 12,000 men. Now when David heard of it he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate and the Syrians of Zobah, Rehob, Ishtob and Maakah were by themselves in the

field.

Then Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind. So he chose some of the choice men of Israel and put them in battle array against the Syrians and the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai, his brother, that he might put them in battle array against the people of Ammon. So the main thing is they're going to have to fight on two fronts simultaneously, the Ammonites on one side and the Syrians on the other side.

So the armies of David have to be divided into half so that David's troops, of course, are much diminished as far as the concentration of power against any given front that they have to fight upon. So Abishai, who is also a great warrior, one of David's mighty men, and Joab, his brother, are becoming the commanders of two wings of this army. And he said to Abishai in verse 11, If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me.

But if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. They weren't sure who would do better in their conflict, but whoever was worsted the worst would be aided by the others and they'd have to, of course, leave off their campaign to go help their brothers. But that would be a bad situation.

It didn't materialize, however. It says, Be of good courage and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may Yahweh do what seems good to him.

Now, it sounds as if Joab wasn't quite confident that they're going to win. You know, let God do what he's going to do. Sounds like he's saying, you know, we're kind of putting ourselves in God's hands and we're not sure how this will turn out.

Now, they've fought every war so far. They've been victorious. But this was apparently a much more threatening situation with the two very large armies coming at two different directions.

And Israel not at all in a position to be, obviously, in a better position than their enemies. So Joab and the people who were with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians and they fled before him. Now, that's stated very briefly.

It doesn't tell us anything about the details of the battle. But Joab quite handily dispersed the Syrians and sent them running. And when the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai and entered the city.

So Joab returned to the people from the people of Ammon and went to Jerusalem. So they didn't try to destroy the city into which they fled. Not at this time.

They did later. The city is called Raba. And they just kind of let these people hold up in the city, hiding out.

And then Joab and his armies, they all went back to Jerusalem and left the Ammonites still sort of in their city. They might have... It's possible that he left some troops there to keep them from coming out again. I don't know.

But later on in chapter 12, they capture Raba. And it's because this is an unfinished business, this city, that David finds it possible to get Uriah the Hittite killed when he becomes inconvenient to him. And so they leave this city uncaptured.

Now, when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated before Israel, they gathered together. Then Hadadizr sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the river and they came to Halam. Now, he had been defeated before in earlier conflict, but he apparently was not killed.

And so he regrouped and gathered more of his people to come against David a second time. And Shobach, the commander of Hadadizr's army, went before them. And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan and came to Halam.

And the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. Then the Syrians fled before Israel and David killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 horsemen of the Syrians and struck Shobach, the commander of their army, who died there. This number, 700 charioteers, is different in 1 Chronicles 19, verse 18, it says 7,000.

So they are parallel accounts about the same battle. And 1 Chronicles 19, 18 says he killed 7,000 charioteers. Here it says 700.

Apparently, just a copyist error, somehow the number got copied wrongly in one of the manuscripts, got carried on down wrongly. Most scholars think that 7,000 is the correct number, rather than 700. So the Syrians and the Ammonites were defeated, and even the Syrians, seeing that the Ammonites were defeated, regrouped and launched a second battle, which was not very wise.

They lost heavily, 40,000 horsemen, 7,000 charioteers, and their commander was killed. And when all the kings who were the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them, so the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore. So Hadadezer apparently had ruled over several lesser kings that he had conquered on earlier occasions.

And now they, with the defeat of Hadadezer, they became vassals under David too. So David extended his control considerably by a few major defeats of major enemies. He collected a whole bunch of peoples under him to pay tribute to him.

They served David. That's when it says they served Israel. They made peace with Israel and served them.

It means, of course, they paid tribute to them. So David was able to collect a lot of

revenues from all these nations that he had conquered, which is why Solomon had so much money when David died to build the temple, which was one of the seven wonders of the world. It was one of the most glorious buildings, apparently, of the ancient world, the temple that Solomon built.

Now, chapter 11 is a very sad story, and it begins a sad story that remains sad for the rest of David's life. David has been the good guy throughout the story up to this point. He was righteous.

He was persecuted for righteousness' sake. He was God's favored one. Promises were made to him.

He was devout. He was principled. But, like other men, he had feet of clay, and he, just once too many, caved in to temptation.

And that is, of course, his sin with Bathsheba. Now, you might think, why was that such a big thing? I mean, he had eight wives, or seven wives before this that we know of, plus other wives and concubines who are not named. Why was it such a big offense to marry Bathsheba? Well, or to take Bathsheba, the difference was that she was another man's wife.

David, having married other women, even quite a lot of other women, had not really been a matter of offense to God. But when he took another man's wife, that was the offense. And we see that that's exactly what Nathan, the prophet, brings to confront him with.

You're like a man who had a lot of sheep, and you took your neighbor's only sheep, as we'll see in chapter 12. But here we have the story itself. It's very disappointing, because it changes the whole trajectory of David's reign.

Up to this point, he's been going from victory to victory. The blessing of God is on him. The Lord's preserving him everywhere he goes.

He's God's man. He's riding the wave of popularity and of success. And now this happens, and as a result of this, Nathan, the prophet, tells him that the sword is not going to depart from David's house all the days of his life.

And we read from this point on to the end of David's days, that's just it. Almost the rest of 2 Samuel, after this chapter, is the story of disaster in David's home. And it's because he messed with his neighbor's home.

He messed with his neighbor's wife, and that led to destruction of his own family. Now, it came to pass in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel, and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

It's interesting, it talks about this is the time when kings go out to battle. I mean, we don't live in times where there are kings going out to battle every spring. But apparently spring was the time to go out and fight.

Probably because winter was too rainy and muddy, it was just not a good time to go fight. So if you had any hostilities with other nations, you just kind of waited till springtime, waited for the thaw. And then you go out and fight your battles.

And so the people of Ammon had been holed up in the city of Rabbah. And now that spring had come, it was time to go and defeat that city. Joab had left the city unmolested at the end of the previous war, maybe because winter was coming on, we don't know.

Maybe because the weather was getting bad and it wasn't a good time to begin a long siege. So they left. But now spring came, and it was time to go back and finish up that business.

So he sent Joab to do this, but he remained in Jerusalem. Now, for David to remain in Jerusalem while the general goes out and leads the armies is not really a bad thing. In this case, it proved to be not a good thing.

And it's often pointed out that David got into trouble because he was at ease. At the time when kings go to war, he was not going to war. He sent someone else, he stayed home, and he was at home comfortable.

And his guard was down, and he ended up falling to temptation. But really, it can't be said that David did something in itself wrong in sending Joab. A king has to govern, he can't just go out and lead the armies all the time.

That's what he has generals for. And so he sent his general out. And David had been a man of war and had been involved in a lot of the battles, but now he's kind of facing retirement from that kind of activity.

He's not putting his bodily safety on the line anymore. But now his soul is endangered because of being too much at ease, it would appear. Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house.

And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. Now, people sometimes wonder whether Bathsheba was doing this in order to catch his eye. She was bathing on her rooftop.

And so some people thought, well, maybe she was doing that hoping to seduce David. But I don't know that that would be a fair assumption. It was the time of night that David was ordinarily asleep.

He was in bed, and he got up to wander around. Apparently he couldn't get to sleep or

something, or he woke up in the middle of the night. And he happened to get up on the roof or look out his window and see in the house next door a woman bathing.

She apparently would have no reason to believe he would be up walking around at that time of night. In fact, she might have even chosen that time for the sake of privacy. Hard to say.

And to say she was bathing does not necessarily mean that she was, as we would be, totally unclad. She might have been bathing with rags and things. She was bathing because she had come through a period of uncleanness.

That's what we're told in verse 4. It says she was cleansed from her impurity. That impurity has to do with her period. She had been on her period, and women on their period were unclean for that week of their period and for a week following.

Which means what? It means she was about ready to conceive. She was very susceptible to pregnancy. But under the law, a woman who had finished her period of impurity, which was two weeks after her period began, had to wash herself.

That was part of the ceremonial law. That's how you ended any period of impurity, whether you had been a leper or whether you'd had any kind of impurity. After your period of impurity, you'd wash yourself.

And so she was simply carrying out the instructions of the law. And there's no reason to believe that she was thinking in terms of being spotted by David. I think the error is all his in this case, not hers.

But she was very beautiful, and she was his neighbor's wife. David sent and inquired about the woman, and someone said, Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? Now, she was the daughter of Eliam. And there is a mention of an Eliam who is the son of Ahithoel, David's counselor.

This is said to be so in 2 Samuel 23.34. In 2 Samuel 23.34, Ahithoel, the counselor of David, the wise man who is so wise that it was said of him that to inquire of Ahithoel is like inquiring of the oracle of God. Well, he had a son named Eliam, or I don't know really the pronunciation. But if this Eliam, who is the son of Ahithoel, is also the father of Bathsheba, then she was the granddaughter of Ahithoel.

And the fact that Ahithoel sided with Absalom after David was driven from Jerusalem might be thought to be because of Ahithoel being unhappy with David over this incident. Though most scholars, or at least many scholars, believe that the Eliam here is a different one than Ahithoel's son. And therefore, we don't know that she was really related to Ahithoel.

And it would seem that if she was related to Ahithoel, he might be more inclined to

side with Solomon rather than Absalom as their king. Because Solomon would be his great grandson. So I don't know if the relationship with Ahithoel existed or not.

All we know is there was an Eliam who was her father and an Eliam who was the son of Ahithoel. Whether it's the same one or not, we cannot say. In 1 Chronicles 3.5, instead of calling her Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, it says Bathsheba, the daughter of Amiel.

So apparently Bathsheba was another name for Bathsheba. And Amiel, another name for Eliam. The interesting thing is that she was married to a man named Uriah who was a Hittite.

Now a Hittite was one of the Canaanite tribes that were not supposed to survive the conquest in the days of Joshua. Joshua was supposed to wipe out all the Hittites and all the other Canaanites. However, the Hittite nations, as scholars now know, extended way far north of Israel.

There were Hittite tribes and ethnic groups that were not in Canaan. They were way up in, I think, in Asia Minor, if I'm not mistaken. There were Hittites way up there too.

So it's possible that he was not one of the Hittites that had lived in Canaan before the conquest of Joshua. I mean, he didn't certainly, but that his ancestors did not. He may have been of Hittite origins from another country and therefore not one that would have been slated for extermination.

But even if his ancestors had been in the land of Canaan, that doesn't mean that they would have been exterminated because Joshua's day did not see the extermination of the Canaanites like they were supposed to. In any case, the Jews were not supposed to marry Canaanites. And Bathsheba married a Hittite, but he was clearly a pious Hittite.

Rahab was also a Canaanite, but she converted to Judaism and therefore she was able to marry within the tribe of Judah. So even though they were not to marry the Canaanites, that was on the assumption that the Canaanites remained pagans. But if they became converts to Yahweh, then apparently it was okay to marry them.

Bathsheba was probably a Jewish woman. She certainly was if she was granddaughter of Ahithoel. But in any case, she was probably Jewish, yet she was married to a Hittite.

He is often referred to as Uriah the Hittite, never just Uriah. There's always the emphasis that he was a Hittite. Perhaps in order to show the comparative righteousness of this Gentile to the Jew David.

We find that, as we shall see later on, Uriah, drunk, was more virtuous than David, sober. Had more self-control. So this was an unusually virtuous pagan.



But he had no doubt converted to Judaism, and therefore he was no longer really counted as a pagan. But he was a Gentile. This illustrates the fact that Gentiles could not only be saved in the Old Testament, but could be even more righteous than Jews can be, including the Jewish king.

Now, Jewish tradition says that Uriah was the armor-bearer for Joab. He may have been, but we don't have any record of that. We do have record, although, in the list of David's mighty men, where there are 33 named, that Uriah the Hittite was one of them.

So he wasn't just a soldier. He was one of the champions in David's forces. And he lived next door to David, apparently, next door to the palace.

And while Uriah was out faithfully serving David, David was betraying Uriah and sleeping with his wife, as we shall see. So she's the daughter of Uriah the Hittite, I mean the wife of Uriah the Hittite, the daughter of Eliam. And David sent messengers and took her.

And she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity, and she returned to her house. That is, he couldn't have lay with her if she was still impure from her period, and therefore it mentions she was cleansed from her impurity. But it also means, since she was bathing and had recently finished her period of uncleanness, that she would be susceptible to getting pregnant, and that's exactly what happened.

The woman conceived. So she sent and told David and said, I am with child. You know, her communications are extremely limited in this narrative, which makes it impossible for us to really sense what her whole attitude was.

As a woman, she may have felt that she's not empowered to resist, especially the king. And when she gets a summons to come to the king's house, you know, it's a royal summons. She can't say, I'm busy right now, I can't come.

And of course, when she comes over and he attempts to seduce her, she could have resisted, I suppose. I mean, it would have been difficult for a woman in that society to resist the overtures of the king with impunity. But if she had been exceptionally virtuous, or even we could just say faithful to her husband, which sometimes is an exceptional virtue, then she would have said that, you know, of course, no matter who you are, I'm not going to cheat on my husband.

But people were accustomed to obeying kings, and David was not unattractive either. And so, I mean, she may not have been unhappy about the whole thing. It's hard to say.

We don't know if she preferred to be faithful to her husband. We know that when her husband died, she mourned him. And that may have been, you know, sincere, or it could have been fake.

But it's really hard to read Bathsheba. It's hard to do. We don't get the insight into her

thinking and her attitudes like we do into David's.

But we just have this simple line. She's pregnant, she sends David a message, I'm pregnant. And it's up to David to decide what to do then.

She's not even making necessarily any suggestions. Just, you might want to know, you're a dad, again. Then David said to Joab, sent to Joab, saying, send me Uriah the Hittite.

And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. And David said to Uriah, go down to your house and wash your feet.

So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him. In other words, go home and party with your wife, is what he's saying. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all his servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

Now Uriah was a Spartan soldier. He had a nice house. I mean, it was in a good neighborhood, right next to the king's palace.

He had a beautiful wife, and he was a man of prestige in the army. But he didn't act like a man who felt like he had a lot of privilege. He felt like he was one of the servants of the king.

His loyalty to David is touching, in view of David's lack of loyalty to him in this story. And it says, when they told David, saying Uriah did not go down to his house, David said to Uriah, did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house? And Uriah said to David, the ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house and eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.

So David's plan seems to be thwarted. Obviously, time was of the essence. By the time Bathsheba knew she was pregnant, there must have been the passage of a month or two at least, if not three.

And David's plan, of course, was to hopefully have Uriah sleep with her so that he could mistake the baby for his own. Though it seems like Uriah by this time would know it wasn't his own in any case. But David was being desperate and hoping that at least it could be, the impression could be given that it was Uriah's baby.

After all, Bathsheba no doubt was not showing yet, or else David could hardly hope that Uriah would think, if he went to sleep with his wife and she was already showing from the pregnancy, there'd be no way to conceal this from Uriah. So she must have just missed a period or something like that and concluded that she was pregnant, and

therefore maybe only a few weeks had passed. And therefore David would hope that if Uriah would sleep with her, it might be passed off as if she had gotten pregnant by him, and that would have concealed David's sin adequately.

But Uriah wasn't cooperating. Of course he didn't know he was supposed to. He was just being a loyal soldier, loyal to his commander.

He said, you know, my superior's out sleeping on the open fields. How can I go to my home and sleep in a comfortable bed and enjoy the comforts of home that my fellow soldiers in Israel, even the ark of God's in a tent, how can I go live in a house and stay in a house and be comforted when my fellow soldiers out there are toughing it out, I'm going to tough it out too. So he slept with the servants at the foot of the stairs.

And David was not going to be put off quite that quickly. This time he thought, well, maybe I can get him drunk and end his resolve of this type. So David said to Uriah, wait here today also and tomorrow I'll let you depart.

So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. Now when David called him, he ate and drank before him, and he made him drunk. And at evening he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his Lord, but he did not go down to his house.

So David apparently thought that once he's drunk, certainly he will not have this firm resolve and this conscience that he's got. But like I said, Uriah drunk was more virtuous than David sober, and therefore Uriah didn't go home that night. Then in the morning it was so that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

And he wrote in the letter saying, set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, retreat from him that he may be struck down and die. Now in doing this, Uriah was carrying his own death warrant unknowingly to his commander. I mean this is really, what a betrayal this is.

I mean it's a huge betrayal to sleep with anyone's wife anyway, but then to kill the man, and even to use him as the courier unknowingly to carry his own death warrant, it's just as bad as it gets. There's really just hardly any treachery more imaginable than that which David is guilty of here. And that the Bible would tell this story really quite matter of factly about one of its heroes.

In fact, one of its greatest heroes just is one of those many things that makes the Bible unlike mythology. In the myths, the heroes are heroes. In the Bible, the heroes are human, and they are susceptible to doing wrong things.

There are things they do that could easily spoil their hero status for the reader. And the writers just take the risk because that's simply the truth about it. Now it's interesting that in Chronicles, which tells of the reign of David also, 1 Chronicles covers much of the same material as Samuel.

This sin of David and many of the other bad things that happen later are simply omitted. There are no chapters in 1 Chronicles that parallel this particular story. But on the other hand, Chronicles doesn't paint David out to be perfect because it does record the story of how Satan moved him to number the people and David got in a lot of trouble for that, and Chronicles does record that.

But this particular scandal is not recorded in Chronicles, but it is recorded by the prophets who wrote these books. So, David was bringing Joab into his confidence because that would be a strange letter for Joab to receive. Here's one of David's mighty men, and David says to Joab, put him in a dangerous situation, withdraw and let him die.

Joab didn't ask for any explanation, but he must have known there was something secret afoot, obviously. This is the kind of thing that Joab would have to keep quiet about. And therefore, David was making himself vulnerable.

His story would be known by Joab. Certainly, Joab would put it together once he'd see that David would marry Bathsheba after Uriah was killed. So, David was making himself considerably vulnerable to Joab by getting him involved in this plot.

So, it happened while Joab besieged the city that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men. Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the people of the servants of David fell, and Uriah the Hittite died also. Then Joab sent and told David all things concerning the war, and he charged the messenger saying, when you have finished telling the matters of the war to the king, if it happens that the king's wrath rises, and he says to you, why did you approach so near to the city when you fought? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck Abimelech, the son of Jerubibesheth? Was it not a woman who cast a piece of millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebes? Why did you go near the wall? Then you shall say to your servant, Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

That will calm David down. Now, of course, you remember the story of Abimelech is from the book of Judges. He is here referred to as the son of Jerubibesheth.

Now, Jerubibesheth, you remember, was Gideon, but his real name, Gideon, he had adopted, or someone had adopted for him a nickname, Jerubael. But as I told you before, the word Baal, as a particle of a name, became very unpopular in Israel at later times, and they substituted the word Baal with Beshet, which means shameful thing. So here he is not even called Jerubael, he is called Jerubesheth.

Besheth, of course, taking the place of Baal. Just like Mephibosheth, his real name was Mephibael. And Ishbosheth, his real name was Ishbael.

These names that had the word Baal in them, since Baal is a common word in Hebrew for Lord, and can be used of God himself, yet among the Canaanites it was the name of a

pagan deity. And so at a later time in Israel's history, back when they were more sensitized to paganism, they often would refer to all these names that had the word Baal in them, they'd substitute the word Baal for Bosheth, shameful thing. And so apparently that was the case here as well.

So tell him that Uriah the Hittite is dead also. So the messenger said to David, Surely the men prevailed against us and came out to us in the field. Then we drove them back as far as the entrance of the gate.

The archers shot from the wall at your servants, and some of the king's servants are dead. And your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. So he didn't wait to see if David was going to get mad by the news, he threw that in there knowing that that would quell David's anger.

Then David said to the messenger, Thus you shall say to Joab, Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Yeah, it's a random thing who dies in battle. Except in this case it was not random at all, it was quite planned.

Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it. So encourage him. Then the wife of Uriah, excuse me, when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. When David sent the message back to Joab in verse 25, when he says, Do not let this thing displease you, literally in the Hebrew it's, Do not let this thing be evil in your sight.

It's a Hebrew expression that just means don't let this be something that you're unhappy about. But don't let this be evil in your sight. But in verse 27 in the Hebrew it says that this thing that David had done was evil in the sight or in the eyes of the Lord.

So he tells Joab, Don't let this be counted evil in your sight. But it was evil in God's sight. Obviously God's opinion of it mattered more than Joab's.

And so David seems like he's gotten away with something. He now has taken an eighth wife, a widow, already pregnant, but the nation doesn't know that yet. In fact, I don't know if they ever knew that because if this was soon enough, if this was only, say, two or three weeks after her pregnancy, had been, well, after he had slept with her before, I'm sure that many times a baby would be born a few weeks early so it wouldn't be obvious whether she, you know, that he had married her pregnant.

So he might have felt like he'd gotten away with it. And apparently he did. Except the thing displeased the Lord.

And this is something we see in the Old Testament history a lot. And that is that the prophets who wrote the history tell us what God thinks about things. You could read the history without that kind of commentary.

But the purpose of the scripture is to reveal the mind of God to us. And so the thing was not okay. David was, you know, exercising executive privilege, no doubt, in his own thinking.

But he apparently was not, at this point, convicted about the thing, even to repent. He had not repented at the time that Nathan came to him, which he does in the next chapter. And that seems strange.

It seems strange that David would do such a criminal act and being a man after God's own heart as he had been, not immediately repent of it. But we do know that he was carrying guilt about it. He was slow to repent.

And he did not repent until Nathan came to him. But after he repented, he wrote a psalm, Psalm 32. And he tells us what was going on inside him before his repentance, apparently before Nathan came to him.

Between the time that he had committed these sins and the time he repented, he tells us something. In Psalm 32, the psalm title doesn't tell us what the time frame is, but all scholars agree that this is a reference to that particular time. And he says in verse 1, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me, my vitality was turned to the drought of summer.

Then he says in verse 5, I acknowledged my sin to you, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Now, the confession in verse 5 he refers to is the confession that we will read about in the next chapter of 2 Samuel, when Nathan came to him.

But he says prior to that, what was he going through? He was living with his neighbor's widow that he had committed adultery with. He had killed the neighbor. He had done just about every kind of crime against God and against humanity that is possible to commit in a very short space of time.

And he had not repented, but he was not getting away with it. He says, when I kept silent, that's when he was keeping his secret, not repenting and not confessing it, my bones grew old through my groaning all day long. He says God's hand was heavy upon him.

He felt strong disapproval from God upon him. He says my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I don't know if that's referring to his sexual prowess.

I really don't know, but it's very possible that God was actually depriving him of even his manly vitality because of this guilt that he was carrying. And then he says I acknowledge my sin and you forgave. And of course the psalm begins rejoicing in that forgiveness.

Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven. But we see then that although between the end of chapter 11 and chapter 12 we have no reference given to David's mentality or his mood or his attitude about this sin before Nathan came to him, nor do we know how long it took before Nathan came to him, but it must not have been very long because Nathan came before the baby was born, so it was certainly less than nine months later that Nathan came to him. However long it was, and it could have only been a week or less, it might have been the next day, we don't really know, but David was not feeling good about it.

And the Lord sent Nathan to David and he came to him and said to him there were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished and it grew up together with him and his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his own bosom and it was like a daughter to him.

Now remember Nathan is talking as if this is a true story. He's bringing it as if he knows of a case of an injustice that has been done and he's asking David to give a judgment about it. And a traveler came to the rich man who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one of the wayfaring men who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.

So here's the deal. One guy has a lot of sheep and his neighbor is a poor man who has only one sheep. The rich man has a visitor and doesn't kill one of his own sheep to feed the visitor.

He goes and steals and kidnaps and kills this other sheep that was like a family member to the poor man. Now Nathan certainly picked the right illustration to get up the ire of this king because this king had spent many years as a shepherd and a shepherd risks his life to prevent theft of his sheep. Once a bear had come to get his sheep and another time a lion and David had put his own life at risk to save the sheep from being taken away from him and no doubt had to also stand up to thieves and cattle thieves and so forth that would come and try to take his sheep.

A shepherd, his sheep being safe and his sheep not being stolen from him is a major priority to him, worth putting his life on the line about. It would be like probably a person who stole sheep from a shepherd would be viewed the way that a horse thief was viewed

in the Old West. That's just not okay.

Hanging is too good for him. They'd hang a horse thief. And David felt the same way about someone who stole his sheep.

Nathan had crafted this parable in such a way that David thinking it was a true story would have his blood boiling. I mean it's an outrage even if you've never been a shepherd to think of a man who's rich taking advantage of a poor man like that. I mean it's outrageous.

And yet David being a shepherd or having been a shepherd would be particularly sensitized. In fact, as a boy, he probably had favorite lambs that he slept next to and treated as special pets just like was described here. David could probably relate with the poor man very much.

And David says his anger was greatly aroused against the man and said to Nathan, as the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die and he shall restore fourfold for the lamb because he did this thing and because he had no pity. Now the law of Moses, if a person stole a lamb, according to Exodus 22.1, he would have to restore four lambs for a lamb. That is if the lamb was eaten and could not be returned.

If a man stole a lamb and he was caught with it alive, he had to return the original lamb and one other besides. But if he had killed it or sold it and could not return it, he had to pay back four lambs for one. So David said he's got to restore the fourfold for the lamb but he also is going to die, which was certainly not what the law said.

But David could order the death of Uriah, an innocent man, he could order the death of a guilty man who hadn't done something worthy of death. It's not worthy of death to steal a lamb. That's the point about the law of Moses.

The law of Moses gave exactly just penalties for crimes. You steal a lamb, you give back four. You don't lose your life for it.

You don't get your hand cut off for stealing. You have to repay, you have to make restitution. But for a man to die for a lamb is not really something in the Bible that the law would have approved of.

But David obviously had gotten used to making decisions that weren't exactly true to the law. I mean, sleeping with his neighbor's wife and killing her husband is not a sign of being a real conscientious. And so he's just in his anger saying, I'm going to hang the guy.

The guy deserves to die. And he's got to repay fourfold to the poor man. Then Nathan said to David, You are the man.



Thus says the Lord God of Israel, I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more.

Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword. You have taken his wife to be your wife. You have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor. And he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the sun.

For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun. Then David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And apparently he said it with sincerity.

We have actually a longer version of this sentence in Psalm 51. David wrote Psalm 51 at this time. Not while he was sitting there in Nathan's presence in all likelihood.

I'm sure he didn't say, well, wait a minute while I write something out here. But he truly did repent, and his repentance is recorded in a psalm, Psalm 51, a very well known psalm. And the repentance was genuine.

And that's why Nathan said, okay, the Lord says you're not going to die for this. Even though you pronounced your own death sentence when you said the man shall die, and you're the man, the Lord is going to cancel that sentence. You're not going to die.

But you're going to have trouble. In chapter 51 of the psalm, it says to the chief musician of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he'd gone into Bathsheba. So there's no question about the timing of this.

David says, Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your loving kindness, according to the multitude of your tender mercies. Blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin as ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done this evil in your sight, that you may be found just when you speak and blameless when you judge. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me, behold, you desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part you will make me no wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the

bones which you have broken may rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence. Do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your generous spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall be converted to you. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth your praise. For you do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it. You do not delight in burnt offerings.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. These, O God, you will not despise. Do good in your good pleasure to Zion.

Build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offerings and whole burnt offering. Then they shall offer bulls on your altar.

A lot of good verses here, but we're not studying the Psalms, so I'm not going to go into exposition. We're going to study the Psalms in another module. But these were things that David wrote at this time.

And it was obviously a repentance recognized by God and the prophet as genuine repentance instead of fake. And in chapter 12 of 2 Samuel, verse 13, when David said, I have sinned against the Lord, Nathan said to David, The Lord has also put away your sin. You shall not die.

You should. You've done two crimes that in the law are worthy of death, murder and adultery. Both are punishable by death.

Furthermore, David had pronounced his own sentence when he said, The man shall die. As the Lord lives, he shall die. And Nathan said, Well, you're the man.

But the Lord, seeing his repentance, said, You're not going to die. However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die. Then Nathan departed to his house.

So it's not just a matter of just a crime. It's a matter of giving the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme God. If the man who stands for Yahweh behaves this way, then it gives people occasion to disregard Yahweh as a righteous God.

And of course, Christians, when we sin, we take that risk also. How many times when you talk to people about Christ do they bring up an objection that really amounts to, Some

one I knew who was a Christian did such and such a thing. Therefore, I don't believe in God.

I don't believe in Christianity or whatever. These books by the modern atheists are really, they don't have any real arguments against the existence of God except that people who are religious do such bad things. They give occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

So this was not a light matter. David, you're not going to die, but your child will die. Now a lot of people feel this is unfair.

Why should the child die? He's innocent. Well, he is innocent. That's just it.

Because he's innocent, he's going to go to heaven. Children die, even without special pronouncements like this. I mean, everyone dies.

And people die when God says it's time for them to die. You or I could die today. Does it mean we've done something wrong? No.

It doesn't mean we've done something wrong. The question is not whether you die. Everyone does that.

The question is whether you are on good terms with God when you die. There's every reason to believe that this child was on good terms with God. The child didn't do no wrong, and God knows that well enough.

So God was taking the baby home. And David probably wished he could be taken home instead, but he didn't get that luxury. Tell you what, when you're really broken over your sin, you kind of wish you could die rather than live with the sense of guilt and the consequences of your sin.

And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became very ill. And David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. So the elders of his house arose and went to him to raise him up from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them.

Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. After all, sometimes David did not respond well to people who brought him bad news, as we know.

For they said, Indeed, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm. When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead.

Therefore David said to his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes.

And he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped.

Then he went to his own house, and when he requested, they sent food before him, and he ate. Then his servants said to him, What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child when he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food. So he said, While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me and the child may live? But now he is dead.

Why shall I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. Now fasting was usually understood to be a sign of mourning, and therefore it would be done only when someone had died or when there was some other special occasion to mourn. David saw fasting in a different light.

He saw it as something which, joined with prayer, might prevail with God. Now in this case it did not, and could not, because Nathan the prophet had declared the child would die, it was going to happen, and God didn't change his mind because David fasted and prayed. But it's interesting that David saw fasting and prayer as a means of possibly changing God's mind, or at least getting God to move.

He saw fasting as something to add to prayer, to give it more oomph. But he did not see it simply as a thing to do in mourning. And so he stopped fasting when the child died, and he knew the child was not coming back.

Now he said, I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. Christians often use this to suggest that this proves that babies go to heaven when they die. And I believe they do, but I don't think this proves that.

The argument goes like this. David, of course, went to heaven when he died. Maybe he did, maybe he didn't.

I think he probably went to Abram's bosom. But the point is, David died a saved man and went wherever saved people go. And he said that he will go to the child.

That means the child must have gone to wherever saved people go. And there's the argument for children being saved when they die. I believe the Bible does indicate that children die saved, but I don't think David was referring to that.

I think he's saying that the child has gone to Sheol, where all dead people go. David will someday go to Sheol, too. His son will never come back from there.

But he, like all people, will go there and join his son someday in that place. Then David comforted Bathsheba, his wife, and went into her and lay with her. So she bore a son.

And he called his name Solomon, and the Lord loved him. And he sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet, so he called his name Jedidiah because of the Lord. Jedidiah

means Beloved of the Lord.

Now, we never have Solomon called by that name later than this, so it might have just been a nickname he had when he was a little kid. Now Joab fought against Ravah of the people of Ammon and took the royal city, finally. And Joab sent messengers to David and said, I have fought against Ravah and have taken the city's water supply, which means it's just a matter of time before they have to surrender.

They won't have water. They'll be starved out. Now, therefore, gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be named after my name.

In other words, if you want to get credit for this victory, come on down here and finish it off. I've done all the heavy lifting. You just come and wait for them to surrender and you'll get the credit.

So David gathered all the people together and went to Ravah, fought against it and took it, and he took their king's crown from his head. Its weight was a talent of gold, which is like 60 pounds or 65 pounds or something like that. Now, you wouldn't wear a crown like that normally.

It was apparently for display purposes rather than for wearing. And probably when it says, well, it says its weight was a talent of gold with precious stones. It was set on David's head.

Probably only symbolically. It's not likely David wore that thing around that heavy. In fact, they probably had to suspend it while it was on his head.

It was maybe just set there just to show, okay, look who's king now. Okay, that's done. Also, they brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance.

And he brought out the people who were in it, and he put them to work with saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them cross over to the brickworks. So he did with all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

So the Ammonites were finally defeated. They were very stubborn, but they were defeated after this little incident where Uriah the Hittite was killed at their walls. David, I suppose, is fortunate if you want to get the man killed that the war wasn't ended earlier because it would have been harder to find a situation for Uriah to be betrayed and put to death.

Anyway, so we've got this ugliness. The prophecy is given that David, though he would live, his son would die, and the sword would not depart from David's house all the rest of his life. So the very next chapter sets up the situation where one of his sons is going to get murdered after himself committing a violent crime against one of David's daughters.

And then there's more and more and more, and it just gets worse for David because of this whole situation.