

1 Chronicles 20 – Thursday, September 15th, 2016

1 Chronicles 20 -- 1 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time kings go out to battle, that Joab led out the armed forces and ravaged the country of the people of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. And Joab defeated Rabbah and overthrew it.

- You probably noticed chapter twenty is a very abbreviated version of what really happened when David stayed in Jerusalem.
- This for a couple of reasons one of which is that Chronicles is written to the post-exilic Jews, such that they already knew of it.
- Secondly, it's believed the exclusion of David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah was to give the Israelites hope.

- Before we move on to the rest of the chapter, I'm hoping you'll kindly indulge me as we revisit some of the lessons from this.
- It all started when David made the catastrophic decision to remain in Jerusalem instead of going to battle as kings did in spring.
- This led to one particular evening when he couldn't fall asleep then gets up and notices Bathsheba bathing on the roof close by.

- In spite of the warnings David sends for her lies with her and she returns to her home, and it would appear he gets away with it.
- That is until Bathsheba sends a message to David that she is pregnant with his child. Then David's response is just disastrous.
- Instead of confessing his sin David seeks to cover up his sin and in so doing ties the hands of God's forgiveness and cleansing.

- It's hard to imagine but David not confessing and choosing to cover it up instead would bring about such horrific consequences.
- Namely, this unwanted pregnancy, then subsequently the death of this precious baby, not to mention the murder of one Uriah.
- If this weren't bad enough his son rapes his daughter, one son murders another son and there's a rebellion by his son Absalom.

- Be that as it may, David's cover up Plan A is met with utter and total failure when Uriah doesn't do what he had hoped he'd do.
- More specifically, the plan to get Uriah to have relations with his wife in order to cover up Bathsheba's pregnancy as being his.
- Interestingly, we're told not just that he didn't sleep with her we're told why. He couldn't enjoy his wife while Israel was in battle?

- Instead of repenting, which he could have done at this point, David resorts to getting Uriah drunk so his resolve is weakened.
- However, David has underestimated the commitment and character of his faithful servant and loyal soldier who will not give in.
- As one said, David was drunk with lust and slept with Bathsheba, and hoped making Uriah drunk with wine would do the same.

- Sadly, when this plan fails, David writes a letter and has Uriah himself carry it to Joab, not knowing that it's his death sentence.
- Joab then places Uriah on the front line per David's instructions, which ultimately leads to his murder in David's cover up effort.
- One might think that alas, David's plan has finally succeeded in muting the voice of Uriah who alone could testify against him.

- Unfortunately, nothing could be further from the truth; now, the enemy is rejoicing at David's fall, little by little, over the 20-years.
- In other words, David didn't go from lust to adultery to deception to murder overnight rather, it took place over a period of years.
- At this point in David's life, he's likely about 50-years old and has been reigning as king over all Israel for some twenty-years.

- It's been said that prosperity has the potential of being more dangerous than poverty, such that it gives us a sense of ease.
- Such is the case with David at this stage in his life, in the sense that he wants to sort of take it easy and rest on his laurels.
- Tragically, it will be the first in a long line of mistakes that he makes on his way to sexual temptation that he ultimately falls into.

F.B. Meyer of this wrote, "Beware of moments and hours of ease. It is in these that we most easily fall into the power of Satan. The sultriest summer days are most laden with blight. ...If we cannot fill our days with our own matters, there is always plenty to be done for others.... Watch and pray in days of vacation and ease, even more than at other times."

G. Campbell Morgan offers this warning; "There is nothing more full of subtle danger in the life of any servant of God than that he should remain inactive when the enterprises of God demand that he be out on the fields of conflict."

Charles Spurgeon, "...he had begun to indulge himself in ease, and therefore left the battles of his country to be fought by others. If so, we are hereby taught that indolence is the nurse of vice."

- The reason that laziness is the nurse of vice, as Spurgeon says it, is because we become a sitting duck for the Devil to tempt.
- Like with David, we will likely end up being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and as such, it ends up being a matter of time.
- When it comes to some how thinking that you've paid your dues, especially for leaders, you are putting yourself in great danger.

- One of the most valuable lessons that I've been learning in my Christian walk is that I must stay busy about the things of God.
- Actually, it's when I'm walking according to the Spirit, busy in the Spirit, that I don't have the time to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
- Conversely, if I don't stay busy in the Spirit, I become susceptible to the flesh, such that I can get in the flesh and not the Spirit.

- Be that as it may, it's been suggested that David has fostered a proclivity to lust for many years as evidenced by all his wives.
- In other words, whenever he desired a beautiful woman, David would marry them in order to indulge the lusts of his desires.
- The reason I mention this is because David's fall didn't happen overnight, such that, it was over a process of a number of years.

Alan Redpath - "As I think of what happened, of this I am sure, that it did not happen all at once. This matter of Bathsheba was simply the climax of something that had been going on in his life for twenty years."

- I would suggest that what had been going on in David's life for twenty years culminated in four steps leading to David's sin.

- Step #1 - Remaining idle – David stayed
- Step #2 - Being enticed – David saw
- Step #3 - Pursuing curiosity – David sent
- Step #4 - Ignoring warnings – David sinned

- There's an interesting contrast between David who did sin in this way and Joseph who resisted the temptation to sin in this way.

David	Joseph
Stayed behind (2 Samuel 11:1)	Stayed busy (Genesis 39:2-5)
Entertained temptation (2 Samuel 11:2)	Resisted temptation (Genesis 39:7-10)
Ignored warnings (2 Samuel 11:3)	Heeded warnings (Genesis 39:8-9)
Sent for her (2 Samuel 11:3)	Caught by her (Genesis 39:11-12)
Sinned with her (2 Samuel 11:4)	Ran from her (Genesis 39:12)

Kindly allow me to share with you some interesting quips and quotes concerning temptation:

- "Temptation, if not resisted, soon becomes necessity."
- "Watch out for temptation—the more you see of it the better it looks!"
- "Few speed records are broken when people run from temptation."
- "One-half the trouble of this life can be traced to saying yes too quick, and not saying no soon enough."
- "It is easier to suppress the first desire than to satisfy all that follow it."
- "He that labors is tempted by one devil; he that is idle, by a thousand."

Before we move on to the rest of the chapter, I'd like to read a letter to Dear Abby written by a pastor Walter Cowen, "Since I am a pastor with 43 years' experience, I'd like to offer this suggestion to the inexperienced young minister who didn't know how to handle a very bold woman in his congregation who had designs on him. "Whenever I noticed a romantic twinkle in the eye of a woman in my congregation, I always checked to make sure it wasn't caused by a reflection from the gleam in my own."

2 Then David took their king's crown from his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there were precious stones in it. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance. 3 And he brought out the people who were in it, and put them to work with saws, with iron picks, and with axes. So David did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

- Here we're provided with an interesting detail that speaks to the goodness and grace of God in the face of our sinful decisions.
- Notice how that we're told David had the king's crown set on his head, and brought out the spoil of the city in great abundance.
- The reason I point this out is because David had repented, and God relented, which is why he remained in his position as king.

4 Now it happened afterward that war broke out at Gezer with the Philistines, at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite killed Sippai, who was one of the sons of the giant. And they were subdued. 5 Again there was war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. 6 Yet again there was war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, with twenty-four fingers and toes, six on each hand and six on each foot; and he also was born to the giant. 7 So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him. 8 These were born to the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

- The chapter ends with yet another very abbreviated account of both David's and Israel's victories over the Philistine giants.
- However, it does present the question of why so much is left out here in Chronicles even though it's to a post-exilic Israel.
- While we have the detailed accounts in the books of Samuel, it seems the writer deemed it unnecessary to repeat graphic sin.

Adam Clarke has some interesting insight into the omission from Chronicles; "The compiler of these books passes by also the incest of Amnon with his sister Tamar, and the rebellion of Absalom, and the awful consequences of all these. These should have preceded the fourth verse. These facts could not be unknown to him, for they were notorious to all; but he saw that they were already amply detailed in books which were accredited among the people, and the relations were such as no friend to piety and humanity could delight to repeat. On these grounds the reader will give him credit for the omission."

- To me, the main reason for the omission in Chronicles is what I like to call, the "but God" factor. The sin was horrific, but God!
- David committed adultery and murder, but God in his mercy and grace, forgave David when he repented and forsook his sin.
- This is what God wanted the post-exilic Jews to know moving forward, in that, the sins of the past had already been dealt with.

- It's in this way that I would like to bring our Bible study to an end. It's not about how bad we are -- it's about how good God is.
- Perhaps better said, scripture is replete with the failure and fall of many a great man or woman of God to show us Who God is.
- It's for this reason that every single one of us should be greatly encouraged and hopeful when it comes to our own failures.