

## A Study of II Samuel

### *The Life of David*

#### Chapter Nine

#### Sharing God's Kindness

**Finding Mephibosheth (1-4):** The kindness of God by David for Jonathan's sake is the subject throughout this chapter (1, 3, 7). David had promised to preserve the lineage of Jonathan (I Sam. 20:15-17, 42; 24:21). David therefore called Ziba, a servant of Saul, and asked him if there was any of the house of Saul still alive that he might show kindness unto? Ziba states that Jonathan has a son who is lame on his feet (3), Mephibosheth by name he is residing at Machir a house in the city of Lodebar. Mephibosheth was but 5 years old when his father died in battle (4:4). Jonathan could not show love to him, so he sought for Jonathan's son to pour out love and affection.

Ziba will turn out to be a deceitful man. He will lie about Mephibosheth when David is fleeing from Absalom (II Sam. 16:1-4) and when David returned to Jerusalem (19:17, 24-30).

**Calling of Mephibosheth (5-8):** What was the thoughts of Mephibosheth as he traveled to the king? If he listened to his father, he would be excited, however if he listened to his grandfather, he would be fearful.

The act of Mephibosheth falling before David in humility and reverence took a great deal for Mephibosheth, for he would need to have a servant help him. Mephibosheth's humility is also seen in his response to David, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?".

David's answer to Mephibosheth is "fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually" (7).

**Enriching Mephibosheth (9-13):** David will unofficially adopt Mephibosheth. David took Mephibosheth into his household, provided for him, protected him, and let him eat at David's own table. Eating at the kings table is mentioned 4 times in this chapter emphasizing the care that David would provide (7, 10, 11, 13).

David informs Ziba that he and his 15 sons are to till the land for Mephibosheth though Mephibosheth himself will eat bread, all of his days at the table of David.

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#### Chapter Ten

#### International Relationships

**International Relationships (1-5):** One very important aspect to David's success was his ability to really support from international relationships. David had brought many surrounding nations under tribute to Israel (8:12). Included in these nations was Ammon, a kingdom directly east of the Jordan River. Since Saul's early years Ammon had been ruled by king Nahash. Nahash however eventually died and was succeeded by his son Hanun. Because Nahash had shown some unspecified kindness, David sent an envoy to Ammon to express his sympathy to Hanun regarding his father. This David hoped would enable him to have a friendly ally.

Hanun's advisers however counseled Hanun not to accept David's kindness supposing David sought to spy out the land for a future attack (3).

Hanun taking the advice of his counselors takes David's messengers and shave off half their beards and cut off their garments to an immodest length before sending them back (4). David in kindness towards his messengers has them tarry at Jericho until their beards grow back (5).

**A Declaration of War (6-14):** Ammon understanding that their actions are perceived as a declaration of war engage 30,000 mercenary troops from the three Syrian kingdoms of Beth Rehob, Zobah and Tob (6).

David in response sent his armies under the command of Joab and Abishai (6-7). Joab directed his attention to the Syrian divisions and Abishai's troops to the Ammonites with the understanding that one would help the other as circumstances required. The result was a smashing victory for Israel. (8-14).

**Humiliation Brings Retaliation and Defeat (15-19):** The Syrians having fled before Abishai regather themselves under the command of Shobach, general of the army of Hadadezer of Zobah (15-16). The two armies gather at Helam and set themselves in

array (17). David's army takes the victory in an impressive battle defeat the Syrians: David's men kill 700 charioteers and 40,000 horsemen and smote Shobach the captain of the their host (18).

This victory broke the back of the Syrian resistance and brought the Syrian confederates under Israel's domination. Never again did they side with Ammon against the people of Israel.

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#### Chapter Eleven

#### David and Bathsheba

**Avenging the Humiliated (1):** David had dealt with the Syrians for yoking up with Ammonites against Israel, but the Ammonites had not been dealt with for their humiliation of David's messengers in cutting off half their beards. David therefore sends Joab to deal with Ammon. The return of Spring was the usual time of commencing military operations. This event took place a year following David's victory over the Syrians in the previous chapter. David however stayed back which was uncustomary for the kings who would typically lead their armies personally.

**David and Bathsheba (2-5):** David looking out upon the roof top sees Bathsheba bathing herself. Bathsheba was very beautiful to look upon however she was another man's wife. Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam one of David's mighty men and an officer in David's army. Uriah one of David's mighty men was the husband of Bathsheba (3). Bathsheba is also granddaughter to Ahithophel who will side with Absalom in his revolt against his father David. Could act of David have something to do with Ahithophel's rebellion? (see 2 Sam. 15:12)

David's inquiring after Bathsheba asks whose wife she is and even after David is told he still took Bathsheba to lay with her (3-4). This act brings forth conception, for Bathsheba is pregnant with David's child (5).

**But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1:14-15)**

The sin of David is inexcusable, for David took deliberate steps in committing his sin. David acted upon his look of desire though he had opportunity to repent and turn away from the rooftop look of desire he did not take it. David even knowing Bathsheba was a married woman, married to one of David's mighty men and daughter to one of his generals sent messengers to take her unto himself.

**David and Uriah (6-13):** An act of sin if not dealt with will grow as does a cancer. David rather than repenting chooses to sink deeper in sin. David seeking to cover up his sin tries twice to manipulate Uriah in laying with his wife. After calling Uriah off the battlefield David meets with Uriah and sends him away with meat and drink, David supposing Uriah would return unto his house to his wife (6-8). However, Uriah would not go unto his house but slept outside the king's house with all the servants of David (9). When this deceitful act of David did not work David took matters into his own hands and made Uriah eat and drink with him seeking to make Uriah drunk. This, however, did not work either for Uriah was a man of integrity (10-13).

**David and Joab (14-25):** David not willing to repent and turn to the LORD and confess his sins and deal with the ramifications of his own decisions sinks into greater sin. David will move from adultery to murder. If only David would have stopped and dealt with his sin, Uriah would still be alive and David house might not have suffered the judgment of God for generations (see 12:7-11).

David seeks to kill Uriah, one of his very own mighty men. Uriah had fought many of David's foes, but I am sure Uriah never supposed he would have been killed by his beloved king. How much more grievous was David's sin in sending Uriah with the letter telling Joab to allow Uriah to be killed in battle. The letter (14) tells Joab to place Uriah in the hottest part of the battle, close to the city walls so that he might die.

Joab is faithful in his orders and commands Uriah to the hottest part of the battle and he is killed by the city gate from arrows from the wall of the city (16-17,20, 23-24).

Following the battle skirmish in which Uriah dies Joab sends word back to David.

Ordinarily David would be upset by the news of casualties. He would have wondered at Israel's indiscretion in fighting so close to Rabbah's city walls, a blunder which had cost Abimelech, son of Gideon, his life so long ago (Judges 9:50-54). So, Joab informed the king specifically that Uriah also had died. This he knew would appease David's anguish (18-24).

David's repose to the news was predictable. He told the messenger to tell Joab that in circumstances such as war, life and death were matters of blind chance. His instruction back to Joab was only that the siege of Rabbah be even more aggressive (25).

**David and Bathsheba (26-27):** Bathsheba soon learned of her husband's tragic death. After the customary time of mourning, she moved into the king's palace in time to bear their son.

The LORD however, saw all and was displeased at the actions of David setting in motion events that would trouble David until his death.

One child and 4 sons spring from this marriage (2 Sam. 5:14, I Chron. 3:5): The first child will die then there was Solomon, Shimea, Shobab and Nathan.

Bathsheba strength of intellect, kindness and influence over David and her son, appear in I Kings 1:11-31; 2:13-21. She is said by tradition to have composed Proverbs 31 as an admonition to Solomon on his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter. With the help of the prophet Nathan, she will render futile the usurpation of Adonijah and craftly secure the kingdom for her son Solomon (I Kings 1:11). Later Adonijah succeeds in deceiving Bathsheba, but his plan is frustrated by the king (I Kings. 2:13). In the genealogy of Jesus Bathsheba is mentioned as the wife of Uriah (Matthew 1:6).

**Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. (1 Kings 15:5)**

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#### Chapter Twelve

#### David and Nathan

**Nathan's Parable (1-6):** The LORD was not pleased with David (11:27) and therefore sends His prophet Nathan unto David with a parable. Nathan told David a story of a rich man who, despite having everything, stole a poor neighbor's ewe (female) lamb to provide for a guest (1-4).

Enraged, David pronounced that the man who would do such a despicable thing ought to die and the rich man must restore four lambs for the one stolen for not even the rich man's death could compensate the poor man's property loss (5-6).

**God's Judgment by the Mouth of Nathan (7-14):** "Thou art the man" what a dramatic accusation and condemnation of David. David's gig is up, he can no longer hide though he so desperately tried.

God had given David literally everything in his life and if that would have been too little, He would have given David all that he desired (7-8).

David would now suffer the consequences of his sin: *First*, the sword shall not depart from David; he will be known as a man of war a bloody man (9-10 cf. I Chron. 22:8; 28:3). *Secondly*, evil will arise against David from his own house (11). To name just a few troubles, Absalom will seek to take the kingdom from his father, Tamar the daughter of Absalom is raped by Amnon, Absalom's brother. *Thirdly*, David's wives will be taken (11-12). This is fulfilled when Absalom when he lays with David's concubines on the roof top for all to see (2 Sam. 16:22). *Lastly*, David's first child will die (14 cf. 18). Such is the case of the high cost of sin.

One might wonder why David was not punished with death for his act of adultery and murder as he so sternly desired for the rich man. Adultery and murder both were sufficient cause for the execution of even a king (Ex. 21:12; Lev. 20:10).



The answer surly lies in the genuine contrite repentance which David expressed, not only in the presence of Nathan but more fully in Psalm 51 (and others: Ps. 32:1-11; 103:1-220).

David's sin was heinous, but the grace of God was more than sufficient to forgive and restore him, as Nathan could testify. And yet, though David could be restored to fellowship with God, the impact of his sin remained and would continue to work its sorrow in the nation as well as the kings' life.

**The Death David's Son (15-23):** David's confession brought him forgiveness but could not change the course of events his choices had set in motion. David would not die, but the child Bathsheba had conceived would die. One day David would go to be with the son whom the Lord had taken, but that son would never know David on earth.

David's response to his servant's inquiry concerning why he arose and ate bread once he heard the child was dead is classic: While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept... But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? David attested to the irrevocability of death - its finality renders further petition absurd.

"I will go to him, David said, but he will not return to me." This is one of the reasons that many believe that a child before the "age of accountability" is saved. This would seem to be what Paul is also saying in Romans 7:9.

**The Birth of Solomon (24-25):** Eventually another son was born to David and Bathsheba, one who bore a double name: Called Solomon by David and Bathsheba meaning "peace" and the Lord, through Nathan called him Jedidiah meaning "beloved of the LORD". Some think that Nathan served as the royal tutor to Solomon.

**Back in the Battle (26-31):** Joab seeing he is about to take the city of Rabbah seeks for David to come and lead the final assault lest Joab get the credit. David sacks the city of its wealth, including the 75 pound (a talent) golden crown of the Ammonite king. David also put the survivors to slave labor (using saws, iron picks and axes and working at brickmaking)

