

# The Logic of Spirituality

## 2 Samuel 12:15 - 23

Nutshell: The reality of the living and the dead, of life and death, puts an urgency and focus in those who understand it.

I. Context: David's sin and its consequences .

II. Text

2 Sam 12:15 And Nathan went to his house. And Yahweh afflicted the boy whom the wife of Uriah bore to David, and he became incurable.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

### Review

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
  1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
  2. **Saul** demonstrated *man's* kind of rule. God previewed *His* version of king through **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 tells us that David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. This dramatically shapes our approach to each incident in David's life.
- C. The chronicler presents David as God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for all subsequent kings of Judah, e.g., 2 Kings 14:3; 2 Chron 34:2
  1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5.
  2. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- D. **DAVID'S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING\***
  1. David finally vanquished Jebus (Jerusalem), 2 Sam 5:6-10, where he had taken Goliath's head, 1 Sam 17:54
  2. David retrieved the Ark from its 'wanderings', 6:1-19; tragically wrongly, 1 Chron 15:2; then rightly & joyfully
  3. Now David wants to build a permanent form for the

Tabernacle. His son Solomon will build Temple.

- ★ 4. God chose **Abraham** to bless all nations. Now He chose **David's** line to bring forth the King of all nations
- 5. David fulfilled his oath to Jonathan through his son Mephibosheth, 9:1-13. \*ALL OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.
- E. The Ammonites incited war, but Israel won, 10:1-19.
  - 1. 2 Sam 11, battle with Ammon resumed.
  - 2. David stayed in Jerusalem, as he did in 10:7
  - 3. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and tried to cover her pregnancy. Unsuccessful, he had Uriah killed.
  - 4. He married Bathsheba. She gave birth.
  - 5. 2 Sam 12, David abominates the villain of Nathan's story. Gotcha. "You are the man!"
  - 6. Now violence would visit David's household, v 10
  - 7. Family members would turn against him. His wives would be publicly taken, v 11.
  - 8. David confessed. God forgave Him and passed over His rightful death sentence, but the child, now an occasion of enemy scorn, would be taken in death- *not* as a cohort of David's sin, which was the Deut 24:16 stipulation.

**Kid-speak:** When David sinned against God, did God forgive him? Yes. But would bad things keep happening to David because of what he did? Yes!! It's a bad idea to sin!

- F. 2 Sam 12:15-23, David will plead for the child's life until its life is gone. Then he will get on about his business.

Outline:

- I. God afflicts the baby, 12:15
- II. David mourns and pleads for the child, refusing food, 12:16-17
- III. The child dies. David's servants fear for him, but he stops his mourning, 12:18-20
- IV. The servants fear the child's death may bring harmful grief, 12:21
- V. But spiritually-minded David (back in his right mind) acts according to the reality of the living and the dead, 12:22-23
- G. 2 Sam 12:15, "And Nathan went to his house"

1. Meaning he left David to deal with his own troubled house
  2. Nathan had done what he was supposed to do
    - a. Likewise, the main role of **EVANGELISM** is just as a messenger
    - b. We have bad news and good news. We're not there to fix anything, but to tell about God doing so.
- H. "And Yahweh afflicted the boy"
1. God takes direct responsibility for afflicting the child with an incurable (man can't cure it) illness
    - a. Same word in Jer 17:9 of man's heart
    - b. God struck us with death, meaning He stuck us with the death (separation from Him) we had chosen (and still choose and love, until regeneration)
  2. If a person had hurt the child, the person would bear responsibility
  3. In this case, God makes the child sick to prevent public dishonor to His reputation (name), v 14
    - a. Showing that God not only rescues us from enemy territory; He puts us on His side against His enemies
    - b. We're combatants who, like Him, are kind to our foes
    - c. But who will defend the truth against them, including our identity (which, in Israel's case, included military protection of her borders)
  4. David is a guilty human party in harming this child
    - a. God can and does afflict without our sin connected to it, simply His general discipline
    - b. Bathsheba is guilty, like David, but David more so

**Kid-speak:** God made David's baby sick because of what David had done. Whenever we get sick, does that mean we (or mom or dad) did something bad to deserve sickness? No.

- I. "Whom the wife of Uriah bore to David"
1. She's still called Uriah's wife. David's marriage to her was still wrong
  2. Could this marriage succeed as it otherwise might have? A good question.
    - a. They were not doomed to *more* slipups
    - b. But there was no ignoring where they'd come from

2 Sam 12:16 And David **sought God** for the child. And David

fasted a fast, and went in and stayed the night, and he lay on the earth.

- J. “Went in” apparently means entering the child’s room. He spent the night there.
- K. “Sought God,” If anything could ameliorate the just punishment, seeking God could
  - 1. Spiritually, seeking God is what brings REVIVAL: when God grants us a spirit of earnest, continuous seeking of Him
    - a. Deut 4:29; 1 Chron 16:10-11; 2 Chron 7:14, 11:16, **15:4** (once we perceive the trouble of our overriding fleshliness), 15; 20:4; Ezra 8:21-23; Hos 3:5; 5:6, 15; 7:10
    - b. Ps 24:6; 27:4, 8; 40:16; 69:6; 70:4; 83:16; 105:3-4...
    - c. Prov 28:5; Isa 45:19; 51:1; 65:1; Jer 29:13; 50:4; Dan 9:3
    - d. Amos 8:12; Zeph 1:6; 2:3; Zech 8:21-22; Mal 3:1
  - 3. But David sought God for one particular
    - a. Anything wrong with seeking wholeheartedly for one thing? No, that’s “supplication,” Philip 4:6
    - b. Emphasizing one request must be in accord with seeking God’s kingdom and righteousness first. Here, repentant David was newly balanced.

**Kid-speak:** Are we supposed to ask God stuff like we really, really mean it? Yes. Mostly, that we will follow His ways more, and that He will help us.

- L. “Fasted a fast,” the verb and a noun
  - 1. The norm is doubling the verb. That occurs only once with fasting, Zech 7:5b
  - 2. This doubling likewise depicts great concentration of soul
  - 3. The Hebrew word for “fast” means “to cover,” as in the mouth. If there are levels of fasting, we’d think this was a very complete one. Esth 4:16 represents the most comprehensive kind of fast. This one may be the same.
  - 4. Is fasting just ‘jumping through hoops’?
    - a. Many forego fasting: “God is ‘not that kind of God’”
    - b. Good luck with God not being whom He says
- M. “Lay on the earth”
  - 1. Only 2 Sam 13:31 uses “lay” and “earth” the same way
  - 2. No bed, apparently no blanket beneath (or on top?)
  - 3. ‘Let’s get elemental’. Here’s what I came from: dirt. Peel

everything else back. Here I am God, as basic and humbled as I'm able. Receive and help my humility.

4. Is there *anything* that would break **us** down to this point? Should be. Revival. (Or are we shielded, like Job at first?)

**2 Sam 12:17** And the elders of his house rose up toward him, to raise him up from the earth. But he was not willing; and he shared no bread with them.

N. As back in 3:35. This time went beyond a sundown.

1. Nothing evil in the servants' attempts
2. Ideally, *perhaps*, they might have joined him, but administration of a big house is demanding
- (3. "Shared" is *bara*, the word for "create" in Gen 1:1)

**Kid-speak:** How sad was David that his baby was sick? He didn't eat any food for seven days!

**2 Sam 12:18** And it happened on the seventh day, the boy died. And David's servants feared to tell him that the boy was dead, for they said, "Look, while the boy was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not listen to our voice. And how do we say to him, 'The boy is dead?' Then he may do harm."

O. The seventh day from the child's birth? We're not sure, but at least from the seventh day of the child's sickness.

P. A reasonable fear on the part of David's servants. He's already at an extreme end of the behavior spectrum. How could news of the child's death not exacerbate that?

**2 Sam 12:19** And David saw that his servants were whispering among themselves. And David discerned that the boy was dead. And David said to his servants, "Is the boy dead?" And they said, "He is dead."

Q. David picks up the signals that the child has died. He asks, and they verify.

**2 Sam 12:20** And David rose up from the earth and bathed and anointed. Then he changed his clothing, and he came into the house of Yahweh, and he prostrated *himself*.

Then he came to his house, and commanded, and they brought bread for him; and he ate.

- R. The fasting and specific seeking of God were now at a complete end, ushering in a thorough transition
- S. He came before God to acknowledge God's answer
  - 1. If we ask God to send a hurricane away and He doesn't, we'd better worship all the same
  - 2. There will likely be significant "no's" in this life, 2 Cor 12:9
- T. A seemingly strange name for the tent housing only the Ark. But that's where God said he'd dwell with them.

**2 Sam 12:21** And his servants said to him, "What *is* this thing you have done? You fasted and wept because of the living boy, yet when the boy is dead, you have risen up and have eaten food?"

- U. The servants weren't quite right on one thing. Though "living" boy was true, "dying" boy would have been more to the point.
  - 1. That's why David was fasting and weeping (we now learn he wept as well). The child was departing this world. Perhaps God would 'change His mind' and save him.
  - 2. God could 'change His mind', as David knew
    - a. When the conditions for a declaration of God change, it is not necessarily sensible for the declaration to stand
    - b. David knew that his own bad behavior had brought on the child's sickness. If he expressed repentance before God, God might still reverse His declaration.

**2 Sam 12:22** And he said, "While the boy was alive, I fasted and wept. For I said, Who knows? Yahweh may be gracious to me and the boy *may stay* alive."

- V. A good rationale seeking God for *anything* that can only occur while we are still alive...

**Kid-speak:** David was hoping God would change His mind about taking the baby's life. *Can* God change His mind? Yes. But does God already know when He's going to 'change His mind'? Yes.

1. ... A good impetus for sharing the Gospel
2. Col 4:5-6, “redeeming the time...”

2 Sam 12:23 “And now he has died. Why this- me fasting? Am I able to bring him back again? I *am* going to him, but he will not return to me.”

W. A particularly profound (though simple) way to contrast the state of **the living** and **the dead**

1. “I am going (participle, in the process of going) to him
2. But he will not return to me.” *We’re* all headed in *their* direction. None of them are headed back in our direction.
3. Eccl 9:3-6, 10; Col 3:17, 23; 4:5-6
4. (A clear statement against reincarnation, by the way)

X. Does this teach that all children who die ‘automatically’ go to Heaven?

1. Some would say that the passage only suggests that all children of *believers* are automatically accepted by God
2. However, all the passage is necessarily saying is that the child went to the place of the dead (that would be Sheol for David), and that David would be joining him there (as all men will)
3. *Could* all young children who die go to Heaven?
  - a. Yes, but it would be by the same means as you or me. They would have to have their sins and sinfulness washed in Christ’s blood.
  - b. Can God do that for all of them? Looks like he did it for John the baptizer, Lk 1:15, 44.
  - c. But it looks like he *hadn’t* done it yet for Jacob or Esau, Gen 25:22; nor does it generally, Ps 58:3.
4. If Spirit-filled John could *rejoice* at Christ’s presence, can unregenerate children *recoil* at His presence?
  - a. God, of course, will not do unjustly. Only His haters will be punished.
  - b. But just because *we* can’t communicate with infants in language, does that limit real interactions between them and God *without* language?

**Kid-speak:** If a baby who was just born dies, does the Bible say the baby will go to Heaven? No, not unless Jesus’ blood washes away the baby’s sins. *Can* God do that for a baby? Yes!

- Y. We see David's genius often. No more so than here.
1. Not that he's trying to be philosophical. It's just true.
  2. For the spiritually-minded, spiritual reality takes precedence, including the realities of the living and the dead.
  3. David had mourned the passing of Saul (chap 1), Abner (ch 3). But there is no inconsistency with his *not* mourning the child's death.
    - a. He didn't have occasion to intercede that Saul or Abner might live
    - b. In this situation, he's been told the child will die. With that knowledge, he focused his mourning correctly.
  4. Likewise with us, we know people are going to die. We don't know when. Col 4:5-6, "redeeming the time..."
    - a. How can we not be urgent with the only news that can save them from eternal torment?
    - b. May God grant us a sense of urgency. May God revive His assembly. Rev 3:2.

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")  
 Could my weakness be a better connection to spiritual reality?

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?**  
**How have I lost righteousness?**  
 Do I plead with God for *anything*?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
 I will seek a spirit of *supplication* in prayer.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**  
 O God, let my prayers deepen, matching reality.

Wrap-up: The "pride of life" is a continuous wave that carries all but the best swimmers into the shore of worldliness. Daily life tells us, "I'm all there is." Only the Spirit-groomed learn our real place in Heaven, Col 3:1-3, from whence comes the spirit of supplication, Eph 6:18, remodeling our view and approach to daily life.