

# When Desire Has Conceived

## 2 Samuel 11:1 - 3

Nutshell: Here we begin an unusually deep, in-progress exposé of the inception and progress of sin. We see that sin can undo the best of us. Sin is *ever* lurking. Only the *ever*-vigilant will escape its traps.

I. Context: Israel's war with the Ammonites.

II. Text

2 Sam 11:1 And it was at the turn of the year- at the time of messengers going out- that David sent Joab and his servants with him, plus [and] all Israel; and they were undoing the sons of Ammon. And they laid siege to Rabbah. But David was staying in Jerusalem.

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** was apostate *man's* version of king. God previewed *His* version via **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
- D. David becoming king
  1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2. 2 Sam 2:12-32: trouble between Judah and Israel (the 9 northern tribes) begins.
  2. After Ishbosheth's assassination, **Israel's** elders anointed

David KING, 2 Sam 5:1-5

E. 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
  - a. David rebuffed 2 Philistine invasions, 5:17-25
  - b. David retrieved the Ark from its 'wanderings', 6:1-19; first, ignoring God's instructions, leading to a death, then properly, with great joy
2. Now David wants to build a permanent form for the Tabernacle. This will be the Temple, 7:1-3
  - a. God corrected David: "I'm building *you* a house, 7:4-11
  - b. Then, "Your son will build the Temple," 7:12-13
- \* 3. God chose *Abraham* to the people through whom all nations would be blessed. Now He chose *David* as father of the King to bless the nations, 7:14-17. David gratefully received this blessing, 7:18-29.
4. David secured Israel's borders, gaining materials for the Temple, 8:7-14. His govt was "just and moral," 8:15-18
5. David fulfilled his oath to Jonathan through his son Mephibosheth, 9:1-13. \*ALL OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.

F. David sent comfort to Ammonite King Hanun over his dad's death. Hanun mistreated David's messengers, then hired 4 additional forces vs. David. David sent Joab, 10:1-7.

1. Ammon+ hemmed in Israel's elite forces; Joab had to split his forces in both directions, 10:8-10
2. Joab gave a stirring speech, and Israel won the day, 11-19

**Kid-speak:** Last time, God's people, the Israelites, beat the Ammonites in one battle. Now the Israelites were going to have one big war to keep the Ammonites from being able to fight them anymore.

G. 2 Sam 11:1, The battle with Ammon is continued. They had submitted to David back in 8:12, but now, having sought war, they needed to be decisively defeated.

H. 11:1, "And it was at the turn of the year," hence, both spring and the beginning of the Hebrew calendar year, Nisan, our Mar/Apr

I. "At the time of messengers going out"

1. Only YLT and LSV keep the Masoretic text's "messengers" (but several commentators do as well).

Every other translation goes with “kings”

- a. The two words are one vowel-pointing different
  - b. And 1 Chron 20:1 has “kings”
2. But “messengers” makes sense. Kings sent messengers with peace terms or terms of surrender. The words “messenger” and “sent” are theme words in this chap, 11- v 1, 4, 19, 22, 25, 27, so this is our first piece in that thematic thread
- J. “That David sent Joab and his servants with him, plus all Israel; and they were *in the process of* undoing the sons of Ammon”
1. Did David err here, since 1 Chron 20:1 tells us that this was the time of year when kings went out?
  2. Probably not, since we just saw David send Joab in the previous battle, and we inferred no evil there, 10:7

**Kid-speak:** Did David make a mistake by staying at Jerusalem while Joab led his army to battle? Probably not. That’s what happened in the battle before this one too.

3. Uriah will model for us a warrior’s proper mentality while Israel was at war. *That’s* where David slipped.
    - a. And David may not have slipped *until* the opportunity presented itself
    - b. But it was *because* David was not sufficiently united in purpose with God’s army that he became off his guard
    - c. Eph 6:18 makes “all perseverance and supplication for all saints” part of our *my* armor. I.e., If I don’t pray for *your* armor, *my* armor gets chinks
- K. “And they laid siege to Rabbah” (“Big” or “Plenteous”)
1. The Ammonites have retreated to their main city
  2. The Israelites attacked the city
- L. “But David stayed in Jerusalem.” Again, he did the same thing initially in the prior battle, 10:7

2 Sam 11:2 And it was at evening-time, and David rose from upon his bed, and he walked back and forth on the roof of the king’s house. And from upon the roof, he saw a woman bathing, and the woman [*was*] of very lovely appearance,

M. “And it was at the time of evening”

1. The previous verse had “at the time of”- “messengers”
  - a. Our chronicler focuses us on set times
  - b. Maybe he is warning of the need for vigilance when our life begins operating with regularity
2. It is either night or twilight. 1 Thess 5:7 makes evening a time for special precaution.
  - a. Man as sinner is a hider
  - b. Our sneaky instincts gravitate to the cover of darkness
3. But sins committed at night are still fully our own choices

**Kid-speak:** Houses back then had flat roofs that were made to walk on. David got up when the sun was going down and walked around on his roof.

- N. “David rose from upon his couch/ bed”
1. Ps 119:62 speaks of rising in the middle of the night and giving thanks because of God’s righteous judgments
  2. On this occasion David allows sleeplessness (if night) to become a distraction rather than a focus
- O. “And he walked back and forth on the roof of the king’s house”
1. This doesn’t rule out him praying and meditating in his pacing, but if he was, he was soon to leave off with it
  2. ‘Idle hands are the Devil’s playthings’.
- P. “And from upon the roof, he saw a woman bathing”
1. She may have been on the roof of her house, but he may have seen into her courtyard
    - a. This was probably not a full-on bath
    - b. And she probably assumed no one was watching
    - c. If it was dark, she had lighting: candles- whatever
  2. However, if David had line-of-sight to her, she likewise could see that the king’s roof was sometimes inhabited
    - a. Modesty would have dictated that she avoid that line-of-sight while bathing
    - b. But people seen on the king’s roof may have been a very rare occasion. Plus, she may have felt that the (oncoming) cover of darkness aided her propriety.

**Kid-speak:** David saw a pretty lady when he was up on his roof, and he noticed her. Does this sound like it’s going to end badly? Yup, you’re right.

- Q. “And the woman was of very lovely appearance”
1. “Lovely” is the word “good,” but in this form, it is only used to describe women (8x), e.g., Gen 26:7; Esth 2:7.
  2. 1 Sam 25:1 stands out, though, in not describing the woman’s beauty, but her intelligence! Her beauty is described in the succeeding phrase.
    - a. Making us long once again for Abigail as the best bride for David
    - b. But her circumstance disqualified her from raising a son to the king
  3. Our v is the only time that the adverb “very” is appended to “lovely.” Esther was lovely “and beautiful.”
  4. But perhaps the Shulamite is portrayed as the most beautiful woman in the Bible, since all the other pretty ladies conceded her superiority, Song of Sol 6:9
  5. Is God mindful of the loveliness of His creature, woman? Or is it *we* who attach the idea of loveliness to her?
    - a. The above verses are Spirit-inspired descriptions, not quoting people’s opinions. Yes, God knows what He made.
    - b. The question is: Does God bear any blame for males’ wrongful attraction to women?

**Kid-speak:** We said the lady David saw was pretty. Well, she was *real* pretty! But was it her fault that David liked her too much? No! Well, she should have made extra sure that nobody could see her when she was cleaning herself. But still, David should have just looked away.

6. Consider: God knowingly made Lucifer beautiful, which beauty was his undoing, Ezek 28:17. God *could* have with held this beauty.
  - a. But the verse says that Lucifer’s *heart* was exalted. He could have chosen to exalt God even more highly in his heart, but he fell in love with himself.
  - b. Similarly, men are responsible for how they channel their perceptions about women
7. Ultimately, all earthly beauty fades and is therefore “empty,” as the world itself is, Prov 31:30
  - a. “Love is patient,” not deceived by the moment, but looking longer term

- b. Wisdom compares what's immediate with what's to come

2 Sam 11:3 and David sent and inquired about the woman, and he said, "Is this not Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

R. The plot thickens!

- 1. David should not have inquired. Temptation already had an iron boot in the door.

- 2. Perhaps he hoped she was unmarried, but his desire was already past the obstacle of a possible husband, as we'll see

S. "David sent" a messenger "and inquired about the woman"

- 1. David would have had to specify the house to his messenger, perhaps from the roof itself

- 2. Did David possibly choose a messenger he perceived to be more pliable? Less likely to ask questions?

- 3. But certainly he had chosen his messengers to be wise! ...?

T. "And he [the messenger] said, 'Isn't this Bath-sheba?'"

- 1. Bath-sheba, "daughter of an oath"

- 2. Perhaps as Hannah had promised Samuel to the Lord

- 3. Already God was warning David! She is the daughter of an oath! She is more special than her mere appearance! She is meant to be treated specially.

- a. Sexual desire tempts us to interpret "special" according to our own desires

- b. God provides us one "special" person in marriage, 'til death do us part

**Kid-speak:** David found out that the lady's name was Bath-sheba, which means "daughter of a promise." That probably means that her parents had promised her to God, a lot like your mom and dad did with you! Anyway, David should have respected that.

- c. David had less excuse! God will tell him in 12:8 that He had given him "his lord's wives into his bosom," meaning that he could have disposed of Saul's wives as he pleased—that *besides* the wives David already had

- d. I.e., David could have 'dignified' himself with wives as noble as former kings' wives (note God's concession), had he desired. He had no need to take the wife of another

4. Note that the messenger was trying to warn David too. Not, “This is...”, but “Isn’t this...?”, suggesting that David inquire no further. And he gave even further warning!

U. “Daughter of Eliam,” meaning “God of the people”

1. This name warned David as well! “The people” were not David’s to use selfishly or for his own glory. They were God’s people. And David knew this, 7:23. But what we know we can suppress.
2. 1 Chron 3:5 tells us that her dad was also called Ammiel, which is simply the reverse, “People of God.” Beautiful alternate name, eh?
  - a. Because God is God of the people, *they* are the people of God
  - b. Bathsheba’s other name was “Bath-shua,” daughter of bounty
3. Eliam/Ammiel was also the name of one of David’s 30 mighty men, 2 Sam 23:34. Uriah is definitely on the list, 2 Sam 23:39.
4. If Bath-sheba was daughter to one of David’s elite soldiers, David certainly should have honored her accordingly. But he had already claimed her in his heart.

V. “Wife of Uriah”

1. And here was the dead end to David’s inquiry. But he plowed right through it, to his own and the kingdom’s wreckage.

**Kid-speak:** When David found out that Bath-sheba was married, what she he have done? Said, “OK, then. I can’t marry her. I’ll pray that God will bless her and her husband.”

2. Uriah was one of David’s 30 (37) mighty men, 2 Sam 23:39
  - a. David must have known him and trusted him
  - b. He might have even known Uriah’s house, but was hoping that the woman was a servant or sister
3. The tenth Word of the Ten Words, in Deut 5:21 is, “And you shall not desire your neighbor’s wife.” -first on the list!
  - ☞ a. Appreciation of feminine attractiveness, whether of outward or inward beauty, is part of human experience
  - b. But a male in general, and a married man in particular, must take the reins of this appreciation and head them off into the *covered* corral (meaning *not* to ponder) of Acknowledged Beauty Only. Acknowledge it and move

on.

**Kid-speak:** Which commandment would David be breaking if he took Bath-sheba (even if she wanted him to)? “Don’t commit adultery.” That means, Don’t take somebody else’s wife (or husband). Does that sound like a pretty serious command from God? Oh yes, it is!

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”)  
If a person wounded you, they did it against God’s commands.

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?  
How have I lost righteousness?**  
How strictly do I honor the 7th Word of the Ten Words?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
I will refocus on the grave dishonor and harm brought about by adultery.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**  
All of God’s boundaries are real, not artificial. His rules all protect vital aspects of our humanity *and* our relation to Him.

Wrap-up: James 1:14-15 marks the stages by which temptation progresses to sin and its consequences. His main point is that sin is produced solely by us. In fact, that’s the context of 1:17- Everything in the universe *besides sin* is a product of God.

Yet temptation is the setting in which our approval before God is wrought, 1:12. Thus, God intends to use our own wrong inclinations to train our new senses. The wrong inclinations will always arise. As we mature, so does their right to increase, 1 Cor 10:13.

Our key in this battle? **The Word**, James 1:18-21. The Word, having birthed us, shows us our sin and empowers our laying it aside.