

When Davids secret sins caught up with him

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- [0 : 00] The first of which gives the context for the psalm that we'll read in a minute. And you'll find that in 2 Samuel chapter 11, and we read some verses there beginning at verse 1.
- 2 Samuel chapter 11, and there at the first verse. In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab and all his servants with him and all Israel.
- And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. It happened late one afternoon when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house.
- That he saw from the roof a woman bathing. And the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired the woman, about the woman.
- And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? So David sent messengers and took her.
- [1 : 22] And she came to him, and he lay with her. Now she was purifying herself from her uncleanness. Then she returned to her house.
- And the woman conceived. And she sent and told David, I am with child. In the verses that follow, there are instructions to Joab of what to do.
- And Uriah is brought back. But he will not go down to his own house. So therefore, David thinks of a second solution to this problem.
- And that is to set Uriah in the foremost place of the battle, so that he may be struck down and die. Joab then sends a messenger to David to tell him what's happened.
- And so we pick it up at verse 22. So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell. The messenger said to David, The men gave an advantage over us and came out against us in the field.
- [2 : 30] But we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. Then the archer shot at your servants from the wall. Some of the king's servants are dead. And your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.
- David said to the messenger, Thus shall you say to Joab, Do not let this matter trouble you. For the sword devours now one and now another.
- Strengthen your attack upon the city and overflow it and encourage him. When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah, her husband, was dead, she made lamentation for her husband.
- And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house. And she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.
- And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor.
- [3 : 42] The rich man had very many flocks and herds. The poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up and it grew up with him and with his children.

It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his bosom. And it was like a daughter to him. Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd or to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him.

But he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. Then David's anger was greatly kindled. And he said to Nathan, As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he had done this thing and has shown no pity.

Nathan said to David, You are the man. Turning over to Psalm 51 and reading there from the very first verse.

The title reads, To the choir master a psalm of David, where Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

[5 : 17] According to the abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, against you only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in your sight.

So you are justified in your sentence and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me.

Behold, you desire us truth in the inward being. Therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow. Fill me with joy and gladness. Let the bones which you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities.

[6 : 23] Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not the Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, you God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall show forth your praise.

For you have no delight in sacrifice. Were I to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings.

[7 : 35] Then bulls will be offered on your altar. Amen. May the Lord bless the earth for that reading. Or readings. May they be to his praise and to his glory.

For Psalm 51, and it almost doesn't need to be said, but this is a confession, not of an outsider, but of a man who's in religious office.

And it's important to realize that. The title says, To the choir master, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

In other words, it's referring to this adulterous liaison which David had. And that's described in the first reading, in 2 Samuel, in the first four or five verses.

So you have to ask the question, how is it that someone like David, who is a man after God's own heart, can fall in this spectacular way?

[8 : 41] And the reason is, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Job and all the army, they're besieging the Ammonites.

He, as the commander-in-chief, should have been there. Proverbially, in the first book of Samuel, you have this proverb.

Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands. Well, clearly he didn't slay tens of thousands by parading around on the roof of the king's house.

He was actively involved. So he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. And because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time, this adulterous liaison followed on.

First of all then, confession of sin. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy, I say blot out my transgressions.

[9 : 59] Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. So in this first two verses of the psalm, David is making an appeal for forgiveness and cleansing.

And as the psalm goes on, these are aspects that he will develop, as we'll see shortly. But the next two verses, he gives you his confession.

He says this, I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only have I sinned and done that which is evil in your sight so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless in your judgment.

So here we have a situation where David, having done this, is now saying he knows about it.

So how is it that he came to know about this? In the very least, we must say that even in the days of the Old Testament, his conscience must have borne witness to this, that deep feeling within him that he had committed a wrong against the Lord.

[11 : 26] Now, speaking of conscience, the Apostle Paul talks about the conscience of the Gentiles who were supposedly heathen. He says this in Romans 2.15.

They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them.

What he's arguing about there is the fact that the Gentiles, the supposed heathen, the pagans of the world, were carrying out as a matter of nature some of the things that were written in the Ten Commandments.

And he puts it down to conscience. But conscience cannot necessarily be a sure guide unless it is educated.

The more sure guide is the word of the Lord brought to David by Nathan the prophet as we read in 2 Samuel chapter 12.

[12 : 35] And this was a parable. And the parable was to the effect that in Jerusalem there were two men. One who was poor, who had one little ewe lamb.

And that lamb was taken from the poor man in exercise of force, forced by the rich man in the story. And we read there that David responded to this.

As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die and he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity.

It is then that Nathan clears up the situation and says, you are the man.

So the word of the Lord through Nathan the prophet has exposed sin for what it is.

[13 : 35] And as David thinks about it, he says this, behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me.

Now that text doesn't teach us that the conception of David was a sinful act. Rather it teaches us that the origin of sin in David the man could be traced back to the beginning of his life.

And sin is a problem not only for David but for all of our lives prior to conversion to Christ. Now what Nathan calls attention to is this.

You did this secretly. And referring to the judgment of God, he says, I will do this thing before all Israel even before the sun.

The judgment of God as far as David is concerned can be seen coming about in the second book of Samuel. But the fact is that this sin has occurred in the secret place of his heart.

[15 : 00] Now this was not a truth that David was not accustomed to. Indeed, he'd already been thinking about this in Psalm 19.

He says this. Psalm 19 verses 11 and 12. Moreover, by them, that's the commandments, is your servant warned.

In keeping of them there is great reward. But who can discern his errors? clear me from hidden faults.

Now this is a very interesting phrase, this clear me from hidden faults. The NIV translates it as forgive my hidden faults.

But the Hebrew verb used here, nakah, carries the meaning like this. make a declaration that I am exempt the punishment of my secret faults.

[16 : 09] And the only one that can make the declaration is God. Now, what kind of scripture would David have used to come to such a conclusion?

The Psalms in the book of Psalms contain a great deal. But the earliest Psalm is Psalm 90. It is the prayer of Moses, a man of God.

And in verse 8 he says this. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins sins in the light of your countenance.

And David has been thinking about that verse. Our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

And so it drives him to see that what he did is being contrived in the secret place of his heart. And only God can do something about this.

[17 : 20] Let's think about the cleansing from sin. Verses 6-7 Behold, you desire truth in the inward being.

Therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow.

He's now responding to what he's heard from the mouth of Nathan the prophet. He is desiring that the word of truth will occupy the innermost part of his being.

Teach me wisdom in my secret heart. And the significance of this secret heart, that he's talking about in the prayer, is this is the place where our secret sins, his secret sins, took place.

So instead of sin, he wants the word of truth to be in possession of his innermost being. That is what he's praying for.

[18 : 39] That's the substance of his prayer. And then he goes on, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

Wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.

This word hyssop occurs nine times in the Old Testament and usually in connection with the blood sacrifices of the book of Leviticus. And it's taken up by the writer to the Hebrews in chapter 9 verses 19 to 20 when he says this.

When every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of goats and calves with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people saying this is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.

So it was a regular use by the priests of Leviticus as a cleansing agent. But in this prayer, David is not turning his attention to an Aaronic priest.

[20 : 00] that he might be purged with hyssop. He's turning his attention to God. Only God can give him this cleansing.

And this is because one of the sins that he's committed. He refers to it in verse 14. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, you God of my salvation.

my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance. Murder. In 2 Samuel 11, we found that David had committed adultery, was deeply guilty of conspiracy to commit murder, under the rejection or the revolt of Absalom, was a deposed king with blood on his hands.

Now, it's interesting, if you were to take a graph of the life of David in 2 Samuel, you would see that he first of all became king of the southern part of Judea.

Then he became king of the northern part of Judea. He extended his reign to many of the surrounding nations, and he erected Jerusalem as his capital, the city of David.

[21 : 35] So the career of David as the chosen king goes from one success to another, until it reaches its height in this matter of Uriah the Hittite, whom he committed adultery with, the wife of Bathsheba.

His first attempt is to cover up this sin by recalling Uriah from the battle and passing the child off as one of his own. But that didn't work out, because Uriah would not go down to his own house.

So what was conceived in the depth of his heart was murder. You of the man.

The following chapter reveals that there was a revolt by his son Absalom. This revolt carried on because Absalom had killed his own brother because his brother had slept with his sister Tamar.

And when you think of these particular actions of the sons, what they were doing were following through the example of what his father had done.

[23 : 06] What he had done left was an effect on the family. Now there is an epitaph that is given in the book of Kings later on about David, which says this, David does that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn aside from anything the Lord commanded him except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

His epitaph is impeccable, but for one thing, he wants to be released from this. Released from sin, O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. So this prayer for release, for restoration, from the consequences of sin, is also to be seen earlier in verses 12 and 13.

Resort to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you.

So what he's now saying is that if God will do this, he will have a testimony. and he will be clear about teaching people that this is what has happened.

[24 : 46] Now the teaching role in the Old Testament, which was something that was committed actually initially to the priesthood, you find it in Malachi chapter 2 verses 5 to 7.

verse 6. Verse 6. My covenant with Levi was a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear, and he feared me and stood in awe of my name.

True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found in his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity.

for the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is a messenger of the Lord of hosts.

So this is something that's unique to the priesthood in ancient Israel. You also have it described in Leviticus 10, verses 10 and 11.

[25 : 50] You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes which the Lord has spoken to them by Moses.

And we find that such a role actually happens in the book of Nehemiah. But in our psalm, there's no mention of any Levites doing this.

He wants to do it himself. And the reason that he wants to do this is the word of assurance that Nathan has given him.

The Lord also has put away your sin. You shall not die. And in that word, David, despite his sin, has discovered the grace and forgiveness of the Lord his God.

Now, in the scriptures of the Old Testament, Genesis to Deuteronomy, the statute is made that all murderers are to be put to death.

[27 : 00] But David here has discovered something. Through this sin, he's discovered that the Lord is a gracious and forgiving God.

Not something you would always find in the pages of the Old Testament. punishment. So when he talks about this release, he thinks about what he can do.

You have no delight in sacrifice. When I had to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.

you will not despise. Verses 16 and 17. It's no good marching along with the Lamb for the sin offering if you don't mean it in your heart.

That is the problem that God had with the Israelites down the generations. They thought that all they had to do was to keep performing sacrifice after sacrifice and not change their heart.

[28 : 18] But God is saying no, that's not what I want. What I want is a changed heart. The sacrifice to God, the acceptable sacrifice is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart of God you will not despise.

So what happens now? That he's being brought to this place of brokenness, this place of confession, this place of remorse.

we find it in 18 and 19, the way the psalm closes, do good design in your good pleasure, rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings, and in whole burnt offerings, then bulls will be offered on your altar.

Now, we're nearly there. What is being said here is this, because of David's brokenness, restoration will not only come to him and his family, but the temple worship will be restored.

Then bulls will be offered on your altar. This will be a situation that God will look down on with pleasure, with blessing, and with grace.

[30 : 03] So how can we adapt all of this to us? By saying this, that what David is having to confess here is indeed an impediment to the revival of the temple, his family, his reign, and the city Jerusalem.

And if we want to update that into our own circumstance, we have to realize there are things that we need to confess before God the way we treated our brothers and sisters, what we said about them, then if we do that, this impediment for revival will be removed and God will shine graciously on our testimony, on our gospel preaching, on our witness.

It's an impediment. It can be turned into a blessing. Amen. May the Lord bless us these remarks.

May we be to his praise and to his glory.