

SI: We’re studying the life of King David because we want to know David’s Son.

INTRO: This shouldn’t be in the Bible.

What I mean is, when you consider what an important person David was in the history of Israel and how his name dominates Christian life and worship, you would think this would have been buried and never seen the light of day. In our society there’s a financial incentive to publish exposés about public figures. You can read any number of books about John F. Kennedy’s affairs. Sometimes there are political motives for writing about the scandalous behavior of certain people, to weaken them and help the opposition.

But neither of those hold true for the historical books of the Old Testament. They weren’t best-sellers that made their authors lots of money. And they certainly don’t have an anti-David political slant.

In fact, it’s just the opposite. Whoever wrote the final edition of Samuel and Kings was strongly pro-David.

So he could have easily buried this story and still written an accurate account of David’s life. All history writing is selective. You can’t put in everything. You pick and choose based on what you want to emphasize and what points you want to make.

He could have just noted that David married another wife who was the widow of a soldier who was killed in battle with the Ammonites. That’s true and that’s all most people knew at the time.

And then he could have written the rest of David’s life and this event would never have been known by future generations.

But not only did the writer of 2 Samuel not sweep it under the rug, he tells the tale with brutal honesty—no excuses, no justifications. He leaves David absolutely no place to hide.

So why is this story in the Bible?

In one sense, David is just like us.

He’s a man who is tempted and he sins and his story is a warning for us. It gives us some helpful, practical lessons about temptation.

But in another sense, David is not like us. He’s David.

We celebrated Christmas a month ago.

Think of how often David's name shows up in Christmas—the line of David, the city of David, the throne of David.

Sometimes the Old Testament prophets refer to the coming Messiah as the Son of David, but sometimes they just call the Messiah "David."

The Lord is going to raise up David to deliver his people.

I've made this point over and over in this sermon series, that many of the ways we know and relate to Jesus Christ as our Savior is through David.

When Christians are dying, what Psalm do they always want read at bedside?

The 23rd Psalm, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. David wrote that. We hear the voice of our shepherd Jesus in those words.

David is a giant in redemptive history, he's a giant in God's salvation plan.

He's the greatest prototype of Christ in the old covenant

God calls David the man after my own heart, but David falls.

I think the ultimate reason this story is in the Bible and told with such force is not to teach us lessons about temptation and how to avoid it, but to show us all our great need for Jesus.

If David could fall, if the man after God's own heart could fall, then who are we?

We need the presence and help and forgiveness and perfection of Christ.

So let's look at David's fall, and see how it leads us to Jesus.

Three observations, I'll give them to you as we go.

MP#1 First, his fall was sudden

David was walking on his roof after a late afternoon siesta and he saw a woman on another rooftop bathing.

What happens next is told very quickly, with a rush of action verbs— he asked who she was, he sent messengers to get her, she came to him, he lay with her, she returned to her house.

It was over and done quickly. They didn't even spend the night together. The way the story is told, in this rushed way, indicates that David wanted to get her in and out of his house without anyone else seeing her.

But did you notice that in telling the tale, the writer of 2 Samuel slows down at one point and gives us a detail? “And the woman was very beautiful.”

This clues us in as to what caused David's sudden fall.

It wasn't her beauty that made David fall, it was his imagination.

Temptation gets its animating power through our imagination.

Our imagination stirs up our desires and the will to act on those desires.

Herman Bavinck, great Dutch Reformed theologian says:

The mind entertains the idea of sin.

The imagination beautifies and converts it into a fascinating ideal.

Desire reaches out to it. And the will goes ahead and does it.

In the book of Joshua, when the Israelites conquered the city of Jericho, God told them not to keep any of the plunder because it was the first city they took in the conquest of the Promised Land.

All the cities after that the Lord said they could keep the plunder, but not this first one, it was dedicated to the Lord.

So everything of value was to be put in the temple treasury.

But a man named Achen kept some things and it caused all sorts of trouble. And when he was finally caught and Joshua asked him why he did it, here's what he said:

When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them.

Follow the progression. He saw in the plunder a robe. Nothing wrong with that.

But he didn't just see a robe. He saw a beautiful robe.

And not just a beautiful robe, a beautiful robe from Babylonia—stylish.

What was Achen doing? He was imagining. How good he would look in robe.

And this silver and gold, he didn't have a scale. He weighed it in his mind.

He was imagining what he could do with that wealth.
God said he couldn't have these things but he imagined himself with them.
So what was the next step? I coveted them and took them.

And if you go to the very first fall in the Garden of Eden, the serpent tempts Eve.
He makes his arguments for eating the forbidden fruit.
But do you remember what actually moved Eve to suddenly reach out her hand
and take the fruit and eat it and give it to Adam?
So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes,
and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also
gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.
She saw and then she imagined all sorts of good things the fruit would give her
then she took it and ate it and gave it.

One of the effects of the original fall in the Garden of Eden is that all the falls
that have taken place afterwards happen much more easily.
Our imaginations can so easily and suddenly be captured that it's frightening.
We see something and our sinful imaginations go to work and the only things
that usually stop us are the inability to carry it out or the fear of getting caught.
We are helpless before temptation, we crumble before it.
We need a Savior.

Think back the New Testament reading, Christ's temptation in the wilderness.
The Devil appealed to his imagination. Jesus was hungry.
Imagine warm loaves filling your hungry stomach. Turn these stones into bread.
Cast yourself off the pinnacle of the temple in front of the Jerusalem crowds
and imagine how they will respond when an angel catches you, they'll all believe.
Look at all the kingdoms of the world and their glory and imagine having them
right now and not having to experience suffering and the cross.

What did Jesus imagine? He was a man, his human nature must have imagined.
Hebrews 12 says that for the joy set before him that he endured the cross
and scorned its shame.

The joy set before him.

The reason Jesus did not fall to the temptation to avoid the pain and shame of
the cross is because he imagined the joy that would come from obeying his
Father and saving us. The imagination that motivated his obedience, our future.
Jesus is the Savior we need. He is strong when we aren't.

MP#2 David's fall was sudden, it was also stupid

There's a breathtaking foolishness in David's actions,
first in the adultery itself, and then in his murderous cover up.
He saw this woman bathing on her rooftop and asked who she was.
One of his attendants said:

You know who that is, it's Bathsheba, Eliam's daughter, Uriah's wife.

Who were these men? Who were Eliam and Uriah? Turn to 2 Samuel 23.

This chapter tells about David's mighty men,
all the great warriors who fought alongside him over the years.

There was an elite group of soldiers called The Thirty, David's personal bodyguard.
The core of this group were men who had been with David from the beginning,
back in the old days when they were running from King Saul.

They had been with David through thick and thin.

Over the years, when men in The Thirty were killed, younger men would be
added. So the total number of men who served in The Thirty was actually 37.

Let's look at two names in this list. Vs. 34 Eliam son of Ahithophel.

So Bathsheba was the daughter of one of The Thirty.

Her father Eliam was certainly one of the men who had been with David from the
beginning. So he was David's age, about 50 years old at the time this happened.
That puts Bathsheba in her 20s.

Vs. 39 Uriah the Hittite.

Uriah her husband was also one of The Thirty, obviously a younger man who had
been added to take the place of a fallen warrior.

So when David was told who she was, and when he decided to take her anyway,
he knew he would betray not just one of his loyal bodyguards, but two of them.
It's not just despicable, it's profoundly foolish. Anyone could see it's a disaster.

Then the cover-up. When Bathsheba sent him a message that she was pregnant,
he foolishly thought he could pin this pregnancy on Uriah.

What he should have known, and certainly would have known if he had been
thinking straight, was that Uriah wouldn't sleep with his wife if he was called
back to Jerusalem to give a report.

One of the purity laws of Moses was that when the armies of Israel were at war,
the soldiers were to refrain from sexual relations.

Uriah was not a native born Israelite, he was a Hittite.

So his presence in Israel and service to David meant he had converted to the

faith of Abraham and been circumcised and was a follower of the Lord.
He was a true believer. He took the law seriously.

And he made that very clear in his response to David.

No, I'm not going to sleep in my bed with my wife when army of Israel at war.
So David gets him drunk, thinking that will lower Uriah's inhibitions.

But Uriah drunk is more righteous than David sober.

He keeps the purity laws and sleeps in the dormitory with David's staff.

You would think at this point David would simply to cut off all contact with
Bathsheba and deny, deny, deny.

Her husband is away at war, he comes home months later and finds her pregnant.

She says it's the king's baby. David denies it. He tells the two or three servants
who know about her afternoon visit that if they say anything, they're dead.
She takes the fall for it.

Why did he move ahead with this foolish, evil plot to kill Uriah?

By the way, as the rest of David's life unfolds, it's not his adultery that brings
God's punishment on his family, it's his ordering Uriah's death.

If David had confessed his adultery when he was caught, he would have paid a
price, but it would have been a fraction of what he suffered for this murder.

So why did he do it?

I'm speculating, but I think Uriah's little speech unnerved him.

Uriah spoke with such conviction about the law of God and the honor of God.

The penalty in the law of Moses for adultery was death.

So when he ends saying: As you live and as your soul lives I will not do this thing,
David might have thought Uriah suspected something.

There's a verse in Proverbs that says the guilty man flees when no one pursues.

I think that's what was going on with David.

Sin makes the best of us stupid. Even David. David!

His fall magnifies the wisdom and the moral clarity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the Devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness, one of his tricks was to quote
Scripture. Jesus, the Bible says God will do this for you. Don't you believe?

But Christ wasn't fooled. He had the wisdom of God and the Spirit of God.

So even when we stupidly fall into sin, his wisdom covers us.

He's the Savior we need. He's wise and good when we aren't.

MP#3 His fall was sudden, stupid, and selfish

In chapter 23 referenced a moment ago, the chapter about David's mighty men, there's a story that's told about an incident that happened early in David's reign. In the early days, the Philistines were still a threat and they had invaded Israel and set up a garrison in, of all places, Bethlehem, David's home town. So David makes an off the cuff comment. He says:

I'd give anything for a drink from the well beside the Bethlehem gate. David drank from this well as a boy and it just kills him to see his town occupied by these enemy forces.

Well three of David's mighty men hear him make this comment. So they take on the whole Philistine garrison, fight their way into Bethlehem, draw out a pitcher of water, and then fight their way back out and give it to David. But he refused drink it.

He says in front of everyone: I will not drink the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives. In other words, I did not order them to risk their lives for this mission and I will never be a king who sends people to do foolish and dangerous things to satisfy my selfish desires. And he pours the water out on the ground as an offering to the Lord.

Hebrew scholars have pointed out a detail in the story of David's fall. The word send is used 10 times.

David sends Joab and the army to fight while he stays in Jerusalem.
He sends messengers to find out about Bathsheba.
He sends servants to get her and bring her to him.
He sends word to Joab telling him to send Uriah back to Jerusalem.
He sends Uriah back to the battle carrying his own death warrant.
He sends and has Bathsheba brought to his house after Uriah is killed.
David has become the king he said he would never become.
He sends people to do foolish and dangerous things to satisfy his selfish desires.

There's another word in this story that is significant.

It's in verse 4. So David sent messengers and took her. He took her. For a Hebrew person reading this story, that word sets off alarm bells. Because way back in the days of Samuel, the last judge of Israel, the people began to demand a king. We want a king. Samuel said, You have a king, the Lord God is your king. No, they said, we want a king like all the nations around us. And Samuel said, Do you know what kings are like? Let me tell you. They take.

They take your sons and make them serve as soldiers in the army.
They take your daughters and make them cooks and concubines.
They take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves.
They take a tax of your produce and livestock.

That's what kings do. They take and take and take. (And we would do same).

Of course David's story doesn't end here, with his heart hard towards God and other people. He does repent and he is forgiven. We'll get to that. But just look at him at this point as the chapter closes.

He's supposed to be the ideal king but he's a selfish man who sends people to carry out his selfish desires and he takes from them whatever he wants. Why is this in the Bible? To show that David's not the one.

It's going to take someone very different to save us.

Fast forward a thousand years.

John the Baptist comes out of the wilderness of Judea to the Jordan River.

And Yeshua of Nazareth comes to be baptized.

And as he is in the water God breaks the silence of centuries and he speaks:

This is my son. It's from Psalm 2, a Psalm of David about coronation of king.

With whom I am well pleased. From Isaiah, a passage on the suffering servant. So Jesus, the Son of David is declared by God to be the Servant King.

And no sooner does this coronation happen than he is sent into the wilderness for 40 days where he is tempted by the Devil.

But where Adam failed, and David failed, Jesus wins.

He's the second Adam and the perfect David.

And three years later, on the night he was betrayed, in the Garden of Gethsemane, he was tempted again by fear and doubt. He was in agony to the point of death.

He prayed, Father, let this cup pass from me. But then he won again.

Yet not my will, but yours be done.

And he went to the cross for you and for me so all our sins could be forgiven.

Jesus is not a king who sends people to carry out his selfish whims—

he's the king who was sent to carry out God's plan for our salvation.

He did not come to take and take and take, but to give his life as a ransom for many.

Do you see what the story of David's fall shows us?

We can't save ourselves, everyone falls, even the greatest of men.

But Jesus Christ is the King we need. Trust him. Follow him.