

THE STORY
STUDY 12
CHAPTER 12

The Story so far ...

The chapter opens with David remaining in Jerusalem instead of leading his soldiers to war. He ends up committing adultery with Bathsheba. He sends for her husband – Uriah the Hittite – and tries to get him to have sexual relations with his wife Bathsheba. “Go down to your house and wash your feet” is probably a euphemism for sexual relations. Although it can also simply mean to go and refresh oneself. David is unsuccessful – Uriah doesn't “wash his feet” and so David conspires with Joab his army commander to allow Uriah to die in battle.

David is now free to marry Bathsheba.

Nathan the prophet is sent by God to rebuke David, which he does, telling a story, getting David to condemn himself. David hears the Lord's rebuke and acknowledges: “I have sinned against the Lord.” Ps 52 is David's Psalm of repentance.

The child conceived dies. Ps 32 was written in response to the knowledge of sins forgiven.

After that Solomon is born.

Another son, Absalom rebels against his father David, the king, to take control of the kingdom. David musters his army to subdue the rebellion, giving his commanders instructions to be gentle with his son Absalom.

Israel's armies are routed by David's armies, and Absalom, caught in a tree by his hair, is killed by Joab. News of the victory is sent to David. His concern is for Absalom, and is devastated when he hears that he is dead.

David wants to build a temple, but because he has spilled so much blood in establishing the kingdom, the Lord tells him that his son Solomon will be the one to build it. Yet, although he would not be the one to build it, David provides all the material for the building of the temple. He also arranged for the people of the land to contribute to the materials for its building.

It was David's love for God, which we see reflected in his poetry, which was the organising and driving principle of his life.

David finally handed over the reins of the kingdom to his son Solomon.

1. What were some of the factors that led to David's sin with Bathsheba?

The Chapter opens with the words: “In the Spring, at the time when Kings go off to war, David sent Joab out ...” David was not fulfilling his responsibility. David was where he ought not have been.

Secondly, David saw what he ought not have seen. Maybe he couldn't help “seeing” but then he should have stopped “seeing” because he looked away.

Thirdly, having committed adultery in his heart, he set about making it possible for his thoughts to “be given legs.” The sin was committed in his heart. Sleeping with her was the physical outworking of what had already happened. That is why Jesus made it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that if we look with lust, the sin has been committed.

It is true – the devil does find work for idle hands!

All of us will be faced with temptation. Now we have had the power and penalty of sin dealt with. But we will not be removed from the presence of sin till we get to be with Jesus. Therefore, sin and temptation will always be with us. But we can take steps to make it more difficult to sin.

Just a word on the little phrase: “She had purified herself from her uncleanness.” That may be the writer telling us she was fertile to conceive.

2. Both Saul and David sinned against God, yet how did their responses differ? What was the result of their responses?

Saul followed the age old response: make an excuse, try and justify it, blame someone else:

We read (page 143) that Saul, when confronted by Samuel, responded: *When I saw the men scattering and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling ... I thought "Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal and I have not sought the Lord's favour" So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offerings.*

He made an excuse, he tried to justify it, even made it sound like the "religious" thing to do, all leading him to feel "compelled" to do what he did. God saw it differently – disobedience.

In the second instance, Saul justified his actions from a religious point of view – he wanted to offer them to the Lord. But, the Lord wanted obedience not sacrifice.

David on the other hand, was quick to say: I have sinned against the Lord. And as we read Psalm 51, we see the depths of his confession and repentance. He not only confessed, he showed that he knew exactly *what* he was confessing. There was true repentance. And Psalm 32 shows that he truly knew what it was to be forgiven.

The result was that Saul was side-lined; David went on to achieve all God had planned for him to achieve.

What are the implications of this for us? – we do sin. In **1Jn 2** John writes to us what the Lord's desire is – *my little children, I write this that you do not sin.* That is the Lord's desire. But the truth is, we will sin. Therefore, John continues: *if any of you do sin, we have an advocate with the Father ...*

Sin will be with us until we die. But we can confess. We don't sin knowing we can confess. We confess when we have allowed the devil to get the upper hand. And the Lord graciously forgives and will still use us.

3. How did David's sin affect the future of his family?

God, through Nathan, warned David that he would have family strife. And David did. Before even the Absalom affair, one of his sons raped his half sister, which led to deaths, which was instrumental in leading to Absalom's rebellion against his own father.

4. David was allowed to plan the temple, but God told him that his son would be the one to actually build it. How do you think David felt about that? How did David respond?

One doesn't get the idea that David resented it. He seemed to understand that his role in God's – and Israel's – kingdom was to establish it. This took battles and the shedding of blood. But that was David's part and he did it to the best of his ability.

However, David knew that he could still play a part in the building of the temple – and he played that part. He, from his own wealth, provided most of the materials for it. He willingly and voluntarily did what he was able to do to build it.

I think that in the church that is a lesson for us. Different people will get to do different things. We might end up not doing the thing we wanted to do. Like David. But instead of sulking and withdrawing, couldn't we, like David, positively engage to do what we still can do to make sure the project is a success?

5. Do you, like David, give God credit and praise for your successes and accomplishments?

What ISN'T being suggested is that when we have been part of a successful project, that we make it difficult for people to thank us, to recognise our giftedness. God has given us gifts and abilities, and it is because we are good at certain things that God was able to use us. Which is why we may offer to do something in the first place. It is being most UN-gracious not to allow people to say "thank you." However, there will and must always be a humility, which recognises with gratitude the God who gifted us, and that Almighty God should have been willing to use us for something he could have spoken into being.

And even worse is a false humility – you know that you have gifts in a certain area, but you discount them in a way that leaves folk in doubt as to the fact that you actually know you are pretty sharp!!

So, we must God credit. But we must also remain gracious in responding to our church family.