



... Uriah the Hittite died also...

Part One – David the Leader – or not?

1 And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. (2 Sam 11:1)

During the days of David the King, it was customary for the King to lead his armies into battle. This had the favorable effect of reducing any war-mongering on the part of Kings who valued their lives highly. It also set the example that every good leader will lead his men in battle and not merely SEND them to perform a task which he will not perform. God leaders are always men or women who lead, and not follow. Perhaps the term itself (LEADER) answers the nature of those who should be so-called. Moreover, it is the inherent DUTY of a leader to lead his men into battle or on dangerous paths. Anyone who sends men on missions wherein he will not go has no sense of duty or responsibility.

At the proper season for Kings to go into battle, King David sent his men to go against Ammon, but did not accompany them as was the custom. Instead, he remained in Jerusalem. If we examine closely the trend of events, we might suspect that David had some ulterior motive for remaining behind in Jerusalem. One thing is certain: David failed to perform his duty as King! Breaches of duty seldom fail to lead to more serious breaches of righteousness. What are the attributes and nature of DUTY?

The way of duty is often rugged, but it is always royal. It is the king's highway. It is the way to promotion and power. It gives dignity to life from the moment we take our first step in it. O royalty of youth! Walk in the way of duty - the way of Christian duty, manly and womanly duty, patriotic duty. It is the way to your coronation." Charles C. Albertson "Duty is the most sublime word in our language. Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less. - General Robert E. Lee

It is quite clear that King David did not perform his royal duty on this one occasion, and with what result? David sank into the egregious sins of adultery and murder. As we have learned from Psalm 1:1, sin is a DIRECTION that constantly spirals downward at an accelerating speed. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

(Psalms 1:1)

Let us examine the behavior of David that led, first to voyeurism, then adultery, and finally murder:

1. *And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed.* Why did David arise in the evening, after retiring to bed, to walk on the roof? Perhaps it was for the same reason that he remained behind in Jerusalem?
2. . . . *and walked upon the roof of the king's house.* (vs 2) His men are off at war, and David rises from his bed and walks on the roof. One wonders if David has done the same thing before when Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, was home. But Uriah is no longer home because he has been sent to do battle with the Ammonites, but David remains behind. Some may accuse me of reading too much into the text, but human nature is a universally known mystery; I have not survived 72 years upon this earth by keeping my eyes closed. David would have fared better if he did, indeed, keep his eyes closed.
3. . . . *and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.* (vs 2) Perhaps this was the particularly time of evening that Bathsheba bathed in her court. It should be noted that the palace parapets were in plain view above her garden, and any man standing and peering down could have been well in view. It would seem to me that this may have been a collaborative sin.
4. *And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?* (vs 3) If he did not know before, David now knows that this woman is married to Uriah. But why send and inquire? This is one step more toward a terrible series of deadly sins. Our lives, too, are measured by such breaches in duty to God that leads to sin.
5. *And David sent messengers, and took her* (vs 4) The descent into the abyss accelerates, doesn't it. It is more serious to act upon ungodly desires than to be tempted with them.
6. . . . *and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.* (vs 4) David's lapse of duty has now resulted in the sin of adultery the punishment of which was stoning. I would say that David began with a small sin that gave birth to a greater - as is the usual case. All along, there is no record that Bathsheba shunned the approaches of David, and she did not share with her husband, Uriah, what David had done.
7. *And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.* (vs 5) Can you imagine the chill that came over David's countenance at this news! As we say in the Army, *So, what are you going to do NOW, Lieutenant?* David's failing to accompany his armies has now led to a fatal sin. It will be the catalyst for much misery for David and for his people Israel. So what is the FIRST idea that comes to David?
8. *And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.* So will David bare his conscience and confess his wrong to Uriah? Absolutely NOT! David has something less DUTIFUL in mind.
9. *And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy*

house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king. (vs 7-8) I am sure that the reader has discerned David's motives here. David, more than anything else, was trying to cover his sins. There is no cover for sins but the Blood of Christ through repentance. Uriah does not fall for David's carefully thought-out plans. Sins are much less cooperative about being covered up than they are at being committed at first instant.

10. *But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house. And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house? And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.* (vs 9-11) Though a Hittite, Uriah seems to have a higher sense of duty than does his king. He refuses to go home and sleep with his wife, Bathsheba, to cover David's sin.
11. *And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.* (vs 12-13) Perhaps if David can get Uriah drunk, he will then weaken to go to the bed of his wife. But Uriah is too honorable for such an option. One reason that a nation may be considered righteous is because it is difficult to get away with sin when those around us refuse to cooperate in covering it up.
12. *And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.* (vs 14-17) Please note that David's beginning lapse of duty may have seemed a small indiscretion, it did not remain so. It continued to escalate from indiscretion, to adultery, and finally to an egregious murder.

That is how Satan will use his victims who fall for merely a look at sin, then a walk with sin, and finally make their home with sin. The terrible cost to David will be the subject of our next devotion on Notable Firsts of the Bible.

We are often assured by ministers that sin has no power - all we must do to set all things right is to repent of our sins and all will be well. While this is partially true, it does not account for the full truth of sin. Sin affects us deeply, and it affects all of those around us. We may hurt someone we love by our infidelity or hard words, and we may repent and find forgiveness, but the scars remain.

David and Bathsheba will bring an innocent life into the world, but, owing to the sin committed, that infant will not grow to run and play in gardens of delight as do other children. Because of David's sin, the child is taken in the tender days of its birth. We shall see what other scars the sin of David leave to fester as well in our next study.