

The Ten Commandments - Part 37: You Shall Not Commit Adultery Part 4 - The Judgment of David (2/4/2023)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/x28jhx/f/the-ten-commandments-part-37>

***Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserving the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

Shabbat shalom, everyone. We are still looking at the seventh commandment:

Exodus 20:14 — **You shall not commit adultery, *lō tna'āp̄.***

Last week, we ended by looking at the parable the prophet Nathan told King David about a rich man and a poor man. Nathan described the disgraceful behavior the rich man had displayed toward the poor man. Upon hearing it, David was so enraged he pronounced judgment against the rich man. He was disgusted with this man's behavior and declared that the rich man should be put to death. After David was done declaring judgment, the prophet Nathan told David that the man you're disgusted and angry with and you declared the judgment of the death penalty against is you, David. You can only imagine the fear that overcame David right at that moment (like a wave of terror rushing over him).

We will continue in our story today. I will highlight an aspect to the story that I don't feel gets enough attention. We will put a special emphasis today on how God responds to adulterers.

I recently heard a sermon where this gal, a preacher, was discussing the story of David and Bathsheba. She was really disgusted with the whole story because she felt David walked away with barely a scratch. Basically, she thought David got his cake and ate it too. So, we will emphasize how God responded to David. When the enemy hits you at an opportune time, and you are at the precipice of crossing into the arena of adultery, I want to ensure an evil spirit cannot whisper in your ear and take you to the Word and remind you, "You know what? It worked out for David. God loved David, and it worked out just fine. You can repent later. So, you can have your cake and eat it, too." We will address that nonsense today.

You don't want to ever let go of today's message. It will keep you out of judgment. It will keep you out of hot water and on the path of righteousness.

We ended last week with 2 Samuel 12:9. Nathan just told David he had committed adultery and murdered Uriah. The prophet Nathan didn't even take a breath. Immediately after telling David his sins and that his sins are known, he says this:

2 Samuel 12:10a—^{10a} **Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house.** “Never” is not a bad translation. It means David will get caught up in scandals. There will be great disgrace, shame, hatred, violence, and chaos in his house. David has opened the gates of hell, and that is not an exaggeration. The judgment of the living God will be poured out on him. Just go down a couple verses in Chapter 12, and you already see judgment ensuing.

The Lord struck down David’s son, the child that Bathsheba gave birth to. David went into intercessory prayer. He prayed, wept, and fasted. He interceded and petitioned the Lord on behalf of the child. Now, keep in mind, David always had the ear of the Lord and the favor of the Lord. David moved to save his child. The Lord refused and did not hear his prayer. The Lord took out his son. Can you imagine the agony Bathsheba went through losing her son?

It doesn't stop there. Go to Chapter 13. David's firstborn son, Amnon, was heir to the throne. Being the firstborn was such a great blessing; they received a double portion. It was the beginning of David's strength. And what did Amnon do? He violated David’s daughter, Tamar. Tamar was Amnon’s half-sister; they had different mothers. After Amnon violated and disgracefully treated Tamar, he discarded her like a piece of garbage. When David found out, he was angry and in agony because this had happened. David had already lost a child, and now his firstborn son violated his daughter and disgracefully treated her. The Bible says she remained desolate in the house of her brother, Absalom.

And we are not done. Fast forward two years, and guess what? Absalom, the brother of Tamar, rose up violently and took out the heir to the throne, Amnon. The beginning of David's strength was killed. David lost another son.

If that’s not enough, later, David gave Joab a directive not to lay a finger on his son, but Joab violently killed David's third son, Absalom.

They say the most painful thing (even more painful than your spouse having an adulterous affair) you can experience in this life is the loss of a child. I don't debate that at all. I wholeheartedly believe it as I've met enough people who have experienced it. This quote will help you appreciate this reality:

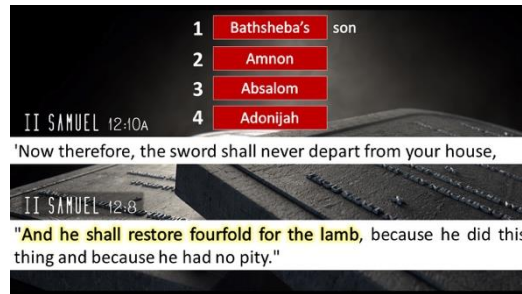
Robyna May—I **cannot think of anyone stronger than a mother who lost her child and still breathes.** Do you understand it's a miracle that a mom and dad can even survive after such a traumatic event?

Yet, David's whole house was wrecked. He lost three sons, and you're going to tell me David got away with barely a scratch; he had his cake and ate it, too. You have no idea of the pain, the sorrow, and the judgment that was poured out on him. Listen to me carefully: when God pours out judgment on you, who can help you and intercede on your behalf? There is no one.

Look at this again: 2 Samuel 12:10a—^{10a} **Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house.** Unimaginable judgment.

Let me take it a step further. Do you remember as Nathan told David the parable of the rich man and the poor man, David responded that the rich man deserved to die? Well, David also said this:

2 Samuel 12:8—⁸ **and he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity** (emphasis added).



It was not tit-for-tat. It was not one-for-one. David said he was to restore fourfold. Isn't that interesting? First, Bathsheba's son was taken out. Second, Amnon, heir to the throne was killed. Third, Absalom was killed. And later on, Adonijah was killed.

David lost four sons. One died by the Lord, and the others were violently murdered. David restored fourfold. Now, you tell me that David was thinking, "You know what? I have Bathsheba. It was all worth it." His sin was always before his eyes. Look at all the different wives with all these different sons and see the agony and the pain. How do you live with that? There are not enough counselors in the world to get you through a situation like this. It's unimaginable.

2 Samuel 12:10—¹⁰ Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house **because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife** (emphasis added). Why are the gates of hell open on David? Because he committed adultery. Notice the verbiage: "**because you have despised me.**" What does it say in the verse just before this? 2 Samuel 12:9—⁹ **Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight?** (emphasis added). Notice in verse nine, it says "**you despised the commandment of the LORD.**" In verse ten, the Lord himself says, "**you have despised Me.**" It is important to make the connection that when you violate the commandment of God, it's not simply that you have despised the commandments of the Lord, but you have despised God Himself. We need this perspective.

This takes us to Exodus 20 where God spoke the Ten Commandments. In Exodus 20:5, God said—⁵ **For I, the LORD thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me**—God tied lawlessness specifically to hating Him—but **showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.** Again, God tied loving Him directly to obedience.

Think about this. This was the strongest language the Lord could use against David. God was not talking to Ahab the king, a wicked king of Israel, or some other violent wicked person. He was talking to an anointed man He loves, a man after his own heart, and He said, "**you have despised Me.**" Does it look like the Lord was tiptoeing around in this situation? Absolutely not.

2 Samuel 12:11a—^{11a} **Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house;** This is a very specific prophecy about Absalom. God didn't bring in some pagan king and run David out of Jerusalem. This was his own son. Do you know how psychologically destructive this is? Do you know how painful it is to have your own son turn against you? This is the worst nightmare you could paint. There's no possible way you can say, "At the beginning, David knew all this would happen." He didn't know any of it. That's what the devil does; he blinds us to the effects of what will come later.

If this wasn't bad enough, we read this in 2 Samuel 12:11b—^{11b} **and I will take your wives—plural—before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he—this adversity, this Absalom—shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.** We talked about this last week. The place where Absalom set the tent up was the exact place where David gave his heart over to adultery. But you would think, if the Lord was fair, Absalom would have committed adultery with just one of David's wives, not ten. David paid ten times. Absalom committed adultery with ten of David's wives, and it wasn't in the secret of the night.

2 Samuel 12:12—¹² **For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.** The Lord exposed great shame and disgrace on David in broad daylight. The moral of this story is not that adultery worked for David; therefore, it will work for you. The moral of the story is “run for your life” because you cannot imagine the hell that will follow. There is no possible way you will conceive that. The moral of this story is: don't mess with God, don't test Him, and don't doubt Him. Hold fast to his commandments because if you break the commandments of God, i.e., the commandment of adultery, you will pay; the Lord will make sure of it.

Let's look at a few passages in Genesis, the first book in the Torah, as they have a lot to say regarding this subject. These passages have a lot of wisdom and will help you understand how serious the Lord is about adultery and how protective He is over marriage. The more you get into the Word on this subject, the more disgusted you will be with the thought of adultery, and the more terror of the Lord you will have. **By the fear of the LORD, one departs from evil** (Proverbs 16:6).

We will begin cultivating that by looking at Genesis 20. Abraham and Sarah went into the land of Gerar, the land of the Philistines. The king of the Philistines is Abimelech, *Abimelek*. Abraham entered Gerar in an unusual way. He introduced his situation a little differently than it actually was. When Abraham entered into Gerar, he told everyone Sarah was his sister, not his wife. Abraham introduced his wife as his sister because he was concerned that the people of Gerar did not have the fear of God. And when you are in a society that is devoid of the fear of God, that means they have no conscience; nothing holds them back. So, Abraham was worried that when the men in Gerar saw his beautiful wife, they would simply kill Abraham and take Sarah.

As a quick side note: This wasn't Abraham and Sarah's first rodeo. In Genesis 12, when Abraham went to Egypt during the famine, he told Sarah to say she was his sister so he could live because if they thought he was her husband, they would kill him. So, this wasn't the first time Abraham did this; this was the second time. So, we'll pick the story up in verse two:

Genesis 20:2—² **Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.** That didn't take long. Maybe, Abraham had some insight because Abimelech took her. How did God respond to this situation? This is where we really want to pay close attention:

Genesis 20:3a—^{3a} **But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him....**

I want to stop here because as we get further into this story, you will see that Abimelech is one of the most interesting, non-Hebrew characters you will find in the Torah. He is a prophetic picture of Gentiles being grafted into Israel in such a profound, mind-blowing way.

This was a very unusual way for the Lord to communicate to a pagan king, a king that is not part of the Hebrews. Normally, God would send a prophet, and His prophet would speak to him. How did God

speak to some of the pagan kings, like Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar? He gave them dreams, but they were riddles they didn't understand. That is not how God spoke to Abimelech. This is huge! God spoke to Abimelech without riddles. In Numbers 12:6, God said—⁶ **If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.** Pay close attention because this gets really interesting. This is how God responded to Abimelech, who had separated this marriage by taking Sarah from her husband, Abraham:

Genesis 20:3b—^{3b} **Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife** (emphasis added). I love this story because it shows how serious the Lord is when it comes to the sanctity of marriage. God is so protective over marriages. ⁹ **What God has joined together, let not man separate** (Mark 10:9). But, woe to the man that takes that step! **You are a dead man.** If there was ever a time to understand how God feels about marriage, it's right here with the patriarchs of the faith, the Father and Mother of Nations, Abraham and Sarah.

You need to have this in the back of your mind when the enemy somehow beguiles and tempts you to the point you feel you might commit adultery. Know this: you're a dead man. Married men looking at porn on their computer: they are a dead man. You're going into a land you do not understand where you will be shackled and chained.

Genesis 20:4—⁴ **But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also?"** That sounds very familiar because just two chapters earlier, Abraham asked the LORD, **"Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?"** (Genesis 18:23). King Abimelech had the same conversation with the Lord: **"Will You slay a righteous nation also?"** That is amazing. It gets better as we continue.

Genesis 20:5—⁵ **Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this.** Abimelech pleads his innocence before the Lord. And this is huge: Abimelech never had an adulterous thought towards Sarah; never. If you want proof of this, look at what we read next:

Genesis 20:6—⁶ **And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore, I did not let you touch her.** Why did God hold Abimelech back from sinning? Because Abimelech's heart was right. It's not what he was thinking. God blessed that and kept him from sinning against Him. In Psalm 51, when David reflected upon committing adultery with Bathsheba and everything that followed, he said, **"Against You, You only, have I sinned."** It's amazing that the Lord told Abimelech, **"I also withheld you from sinning against Me."** In other words, if Abimelech had gone forward and committed adultery with the Mother of Nations, that would have been a sin directly against the Lord. It's not that it wouldn't have been a sin against Abraham or Sarah, but there is no sin against our neighbor without the law of God. That's where David was coming from, and that's where the Lord was coming from.

Genesis 20:7—⁷ **"Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."** (Emphasis added). At this point, Abimelech had separated Abraham from Sarah. The Lord had kept Abimelech from sinning and had shown him grace. Then the Lord warned him: restore Sarah, but if you don't, I am coming for you, and I will destroy you and everyone who is of you.

When we look at King David's house, we know God isn't playing; God does not give empty threats. So, take His word at face value. You have to believe sin is never worth it, even though the devil will tell you it is worth it, and there won't be any consequences. Looking at the consequences in King David's life should be enough for a thousand lifetimes to run the other direction.

I want to fast forward to Genesis 26 to the story of Isaac, *Yitschaq*, the son of Abraham. This is amazing, so check this out. Isaac went to Gerar because of a famine. Isn't that interesting? He did the exact same thing his mother and father did. When Isaac went into Gerar, he told the inhabitants and the same King Abimelech that Rebecca was his sister, not his wife.

As a side note, this gets into the eschatological prophetic old adage of Judaism: *Ma'eseh Avot Si'man Le'banim*. That means the deeds of the fathers are assigned for the children. In other words, what happened to Abraham will happen again. The children will experience it. This is quite literally a facsimile.

Genesis 26:6-7—⁶ So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. ⁷ And the men of the place asked about his wife—there was a new woman in town, and it caused a lot of hullabaloo—And he said, “She is my sister”; for he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” because he thought, “lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold.” Isaac thought exactly like his father had thought. This is amazing because Yeshua thinks exactly like His Father, and Isaac is a typology of Yeshua, and Abraham is a typology of the Father. It's fascinating. So, Isaac did the same thing his father had done. And at this point, this is not Abimelech's first rodeo since he's already been through this.

Genesis 26:8—⁸ Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. Something tells me that Abimelech was suspicious from the get-go. As Isaac introduced his beautiful wife as his sister, something tells me Abimelech intentionally looked through the window. Whatever it was that Isaac was doing with Rebecca, it was something that brothers don't do with their sisters. Let's be clear; this much we know. Abimelech was not an idiot, so we read:

Genesis 26:9-10—⁹ Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Quite obviously she is your wife, so how could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’” ¹⁰ And Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? —listen—One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us (emphasis added). That is an amazing statement. Abimelech confessed righteousness. Abimelech confessed that since you are married, if this had happened, we, as a people, would have been guilty. King Abimelech embraced the protection of marriage. He doesn't want to violate it; he wants to protect it. Oh, that our society today had the wisdom of this man that wanted to promote harmony and peace and protect the sacred union of marriage.

Our society today is so far radically to the left, so far away from Abimelech, that we now fundamentally believe that adultery is a right. It's a human rights issue because we as a society have the right to privacy, so two consenting adults have the right to commit adultery. (I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago.) That thought never crossed Abimelech's mind. In fact, this was deplorable to this man because he had integrity in his heart. So, the best part of the story comes next:

Genesis 26:11—¹¹ So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.” (Emphasis added). Oh my! Think about the bold, strong stance

Abimelech took against adultery. Do you see the parameters? He opened the parameters and included “this man.” It's not just about not touching his wife, but also about not touching the man. What were Abraham and Isaac worried about? They were worried that someone would want their wife and to solve the problem of her being married, they would kill her husband. This would be wicked. To not allow someone to get at Sarah in a violent and perverse way, Abimelech broadened this and said, “If you touch her husband, I'm coming after you; you're a dead man. If you touch his wife while he's alive, I'm coming after you; you're a dead man.”

Do you know what's amazing to me? Abimelech implemented the Torah. This comes right out of Leviticus 20 and Deuteronomy 22 where the Lord told the people that if they polluted the sanctity of marriage, you're a dead man; it's the death penalty. It's amazing that Abimelech implemented this in his society. Oh, how we long to live in a nation where its government represents the will of the people, and the will of the people represents the will of God. Abimelech is a blessing to his people at least in his generation. Historically, Philistines were wicked, but Abimelech didn't fit the bill at all. He implemented peace and prosperity to his people.

Do you want to add interest to this figure? Abimelech made a covenant with Abraham and, later, made a covenant with Isaac. He joined himself to Abraham and Isaac. He is an amazing man within the Torah. Abimelech was a man of wisdom and protected his society knowing the blessing that would come upon him.

Think about what would happen to our society if people woke up one morning and read on the front page of the newspaper, “If you commit adultery or mess with somebody's marriage, you are a dead man.” What do you think that would do to this country? I'm sure there would be radical protests. I'm sure the left would be seething and frothing at the mouth. If we did what Abimelech did, it would flip our country upside right. It is amazing to recognize that the laws of the land are representative of the hearts of the people, and Abimelech revealed his heart, which God already knew.

I want to take you back to Exodus 20:14—our commandment—¹⁴ “**You shall not commit adultery.**” Only this time, let's look at the Targumic translation, which is mind-blowing. The Hebrew translation, *lō tna'āp*, is only two words. The English translation, **you shall not commit adultery**, has a couple of words. The Targum translation has a massive elaborate discussion. Incredible. In fact, it has sentiments that are carried in the New Testament. I want to share this with you because it is so powerful. This is where the Targums kind of carry their weight.

Targum Neofiti, Exodus 20:14a—^{14a} **My people, children of Israel, you shall not be adulterers**—in essence, this is what we read in the English and in the Hebrew, but it doesn't stop there—**or companions or partners with adulterers** (emphasis added).

It's expanding this concept. They are not adding to the Word or taking away from it; they're explaining what “**you shall not commit adultery**, *lō tna'āp*,” means. It's a lot broader. This is what Yeshua did. Yeshua didn't add to the law when he said, ¹⁵ “**Whoever hates his brother is a murderer.**” (1 John 3:15). That was not adding to the law; it was explaining the reality of the law, and the Targums do this.

So, the law, the seventh commandment, is not just “don't commit adultery, *lō tna'āp*.” It also means to keep yourself from adulterers and adulteresses. In other words, do not hang out with them.

In fact, the fifth chapter of 1 Corinthians is dedicated to an adulterer in the church of Corinth. This man is supposed to be cast out of the camp. You're to put evil away from you. *luvarta harami*, Israel. Get him out. For the people in the church community, not in the world, Paul said—¹¹ **not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolator, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.** (1Corinthians 5:11). For those engaged in sexual immoral activity, you are not even supposed to eat with such a person. The very thing Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 5 is stated in Targum Neofiti, Exodus 20:14.

Let's continue in the Targum: Targum Neofiti, Exodus 20:14b—^{14b} **and adulterous people shall not be seen in the congregation of Israel**—again, that's what Paul said. He quoted Deuteronomy 22. *Harami*, Israel. They're not to be in the church; they have to go out. Next is a crescendo moment, when it tells why—**lest your children arise after you and they also learn to be an adulterous people** (emphasis added). This tells you that it will infect, transform, and wreck society because ⁶ **a little leaven leavens the whole lump** (1 Corinthians 5:6). ¹⁸ **Wisdom is better than weapons of war; But one sinner destroys much good** (Ecclesiastes 9:18). We can't let one of these people in our community. Our children can't be looking at this. Here's an article explaining why:

Article by Lindsay Dodgson, Oct 17, 2017, posted on Insider.com—**Children of unfaithful parents are more likely to cheat on their own romantic partners when they grow up. The researchers found that those who had unfaithful parents—listen to this—were twice as likely to have had a parent who also cheated — 44% versus 22%** (emphasis added). Monkey see monkey do! In this article, they're dumbfounded and baffled and can't pinpoint why this happens. It didn't make sense to them, but when you understand the nature of sin, what the Bible says, and that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, you understand perfectly that it's contagious and a cancer; you must get it out.

So, let's look at this statement: Targum Neofiti, Exodus 20:14b—^{14b} **lest your children arise after you and they also learn to be adulterous people, because by the sins of an adulterer pestilence comes upon the world** (emphasis added). As the Targum translators took the Hebrew into the Aramaic, they wanted to make sure you understood the penalty. This is something the devil never wants you to calculate; he never wants you to count the cost. Yet, the Targum translators recognized historically that when adultery was rampant, pestilence followed. Look at the amount of pestilences in our country today versus 100 years ago. There is no comparison. This is a true statement. There are consequences for sin.

In Genesis 49:2, I will show you how deadly these consequences are. Genesis 49:2-3—² **Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, and listen to Israel your father.** ³ **Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.** Jacob called his 12 sons, the 12 tribes of Israel, to bless them because he is going to pass away. It's his time to leave, so he blessed each son. Reuben, being the firstborn, is blessed first. This is one of the best biblical articulations of what it means to be a firstborn. It means that as my firstborn, you are **my might and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.** That is the firstborn's status. The firstborn received a double portion, a double blessing. So, you can imagine, at this point, Reuben was expecting a blessing.

This sounded good until Jacob said the following in Genesis 49:4a—^{4a} **Unstable as water, you shall not excel.** By saying **“you shall not excel,”** Jacob meant Reuben's firstborn status would be taken from him. It would be totally stripped from him. We know it was because 1 Chronicles 5 says the firstborn status was taken from Reuben and given to Joseph. That is interesting because of the 12 tribes of Israel, Joseph had two of the tribes, which ended up being a double blessing. He didn't just get one name, he

got two tribes within the 12 tribes of Israel. He got the firstborn birthright. Why did this happen? What did Reuben do?

To answer that questions, we go to Genesis 49:4b—^{4b} **because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it--he went up to my couch** (emphasis added). In other words, Reuben committed adultery with Bilhah, the maidservant of Rachel, Jacob's wife. When Reuben came for the blessing, what did he get? A curse. This reminds me of people (Christians) coming for a blessing, but instead they will hear a curse (Matthew 7:21-23). They will hear, "I'm sorry, you've lost your firstborn status. Remember, Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of soup, and Reuben sold his birthright for the lust of his flesh, the lust of his eyes." I don't care where you go in scripture, you cannot say, "You know what? It really worked out for somebody that committed adultery. Things look good in the end, so I don't need to worry."

Deuteronomy 27:20—²⁰ **Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife because he has uncovered his father's bed. And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'** They're saying amen to a curse. The wicked are being cursed in the Torah.

Proverbs 6:32—³² **Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul.** ³³ **Wounds and dishonor he will get, and his reproach will not be wiped away** (emphasis added). You destroy your own life. If you want to go into self-destruction mode, cross the line into the land of adultery, and the only thing you can expect is wounds and dishonor. This is what happened to David and Reuben. This is what happens to all the people that get involved in adultery. There are men I've had to counsel that have committed adultery, and the Lord wrecked their life. I've seen men who have got caught in this, and one thing after another, no matter what their hand touches, it's cursed. It's unbelievable! It's enough for me say, "I'm good." The thought is not even there. I want to run the other way. What I want to do is cultivate an environment where people exalt marriage to the highest level because that's where health is, and that's where safety is.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, Apostle Paul said—³ **For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;** ⁴ **that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.** In other words, get self-control. Understand who you are in the Lord and that you are the temple of the Lord. As you get into the New Testament, the most important thing the apostles conveyed to the Gentiles coming in to the faith was to stop sexual immorality. This is not something you need to study for 12 years; you must stop sexual immorality immediately. Sexual immorality is one of four things listed in Acts 15 (the other three were food laws) that the Apostles said the newly converted Gentiles needed to do now. They were to immediately deal with this.

Paul explained in 1 Corinthians 6:18-19—¹⁸ **. . . Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.** ¹⁹ **Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit . . . ?** And in 1 Corinthians 3:17—¹⁷ **If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.** There's no wiggle room here. You don't say, "Hey, give me some time; I need to learn about this. You know, I'm dating four women. Or you know what? I'm involved in porn, but it's only twice a week, but I'll knock that down to one day a week. Just give me some time." I am telling you that's not how this works. Lock it down, immediately. It is run for your life.

1 Thessalonians 4:5-6a—⁵ **not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;** ^{6a} **that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter,** (emphasis added). Do you know what he's talking about? You're not to take advantage of your neighbor's wife. You're not to defraud him of

his wife. I can't help but think about when the Lord asked Cain, **"Where is your brother?"** and Cain responded, **"Am I my brother's keeper?"** The answer is yes, you are to be your brother's keeper. One primary way we can be our brother's keeper is by protecting and honoring our brother by always making sure that his wife is protected from other people who may have other ideas.

We look to protect our sisters in this community. One of the coolest things about this community is the strength we have in marriage. It is so beautiful. I see so many wives standing side-by-side with their husbands and husbands standing side-by-side with their wives doing the work of the Lord. It is a beautiful thing. I love to see John and Judy come in together as husband and wife, and they're at the threshing floor of prayer. And I think of Bobby and Karen coming in together as husband and wife at the threshing floor receiving prayer. This is absolutely beautiful! If you want a healthy community, you better be an example to the next generation of what marriage looks like. I remember watching Jeff and Lori (who were in ministry together for 50 years) spreading the gospel side by side as Aquila and Priscilla did. This is the stuff that gets me excited. This is one of the things that I'm most proud of in this community, and it is something we have to defend and protect. We have to be our brother's keeper.

1 Thessalonians 4:6b—We are not to defraud our brother in this matter. Why—^{6b} **because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified** (emphasis added). In other words, listen, Thessalonians! Listen, Corner Fringe! Listen, oh, Church! You have been warned! If you defraud your brother in this matter, the Lord is coming for you. You're a dead man. He will be an avenger. He will take vengeance. You will not walk away from this, trust me. I don't care how many times the devil tells you, "It will be worth it. You will be okay. It worked for David"; it will not work for you. I can promise you that sin doesn't work for the righteous.

Hebrews 13:4—⁴ **Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge** (emphasis added). God will come with vengeance. It will happen.

I want to share one more passage with you in the book of Jeremiah. The backdrop is God was unleashing hell on His people. It's a very hard book for me to read because of what happened to the people of God and the pain and suffering they experienced. You can see the effect of this sin. Nebuchadnezzar came in and plucked the children of Israel from the Promised Land and brought them into Babylon. As you come to chapter 29, the Lord commissioned Jeremiah to speak a word He has for His people, not in Jerusalem, but in Babylon.

So, Jeremiah sends this word via letter. This comes out of the letter. Jeremiah 29:20-21—²⁰ **Therefore hear the word of the LORD, all you of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem, Yerushalayim, to Babylon.** ²¹ **Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah**—This is not King Ahab, the son of Omri, which was hundreds of years before this. This is the prophet Ahab, the son of Kolaiah—**and Zedekiah the prophet the son of Maaseiah**—what did they do—**who prophesy a lie to you in My name: Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes** (emphasis added).

These two prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah, said, "thus says the Lord" when the Lord had not spoken. As you read this in the text carefully, it doesn't explicitly say the words they've spoken, but simple deduction leads you to understand they declared that which Hananiah the prophet declared. In Jeremiah 28, Hananiah the prophet went toe-to-toe with Jeremiah the prophet.

Hananiah gave a great prophecy that in two years the king of Babylon's yoke that had been on them would be broken off of them. And he said that their King Jeconiah would come home and be restored to the kingdom; all the articles that were taken out of the temple would be restored in two years; and all the people would return home.

Now, if you were a Jew, and a pagan nation came and wiped you out and took your people, this would be one of the most comforting prophecies you could imagine. It was so comforting that—⁵ **the prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! The LORD do so; the LORD perform your words which you have prophesied."** (Jeremiah 28:5).

The problem was that then the Lord came to Jeremiah and said that Hananiah was a liar, and that wasn't going to happen. Then the Lord told His people 70 years, not two years. So, Ahab and Zedekiah gave this perverse false hope, saying "thus says the Lord," and what did that do? It stirred up a rebellion amongst the Jewish people, but the Lord warned them, "Don't do that because if you do that, I will put you to death." These false prophets told Israel they would be taken out of here; the yoke has broken; let's move on. So, the Lord destroyed the false prophets by burning them.

Now, we're getting to the point I want to make. Jeremiah 29:22—²² **And because of them a curse shall be taken up by all the captivity of Judah who are in Babylon saying, "The LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire"** (emphasis added).

Now, that's interesting because every week we bring the kids up, and we say a little blessing from Genesis 48:20—²⁰ . . . **"By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!'"**

A new blessing came on the scene, given what was going around in the captivity in Babylon, only this was not a blessing, it was a horrifying curse. The people rose up and cursed those who were like Ahab and Zedekiah. They pronounced a curse on them and said, **"The LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab."**

Jeremiah 29:23—²³ **because they have done disgraceful things in Israel—What did these men do—have committed adultery with their neighbor's wives, and have spoken lying words in My name, which I have not commanded them—**Only two things are recorded about these false prophets. Number one: they were saying "thus says Lord" when He didn't say it. Second, the only sin that is added specifically is adultery—**Indeed I know, and I am a witness, says the LORD** (emphasis added).

This is amazing. This blessing, which was a curse, would be spoken over people who did the works that Ahab and Zedekiah did. "May the Lord make you like Zedekiah and Ahab" was a curse to be destroyed, and what it specifically said they're responsible for was adultery and saying "thus says the Lord." When I think about this passage, all I can see are hands stretching over this country and a voice speaking, "May these inhabitants be like Ahab and Zedekiah."

It is a scary thing. When you engage in activity where false prophets run amok saying, "thus says the Lord," and He has not said, and adulterers and adulteresses with their shameful conduct exist in the church, understand this curse will go out.

We'll close here for today.