

David had greatly sinned by not only committing adultery with another man's wife, but orchestrating the man's death in order to cover up his sin. The LORD was not pleased with what David had done and sent Nathan the prophet to confront him over his sin. Even though the penalty for David's sin was death, the LORD shows mercy when David repents. However, the consequences of David's sin would last for years.

1 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: 3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

“And the LORD sent Nathan unto David” – The LORD did not approve of what David had done (2 Sam. 11:27b *“But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD”*). The Hebrew word for “displeased” is often translated “grieved” in the KJV. The LORD had revealed to Nathan all that David had done and sent him confront David with a message from the LORD about his sin.

“And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city...” – David had grown up watching his father's sheep, so the LORD had Nathan the prophet tell David a story that would hit close to his heart. The story was of two men, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a large flocks of sheep while the poor man had only a single ewe lamb, which he had raised as a beloved family pet. One day a traveler visited the rich man, who, rather than taking a lamb from his own large flocks, stole the poor man's lamb and prepared it as a meal for the traveler.

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: 6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

“And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man” – David obviously believed that Nathan was reporting a true occurrence to him and his sense of justice was enraged against this fictitious rich man. Perhaps David's anger was rooted in his sense of justice, but it also may have been amplified by having a soft spot in his heart for sheep. Another contributing factor might have been his guilty conscience over the death of Uriah giving him the unconscious desire to compensate by enforcing justice.

“and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die” – The penalty for stealing or slaughtering another man's livestock was not death, but restitution (Ex. 22:1 *“If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep”*). The story told by Nathan had served its purpose by getting David's full attention so that he became emotionally involved to the point of insisting on a more severe punishment than required.

“And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity [compassion]” – The punishment of restoring four lambs for the one was in agreement with the Mosaic Law. David gives his reason for the punishment (and possibly the severity) as being “because he [the rich man] had no pity.” The rich man in Nathan's story had no compassion on the poor man when he took and slaughtered the man's beloved pet lamb.

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

“And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man” – David had pronounced the death penalty on “the rich man,” not realizing that Nathan's story was a parable and that David himself was being represented by “the rich man.” He was the rich man who had plenty while Uriah was the poor man who had nothing except the single ewe lamb, which represented Bathsheba. David had unwittingly pronounced the death penalty on himself.

“Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul” – Nathan delivers the message from the LORD, Who reminds him of how much He has given David. The LORD had made him king and protected him from Saul, who had been trying to kill him.

“And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom” – In addition, the LORD had given to David all that had belonged to Saul, including Saul's “wives.” There is no evidence that David married any of Saul's wives, but the custom of the day was for the new king to inherit the harem of the previous king, so likely “thy master's wives” referred to Saul's harem that now belonged to David. This seems to be the intent of the expression when used later in the judgment pronounced on David (v. 11).

“and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah” – Being from the tribe of Judah, it was natural for David to rule over Judah. The rest of Israel had followed Saul's son, Ishbosheth for seven years, but the LORD opened the path for David to become king over both Israel and Judah.

“and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things” – In addition to the blessings that the LORD had already given David, He was willing to give David even more if needed. David was not experiencing any shortage of blessings so there was no reason for him to seek the things that the LORD had not already given him. The LORD had already provided David with more than he needed.

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

“Wherefore hast thou despised [to hold in contempt; to disregard] the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight?” – David was aware of the LORD’s commandments against adultery and murder, and yet he disregarded them and committed those sins anyway.

“thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword” – David had not personally wielded the sword that killed Uriah, but he had conceived the plan and given Joab the instructions to arrange the circumstances that resulted in Uriah’s death.

“and hast taken his wife to be thy wife” – The purpose and result of Uriah’s death was not only to cover up David’s adulterous relationship with Uriah’s wife but to take her as his own wife.

“and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon” – David used the enemy’s sword as the murder weapon. The LORD held David as responsible for Uriah’s death as if he had used the sword himself. David had planned Uriah’s death and orchestrated the circumstances so that the enemy soldiers from Ammon would be the ones that killed Uriah.

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

“Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house” – David’s sin was one of violence and therefore the punishment for that sin would also be violent. Three of David’s sons would later experience violent deaths: Amnon (2 Sam. 13:28-29), Absalom (2 Sam. 18:14-15), and Adonijah (1 Kings 2:24-25).

“because thou hast despised [to hold in contempt; to disregard] me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife” – David had disregarded the commandments of the LORD, and thus the One Who gave them, as being unimportant. As a result he followed his own fleshly desires instead of obeying the LORD. He elevated his own fleshly desires as being more important than obeying the LORD.

11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

“Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil [adversity; trouble] against thee out of thine own house” – David would have trouble in his family going forward. His son Amnon would rape his half-sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1-14), only to be murdered later by her brother Absalom (2 Sam. 13:28-29). Later, Absalom would rebel against his father and attempt to take the kingdom (2 Sam. 15:1-12).

“and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun” – During his rebellion against his father, Absalom lay with David’s concubines inside a tent on David’s roof in the sight of all Israel (2 Sam. 16:21-22). The expression “in the sight of this sun” refers to the fact that it would be done publicly and not in secret.

“For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun” – David had tried to keep his sin secret so that no one would know but the punishment from the LORD would be public and all Israel would know what David tried to keep hidden.

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

“And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD” – David did not attempt to make excuses or pass the blame, nor did he call for Nathan’s execution. When confronted by his sin, David immediately confesses his guilt and repents of his sin.

“And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away [to carry away] thy sin; thou shalt not die” – Even though the penalty for David’s sins was death, the LORD recognizes David’s repentance and graciously forgives him, releasing him from the penalty of death. David was forgiven but his sin would still have consequences (vs. 10-11, 14).

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

As a follower of the LORD, David’s actions reflected on the LORD. Since David’s sin would now become public knowledge, those who hated the LORD would now be able to blaspheme Him by attributing David’s actions to the LORD. We bring public shame to the LORD when we sin because of our identity as children of God. Because David’s actions would give the enemies of the LORD the opportunity to blaspheme His name, the child that was born as a result of David’s adultery would have to die.

Verses 15-23: After Nathan’s confrontation of David, the child became very sick. Despite David’s continuous fasting and praying for mercy, the child died a week later (v. 18).

24 And David comforted Bath-sheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the LORD loved him.

No doubt David felt guilty since he was responsible for the child’s death and he does his best to comfort Bathsheba after the loss of her child. Eventually he resumes marital relations with her and she has another son, whom David names “Solomon” which means “peace.” Apparently David saw this child as evidence that there was peace between him and the LORD. Despite the sinful means through which Bathsheba had become David’s wife, the LORD loved Solomon. Solomon would be the next king after David, be the builder of the temple, as well as being part of the lineage of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:6).

25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

The LORD sent Nathan the prophet to give another name for Solomon: “Jedidiah,” which means “beloved of the LORD.” This name is evidence of the grace of God despite the sinful circumstances of David’s marriage to Bathsheba.