

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

In the last lesson, which covered the first 11 chapters of 2 Samuel, we see that David, having been anointed King over Israel, moved his headquarters to Jerusalem where, with the help of the King of Tyre, he built a palace. Seeing that the Ark of the Covenant remained in a tent while he lived in a lavish palace, David decided to build a house for God as well. God intervened by pointing out to David that if God wanted a house, He would have had one already. This demonstrated to us that even the best of intentions may sound good to us -- but may in fact not be God's will.

This week, we focus our study on 2 Samuel Chapters 11-17. We will look at the other side of David. We will see him fall away from being a man of great ethical character and a strong walk with God. David will sin in numerous ways, resulting in the death of his first born and a family thrown into a state of constant turmoil and struggle.

For this week, read 2 Samuel Chapter 11 through Chapter 17; then answer the following:

1. Describe the circumstances surrounding the events in chapters 11 and 12.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Having defeated his enemies and secured his kingdom, David elected to remain behind in the spring as his army went out to continue the war. In the cool of the evening as he walked around the roof of the palace, he saw Bathsheba bathing. His desire for her then caused him to summon her and sleep with her. She became pregnant, which then led David to plot to kill her husband so he could have her as his own without anyone knowing he had slept with her while she was still married to Uriah the Hittite.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Having succeeded in having Uriah killed in battle so it looked like a war-related incident, David marries Bathsheba, and she bears him a son. His lies and deceit however are not secret from the Lord, who sends Nathan the prophet to confront David. David confesses his sin, and God pronounces that his sin will result in the death of David's first-born son. David pleads, prays and fasts for his son, whom God has struck with illness; he eats no food and spends the evenings lying on the ground. He continues this until the day that his son dies.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Following the death of his son, David got up from the ground, washed, put on fresh ointment and clothing, and then went to the house of the Lord and worshipped. Following this, he returned home and ate.
2. What indication do we have that David was in control, both emotionally and psychologically, during the illness and death of Bathsheba's first child?
 - a. ANSWER: David understood that he had sinned, and that he had sinned against God. He also understood God's discipline and accepted the punishment that God had pronounced. Since God had delivered him during tough times in the past, he also continued to plead with God during the child's illness, in the hope that perhaps God would have mercy on him and/or the child, and thus heal the child. Once the child died, David knew that he had done all that he could do, and that it was time to get back to being King; he understood that further fasting and prayer would not bring the baby back to life. He also knew that, even though the baby was no longer alive, someday David would join him in the afterlife. David focused his efforts on comforting Bathsheba, who would then bear him the son named Solomon.
3. How was Nathan's prophesied judgment on David fulfilled?
 - a. ANSWER: The judgment prophesied: "the sword will never depart from your house" -- Three of David's sons came to violent deaths, Amnon (2 Sam. 13:28-29), Absalom (2 Sam. 18:14) and Adonijah (1 Kings 2:25). "Out of your household I am going to bring calamity upon you" -- David was driven from Jerusalem by his son Absalom's conspiracy to seize the kingship from him (2 Sam. 15:1-15). "He will lie with your wives in broad daylight" -- This was fulfilled at the time of Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. 16:22).

4. Discuss the capture of Rabbah of the Ammonites by Joab.
 - a. ANSWER: Joab captured the royal citadel of the Ammonites and called for David to bring the rest of the army to finish the battle - because he did not want the victory to be his, he wanted it to be King David's.
5. What were the events surrounding Tamar's rape by Amnon?
 - a. ANSWER: Amnon falls in love with "his brother's sister" (i.e., Amnon and Absalom were only half-brothers, born from different mothers) and wants her because she is a virgin. He plots with his close friend Jonadab to trick the sister by acting like he is ill so she will come into his bedroom. To make it sound more innocent, he asks his father, King David, to have Tamar come into the room and cook for him while he is sick. At King David's request, she does so, and is raped by Amnon. Immediately after the rape, he immediately "despises her" and casts her out. Absalom takes her in and cares for her. David is furious with Amnon, and Absalom hates Amnon from that time on, but never says anything to him or anyone about his anger. Two years later, when the opportunity arises, Absalom murders his brother Amnon, thus avenging the rape of Tamar.
6. How did Amnon die? What happened that led to his death?
 - a. ANSWER: Absalom got him drunk with wine, and then ordered his men to kill Amnon.
7. What was Absalom's tactic for turning the hearts of the people against his father David?
 - a. ANSWER: Playing off of David's laxity in bringing quick justice in the case of Amnon's rape of Tamar, Absalom sets himself up publicly as man of the people, sympathizing with their legal grievances and telling them that if he were leader they would not be experiencing these problems.
8. How did Absalom pull off such a political and military coup?
 - a. ANSWER: By setting himself up as King in Hebron and getting the support of many of Israel's tribes. Once he had David's permission to go to Hebron, he quickly established his leadership post. Then David, realizing that Absalom's next step would be an attack on Jerusalem, summoned his followers and departed the city to a place that was a far distance away. During the exile, David commands Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to return to Jerusalem, taking back the Ark of the Covenant. Furthermore, they are to send word to David when it is safe to return.
9. Hushai the Arkite was a "double agent". What did he do, and how did he communicate with David?
 - a. ANSWER: David asks his close friend Hushai to return to Jerusalem to help David defeat Absalom by giving him faulty advice. He was to communicate through the two sons of Zadok and Abiathar, the priests David had sent back to Jerusalem with the Ark of the Covenant, so that David could defeat Absalom and retake Jerusalem.

We see a real contrast this week between (1) the David that we had come to know as having a strong and deep walk with God and very high ethical standards and (2) this week's David -- selfish, manipulative, dishonest and a murderer. How is it possible? What a struggle it is for us to imagine such a thing! Yet, as we examine this story, we can see that, like the rest of us, David had his weak spots, his shortcomings, and they resulted in his sinning against God. David also demonstrates to us the true nature of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation -- and the cost that comes with sinning against God.

As we will discover through the rest of our study David's life, his kingdom and his family will all suffer from the effects of his sin -- yet God still loves David deeply and David loves God that much more

Thanks again for studying with us; have a great week.

In Christ,

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