

David and Bathsheba: Adultery¹ and After



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 1

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Samuel 11; 2 Samuel 12.

MEMORY VERSE: “God, create a pure heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful² to you” (Psalm 51:10, NlrV).

THE MARRIAGE OF DAVID AND BATHSHEBA IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW TO DO ALMOST EVERYTHING WRONG. This marriage began with adultery and became worse with lies and murder. This is a story of just how sinful man has become.

But David's sin went deeper than adultery. He broke the sixth commandment (law), “Thou shalt not kill,” and the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not commit [do] adultery.” He also broke the ninth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness [lie] against thy neighbour,” and the tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet”³ (Exodus 2:1–17). No matter how much pressure David put on her, Bathsheba put herself in a very weak position by washing herself near the king's house. Who could ever imagine that a little bath water could be so dangerous? Was it a clever plan to tempt the king? Or was it due to Bathsheba's poor judgment? Anyway, their adultery led to terrible results for them both.

In the end, David received forgiveness. This stands as a powerful testimony (example) of God's grace⁴ for even the worst of all sins and crimes.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY UP CLOSE: The story of David and Bathsheba shows how even the most godly people can fall into the worst of sin. The good news is that our God forgives the most terrible sin.

1. adultery—the act of breaking the marriage vows by having sex with a person who is not one's spouse; unfaithfulness.

2. faithful—being true and loyal; being someone that others can trust and count on.

3. covet—to want another person's things.

4. grace—God's gift of mercy to us.

SUNDAY—SEPTEMBER 2**PRECURSOR⁵ TO A FALL
(2 Samuel 5:13)**

What do 2 Samuel 3:1–5 and 2 Samuel 5:13 tell us about why David would take another man’s wife? How do these verses help us know why David’s act of adultery⁶ was so sinful?

Proverbs says that “the eyes of man are never satisfied”⁷ (Proverbs 27:20). This is very true about David. When he saw Bathsheba washing herself, he already had more than six wives and many concubines.⁸ And yet, that was not enough. And worse, to fulfill his sexual desire, David needed to take another man’s wife.

We should not miss the important principle⁹ here: Going against the will of God leads the soul to more and more foolishness and lies. By going against God’s will, David left himself open to more bad choices and desires. Giving in to a passion (desire) only makes that passion stronger and stronger. Suppose David had followed God’s ideal¹⁰ of marriage—one man and one wife. He would have been less open to Satan’s traps. But now the door to sin was wide open, and David was swept

away in the flood of sin.

What warning does the Lord give us in James 1:12–15?

Those of us who have ever struggled against the strong desire to do something we know is wrong know that sin never satisfies. The more you sin or give in to sin, the more you want to sin. And the more you want to sin, the easier it is to make excuses for giving in to sin. Sin will make slaves of all who give in to it. As Jesus said, “‘Everyone who sins is a slave to sin’ ” (John 8:34, NIV).



Sin will make slaves of all who give in to it.

How have you struggled or fought against strong temptations¹¹ or desires that have power over you? What promises do we have for victory?¹² How do you choose to make those promises real in your own life?

5. precursor—a person or thing that comes before something else happens and makes the way ready for what will happen next; forerunner.

6. adultery—the act of breaking the marriage vows by having sex with a person who is not one’s spouse; unfaithfulness.

7. satisfied—met the needs or demands of something.

8. concubines—women who live with a man but who are not his wives; also in some countries, concubines are additional (other) wives who have less power and importance than the first wife.

9. principle—a law or rule upon which other laws are based.

10. ideal—an idea or plan of something perfect, used as a standard or model for the way a thing should be.

11. temptations—things that try to turn us away from God and try to get us to do, think, feel, or say what is wrong.

12. victory—the act of winning the battle over, or winning the struggle against, something.

MONDAY—SEPTEMBER 3**THE FALL (2 Samuel 11:1–5)**

What steps led to David's fall in 2 Samuel 11:1–5? Where could David have stopped before sinning? What Old Testament stories could have inspired¹³ David not to have fallen into sin? Read, for example, Genesis 39:7–14.

The first temptation¹⁴ from “seeing” or noticing comes to all of us. This may just happen and is not sin. The next step is stopping instead of turning away. This could be walking on very dangerous ground and may be sin in the mind. This could make it very hard not to take the next and final step, which is the real misdeed (wrong action).

Right from the start David knew exactly what he was doing. He had asked about Bathsheba and was told that she was another man's wife. But David had Bathsheba brought to him in order to fulfill his own desires. What other reason did David have to do this? She was already married, so he was not interested in making her his wife. David was not interested in falling in love with her. He was under the power of passion.

Plus, David was the king. He was used to getting everything he wanted. Why not this woman too?



The three steps that lead to sin: (1) looking, (2) stopping, (3) doing what is wrong.

What can we tell about Bathsheba from 2 Samuel 11:4? How did she react to David's seduction?¹⁵

Was Bathsheba flattered by the king's interest in her? Or did she try to refuse him? Was she purposely washing herself in David's sight? Or did she think that the king was away from the city, off fighting with his army? The Bible says that it was the custom¹⁶ in the spring for the king to go off and fight wars. (Read 2 Samuel 11:1.) The Bible does not say whether the king forced Bathsheba the way that Ammon raped¹⁷ Tamar (2 Samuel 13:14). The

13. inspired—to cause, urge, or influence to do something; to cause to have a certain feeling or thought.

14. temptation—anything that tries to turn us away from God and tries to get us to do, think, feel, or say what is wrong.

15. seduction—the act of causing someone to do something bad or wrong; the act of tempting or leading someone astray.

16. custom—something that has been done for a long time and so has become the accepted or common thing to do.

17. raped—when a person, especially a girl or a woman, is forced to take part in a sexual act.

Bible also does not say that Bathsheba willingly gave herself to David. But David—who should have known better—took advantage of¹⁸ this young woman and led them both into sin.

Sexual drives can be very strong. How careful should we be not to take advantage of these weaknesses in others and use them for our personal pleasure or gain? What kind of messages are you sending to others by your words, your dress, your body language?

TUESDAY—SEPTEMBER 4

THE COVER-UP (2 Samuel 11:6–25)

In 2 Samuel 11:5, Bathsheba tells David that she is pregnant. That she pointed to David as the father shows she probably had not been with anyone else, including her husband.

Does Bathsheba play a part in the cover-up of her husband's murder in 2 Samuel 11:6–25? Explain.

The Bible does not tell us what, if anything, Bathsheba knew of David's plans for her husband. David probably wanted it that way. So, David tried to get Uriah to go home to his wife. This shows David was sure Bathsheba was not going to tell her

husband she got pregnant by the king.

Why not? Leviticus 20:10.

David had Bathsheba in a trap. If she confessed that David was the father of her child, she might have faced death. And David could have denied everything. (After all, he did murder Uriah in order to keep Uriah from finding out about him and Bathsheba.) How much easier it would be for David to tell a lie! *Why would I, with all these wives and concubines,¹⁹ take the wife of one of my bravest and most trusted soldiers?* And Bathsheba, pregnant with another man's baby, would have had no way to prove David's guilt either. Who would believe her word against a beloved and powerful king who already had all these wives and concubines to serve his needs? Bathsheba was totally stuck and helpless.

To Bathsheba's way of thinking, what would she gain from saying that David was the father of her child? David clearly knew this. This was why he felt safe in trying to get Uriah to think he was the father. But that did not work.

Look at how quickly one moment of uncontrolled²⁰ desire led to many more sins and crimes in a man of God. How carefully are you controlling²¹ your desires? What can you do to be less tempted by

18. took advantage of—to make use of for one's own gain.

19. concubines—women who live with a man but who are not his wives; also in some countries, concubines are additional (other) wives who have less power and importance than the first wife.

20. uncontrolled—to not have the power to hold something (anger, lust, fear) back.

21. controlling—having the power to hold something (anger, lust, fear) back.

things that can lead you down this same terrible path?

WEDNESDAY—SEPTEMBER 5

THE WAGES OF SIN²² (2 Samuel 11:26, 27)

What does 2 Samuel 11:26, 27 tell us about both David and Bathsheba?

Bathsheba mourned for her dead husband. We do not know how much she knew about David's actions against her husband. But later, the rumors started spreading about David's sins. Meanwhile, David did the only "honorable" (right) thing he could and took Bathsheba as a wife. Let us guess that Bathsheba needed at least a month to know that she was pregnant. Let us guess, too, that she mourned for her husband 30 days (Numbers 20:29). We do not know how long it took David to get Uriah killed. But it is still hard to see how anyone could not have missed knowing something was wrong about the timing of this child's birth.

What principle²³ do we see shown here in 2 Samuel 12:13–23?

It is hard to know why an innocent baby should suffer for sins he had nothing to do with. But this is the ter-

rible nature²⁴ of sin. It leads to the suffering of others. Even to the suffering of those who might have had nothing to do with the sin!



David prayed that God would heal his son. But because of David's sin, the Lord did not spare the child's life. Even forgiven sin can lead to the suffering of others.

What does 2 Samuel 12:24 tell us about the relationship²⁵ between David and Bathsheba?

David and Bathsheba's marriage should never have happened. But David comforts Bathsheba. Later, they have another child together.

Forgiven sin can bring about

22. wages of sin—the results of our actions when we do not obey God.

23. principle—a law or rule upon which other laws are based.

24. nature—the particular aspect or quality of something that makes the thing what it is.

25. relationship—your connection (tie) to another person and how deep your feelings are for that person.

terrible results anyway. What lesson can you take from this story as you face the struggle not to give in to sin everyday?

THURSDAY—SEPTEMBER 6

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA: THE LAST DAYS (1 Kings 1:28–31)

After the birth of Solomon, Bathsheba disappears from the Bible until the end of David's rule as king. Bathsheba would have become just another one of David's wives. But their son Solomon was to become Israel's next king. In 1 Chronicles 22:5–9, David says that the Lord told him that Solomon was to be the next king.

What is happening in 1 Kings 1:1–27? What clue can you find in 2 Samuel 3:4 that would tell us why Adonijah believed that he should have the throne before Solomon?

After the birth of Solomon, Bathsheba does not appear again until Adonijah's rebellion.²⁶ Bathsheba and Nathan inform David of what is happening. Both she and Nathan know that Solomon was the Lord's chosen king. And now the kingdom is very close to civil war.²⁷ More than ever, Bathsheba needs the king's promise that their son (Solomon) would take over David's throne.



David and Bathsheba have another son. They name him Solomon. The Lord tells David that Solomon will be king after David.

Notice Bathsheba's answer to the king in 1 Kings 1:28–31 after he gives her the promise she wants. What might that say about their relationship,²⁸ as well? How is Bathsheba's respect for the king, her husband, an example of how we should come before our King, Jesus, with our prayers?

Any kind of a good relationship—marriage, friendship, or one between a parent and child—needs hope and growth. What relationships of yours need some hope, growth, and work? What steps can you take to make that relationship better?

26. rebellion—an armed fight against the government (ruling power) of one's country.

27. civil war—a war within a country in which the citizens or people of the country fight against one another.

28. relationship—your connection (tie) to another person and how deep your feelings are for that person.

FRIDAY—SEPTEMBER 7

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, “Moral²⁹ Standards,” pp. 326–339, in *The Adventist Home*.

“Many have complained about what they called God’s unfairness in saving David. They feel David’s guilt was so great. God refused to forgive Saul for what appears to them to be far less terrible sins. But David humbled himself and confessed [told] his sin to God. Saul refused to accept warnings and hardened his heart by not repenting³⁰ of his sins. . . .

“As David did, any person may accept God’s warnings with confession³¹ and repentance.³² If the sinner does, he or she may be sure that there is hope. Whoever will in faith accept God’s promises will find forgiveness. The Lord will never turn away one truly repentant³³ soul. The Lord has given this promise: ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.’ Isaiah 27:5. ‘Let the one who is evil stop doing evil things. And let him quit thinking evil thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord. The Lord will show him his tender

love. Let him turn to our God. He is *always* ready to forgive.’ Isaiah 55:7, NIV.”—Adapted, Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*,³⁴ p. 726.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

❶ Read the story of Nathan and David (2 Samuel 12:1–8). Notice how clear it should have been to David that this story was about him. But David totally missed it. What lessons can we take from this about how easy it is to deceive (fool) ourselves about sin? As a class, talk about what steps we can take to make sure we do not fall into this trap.

❷ As a class, read Psalm 51 together. Talk about the points of the gospel of Jesus Christ that are found there. What does this psalm teach us about the power of God’s grace³⁵ in our lives?

❸ What useful spiritual³⁶ truths can we learn from the story of David and Bathsheba? How can they help us not to make the kind of mistakes that David and Bathsheba made? What can we do to help one another avoid the kind of sin that David fell into?

29. moral—having to do with what is right or wrong.

30. repenting—to say you are sorry for sinning and to turn away from sin with the help of the Holy Spirit.

31. confession—the act of telling God and others what you have done wrong against them.

32. repentance—the act of being sorry for your sins and turning away from sinning with the help of the Holy Spirit.

33. repentant—being sorry for sinning and turning away from your sins.

34. patriarchs and prophets—patriarchs were early Bible leaders, such as Abraham and Isaac, or other leaders of Israel, such as Moses; prophets are men and women sent by God to warn us about what will happen in the future.

35. grace—God’s gift of mercy to us.

36. spiritual—having to do with God; holy.