

2nd Samuel Chapters 11-12 – John Karmelich

1. Now we come to the second most famous sin in the bible: David and Bathsheba.
2. For the three people out there who don't know this story, let's summarize it first:
 - a) David is home at his palace and spots a very good looking woman from his balcony.
 - b) He finds out she is married. He sends for her anyway and has consensual sex.
 - c) He finds out before the sexual act that her husband is off fighting the war.
 - d) To cover the sin, David sends a message to General-Joab to put Bathsheba's husband in the front of the battle lines. He gets killed. David is guilty of murder.
 - e) Chapter 12 is about the prophet Nathan using a parable to illustrate the sins that David has committed. Nathan then predicts the problems David will have the rest of his life. Those troubles are described in the remainder of 2nd Samuel.
 - f) The chapter also has some epilogue war verses that are not directly related to David and Bathsheba. The main lesson of those verses is to show that God still unconditionally blesses Israel because of God's promises and not because of David's behavior.
 - g) There, all done. Time to call it a week. ☺
3. I can preach a wonderful sermon on the evils of adultery. I can preach an equally wonderful sermon on the effects of murder. What's more important is to personalize these chapters.
 - a) The bible goes out its way to tell the negative aspects of its heroes as well as their accomplishments. The bible does this so we can relate to these people as fellow human beings with weaknesses like our own. It is a mistake to think we can't ever be as used like a David and it is an equal mistake to think we can't fall like David did at his peak.
4. Most older people have regrets in life. I suspect they (ok, we) have all had a fantasy as follows: "I wish I had a time machine. I would go back to when I was a teenager or in my twenties. I would go find "that kid" and tell them not to do what they are about to do. It is going to mess up their lives forever. I was an arrogant kid who didn't think about the long-term consequences. I want to tell that young kid, look at what you're about to do and watch how it will affect your life for years to come".
 - a) I call this the "ripple effect". The mistakes we make in our lives often have consequences for years to come. Yes, we learn from our mistakes. Yes, God forgives us of our mistakes when we ask for that forgiveness. Still, we have to live with the consequences of those actions. We still carry the scars for the rest of our lives.
 - b) Getting back to David, the mistakes of these chapters ripple through the rest of his life. The same way the sins and mistakes we make will have consequences the rest of our life. For the remainder of David's life, he will have trouble and pain that you wouldn't wish on your worse enemy. God raised up David. To whom God gives a lot of power, God also holds accountable.
5. One of the questions I wrestled with this week was, "Why didn't God kill David, or why didn't the Israelites put David on trial for murder?"
 - a) God calls for capital punishment for murder. It is the only law that is either alluded to, or stated directly in all five books written by Moses (i.e., the first five bible books).
 - i) For example, the bible says, "If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death." (Leviticus 24:17).
 - b) In this chapter, David commits murder. There is no getting around that fact.
 - c) So why didn't God "zap" David with a lightening bolt? ☺
 - i) Part of the answer is the text says, "You (that's us, not God) shall not a murderer to live". God places capital punishment under the responsibility of society. It is up to society to obey God's laws. God does not "force" obedience upon us.

- d) So why didn't the Israelites put David on trial for murder?
 - i) Part of the answer may be that they didn't know at the time.
 - ii) "General Joab" knew of this, yet he went along out of loyalty to David.
 - iii) Even if the Israelites knew, David was the one who led the country to becoming a great empire. They may have been too intimidated to "take on" David. The rest of Second Samuel will show how the country suffered the consequences of not dealing with this sin.
- 6. With that in mind, let's get back to the fact that God called David, "a man after his own heart".
 - a) I take the premise that God knows all things. If God is perfect, then God cannot learn. Therefore, God knew before David was born that: 1) He would be on the run from Saul for years, 2) He would be king and lead a great empire, 3) God would pick him as part of the lineage leading to the Messiah and 4) God knew in advance that David committed adultery and murder.
 - b) My point is God was aware of David's sins when God "picked" David.
 - c) That is something for us to take comfort in. When God calls us to salvation, He is aware of all the sins we will ever commit for the rest of our life. God is well aware of all the mistakes and willful sins we will commit in the future the moment we commit our lives to serve Him. God still picked us despite those sins.
 - d) Don't get me wrong, it doesn't excuse any sin. We still have to pay the consequences of those sins. Know that God loves us and choose us despite whatever we do after that moment in time. God is willing to love us despite our faults and failures. We as human beings tend to be a lot tougher on ourselves than God is. After we have confessed our sins to God, our ego's think, "I should have been a better person". God says in effect, "I know you're sinned. I've forgiven you. Why won't you forgive yourself?"
 - e) OK, let's begin the tragedy. ☺
- 7. Chapter 11, Verse 1: In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.
 - a) First, notice the editorial comment, "At the time when kings go off to war".
 - i) Whoever wrote this knew that David should have been off leading the army.
 - ii) In the last part of Chapter 10, General Joab won some battles, but when King David was leading the army, the victory was all that much greater.
 - iii) It is as if the author is saying, "If David was out leading the army, none of this would have happened!"
 - iv) What is interesting is that despite the fact that David was not there, the Israelites still won. Despite David's sin coming up, the Israelites still won.
 - v) In fact, you can read this two-chapter section as sandwiched between battle victories over Israel's enemies. It shows God's grace and His unconditional blessings despite the circumstances.
 - b) The verse also says that "springtime" is the time that kings go off to war. The reason battles often were fought this time of the year were due to good weather conditions and the fact that armies could walk through farm lands and live off of the crops.
- 8. Verse 2: One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"
 - a) First, let's summarize these two verses: David woke up from a nap and was walking around his rooftop patio. David spotted a beautiful women bathing. David inquired who she was. David discovered she was married. The text says she is the daughter of Eliam. This guy is mentioned in Chapter 23 of this book as among David's "mighty men".

- b) In the introduction, I talked about mistakes one makes when one is young in life and how it ripples through the remainder of their life. In David's case, he made the mistake of marrying more than one woman. He started a harem despite the fact that bible teaches that kings are not to multiply wives. (Reference: Deuteronomy 17:17).
- i) You would think that having a stable full of wives would be enough. I'm sure some, if not all of David's wives were beautiful to behold. To state it crudely, if David was horny, he could have looked around his harem and "somebody" would have cooperated. ☺
 - ii) A point to learn from these lessons is that lust is never satisfied with "enough".
 - iii) The only way to kill a sinful desire is to "crucify it to death". What I mean by that is you must isolate it, and then run away from it.
 - iv) David was a man who sought God. Most of the Psalms were written by David. David's weakness was a lust for women. Having a bunch of wives didn't satisfy that appetite, it only made David hungry for more. Being "religious" doesn't magically make a lustful desire go away. The only way to kill a desire is to isolate it and run away from it!
 - v) The best illustration on this principal is charcoal briquettes. To keep them hot they have to be clumped together. If you isolate one briquette, it goes cold. That is the only way to kill a sinful desire: to isolate it and let that desire "grow cold".
- c) David at this point in his life was middle aged. Most commentators believe David was about 50 when this happened.
- i) One thing you learn as a Christian is that temptation does not die when you get older. The temptations of youth still exist as one gets older.
 - ii) One of the great dangers as a Christian is times of "boredom". Here was David, successful as a king, leader of a great empire, great religious accomplishments, a respectful leader, and now, home and I suspect, bored out of his mind.
 - a) I'm convinced part of the motivation for David doing this deed is just for the "thrill" of the danger. David was used to being on the run most of his early life and being in war most of his latter life. This is a guy accustomed to having adrenaline rushes! Now that he was home, "bored", the idea of trying to get away with this sin had a rush of excitement to it.
 - b) I'm also convinced that Satan does his best work when we achieve our goals, have success in life, and then, get bored with the day-to-day routines. Our human nature craves excitement and fresh things.
 - iii) In the last lesson, I talked about the fact that since God announced that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. Satan now knew where to "best focus his attack". Satan couldn't defeat David on the warfront, so he attacks him after success kicks in and at a moment of boredom. You can almost hear Satan tell one of his demons, "Quick, Bathsheba is out there bathing naked! Quick, David has a weakness for women! Wake up him! Make him sleepless! Suggest that he go out his window and take a look!"
 - iv) So what's the remedy for dealing with "temptation over boredom?"
 - a) First, stay daily in prayer. We can't overcome sin based on our own strength. Pray for God's help to overcome temptation.
 - b) Second, daily read God's Word. One of my favorite proverbs is, "This book will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book". It's hard to commit sin thinking about the fact that God is watching you and knowing you are accountable to Him.
 - c) Third, be accountable to other people. I have seen people who know their bible backwards fall into sin. I usually find those people are in situations where there is no other person to which they are accountable.

- (1) Christian men especially need accountability to other Christian men or a small group. Because God is invisible to the eye, there is something more fearful about the embarrassment of having to tell your Christian friends of your mistakes. It is a great motivation tool to avoid temptation.
 - d) Finally, when it does happen, run! The bible teaches that in every tempting situation, God does provide an escape rout. (See 1st Corinthians 10:13). When you see that escape route, take it!
9. Verse 4: Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."
 - a) Boy does this one verse pack a punch! In one verse, we read that Bathsheba came to David, they had consensual sex, she went home and soon found out she was pregnant.
 - b) The verse says, "She had purified herself from her uncleanness". The book of Leviticus lays out a monthly ritual for women and their menstrual period. The point of mentioning that fact here is to know that Bathsheba just had her period and therefore, Bathsheba was "definitely" pregnant from David. Remember her husband Uriah was off at war.
 - c) I should also comment a little on Bathsheba here.
 - i) The guilt of this adulterous act falls primarily on David. We will read of God punishing David, but not Bathsheba, other than the death of the baby itself.
 - ii) Still, "it takes two to tango". ☹ We don't read of David raping Bathsheba.
 - iii) You have to wonder what was she doing bathing naked outdoors where others can see her. I'm not saying it's just her fault for what David did. I'm saying that a married woman has no business "publicly bathing". Sometimes we have to go the extra mile to do things so that we can avoid tempting situations.
 - iv) I have seen my share of women exhibitionist. You can usually spot them at sporting events. They like to parade down front of the grandstands. Their ego's enjoy it when lots of guys are staring at them. The problem is they don't realize the danger they put themselves in. There are lots of creeps out there and they don't know the danger they are inviting for themselves.
 - d) You can almost hear the words "I am pregnant" ring in David's head.
 - i) David probably thought, "I can get away with this. Her husband and her father are both away fighting the war. Nobody is looking. Besides, I'm the king and I can do whatever I want. Nobody will ever know". David is now dealing with the stress of trying to keep his sin a secret.
 - ii) As a Christian, if you learn one thing in life, it is as follows: We don't get away with anything". God holds Christians to a higher standard than He does non-believers as we are His "witnesses" to the world. I guarantee that whatever sin we commit, eventually gets "found out", or we pay the consequences. God will not stand for any of His "chosen people" to be bad witnesses for him.
10. Verse 6: So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.
 - a) David now has a problem. David cooks up a scheme to cover his sin. He sends for Bathsheba's husband Uriah to come home from the war front. He does "small talk" with Uriah about the war and then tells Uriah to go home to his wife for the night. The king even sends a gift to Bathsheba's home for Uriah. I don't know what the gift included, but I can bet it didn't include contraceptives. ☹ Uriah chooses not to go home to his wife, but instead spends the night at the entrance to the king's home with the palace guards.

- b) It is interesting to think about this from the point of view of the different characters.
 - i) I can hear General Joab getting the message, "Send me Uriah the Hittite". I can hear Joab thinking, "Why would David want that guy? If he wants a battle progress, why didn't he ask me? Oh well, "Hey Uriah, get over here. The king wants to talk to you back home. No, I don't know what he wants!"
 - ii) I wonder if Bathsheba knew of David's plot. I wonder if he told her to expect him home for a visit. If word got out she was pregnant and her husband was out to war, it could be a death sentence for her for adultery.
 - iii) The hero of these verses turns out to be Uriah the Hittite.
 - a) A "Hittite" was one of the pagan nations that the Israelites were supposed to conquer. Apparently, Uriah was a converted Jew.
 - b) The guy had a lot of zeal for Israel and for King David.
 - c) You have to think that Uriah was puzzled by this conversation. He probably thought, "David called me back here to talk about the war? Why me? What's really going on here?"
 - c) Notice any lack of intervention by God at this point. Let's face it, God could have sent an angel, stopped this whole thing, and no murder of Uriah would ever happen.
 - i) This gets back to the issue of "Why does God allow evil?" The answer is partially to show us the consequences of sin. We can't freely choose God out of our own free-will unless we are equally given the opportunity to sin as well. Even if that sin causes pain to others!
11. Verse 10: When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?" ¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"
- a) Let me paraphrase Uriah here: "Your highness, you expected me to go home and sleep with my wife? No sir! I can't do that. My fellow soldiers and I are "one". If they don't have the privilege of coming home to their wives, then neither do I. If they are busy fighting for Israel, then I too will do my duty and protect my king by sleeping with the guards outside the palace."
 - b) Personally, the guy is a lot more disciplined than I am. After being at the front for a long time, it would be very tempting to go sleep in a bed with my wife. Uriah would not be committing any sin by going home to his wife. These verses just show Uriah's zeal for God and zeal for his fellow soldiers.
 - c) Uriah also mentioned that the "the ark of God is staying in a tent". That either refers to the tent-structure that David made for the ark, or possibly, the soldiers took the ark into battle with them.
 - i) A few chapters back, a proclamation was made to David from God that a son of David would build a future, permanent home for the ark. I'm guessing that proclamation was public knowledge.
 - ii) If that is the case, when Uriah says, "the ark is in a tent", Uriah is saying in effect, "I, Uriah am fighting for the day when the Messiah comes down and we have a permanent, peaceful rest of the land. In the meantime, I fight for my homeland and for God. Until that promise is fulfilled to a descendant of David, the war will continue and I choose to be a part of it".
 - iii) I have to admit, I do wonder if Uriah will have a greater reward in heaven than David. David was much older, and the bible records far more of David's life than Uriah's. Still, I believe our rewards in heaven are based on our lifelong record of obedience to God. On that scale, Uriah beats David hands-down.

12. Verse 12: Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.
 - a) David's next trick was to get Uriah drunk. Even in Uriah's drunken weakness, he does not go home to Bathsheba. (Maybe Uriah couldn't find his way home now. ☺)
 - b) The text read that Uriah slept on his mat at the king's door.
13. Verse 14: In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵ In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." ¹⁶ So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. ¹⁷ When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.
 - a) Here we read of David sending an order to Joab. The order read in effect, "When the battle heats up, put Uriah in front so he'll die." Joab did as ordered, and Uriah died.
 - i) Notice Uriah delivered that order from David to Joab. Notes were sealed the messenger was not allowed to read it. David trusted Uriah not to open it!
 - b) You have to wonder what Joab was thinking when he read that order:
 - i) "Was Uriah some sort of traitor? It can't be. I know the guy. Even if he was, David would just have the guy killed and not go through some plot like this".
 - ii) Joab must have thought, "OK, for whatever reason, David wants this guy killed. Personally, I like the guy, but orders are orders. After all, I'm not guilty as David gave the order and not me". I'm just doing the dirty work."
 - iii) I'm sure Joab thought a lot less of David. There is a commentary on this point to the effect of, "Well, David can write all of those Psalms, but when he wants his dirty laundry thrown out, he comes to me, Joab!" (Source F.B. Meyer).
 - c) David is responsible for murder. Not only for the murder of Uriah, but of whatever soldiers died in that same battle.
 - i) Never, never underestimate our ego's. We (yes we) will go to tremendous lengths to try to cover up our sins instead of having them publicly exposed.
 - ii) I find that in order for people to really change, they have to hit "rock bottom". Each of us has a different point of "rock bottom", but we each have one. For David, it won't be until the next chapter when he is confronted with the sin.
14. Verse 18: Joab sent David a full account of the battle. ¹⁹ He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, ²⁰ the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall?' ²¹ Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall? If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.' "

 - a) The point of this paragraph is that Joab still needed to deliver the message to David that Uriah was dead. Joab didn't want to be punished for the fact he lost a battle. Joab didn't want the guy delivering the message to be punished either. The "get-out-of-jail-free" card was the coded message: "Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead".
 - b) There is a reference to the book of Judges here. Centuries earlier, there is the story of an Israelite-judge leader named Abimelech who died when a millstone was thrown over a wall and it fell on Abimelech.
 - i) To paraphrase this thought, Joab was telling the messenger, "What if David says, 'Why did you get so close to the wall? Don't you soldiers read your bible? ☺ Don't you know that in the times of the Judges a "judge" (Abimelech) was killed by getting too close to the wall? You should know better than that!'"
 - ii) Joab was telling the messenger "If David gets too ticked off about the bad news of the war, mention the Uriah-thing and that should calm him down!"

15. Verse 22: The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say.²³ The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate."²⁴ Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."²⁵ David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab."
 - a) Here is David being told that Bathsheba's husband is dead. The messenger brought the war report to David. The "coded sentence" was given of Uriah's death and David said to the messenger in effect, "Thanks for the report. We lost? Oh well, life goes on." ☺
 - b) Understand that there is a time lapse here. From the day Bathsheba got pregnant, it took time to get Uriah back to Jerusalem for a visit with David. It then took time to get a messenger to Joab. It took time to find the right battle for Uriah to die in. Given that time lapse, David must have been worried sick because that baby in Bathsheba's stomach is now growing. I can imagine the stress David put on himself waiting for the announcement Uriah's death.
 - c) With that in mind, you can read these verses as a sense of relief on David's part. It doesn't excuse it of course, but you can picture David thinking, "OK, I got away with it".
 - d) Several pages back I pondered what would motivate David to do this, and the best thing I could come up with is "boredom" and the adrenaline rush of trying to get away with this. Now that David thinks he got away with it, you can sense the temporary relief David got from this stress.
 - i) The problem with having a "healthy" fear of God is you can't stand the guilt of your sin. That pain causes stress and misery. I have heard that many criminals are grateful when they are caught because they can't stand living with the guilt.
16. Verse 26: When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.
 - a) Notice the "editorial comment" of this verse: The name "Bathsheba" has been edited out of the text. Bathsheba is only referred to as "Uriah's wife". In fact, when you read all of Chapter 10 and most of Chapter 11, Bathsheba is referred to as "Uriah's wife" as if to emphasize the comment of what David was doing wrong.
 - b) You have to wonder what Bathsheba was thinking at this point. I'm guessing she did have some love for her ex-husband and feels guilty about what happened.
17. Verse 27: After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.
 - a) In Jewish culture, there is a traditional time-period for mourning the death of one's spouse. After that time frame was over, we read of David adding her to his harem.
 - b) From the point of view of the local townsfolk in Jerusalem, David was probably a hero in this verse. All the locals knew was that Uriah died in battle. His poor pregnant wife now didn't have a husband to raise the child. Now, David, as a good gesture, agreed to marry her and let her child be raised in the palace.
 - c) Then comes the biggest understatement of the whole chapter: "But the thing David had done displeased the LORD."
 - d) Now that the crime has been committed, Chapter 12 is the punishment.
18. Chapter 12, Verse 1: The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor."² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle,³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.⁴ "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

- a) Now we are reintroduced to the prophet Nathan.
 - i) We last read of this guy in Chapter 7 when David wanted to build a temple.
 - a) God told David “no” via the mouth of Nathan the prophet.
 - ii) Now, Nathan “just” shows up at David’s doorstep to tell David he is wrong.
 - iii) One sermon I heard on this point (Bob Davies) mentioned that prophets are the bravest people in the bible. They’re the guys who have the guts to walk right up to a king and tell them they have sinned. If you don’t think this is hard, try telling a fellow Christian of their sins! Watch their defenses go up! ☺
 - b) Nathan told David his sin through a parable.
 - i) This is a very clever way of discussing the issue. If Nathan just bluntly told David what he did was wrong, David’s defenses would have been up and David would probably just deny it or try to justify it. Instead, Nathan tells this parable.
 - c) Let’s summarize the parable: The parable was about a rich man with lots of sheep and a poor man who only had one female lamb. The poor man prized his one female lamb and kept it as a pet. When the rich man had company over for dinner, he took the one lamb from the poor man instead of one of his own flock.
 - i) Notice that Nathan never stated if this was a true story. David’s assumption when hearing this story was that this was true.
 - ii) This chapter opened with “The LORD sent Nathan to David.” I suspect God somehow, implanted the idea of this parable in Nathan’s head. God told Nathan of David’s sin and then told him how to approach David.
 - iii) Again, what is impressive is how Nathan found a way to tell David of his sin without directly confronting David on the issue.
19. Verse 5: David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."
- a) The NIV translation here misses a point. The verse is translated here as “deserves to die”. If you read the King James and other versions, you get the impression that David wants to impose the death sentence. The King James Version reads, “He...shall surely die”.
 - b) My point is David hears this parable and assumes it is a true story. An Israelite king is also “Chief Justice of the Supreme Court”. Ancient kings were also the final appeal as judges in criminal matters.
 - c) David says the punishment is 1) death and 2) the rich man must repay four times (i.e., four lambs) for what he stole.
 - i) I hope that the punishment will be delivered in reverse order. It would be hard for a dead person to pay back four times what he stole. ☺
 - d) What is interesting here is “David knew his bible”.
 - i) If you read Exodus Chapter 22, Verse 1, it states that the punishment for stealing a sheep is to pay back four times. David says the man is to restore “fourfold”.
 - ii) It shows you can know your bible well and still sin. This is why just “bible head-knowledge” is not enough to keep you from sin. I stated earlier that one needs prayer, knowledge and accountability to keep one from sin.
 - iii) By the way, the bible does not call for a death sentence for stealing. When David calls for a death sentence, that is just David’s guilt coming to play here.
 - e) There is a classic saying that a preacher preaches loudest over the sins he is guilty of. That may be the case here for David.
20. Verse 7: Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"
- a) Sometimes the bible is just plain great literature. There are wonderful, dramatic moments where lines are delivered that just stop the room. Personally, my two favorite dramatic moments in the entire bible are “I am Joseph” (Genesis 45:3) and “You are the man!”

- i) In Genesis, when Joseph reveals who he is to his brothers that betrayed him. Joseph says the immortal words to his brothers, "I am Joseph". (Genesis 45:3).
 - ii) My other favorite moment is right here with "You are the man!"
 - b) That line had to hit David like a ton of bricks.
 - i) Again, Nathan never even said this was a true story.
 - ii) By the way, "you are the man" could refer to either the rich man who stole the lamb or the poor man who lost the lamb. David's guilt immediately recognized that he was the rich man of this story.
21. Verse 7 (cont.): This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: `I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹ Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'
- a) Let me paraphrase God here: "Hey David, remember when you spent the early years of your life on the run from Saul? It was me (God) that protected you and kept you alive. I allowed all of that for training purposes. It was me (God) that raised you up to be king. It was me (God) that gave you the king's palace and all that was in it. You David "paid me back" by murdering a guy, and stealing his wife. I (God) will punish you openly for what you did in secret. You'll suffer for the rest of your life for this one".
 - b) One of the most interesting lines in Verse 8 of this decree is when God said, "If all this had been too little, I would have given you even more."
 - i) David conquered all the lands around him. If David was not satisfied with that, God would have given him even more victories.
 - ii) All of that conquering made David one of the richest men alive. If that wasn't enough, God would have provided more.
 - iii) I'll even state that God "tolerated" David's harem and said in effect, if all of those wives were not enough for you, you could have had more, providing you didn't have to kill anyone to get them. ☺
 - c) What's my point? The point is that blessings-on-earth are tied to obedience.
 - i) God wants to bless us and do great things for our lives. It does not mean that if you obey every law in the bible, you are guaranteed to win the lottery. ☺ It means that God wants you to live a happy life and His word gives us a model for that happiness.
 - ii) I've yet to meet a religious Jewish or Christian who regrets that lifestyle choice, especially if they have made that choice later in life. If you have a heart for God, you would be too miserable to ever want to go back to your old lifestyle.
 - iii) We all go through rough times and giving your life to God does not guarantee material blessings. If that were the case, people would come to God for the material things and not for Him!
 - iv) With all of that said, God wants us to have joy in our life. If we're not "satisfied" with the blessings of God, then know that God is more than willing to bless us even more out of His love for us.
 - v) The link of blessings is to obedience. God loves us too much to let us get away with any sin in our life. The standards are even higher when God raises us up to any level of responsibility. Then we become a public witness for God.

- d) One technical comment: David got “his master’s house and his master’s wives” (Verse 8).
 - i) Some believe that David also inherited whatever “harem” Saul had, be it wives or concubines, and more likely the latter. The reference to “master’s house” refers either to the kingdom itself or to Saul’s kingly possessions.
 - e) In Verse 10, God told David that he “despised his word”.
 - i) We need to comprehend that when we sin, we are despising God’s Word and God himself. God and His word are “one” in the sense that, “These are my rules. If you love me, obey them. If you disobey them, that means you despise me”.
 - ii) Many nonbelievers claim they love God or believe in God. When it comes to actually being obedient to the Word of God, they fail. They “despise” God even though they don’t realize it.
 - iii) We as Christians tend to think, “Oh no Lord, I love you, I would never do that. The reality is during those moments of willful sin, we are despising God. This is a forgivable act, but it is “hurtful” to God and God demands justice.
22. The punishment decree continues, Verse 11: "This is what the LORD says: `Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.' "
- a) David thought he got away with this sin. Here is Nathan telling David how God was aware of every detail and God will punish David openly.
 - b) Now onto the punishment itself. God is saying in effect, “David, first the good news. I will not require your life for this crime. Now the bad news, you will wish I did.” ☺ “I’m going to make your life miserable for the rest of your days. Bad things will happen to you for the rest of your life due to what you did.”
 - c) This gets back to the “ripple” effect. Often, the sins we commit hurt ourselves for the rest of our lives and those around us. For example, a drug user who then repents and becomes a Christian may have to deal with the scars of that addiction for the rest of their lives as well as the people they have hurt around them. They are forgiven, as God forgave David, but God still leaves the “scars” there.
 - d) One thing about this punishment: It worked. For the rest of David’s life, we never read of him ever committing adultery or murder.
 - e) The remainder of 2nd Samuel will tell of one of David’s son raping a half sister, another son killing that first son in revenge and a third son openly (same rooftop as David spotting Bathsheba) having an orgy with some of David’s concubines and finally that same son tries to kill David. If you gave me a choice of having a death sentence or living with all of this for the rest of my life, the death sentence would be a lot less painful.
 - i) One of the predictions by Nathan was, “He will lie with your wives in broad daylight.” That punishment will literally come true as one of David’s sons (Absalom) will have an orgy on the same rooftop with David’s concubines (Ref. 2nd Samuel 16:22). Whoever says the bible is boring has never read it carefully. ☺
 - f) Stop and think about this punishment from a “demonic” standpoint. God allowed this punishment to occur. I take the view that God does not implant evil thoughts, but simply “stands back” and lets demonic forces be permitted to do what they want to do. That means that the idea of one brother raping his half sister had demonic spiritual influences. One brother having an orgy on the same patio and organizing a rebellion against David had demonic origins. God “knew” all of this was going to happen and permitted it out of punishment. It doesn’t excuse the actions of the kids, but explains the demonic influences behind those sins.
 - i) That alone should be a great incentive to avoid sin. It should also be a great incentive to be in prayer for our family. It should encourage us to pray more for family protection against evil influences.

23. Verse 13: Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."
- a) Notice who David has sinned against: David didn't say he sinned against Uriah or Bathsheba or even the people of Israel. David said he sinned against the Lord.
 - b) David amplified this same thought in Psalm 51:4 (NIV)
 - i) "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight".
 - ii) The introduction to this Psalm states it was written right at this time.
 - iii) One must understand that when we sin and hurt others, first and foremost we "hurt" God in the sense that we have despised His word. In comparison to that, the people we hurt are a distant-second.
 - iv) David does not mean he didn't hurt innocent people. In that sense, he still owes an apology to Uriah and the people of Israel. What it does mean is that our primary focus should be on God. Once we get our relationship right with Him, then we (through God) have the power to confess to our sins to others.
24. Verse 13 (cont.): Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. ¹⁴ But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."
- a) Remember my half-joke statement of : "David, the good news is you're not going to die, but the bad news is you wish you were dead!" That is in a sense, what God is saying here. For a parent, nothing is more painful than the death of their child. David and Bathsheba will know that pain.
 - b) Part of the punishment for this sin is that the baby that came from this sin will die.
 - i) Now we get into a heavy theological discussion: Why would God punish the baby? After all, it wasn't the baby's fault that David and Bathsheba had sex.
 - a) That is why I don't like the argument of "Abortion is ok in cases of rape". In such cases, you are punishing the baby for sins of others.
 - b) Later in this chapter, we'll read that David was 100% convinced the baby is in heaven. The point is the baby is not killed for the sins of the baby, but for the sins of the parent. In that sense, that baby is rewarded with a "free ticket" to heaven for having to suffer for the sins of others.
25. Verse 15: After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. ¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.
- a) Now we read of the baby getting sick. David fasted and praying by spending the nights lying flat on his face before God.
 - b) In the next verse, the baby will die as God stated. There is something else to point out here: David's prayer and fasting didn't help.
 - i) My point is that if we fast and pray, God is not obligated to give us a "yes" answer to our prayers. Yes, God encourages prayer. David was right to pray here as there are biblical cases of God relenting of planned punishment.
 - ii) Suppose God did change his mind. David might think in the future, "Hey this is great. I can do what I want, then pray hard afterwards, and I'm off Scott-free!"
26. Verse 18: On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."
- a) First, a technical note: The verse says, "The 7th day". This could be the 7th day the child was alive or the 7th day after the day it was discovered the child was sick. You could argue it either way from the text.
 - b) David's servants were afraid to tell the king the baby was dead. Let's face it, David killed the messengers who brought him the news Saul was dead. (Ref.: 2nd Samuel Chapter 1). You could imagine the fear the staff had of having to tell the king his own son was dead.

27. Verse 19: David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is dead." ²⁰ Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate. ²¹ His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" ²² He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' ²³ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."
- a) Let me summarize this paragraph: David was fasting, praying and sleeping on the ground in remorse hoping God would change his mind. When David heard the baby was dead, he got up, prayed to God in the temple, then ate food and went back to his life. David explained this action by saying, "Hey, who knows, maybe God would change his mind. Since God didn't, there is nothing more I can do. I know the baby is in heaven now and I'll see him again one day."
 - b) David went into the temple after the news of the baby's death. The text doesn't say why. Maybe it helped David have "an eternal perspective" and realize the baby's in heaven.
 - c) One of the great questions is "What happens to babies when they die?" The bible implies that all children get to go to heaven. Until children reach an age of accountability to God, they get an "automatic pass" into heaven. Paul teaches the same idea in Romans Chapter 7 when he says, "I was once alive without the law" (Romans 7:9). The idea is that Paul was "saved" before he reached an age of accountability, and then was held accountable for his sins once he understood what sin was.
 - i) Does that mean anyone but God knows the exact age of accountability? No. Does that mean we fully understand this principal? No. We accept by faith that God is perfect, and a perfect God will judge everyone perfectly. The rest is His problem!
28. Verse 24: Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and lay with her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; ²⁵ and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.
- a) Of all of David's wives, the next king would come from Bathsheba! The next king, Solomon, was the son of Bathsheba. You would think that God would condemn that marriage and any future children that came from that marriage! In fact, Solomon is part of Jesus lineage, which makes it all the more unusual to contemplate.
 - b) This is the first time we read of the bible referring to Bathsheba as David's wife. Until now, she was just "the wife of Uriah", which implies the woman that David stole.
 - c) What's the point? God forgave David's sins and therefore "the sin is gone". Once David made the decision to marry her, God condoned it. David still had to pay the price for those sins, but at the same time, those sins are forgiven. David can move on with his life and still be in "good standing" in God's eyes. These verses show an excellent balance of God's justice and God's grace and mercy at the same time.
 - d) Some Christian wonder, "Gee, before I got saved, I got divorced and messed around on my first wife. Now I'm married again and got saved. Should I divorce #2 and go back to wife #1 now? The answer is no, and these verses support that argument. The point is God expects us to get on with our lives "as it is" once we are saved. God blesses the marriage of David and Bathsheba partially to show us that once we are forgiven, we are to move on with our lives as-they-are-now and do our best to be in obedience to God.
 - i) I'll supplement this thought by saying if we can "clean up" our past, do so. Based on this last illustration, I might say it is appropriate to write an apology letter to wife #1 for the sorrow caused, but it is wrong to divorce #2 just to go back to #1

29. Verse 26: Meanwhile Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal citadel. ²⁷ Joab then sent messengers to David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah and taken its water supply. ²⁸ Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it. Otherwise I will take the city, and it will be named after me."
- a) Meanwhile, back at the war front, we still have General Joab fighting a group of Ammonites. The story of David and Bathsheba is sandwiched between war stories.
 - b) Let me paraphrase General Joab here: "Take this message back home to King David. I am about to win the war. I cut off their water supply and they have to surrender. Now David, get your butt up here along with the rest of the troops and let's end this thing. If you don't, I Joab will get all the credit and none for you!"
 - c) Joab strikes me as a good loyal officer. I don't think he enjoys getting the credit, but he loves to win victories. Joab knew it would be good for Israel as a whole if David got the credit for the victory as opposed to Joab himself.
 - d) If you remember back in Chapter 10, when David joined Joab in battle, the Israelites won an even greater victory. Maybe Joab "put two and two together" and realized he needed David for the ultimate victory.
30. Verse 29: So David mustered the entire army and went to Rabbah, and attacked and captured it. ³⁰ He took the crown from the head of their king--its weight was a talent of gold, and it was set with precious stones--and it was placed on David's head. He took a great quantity of plunder from the city ³¹ and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brickmaking. He did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then David and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.
- a) After David showed up with the rest of army, the Israelites won and took a lot of stuff. There was a crown that weighed roughly 75 pounds. They put the crown on David, "ceremonially" then took it off before the weight probably gave David a headache. ☺
 - b) The text says the defeated Ammonites were made slave labor. Alternative translations argue that David actually killed the Ammonites with these saws, iron picks and axes. Archeologists claim that's how Ammonites killed their enemies.
 - c) OK, I'm running very long and I'll wrap up with this question: Why is this text here? Why is this war victory included right after the punishment decree on David?
 - i) One reason is to show that God's unconditional promises to David still hold true despite the actions of David. We can't "mess up" God's unconditional promises.
 - ii) Another reason is to show that if David had been fighting the battles he should have been fighting in the first place, none of this ever would have happened.
 - iii) Stop and contemplate the fact that the Israelites did not win this war until David confessed his sin! Prior to Bathsheba, the Israelites only won the big battle when David was there. It makes you wonder, "Gee, if David was where he should have been in the first place, maybe the enemy would have been defeated a lot faster. Joab and his army probably struggled a lot longer than necessary simply because David was not where he should have been.
 - d) Time to wrap this up. Next week begins the trials of David and his kids.
31. Let's Pray: Heavenly Father, Help us to learn the lessons from David so as we don't repeat them ourselves. Help us to avoid temptation by praying to you, abiding in your word, being accountable to others and then running from temptation. You promised that when such tests come in our lives, You would offer a way of escape. Help us to recognize that way of escape and have the courage to go in that direction. Further, help us to recognize we are forgiven. We often refuse to forgive ourselves after You have already forgiven us. Finally, help us to accept what punishment You do allow. Such punishment is only given because You love us and don't want us to commit the same mistakes again. Help us to learn from whatever tragedies befall in our lives. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.