

General Church Education



Nathan's Parable

2 Samuel 12:1-23

Lesson 27

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is Our King

For ages 10-11

Nathan's Parable

2 Samuel 12:1-23

Teacher Background

David consulted the Lord in all that he did. However this story begins a new chapter in David's life that appears to be the beginning of his downfall. While David's men were away fighting, David saw Bathsheba bathing on her roof. Overcome by her beauty, David called for her and committed adultery. When she became pregnant he tried to implicate her husband, Uriah, a soldier. But Uriah was a good man and would not lie with his wife while his companions were at war. So David arranged for him to be killed in battle and married Bathsheba. The Lord sent Nathan to tell David a parable about a man who stole a poor man's lamb, and when David registered horror, Nathan told him he was that man. David acknowledged his sin, but could not avoid its terrible consequences. Therefore, his son died.

In his capacity as king, David represented the Lord as a hero of war. However, his actions in this story show that David did not always act from the Lord, and sometimes acted from his own interests, and for the sake of personal honor and power.

Focus Points

- After David committed adultery the Lord sent Nathan to tell him a parable.
- David reacted angrily to Nathan's parable and learned the parable was about himself.
- David acknowledged his sin and repented, but the child who was born died.

Readings from the Writings

"By "David" in the Word the Lord in respect to Divine truth is represented.... The Lord is represented especially by king David, because David had so much care of the matters of the church, and also wrote the Psalms." *Apocalypse Explained* 205

"No one can know the nature of the chastity of marriage except the person who shuns as a sin the lasciviousness of adultery.... The truth is that the lasciviousness of adultery and the chastity of marriage stand toward each other exactly as do hell and heaven, and that the lasciviousness of adultery makes hell in a person, and the chastity of marriage makes heaven. But the chastity of marriage exists solely with the person who shuns as sin the lasciviousness of adultery." *Doctrine of Life* 76

When someone we love dies we can say they are in the hand of the Lord, that we will see them again after our own death, and be with them in a life of joy. What person who has loved his married partner, his infants and children, does not say when they are dying ... that they are in the hand of God, and that he will see them again? See *Conjugal Love* 28

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

"You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14)

Projects and Activities (see back of lesson for answers)

David and Bathsheba Multiple Choice

Read questions and circle the best answer for each one.

The Ten Commandments

David disobeyed the Ten Commandments. Like David, we need to know the commandments. Decorate the Ten Commandments to hang where you can see them.

Song: The Ten Commandments

Listen to the song and sing along. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-ten-commandments/>

Additional Project and Activity Choices

Nathan Rebukes David Readers Theater

Read and act out the story using a prepared script. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/play-nathan-rebukes-david-2-samuel12.pdf>

Discussion: Learning from Your Mistakes

Everyone makes mistakes. The most important thing about mistakes is what we do when we realize we've made one. David realized he had made a huge mistake and was truly sorry. In what ways can we respond when we make mistakes? What can make a mistake right? How can the Lord help us when we make a mistake?

Nathan's Parable

2 Samuel 12:1-23

Vocabulary

mourn—to feel very sad or show sadness when someone dies

displeased—upset, not pleased

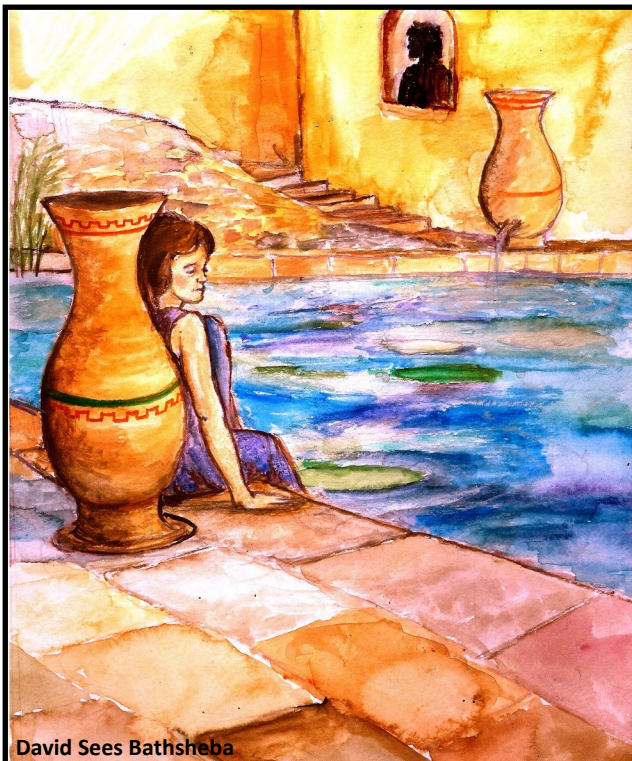
ewe—female lamb

King Saul and king David were very different. David obeyed the Lord, but Saul did not. That was why the Lord took the kingdom away from Saul and gave it to David.

David was a hero. He was a successful and powerful king. But in this story his life changed in a sad way. He allowed himself to want something so much that he was willing to break the Lord's commandments to have it. As you read the story, think about the commandments he broke.

David Desires Bathsheba

David saw a beautiful woman named Bathsheba and wanted her for himself. Bathsheba was married to Uriah the Hittite, but knowing that did not stop David from having Bathsheba brought to him. David knew that the Lord had made him successful. He knew the commandments. But when he wanted Bathsheba, he did not hesitate to break the commandments to get her. David was with another man's wife as though she was his own wife. So he committed adultery.



David Sees Bathsheba

Next, David used his kingly power to hide what he had done. He arranged for Bathsheba's husband Uriah to be sent into battle, and placed at the very front of the fight, where he would be killed.

Bathsheba mourned for her husband. When her mourning ended, David sent for her. She became his wife and they had a son.

“But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.” (2 Samuel 11:27)

Nathan's Parable

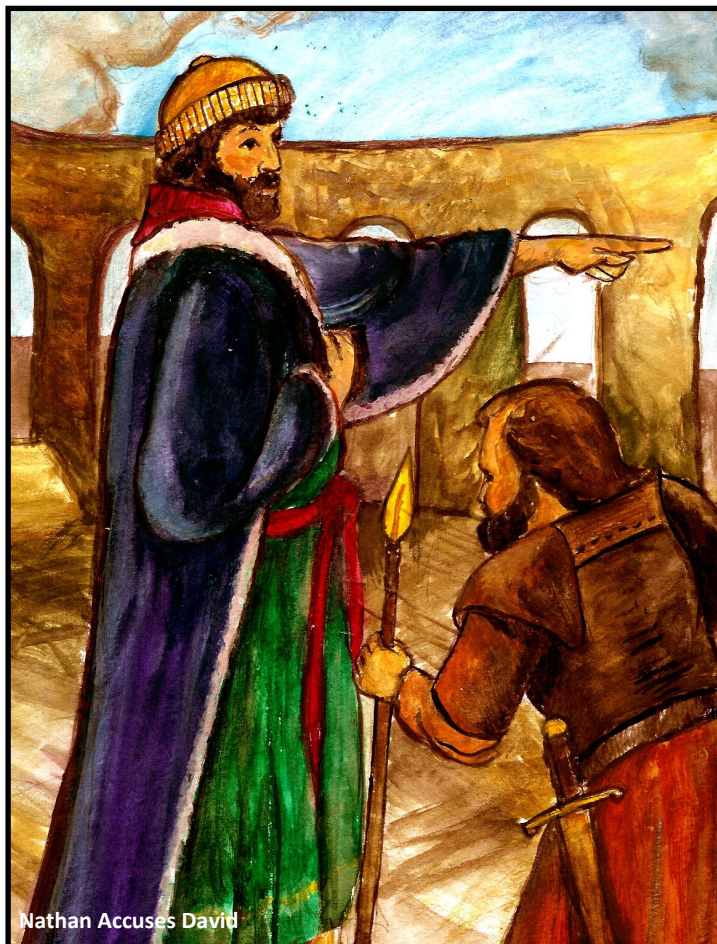
The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David. Nathan told David a story that seemed to be about other people but was really a message for him. As you read the parable, think about what the Lord was really telling David.

“There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb....

And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.” (2 Samuel 12:1-4)

Who do you think the Lord meant by the “rich man?” Who was the “poor man?” Who was the “ewe lamb” that the rich man took? David didn't figure out that the parable was really about him. He was very angry with the man in the story, and judged him harshly. The man who had done this thing must surely die! David must have been shocked at Nathan's next words:

“You are the man! Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in His sight?” (2 Samuel 12:7, 9)



Which commandments did David break by taking another man's wife and killing her husband? Did he steal? Did he commit murder? Did he covet his neighbor's wife? Did he bear false witness? Did he commit adultery?

David did all these things and broke other commandments too. We are to honor the Lord, our Heavenly Father. David did not honor the Lord when he disobeyed Him.

David's Regret

If Nathan had accused David directly, he might have made excuses for his behavior. However, David could see that the man in the parable had done a terrible thing. When he realized it was a picture of what he had done, he could see it was evil. He was deeply sorry, and the Lord forgave him. Psalm 51 shows David's regret:

"I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight." (Psalm 51:3, 4)

David's Choice

In spite of the fact that David felt sorry, his actions brought hard consequences. As the Lord had promised, David and Bathsheba's child became ill. For seven days David mourned and fasted and lay on the ground all night. But when the child died David stopped grieving. This surprised his servants, who expected him to be even more sad!



David's Explanation

David had hoped that mourning and fasting might soften the Lord so that He would let the child live. But the Lord had spoken through Nathan, and Nathan warned David about the problems he would face because he had done such an evil thing. As a result the child died. Read David's words carefully.

"While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child might live? But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.'" (2 Samuel 12:22-23)

We can see that David hoped that mourning and fasting might change the Lord's mind. David's final words are especially interesting. They make us think that David believed in heaven and thought that he would join his son in heaven when he died. Both the realization that the Lord would follow through on His words, and the belief that he would see his son again help us understand why David stopped mourning, got up, and ate.

Parables

Each time we read a parable, the Lord wants us to think about what we can learn from it. Nathan's parable might make us ask ourselves if we ever want to please ourselves when we know it will hurt others. Even small things that we do and say selfishly can make us feel sad. We can come to see that the Lord is really talking to us through the parables in His Word.

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“You shall not commit adultery.” (Exodus 20:14)

Projects and Activities (answers are at the back of this lesson)

Choose one or two.

David and Bathsheba Multiple Choice

Read questions and circle the best answer for each one.

The Ten Commandments

David disobeyed the Ten Commandments. Like David, we need to know the commandments. Decorate a copy of the Ten Commandments to hang where you can see them.

Song: The Ten Commandments

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David and Bathsheba Multiple Choice

2 Samuel 12

Circle the best answer for each question.

1. Who was Bathsheba?
 - a. the wife of Joab
 - b. the wife of Uriah
 - c. the daughter of Saul
2. What did David notice about Bathsheba?
 - a. she was very beautiful
 - b. she was very intelligent
 - c. she was very good
3. How was David responsible for the death of Bathsheba's husband?
 - a. he gave orders that Uriah was to fight at the front
 - b. he put poison in his bread
 - c. he told Joab to kill him and make it look accidental
4. What happened to Bathsheba after her husband died?
 - a. she went into mourning for the rest of her life
 - b. she went to live in her father's house
 - c. she became David's wife
5. Who was Nathan?
 - a. commander of David's army
 - b. Bathsheba's uncle
 - c. a prophet
6. How did David feel after hearing Nathan's story?
 - a. sorry for the poor man
 - b. angry at the wealthy man
 - c. sad that the lamb died
7. What happened to Bathsheba and David's son?
 - a. he became ill and died
 - b. he was cast out of David's house
 - c. he became strong and healthy
8. How did David feel about what he had done?
 - a. he was so ashamed that he hid himself for three months
 - b. he didn't think that he had done anything wrong
 - c. he was very sorry and asked the Lord's forgiveness

The Ten Commandments

And God spoke all these words, saying:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

You shall have no other gods before My face.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Answers

Lesson 27

David and Bathsheba Multiple Choice

1. b, 2. a, 3. a, 4. c, 5. c, 6. b, 7. a, 8. c.