

Lesson 7

II Samuel 6-13 The Ark, The Temple, Military Feats, and Defeat by Lust

Introduction

In the previous lesson we studied how the violent death of Saul and his sons opened the door for the coronation of David as king of Israel. Initially David reigned as King of Judah only for seven years, and finally all of Israel embraced David as king. Unlike Saul, David showed his devotion to God in two key ways: 1. He preserved the power and integrity of Saul as king, even though Saul sought to kill David, because God had anointed Saul and it was not David's option to remove Saul from the throne; and, 2. David showed kindness and justice to people, especially his men, but to others as well. He was a people oriented man with the heart of a shepherd.

God refers to David as, “a *man after My heart*”, in I Samuel 13:14 and cited by Paul in a sermon in Antioch recorded in Acts 13:22. We will see this played out in the life of David through much of this study this week.

Chapter 6 David brings the Ark to Jerusalem

The Ark of the Covenant has been in the hill country east of Jerusalem for some time and David desired to bring it to Jerusalem where he had established his royal city, the City of David. For twenty years the Ark had been located on a hill outside Kiriath-jearim (Baale-Judah) under the care of a priest named Abinadab. I Samuel 7 records the history of the Ark being sent from the Philistines on a cart drawn by two milk cows to Beth-Shemesh and then on to Kiriath-jearim. The Ark is the most sacred artifact of the Israelites, as it represents the very presence of God. The Spirit of God sits enthroned above the two cherubim atop the Ark. According to Exodus 25:10-22 the Ark was to be constructed with 4 gold rings attached to the body of the Ark into which 2 gold rods would be inserted through these rings and carried on the shoulders of men. During the time of wandering through the wilderness, the Ark was veiled and not available for all to see. It was a truly sacred and set apart object.

Vs. 1-11 David assembled an army of 30,000 men to go with him to Kiriath-jearim to retrieve the Ark from Abinadab the Priest. He had a new ox cart built on which to carry the Ark, and so the Ark was loaded on the ox cart and the sons of Abinadab accompanied the Ark on its trek to Jerusalem. The sons of Abinadab, Ahio and Uzzah, walked along with the Ark, Ahio in the lead and Uzzah from behind. David and his men rejoiced and praised God with all sorts of musical instruments as the procession began its short journey to Jerusalem.

Kiriath-jearim is in the hill country west of Jerusalem and the place the Ark had been located was on top of a sacred hill – this was rough country and the roads were not necessarily smooth and ideal for such a load on an ox cart. As the party neared the threshing floor of Nacon, the cart jolted, the Ark looked as if it might topple off the cart, and Uzzah put out his hand to support the Ark and keep it from falling.

“The anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence, and he died there by the Ark of God”. Vs. 7

David became very frightened of God and abandoned the procession at that point. The place where this occurred from that day forward was called, Perez-uzzah, “the place where God ‘broke out’ against Uzzah”. Perez in Hebrew means to break forth, break out, or explode against.

Out of fear David camped the ark there, at the home of Obed-edom, for three months and God blessed Obed-edom and his entire household.

Vs. 12-23 *“You shall not swear falsely by My Name so as to profane the Name of your God, I am the LORD”.* (Leviticus 19:12) Our God is not to be treated with commonness. He and His holy name are to be revered. It might be said that Uzzah sought only to honor God by insuring the Ark did not topple off the cart, but his father the priest must have surely known the way to carry the Ark was not on an ox cart. The word of God is specific on the manner in which this holy relic was to be carried.

When David learned of the blessing brought on the household of Obed-edom he committed himself to continue the process of bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. As the Ark approached Jerusalem, again David and his men danced and played musical instruments in worship to God. As David danced before the Ark, his wife, Michal, daughter of King Saul, watched him and loathed him for his actions. Perhaps she had a lot of her father in her and failed to have the heart of worship that David possessed. Because of her anger and her harsh words to David, she became barren all the days of her life.

Chapter 7 David desires to build a Temple for God

Vs. 1-7 There is peace in the land and David’s heart turned toward his desire to honor God for all the blessing he personally received and for all of Israel. His heart desired to build a temple for God, a permanent place for the Ark and all of the sacred elements of the Tabernacle. He himself lived in a fine house built of cedar but the Ark, representing the presence and dwelling place of God continued to dwell in a very old tent. David shared his dream with Nathan the prophet, and Nathan encouraged David to move forward with his

dream of building a temple. However, God spoke to Nathan in a dream and tells Nathan it was not God's desire for David to build the temple. Later, I Chronicles 28:3 we read that David cannot build the temple because of his history as a warrior.

Vs. 8-17 As we continue reading the vision where God appeared and communicated with Nathan, God pronounced a blessing on David and his household and his lineage:

(Blessings on David and the people of Israel)

- I took you from the pastures to lead my people
- I have been with you wherever you have gone
- I have cut off your enemies from before you
- I will make you a great name
- I will bless the land of Israel for my people and protect them in the land
- I will give you rest from your enemies
- I will make a house for you (physical house and a great and enduring lineage)

(Establishing the David lineage of kings)

- Your offspring will be kings forever

(Blessings on Solomon as David's successor and he will build the temple: Even though Solomon will in many ways fall away from God, God will not take the kingdom away from him. However, as soon as Solomon dies, the kingdom splits and goes into civil war)

- Your descendent after you (Solomon) shall build a house for My Name
- I will establish his throne forever
- I will punish him for his iniquities but my loving kindness shall not depart from him as it departed from Saul

(Establishing the Messiah will come through David, King of Kings)

- Your house and your kingdom shall endure before me forever, your throne shall be established forever

Vs. 18-28 David blesses the Name of God

Chapter 8 David triumphs in war

As God had promised, David and Israel are protected from their enemies who attempt to make war.

Vs. 1 The Philistines are defeated and David takes control of their chief city, Gath.

Vs. 2 David conquered the Moabites, killing many and taking many as servants of David. Tradition records (Midrash) that David punished the Moabites because they had murdered his parents and brothers when they lived in that land to be safe from Saul (I Samuel 22:3-5).

Vs. 3-8 David defeated Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah. Zobah was located north of Israel in the area of Damascus, Syria. Additionally, Arameans from the other side of the Euphrates River assisted Hadadezer and David defeated them as well.

Vs. 9-12 Apparently the Arameans also aligned with the Edomites, located south of the Dead Sea and David defeated them in the Valley of Salt, located on the south end of the Dead Sea.

Vs. 15-17 David made a name for himself, part of the blessing from Chapter 7, and administered righteousness and justice for all his people.

Chapter 9 David extends kindness and grace to Mephibosheth, son of Jonathon

Vs. 1-13 Again we see the character of David as contrasted to that of Saul and most other kings. Most kings would kill all sons and grandsons, immediate successors of previous kings. Instead, David sought any descendent of King Saul in order to restore dignity and grace to the family and name of Saul.

The only descendent to be found was the crippled son of Jonathon, Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth was a young father of one son living quietly in Lo-debar, in the land of the Benjaminites. David restored all of King Saul's personal land to Mephibosheth, assigning Ziba, a servant of Saul, a man who had 15 sons, to cultivate the land for Mephibosheth and bring him the produce. At the same time David moved Mephibosheth and his young family to Jerusalem and instructed that the young family was to take meals with David and his family, in David's palace.

Why is this story included in the scripture? Perhaps it is a picture of how Christians must respond to the children of the Israelite kings, showing tenderness and mercy to those who were the first to be chosen by God. Perhaps Paul was preparing Christians for this as he penned the words of Romans chapters 9, 10 and 11. Certainly there was corruption in Saul and God removed him from the throne. We certainly see in the gospels that there was corruption among the Sadducees and other religious leaders of the day in the times of Jesus. Yet, just as David showed such great respect for Saul, we too, as gentile believers grafted into the root that is the covenant of Abraham (Genesis 15), must show respect for the Israelite people. For much of church history we have missed this point, rather holding on to the misguided concept of "replacement theology", the theology stating God's chosen people are now the Christians who have replaced the Jews, and God has no heart for the Jews. This is a sad and misguided concept.

Chapter 10 An act of kindness turns ugly; war again with the Ammonites and the Arameans

Vs. 15 When Nahash (I Samuel 11:1), the king of the Ammonites died, his son, Hanun became king. David wished to show respect and kindness by sending some of his servants to console Hanun and represent King David at the memorials for Nahash. However, the princes of Ammon did not trust the Israelites and assumed they were there to spy the land and plan an invasion now that the older king was dead. In a dreadful act of disrespect the Ammonites humiliated the servants of David by shaving half their beards and cutting off their garments in the middle, exposing their genitalia, and sent them home in shame. David met the men after hearing of this shameful deed and sent them to Jericho while their beards grew back.

Vs. 6-8 The Ammonites realized David would demand retribution and recruited many soldiers from neighboring countries, several armies of the Arameans and others, a total of 33,000 soldiers joined the already large forces of Ammon and prepared for war with the Israelites. David sent his armies under the leadership of the commander, Joab, to prepare for the battle.

Vs. 15-19 Israel defeated the armies of Ammon and the Arameans, killed thousands of foot soldiers and charioteers, and the Ammonites and Arameans fled from the battle to return home.

Chapter 11 Bathsheba

Vs. 1-5 We know the story so well. In the spring of the year (or early summer when there is fruit on the tree and crops in the field, useful for feeding large armies) when kings go out to battle, David sent his armies under the leadership of Joab, but David stayed behind. This was the year following the battles cited in the previous chapter. When David should have gone to battle, he stayed home, and Satan tested him.

In recent years archeologists have discovered what they believe to be David's Palace in the City of David on the south side of the Temple mount in Jerusalem. When standing among those ruins it is easy to understand how David could see the rooftop of the houses as his house was at the highest point of the very small city, and all the rooftops would be easy to observe. Uriah was a special soldier to David so his house would be close to the King's house, making the proximity that much closer. David observed Bathsheba bathing on the roof top, lusted after her, sent for her and had relations with her, and she conceived.

Oral traditions written in the Haggadah and cited within the Talmud Sanhedrin 107b expands on the history of the relationship between David, Uriah and Bathsheba. According to these traditions (which may or may not be accurate but are truly interesting), Uriah was the shield bearer of Goliath of Gath. When David slew Goliath, Uriah was present and helped David manage the armor Goliath was wearing when David drew Goliath's sword and beheaded the great giant. David invited Uriah to come join the Israelite army and if he did, he would receive an Israelite woman as a wife. God was not pleased with David for promising this

Hittite an Israelite girl as a wife. According to the traditions, Bathsheba was betrothed to David at this time so God gave Bathsheba to Uriah the Hittite as a wife to fulfill David's poorly thought out promise and to punish David. The citation in the Talmud as cited above suggests that Bathsheba was David's divinely intended mate. Maybe yes, maybe no.

Vs. 6-25 When David learned of the pregnancy of Bathsheba, knowing full well it was his child she was carrying, he called to have Uriah sent home. After Uriah gave David a report on the battles, David commanded Uriah to go home and rest before returning to the battle front.

Uriah was too loyal a soldier to comply and slept instead at the King's door. He even refused a direct order from David to go home to his wife, instead, sleeping at the king's door. To cover his sin, David sent Uriah back to the battle front with written instructions to insure Uriah's demise in battle. Joab the commander of the army obeyed David's command and Uriah died in battle.

Vs.26-27 The scripture is plain, "when the wife of Uriah heard of his death; the wife of Uriah mourned for her husband". Bathsheba was Uriah's wife and David had sinned greatly against God and his loyal friend, Uriah.

When the time of mourning passed, David brought Bathsheba to his house, as his wife, and she bore him a son.

"The deed that David had done was deemed evil in the eyes of Hahsem (God)."

Chapter 12 David exposed by Nathan the Prophet

Vs. 1-6 Nathan the prophet came to David and told him a story of a rich man and a poor man. The rich man who owned very many sheep and cattle took the poor man's one and only ewe sheep and butchered it and prepared it for a guest. David reacted by saying the rich man deserved to die, but must certainly pay restitution of 4 sheep for the one he stole, for it was obvious the rich man had no pity! David knew the Torah and was citing the law of restitution from Exodus 22:1.

Vs. 7-15 **"You are that man!"** And God has put a curse rather than a blessing on you and your house because you destroyed another man's house by use of the Ammonites swords:

- Now therefore the sword (violence) shall never depart from your house because you have despised Me and taken Uriah's wife to be your own
- Behold I will raise up evil against you from your own household
- I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion and he will lay with your wives in broad daylight (shame)

- What you did you did in secret, what I will do will be done before all Israel, and under the sun
- The LORD has taken away your sin and you will not die. However, the child you have created with Bathsheba will die because you have given opportunity for the enemies of God to blaspheme.

According to the narrative of the scripture, before that last curse was pronounced David confessed his sin against God and repented. Therefore it says, “*The LORD has taken away your sin and you will not die*”. However, the guilt from the sin still brings consequences and judgment as we see from the very words of God in Exodus 34:5-7. While God forgives, He does hold accountable and punishes the guilty ones to the third and the fourth generations.

Vs. 16-23 God struck the child with sickness and David inquired, interceded, with God on behalf of the child. David fasted and lay all night on the floor for the sake of the child. This went on for seven days and on the seventh day the child died. His servants and the elders of his household were most worried over him and dreaded telling him the child had died.

The number 7 (days) is significant here as it represents the complete process of God taking the life of the child. The other curses cited will be ongoing, but there is completeness in the death of the child as payment for the sin committed by David.

When David was finally told of the death of the child, he arose from the floor, bathed, changed clothes, anointed himself and went to the House of the LORD (Tabernacle) and worshipped God. Afterward he returned to his house and ate. When questioned by the house servants as to why he fasted and lay on the floor while the child was sick, but when the child died, David’s time of mourning was over. David stated he had hoped God might reverse his decision regarding the life of the baby if David showed true repentance, but when God took the child, there was nothing further David could do to show his repentance and hopefully persuade God to allow the child to live.

Vs. 24-25 God is gracious! David comforted his new wife, Bathsheba and she conceived again and gave birth to a boy who David named Solomon. The LORD loved this little boy and gave him the name, Jedidiah, “*for the LORD’s sake*”, or “*Beloved of God*”. This is God’s way of signifying Solomon will be David’s successor in the years to come.

Vs. 26-31 The war with the Ammonites continues and Joab, Commander of the Armies is making great strides against Ammon. He has captured the royal city, Rabbah, the city of waters, and requests David join him in the final conquest of the city, so the city will be named after the rightful king of Israel, David. David joins Joab and the city is conquered. The crown was removed from the king’s head. The crown weighed one shekel of gold,

about 64 pounds, and had a precious stone embedded in it. Also a great amount of wealth was captured with the city.

Questions and Observations:

1. How does scripture reflect the characteristics of David as being a man after the heart of God?
2. What is the Ark of the Covenant and why is it so unique and powerful? Why would David desire to have it located in Jerusalem?
3. What can we learn of the nature of God through the death of Uzzah?
4. God blesses David in 7:8-17. How do we see the blessings being carried out in the following chapters?
5. Why is David's kindness shown toward Mephibosheth significant and what might it represent for future children of God?
6. David writes Psalm 51 following the Bathsheba/Uriah debacle of Chapter 11. David asks God to forgive his sin, transgression and iniquity. What is the difference between sin, transgression and iniquity and how is each depicted in the Bathsheba/Uriah episode?
7. What curses are placed on David following his sin/transgression/iniquity?
8. Read Exodus 34:5-7 again and compare/contrast to the words of God regarding David found in 12:10-14.
9. Discuss the fact that even though their relationship was born in sin, why would God bless the union of David and Bathsheba through the birth of Solomon in such a significant manner?
10. Is it significant that war erupts again following the curse that the sword will not depart from David's house?