



Living in the Victory God Gives (2 Sam 11-12)

Notes: Week Six

2 Samuel 11-12 (HCSB)

David's Adultery with Bathsheba

¹¹ In the spring when kings march out to war, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah, but David remained in Jerusalem.

² One evening David got up from his bed and strolled around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing—a very beautiful woman. ³ So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he reported, “This is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite.”^[a]

⁴ David sent messengers to get her, and when she came to him, he slept with her. Now she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness. Afterward, she returned home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to inform David: “I am pregnant.”

⁶ David sent orders to Joab: “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” So Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the troops were doing and how the war was going. ⁸ Then he said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king followed him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master’s servants; he did not go down to his house.

¹⁰ When it was reported to David, “Uriah didn’t go home,” David questioned Uriah, “Haven’t you just come from a journey? Why didn’t you go home?”

¹¹ Uriah answered David, “The ark, Israel, and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my master Joab and his soldiers^[b] are camping in the open field. How can I enter my house to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? As surely as you live and by your life, I will not do this!”

¹² “Stay here today also,” David said to Uriah, “and tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ Then David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him, and David got him drunk. He went out in the evening to lie down on his cot with his master’s servants, but he did not go home.

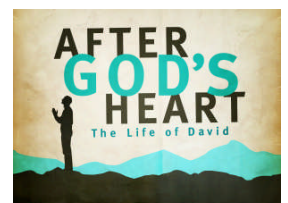
Uriah's Death Arranged

¹⁴ The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵ In the letter he wrote:

Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies.

¹⁶ When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he knew the best enemy soldiers were. ¹⁷ Then the men of the city came out and attacked Joab, and some of the men from David’s soldiers fell in battle; Uriah the Hittite also died.

¹⁸ Joab sent someone to report to David all the details of the battle. ¹⁹ He commanded the messenger, “When you’ve finished telling the king all the details of the battle— ²⁰ if the king’s anger gets stirred up and he asks you, ‘Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn’t you realize they would shoot from the top of the wall?’ ²¹ At Thebez, who struck Abimelech son of Jerubbesheth?^{[c][d]} Didn’t a woman drop an upper millstone on him from the top of the wall so that he died? Why did you get so close to the wall?’—then say, ‘Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead



also.””²² Then the messenger left.

When he arrived, he reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell.²³ The messenger reported to David, “The men gained the advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we counterattacked right up to the entrance of the gate.²⁴ However, the archers shot down on your soldiers from the top of the wall, and some of the king’s soldiers died. Your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead.”

²⁵ David told the messenger, “Say this to Joab: ‘Don’t let this matter upset you because the sword devours all alike. Intensify your fight against the city and demolish it.’ Encourage him.”

²⁶ When Uriah’s wife heard that her husband Uriah had died, she mourned for him.^[e] ²⁷ When the time of mourning ended, David had her brought to his house. She became his wife and bore him a son. However, the LORD considered what David had done to be evil.

Nathan’s Parable and David’s Repentance

12 So the LORD sent Nathan to David. When he arrived, he said to him:

There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor.² The rich man had a large number of sheep and cattle,³ but the poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up, living with him and his children. It shared his meager food and drank from his cup; it slept in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him.⁴ Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man could not bring himself to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for his guest.^[f]

⁵ David was infuriated with the man and said to Nathan: “As the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die!⁶ Because he has done this thing and shown no pity, he must pay four lambs for that lamb.”

⁷ Nathan replied to David, “You are the man! This is what the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.⁸ I gave your master’s house to you and your master’s wives into your arms,^[g] and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more.⁹ Why then have you despised the command of the LORD by doing what I consider^[h] evil? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife as your own wife—you murdered him with the Ammonite’s sword.¹⁰ Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house because you despised Me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own wife.’

¹¹ “This is what the LORD says, ‘I am going to bring disaster on you from your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another^[i] before your very eyes, and he will sleep with them publicly.^[j] ¹² You acted in secret, but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.’”^[k]

¹³ David responded to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.”

Then Nathan replied to David, “The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.¹⁴ However, because you treated^[l] the LORD with such contempt in this matter, the son born to you will die.”¹⁵ Then Nathan went home.

The Death of Bathsheba’s Son

The LORD struck the baby that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, and he became ill.¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the boy. He fasted, went home, and spent the night lying on the ground.¹⁷ The elders of his house stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat anything with them.

¹⁸ On the seventh day the baby died. But David's servants were afraid to tell him the baby was dead. They said, "Look, while the baby was alive, we spoke to him, and he wouldn't listen to us. So how can we tell him the baby is dead? He may do something desperate."

¹⁹ When David saw that his servants were whispering to each other, he guessed that the baby was dead. So he asked his servants, "Is the baby dead?"

"He is dead," they replied.

²⁰ Then David got up from the ground. He washed, anointed himself, changed his clothes, went to the LORD's house, and worshiped. Then he went home and requested something to eat. So they served him food, and he ate.

²¹ His servants asked him, "What did you just do? While the baby was alive, you fasted and wept, but when he died, you got up and ate food."

²² He answered, "While the baby was alive, I fasted and wept because I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let him live.' ²³ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I'll go to him, but he will never return to me."

The Birth of Solomon

²⁴ Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba; he went and slept with her. She gave birth to a son and named^[m] him Solomon.^[n] The LORD loved him,²⁵ and He sent a message through Nathan the prophet, who named^[o] him Jedidiah,^[p] because of the LORD.

Capture of the City of Rabbah

²⁶ Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal fortress. ²⁷ Then Joab sent messengers to David to say, "I have fought against Rabbah and have also captured the water supply. ²⁸ Now therefore, assemble the rest of the troops, lay siege to the city, and capture it. Otherwise I will be the one to capture the city, and it will be named after me." ²⁹ So David assembled all the troops and went to Rabbah; he fought against it and captured it. ³⁰ He took the crown from the head of their king,^[q] and it was placed on David's head. The crown weighed 75 pounds^[r] of gold, and it had a precious stone in it. In addition, David took away a large quantity of plunder from the city. ³¹ He removed the people who were in the city and put them to work with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and to labor at brickmaking. He did the same to all the Ammonite cities. Then he and all his troops returned to Jerusalem.

Footnotes:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. 2 Samuel 11:3 DSS add <i>Joab's armor-bearer</i> | k. 2 Samuel 12:12 Lit <i>and before the sun</i> |
| b. 2 Samuel 11:11 Lit <i>servants</i> | l. 2 Samuel 12:14 Ancient Jewish tradition, one LXX ms; MT reads <i>treated the enemies of;</i> |
| c. 2 Samuel 11:21 LXX reads <i>Jerubbaal</i> | m. 2 Samuel 12:24 Alt Hb tradition reads <i>he named</i> |
| d. 2 Samuel 11:21 = Gideon | n. 2 Samuel 12:24 In Hb, the name Solomon sounds like "peace." |
| e. 2 Samuel 11:26 Lit <i>her husband</i> | o. 2 Samuel 12:25 Or <i>prophet to name</i> |
| f. 2 Samuel 12:4 Lit <i>for the man who had come to him</i> | p. 2 Samuel 12:25 = Beloved of the LORD |
| g. 2 Samuel 12:8 Lit <i>bosom</i> | q. 2 Samuel 12:30 LXX reads <i>of Milcom</i> ; some emend to <i>Molech</i> ; 1Kg 11:5,33 |
| h. 2 Samuel 12:9 Alt Hb tradition reads <i>what He considers</i> | r. 2 Samuel 12:30 Lit <i>a talent</i> |
| i. 2 Samuel 12:11 Or <i>to your neighbor</i> | |
| j. 2 Samuel 12:11 Lit <i>in the eyes of this sun</i> | |

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*¹

2 Samuel 11-12

2 Samuel 11

11:1 Spring was an optimal time for kings to march out to war. The crops were growing and thus men were not needed as badly to work the fields, and the winter rains were letting up. David's forces under Joab had already put down the Ammonite threat ([10:14](#)), but David could not leave them unchecked. Israelite forces besieged Rabbah, the Ammonite capital. The words David remained in Jerusalem do not necessarily suggest David committed sin or folly by doing so. His men may have encouraged him to stay out of the battle ([21:15-17](#)), and David had not participated fully in some other battles as well ([10:7](#)).

11:2 The roof of the palace was probably on the highest ground, providing the king a commanding view of Jerusalem. He saw a woman bathing (lit "washing"); the text does not suggest she did so intentionally to lure David into an encounter.

11:3 David discovered the woman's identity—she was Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam (one of David's elite warriors; [23:34](#)) and the wife of Uriah the Hittite (another of David's elite soldiers; [23:39](#)). She also may have been the granddaughter of Ahithophel, one of David's most trusted counselors ([23:34](#)). At any rate, her married status rendered her off-limits to the king.

11:4 David... slept with her—meaning he had intercourse with her. The narrative is silent about Bathsheba's feelings about coming to the palace and submitting to the king's wishes. Apparently the intent of the biblical writer was to place ultimate blame where it belonged—with Israel's king.

11:5 The news of Bathsheba's pregnancy presented special problems for the king because her husband Uriah had been away fighting the Ammonites and thus could not be the father of the child.

11:6 David sent orders to Joab without revealing the reason he was summoning Uriah.

11:7 Uriah must have wondered why the king had summoned him—one of David's valiant warriors—when a simple messenger could bring news about the war ([v. 18](#)).

11:8 The words of the king to Uriah, wash your feet, suggested a time of gentle relaxing at Uriah's house, where Bathsheba might arrange an intimate evening with her husband to make it appear that he was the baby's father. David even sent a gift along—probably some choice food and drink.

11:10 David questioned Uriah about his refusal to go home as the king had invited him to do, while being careful not to appear overly eager to make sure Uriah went home.

11:11 Uriah answered David as a true soldier. With Israel's army engaging the enemy in battle, he would not leave the battlefield to enjoy the comforts of home. Ironically, Uriah swore by the king's own life to disobey David's command.

11:12 David delayed Uriah's return a few days while he contrived another plan.

11:13 David got Uriah drunk in an effort to get him to wander home to Bathsheba, but he did not go home. The king was becoming more desperate to cover his misdeed.

1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), *WORDsearch* CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Samuel 11-12".

[11:14](#) The letter to Joab ordering Uriah's death was delivered by Uriah's own hand.

[11:15-16](#) Joab, a brilliant general, had to wonder what Uriah had done to deserve death, but he obeyed David's order.

[11:18](#) Messengers (not elite soldiers as with Uriah; [v. 6](#)) routinely ran between battle lines and Jerusalem to provide updates on the war ([18:19-23](#); [1Sam 4:12-17](#)).

[11:20](#) Joab knew that David, an experienced military man in his own right, might respond angrily if he heard a bad report that included what he considered foolish military tactics.

[11:21](#) The account of Abimelech dying from an upper millstone that was thrown from the top of the wall was a vivid example from Israel's history ([Jdg 9:50-54](#)). The messenger must have wondered, however, why Joab's suggestion to tell the king that Uriah the Hittite was dead might appease David's anger. Now two people, besides David and Bathsheba, knew a piece of David's secret.

[11:24](#) The messenger did not wait for the king's reply to share the news of Uriah's death.

[11:25](#) Again, when David told the messenger an encouraging word to relay to Joab, the messenger must have wondered why the king would have received the news without even challenging Joab's strategy as Joab had anticipated he might ([vv. 20-21](#)). As is almost always the case, sin proves hard to hide for David.

[11:26](#) The text's description of Bathsheba only as Uriah's wife is probably intentional to accent David's sin. She mourned for Uriah, probably putting on mourner's clothes ([Jer 6:26](#)), throwing dirt or ashes on her head ([2Sam 1:2](#)), sitting in the dirt ([Isa 47:1](#)), fasting ([1Sam 31:13](#)), and weeping.

[11:27](#) The time of mourning is not given. Israel mourned Moses for 30 days ([Dt 34:8](#)), but Uriah's mourning probably was not that long. David then brought Bathsheba to his house, and soon she bore him a son. The king might have escaped detection from some who might have been in a position to report him—except that the Lord had seen the entire ugly ordeal.

2 Samuel 12

[12:1](#) The Lord sent Nathan to David to reveal His message to the king. Nathan had communicated to the king God's incredible promise about David's house ([7:8-17](#)). This time, the message would not be as pleasant.

[12:3](#) Nathan's language emphasizes how the one small ewe lamb was more a member of the family than an asset comparable to the rich man's abundant sheep and cattle.

[12:4](#) The rich man did the unthinkable in the name of hospitality.

[12:5](#) David was infuriated, a fact that reveals he thought Nathan's words presented a real occurrence in his kingdom. Deserves to die is literally "is a son of death."

[12:6](#) David judged that the rich man had responded in an unjust, calloused manner. Four lambs were the standard restitution for a stolen sheep ([Ex 22:1](#)).

12:7 With his powerful words, You are the man, the prophet drove home the application of the parable. The parable laid a foundation for what was to come; the words this is what the Lord God of Israel says then introduced God's indictment against the wayward king. The Lord then began to describe all He had done for David, beginning with giving him the kingship and delivering him from the hand of Saul.

12:8 The phrase I would have given you even more demonstrated the Lord's willingness to go even further with David's blessing if the king had only asked.

12:9 David had not merely neglected the command of the Lord; he had despised it with his grievous actions. Technically, the Ammonite's sword killed Uriah, but it was as if David had done it himself. And he had done this to cover his adultery with Uriah's wife.

12:10 To despise God's command ([v. 9](#)) is to despise God; conversely, believers show their love for God by loving and keeping His commands ([1Jn 5:3-4](#)).

12:11 David's own family would be the instruments of God's judgment. The words I will take your wives and give them to another were fulfilled by David's son Absalom when Absalom tried to usurp the kingship ([16:20-22](#)).

12:13 David's response—I have sinned—contrasts sharply with that of Saul when Samuel confronted him over his sin ([1Sam 15:15,20-21](#)). Saul gave excuse after excuse, but David's heart ([1Sam 13:14](#)) would not let him do so. Nathan assured the king that his life would be spared.

12:14 The language of this verse is difficult and has been rendered different ways. The words you treated the Lord with... contempt emphasize David's careless treatment of God's commands ([v. 9](#)). Other manuscripts read, "You have caused the Lord's enemies to blaspheme," meaning the enemies of God treated Him with disdain because they had seen the hypocrisy of His chosen leader. In either case, God's leader had committed a very public sin, a fact that contributed to God's verdict: the son born to you will die. God would not allow this child—a reminder of David's adultery and murder—to live.

12:16 David pleaded and fasted, spending the night lying on the ground humbly before the Lord. He repented of his sin, but he would struggle with sin's consequences.

12:21 David's behavior after his child died contradicted what his servants thought might happen. Fasting normally followed the death of a loved one, but David ate food.

12:22 The king replied that he had been holding out hope that the Lord might let him live. One never knows the full extent of God's grace ([Joel 2:14](#); [Jnh 3:9](#)).

12:23 The king's words I'll go to him, but he will never return to me may be understood as meaning David would one day join his infant child in heaven. Another possibility is that David was affirming that he would join him one day in death, but the child would never join him in this life again.

12:24 God's grace began anew in the lives of David and his wife Bathsheba. Their next child was Solomon, who would become Israel's next king. Another mark of God's grace was that the Lord loved Solomon.

12:25 Jedidiah, another name for Solomon, means "Beloved of the Lord."

12:26 The account of Joab's battle with the Ammonites that began in [11:1](#) now resumes. The royal fortress probably designates the part of the city where the palace stood.

[12:27](#) Capturing a city's water supply ensured that its defeat was imminent. Cities that anticipated a siege would use extreme measures to guard their water ([2Ch 32:3-4,30](#)).

[12:28](#) Joab wanted David to lay siege to the city and finish the job he had all but accomplished. The distance from Jerusalem to Rabbah was about 40 miles, but Joab was eager for the king to receive credit for the victory.

[12:30](#) The placing of the former king's crown... on David's head symbolized the transfer of power from the Ammonite king to the king of Israel. David also dedicated the plunder to the Lord for the future temple's construction ([1Ch 29:2-5](#)).

[12:31](#) David enslaved the captive Ammonite citizens and put them to work with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and to labor at brickmaking. All these tasks were heavy labor. They suggest that David was fortifying key cities and areas throughout his territory.

English Standard Version - *Study Bible*² 2 Samuel 11-12

2 Samuel 11

[11:1-12:25](#) *David and Bathsheba*. The story of the Ammonite war continues up through [11:1](#) and is concluded in [12:26-31](#). In between comes the account of David and Bathsheba ([11:2-12:25](#)). The story of the war thus is a “frame” around the story of David and Bathsheba: “Joab/Rabbah” and “David/Jerusalem” in [11:1](#) correspond to “Joab/Rabbah” in [12:26](#) and “David/Jerusalem” in [12:31](#).

The Rise and Failure of David in 1 and 2 Samuel

David's Rise (1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel 10)	David's Failures (2 Samuel 11-20)
Eager holy warrior	Remains in palace
Marries honorably	Adultery with Bathsheba
Protects Saul's life	Plots Uriah's death
Decisive	Indecisive
Prayers effective	Prayers ineffective
Fearless when outnumbered	Fearfully takes census
Attracts thousands of followers	Loses thousands of followers

[11:1](#) With the defeat of the Syrians, David is free to concentrate on besieging Rabbah ([10:14](#)). **the time when kings go out to battle.... But David remained at Jerusalem.** The connection of these two phrases hints that something is wrong: the kings go out to battle, but this king does not. And **all Israel** went out to battle, but Israel's leader did not. Readers can see a contrast between the king who is at leisure ([11:2](#)) and the soldiers on the field ([v. 11](#)).

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Samuel 11-12".

11:2 The **woman bathing** is probably “purifying herself from her uncleanness” ([v. 4](#)) after her menstrual period ([Lev. 15:19-24](#)). Clearly, then, the child who would be conceived in [2 Sam. 11:5](#) was not Uriah’s. **Beautiful** is literally “very good in appearance.” Compared with the usual Hebrew adjective *yapah* for “beautiful” (as in [1 Sam. 25:3](#), where it is used of Abigail), the emphasis here is more distinctly on the woman’s appearance. A terraced structure, first built in the fourteenth or thirteenth century B.C., has been found in Jerusalem as part of the city of King David. Over 50 feet (15 m) in height, it may have served as the foundation for a large base that held the highest buildings of Jerusalem. David’s palace perhaps sat there, overlooking the entire city (see [illustration](#)).

Jerusalem in the Time of David (c. 1010-970 B.C.)

About four millennia ago, Melchizedek was king of Jerusalem, which was then called Salem ([Gen. 14:18](#)). This was an unwalled city, which was taken over in c. 1850 B.C. by the Jebusites, who built a city wall around it and called it Jebus (cf. [1 Chron. 11:4](#)).

King David captured this city after having ruled for seven years in Hebron ([2 Sam. 5:5](#)). The city was strongly fortified, especially the area around the Gihon Spring, where massive towers dating from this period have been excavated. The Jebusites were so confident of their fortifications that they taunted David, saying that even the blind and the lame would prevent him from capturing their city ([2 Sam. 5:6](#)).

However, Joab, David’s commander-in-chief, managed to secretly enter the city through its water system and open the gates for David to take control ([1 Chron. 11:6](#)). The Jebusite Citadel was destroyed and replaced by the “stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David” ([2 Sam. 5:7](#)).

Later on in his life, David built an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, which stopped a plague sent by God upon Israel from reaching Jerusalem ([2 Sam. 24:18-25](#)).

11:3 **Uriah the Hittite** is listed among David’s top warriors, the “thirty,” in [23:39](#).

11:4 Given the elaborate attempt David makes ([vv. 6-13](#)) to cover up the initial act of his adultery, it is hardly likely that he makes his intention clear when he summons Bathsheba. Probably David makes inquiry about the welfare of the family of his trusted general during Uriah’s absence and gives Uriah’s wife the honor of a private interview, even sending **messengers** (plural) to invite Bathsheba; after Uriah’s death, David takes Uriah’s widow under his protection as his own wife ([v. 27](#)).

11:6-13 The king had certain rights, but clearly adultery was not one of them. Instead of repenting and trying to settle the matter openly, David tries to cover it up by making it appear that his child by Bathsheba is Uriah’s.

11:9 Sexual intercourse was a source of ritual impurity ([Ex. 19:15](#); [Lev. 15:18](#)), and so it was avoided during a military campaign, as is mentioned in [1 Sam. 21:5](#). (See [Deut. 23:9](#). “Evil” in that passage refers to something “unseemly” or “improper,” rather than morally evil. Certainly “excrement” [[Deut. 23:13](#)] is not morally evil, but like intercourse it does make one unclean.) Uriah considered himself still on duty, in contrast to David.

11:14-15 It is ironic that Uriah should unknowingly take with him the **letter** that orders him killed. David is hopelessly overwhelmed by the need to cover up his wrongdoings, even if it means taking another person’s life—and even more, the life of a faithful soldier.

11:21 **Abimelech** was a son of Gideon, who was also known as Jerubbaal ([Judg. 8:29-9:57](#)). Here, the element “baal” in a name is changed to “bosheth” (“shame”), so it becomes **son of Jerubbesheth**, as can

be seen elsewhere in Samuel with the names Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth (see note on [2 Sam. 4:4](#)). **Did not a woman.** Abimelech had told his armor-bearer to kill him “lest they say of me, ‘a woman killed him’” ([Judg. 9:54](#)), but this was said of him anyway.

11:25 Do not let this matter trouble you, or “Do not let this matter displease you” (cf. [v. 27](#)). David probably knows that Joab would not have been happy about killing a good commander. David is saying, “He might have been killed anyway.”

11:26-27 The **mourning** period was probably seven days ([Gen. 50:10](#); [1 Sam. 31:13](#)).

11:27 But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD is literally, “The matter that David did was evil in the eyes of the LORD”; see [12:9](#) and [Ps. 51:4](#). This contrasts with David’s words to Joab two verses earlier, “Do not let this matter displease you.”

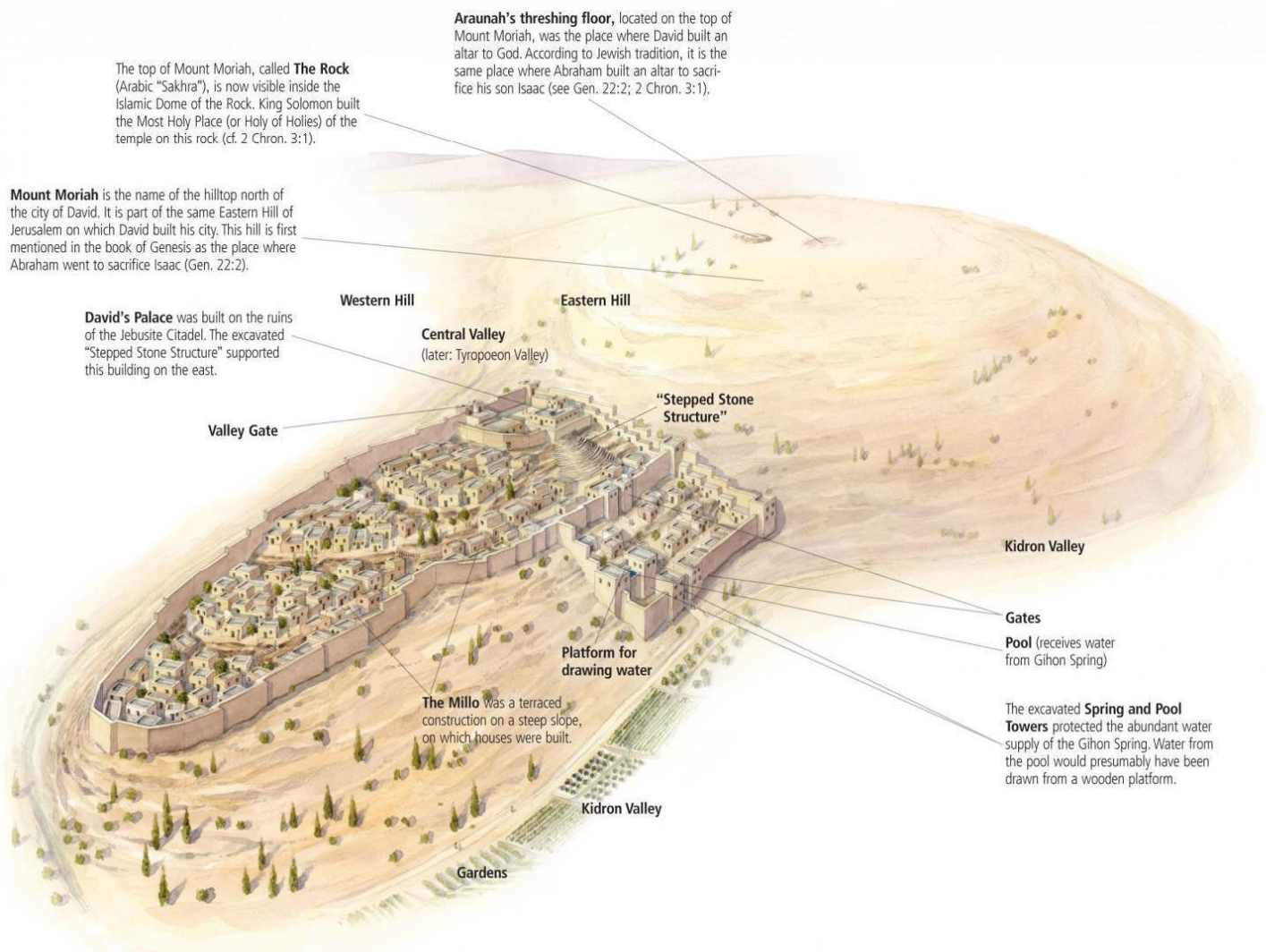
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2 Samuel 12

12:1-31 David started by breaking the tenth commandment (coveting, [Ex. 20:17](#)), then the seventh (adultery, [Ex. 20:14](#)), and then the sixth (murder, [Ex. 20:13](#)), while the Lord silently watched his behavior. Here at last the Lord calls him to account for standing above the law. [Psalm 51](#) was composed in response to this occasion. **Nathan** apparently asks David to intervene in a legal matter. The “parable” ([2 Sam. 12:1-4](#)) is similar to the plea of the wise woman of Tekoa in [ch. 14](#) and that of the prophet in [1 Kings 20:35-43](#). In all these cases, it is pointed out to the king that his own actions do not match his judgments.

12:4 That the Lord has special concern for the poor is a major theme in the Bible, and as his representative, the king and other judges were supposed to protect against abuse by the powerful ([Ex. 23:6](#); [Lev. 19:15](#); [Prov. 31:9](#); [Isa. 3:14](#); etc.). The rich man **took the poor man’s lamb**, just as David “took” Bathsheba (see [2 Sam. 11:4](#)).

12:5-6 David has a true concern for justice when he is not blinded by his own passion (cf. his ready acceptance of Abigail’s words in [1 Sam. 25:32-33](#)). For **fourfold**, see [Ex. 22:1](#).

12:7-13 This passage has similarities with Nathan’s prophecy in [ch. 7](#). In both, the Lord looks back on what he has done by grace for David. But while in [ch. 7](#) the Lord graciously promised him an enduring house, here he announces that David by his own deeds will experience misery in his house. David has **despised** the Lord and his word.

12:8 **gave you... your master’s wives**. There is no other record of David marrying Saul’s wives, but he was certainly in a position to do so.

12:9 This sin was against the Lord, as David should have known through the **word of the LORD** (cf. [Ps. 51:4](#)). **With the sword** is a general term for causing violent death, as in [2 Sam. 11:25](#), not necessarily a reference to the specific mode of death (see [11:24](#)).

12:10-11 **the sword shall never depart from your house**. David’s sons Amnon ([13:29](#)), Absalom ([18:15](#)), and Adonijah ([1 Kings 2:25](#)) all will die by the sword. **he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun**. Absalom will rebel against David and publicly lie with David’s concubines on a rooftop ([2 Sam. 16:22](#)).

12:13-14 David confesses and appears to have genuine repentance. Yet the results of his actions remain. As the ESV footnote explains, for **scorned the LORD** the Masoretic text has “scorned the enemies of the LORD,” but this may not be the original wording. Modern scholars conclude that the word “enemies” was inserted (either by the author himself, or by a copyist) as a euphemism to avoid directly saying the words “scorn the LORD.”

12:15-23 When the child falls ill, David still hopes that the Lord might change his mind and so petitions him with fasting (as in [Judg. 20:26](#); [Ezra 8:23](#); [Est. 4:16](#); [Ps. 35:13](#); etc.). **washed and anointed himself... ate**. Because fasting and refraining from anointing were also part of ordinary mourning ([1 Sam. 31:13](#); [2 Sam. 3:35](#); [14:2](#)), David’s actions puzzle his servants, who seem to have thought he had been mourning.

12:20 The **house** is presumably the tent where the ark of the covenant was housed ([6:17](#)). “House” can also refer to a tent, as it may in Ugaritic and Akkadian.

12:23 I shall go to him. Some interpreters understand David to be saying simply that he, like the child, will someday die. But “shall go to him” seems to indicate the expectation of future personal reunion.

12:24-25 First Chronicles 3:5 suggests that **Solomon** was the fourth son of David by Bathsheba. This verse may skip over a number of years to introduce the most important child of the union. **And the LORD loved him** hints at Solomon’s future role as king; God’s grace has triumphed over David’s terrible sin. The line promised to David will continue through this son of David and Bathsheba, and from this line the Messiah will eventually come ([Matt. 1:6](#)).

12:26-31 End of Israel-Ammon War. Having recorded the birth of Solomon, the author returns to the siege of Rabbah, last mentioned in [11:25](#). The “city of waters” was probably that section of the city that controlled the water supply. With no water, the surrender of the city itself would follow shortly. Therefore, Joab calls David to come to the front so that the king can get credit for its capture.

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

2 Samuel 11-12

Chapter 11

11:1 Winter is the rainy season in Israel, the time when crops are planted. Spring was a good time to go to war because the roads were dry, making travel easier for troop movements, supply wagons, and chariots. In Israel, wheat and barley were ready to be harvested in the spring. These crops were an important food source for traveling armies.

11:1 This successful siege (see [12:26, 27](#)) put an end to the Ammonites' power. From this time on, the Ammonites were subject to Israel.

11:1ff In the episode with Bathsheba, David allowed himself to fall deeper and deeper into sin. (1) David abandoned his purpose by staying home from war ([11:1](#)). (2) He focused on his own desires ([11:2](#)). (3) When temptation came, he looked into it instead of turning away from it ([11:3](#)). (4) He sinned deliberately ([11:4](#)). (5) He tried to cover up his sin by deceiving others ([11:6-15](#)). (6) He committed murder to continue the cover-up ([11:15, 17](#)). Eventually David's sin was exposed ([12:9](#)) and punished ([12:10-14](#)). (7) The consequences of David's sin were far-reaching, affecting many others ([11:17; 12:11, 14, 15](#)).

David could have chosen to stop and turn from evil at any stage along the way. But once sin gets started, it is difficult to stop ([James 1:14,15](#)). The deeper the mess, the less we want to admit having caused it. It's much easier to stop sliding down a hill when you are near the top than when you are halfway down. The best solution is to stop sin before it starts.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 478-482.

David's Family Troubles		
<i>Wife</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>What Happened</i>
Michal (Saul's daughter)	She was childless	David gave her five nephews to the Gibeonites to be killed because of Saul's sins
Ahinoam (from Jezreel)	Amnon, David's firstborn	He raped Tamar, his half sister, and was later murdered by Absalom in revenge
Maacah (daughter of King Talmai of Geshur)	Absalom, third son Tamar, the only daughter mentioned by name	Absalom killed Amnon for raping Tamar and then fled to Geshur. Later he returned, only to rebel against David. He set up a tent on the roof and slept with 10 of his father's concubines there. His pride led to his death.
Haggith	Adonijah, fourth son. He was very handsome, but it is recorded that he was never disciplined	He set himself up as king before David's death. His plot was exposed, and David spared his life, but his half brother Solomon later had him executed
Bathsheba	Unnamed son	Died in fulfillment of God's punishment for David and Bathsheba's adultery
Bathsheba	Solomon	Became the next king of Israel. Ironically Solomon's many wives caused his downfall
David's many wives caused him much grief. And as a result of David's sin with Bathsheba, God said that murder would be a constant threat in his family, his family would rebel, and someone else would sleep with his wives. All this happened as the prophet Nathan had predicted. The consequences of sin affect not only us but those we know and love. Remember that the next time you are tempted to sin.		

11:3 See [1 Kings 1, p. 511](#) for Bathsheba's Profile.

11:3, 4 As David looked from the roof of the palace, he saw a beautiful woman bathing, and he was filled with lust. David should have left the roof and fled the temptation. Instead, he entertained the temptation by inquiring about Bathsheba. The results were devastating.

To flee temptation, (1) ask God in earnest prayer to help you stay away from people, places, and situations that may tempt you. (2) Memorize and meditate on portions of Scripture that combat your specific weaknesses. At the root of most temptation is a real need or desire that God can fill, but we must trust in his timing. (3) Find another believer with whom you can openly share your struggles, and call this person for help when temptation strikes.

11:4 That Bathsheba had just completed the purification rites following menstruation means that she could not have already been pregnant by her own husband when David slept with her. [Leviticus 15:19-30](#) gives more information on the purification rites Bathsheba had to perform.

[11:15](#) David put both Bathsheba and Joab in difficult situations.

Bathsheba knew it was wrong to commit adultery, but to refuse a king's request could mean punishment or death. Joab did not know why Uriah had to die, but it was obvious the king wanted him killed. We sometimes face situations with only two apparent choices, and both seem wrong. When that happens, we must not lose sight of what God wants. The answer may be to seek out more choices. By doing this, we are likely to find a choice that honors God.

[11:25](#) David's response to Uriah's death seems flippant and insensitive. While he grieved deeply for Saul and Abner, his rivals ([chapter 1; 3:31-39](#)), he showed no grief for Uriah, a good man with strong spiritual character. Why? David had become callous to his own sin. The only way he could cover up his first sin (adultery) was to sin again, and soon he no longer felt guilty for what he had done. Feelings are not reliable guides for determining right and wrong. Deliberate, repeated sinning had dulled David's sensitivity to God's laws and others' rights. The more you try to cover up a sin, the more insensitive you become toward it. Don't become hardened to sin, as David did. Confess your wrong actions to God before you forget they are sins.