

# Who Really Has the Power?

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[0:00] And the Lord sent Nathan to David.

He came to him and said to him, Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him.

But he took of the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. And he said to Nathan, As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die.

And he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity.

Nathan said to David, You are the man.

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah.

[1:45] And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the Lord to do what is evil in his sight?

You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.

Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the sun.

For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun. David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.

And Nathan said to David, The Lord also has put away your sin. You shall not die. Nevertheless, because of this deed, you have utterly scorned the Lord.

[3:01] The child who was born to you shall die. Then Nathan went to his house. We need to recognize a simple truth.

Recorded in Numbers chapter 32 verse 23, part of it, Be sure your sin will find you out. It is a reality. We saw in chapter 11 that David had all things under control.

We saw that he was able to take Bathsheba for himself. We saw that he was able to get Uriah the Hittite.

Well, he couldn't control Uriah the Hittite, so he had to kill him off. But he was able to control that.

And if you remember from last week also the thesis, what we looked at, the main idea, the mighty king has fallen, but covers up the fall and pretends nothing has happened.

But God knows. Not only did God know, but it said at the end of chapter 11 that the thing that David did displeased the Lord. So today we're going to look at a reality who really has the power.

[4:22] And we're going to see that the Lord disciplines his sinful servants but also extends forgiveness and mercy. And we see throughout this chapter, even in the parts that we haven't read yet and we'll talk about in the following week, that the Lord both disciplines and he forgives and extends mercy.

And really those two go hand in hand as we see in Proverbs 3, verses 11 and 12. Do not despise the Lord's discipline, for the Lord reproves him whom he loves as a father the son in whom he delights.

Even the Lord's discipline is an extension of mercy. It really is. And I felt that many times, especially after the fact, maybe not during, but after the fact, I have definitely seen such great mercy in the Lord even when he has chosen to discipline me for whatever reason.

And so the Lord does discipline and the Lord does forgive and extend mercy as he does with his servant here. And so we see in this chapter, the first six verses, God's fearless representative. And this is an interesting fellow, Nathan, the prophet. We've seen him before when we looked at chapter 7. David asked him about the temple, about building the temple. And he was able to bring the word of the Lord to him.

[5:51] We see him also, if we go into 1 Kings, he also works with Solomon as king as well. And so the career of Nathan as a prophet lasted and spanned well over 20 years for quite a long time.

So this fellow, when he came to David, David knew who he was. He was not foreign to him in any way. Now, J. Vernon McGee calls this guy the bravest man in the Bible.

Just the way he presented himself, especially starting in verse 7, really, for him to be able to do that, really quite a brave guy. Now, there's a lady about two chapters later that does something, I think, just as brave with David as well.

But we'll get to that. But anyway, so he's a prophet, appears in many ways, not a fly-by-night guy in any way whatsoever. But he gives David the word of the Lord, first in a disguised parable, and then allows David to judge that parable.

And we'll see why that's important. Now, in chapter 11, we see that David was in control. And the way it was shown, in many ways, it was shown in the word sent or a derivative of the word sent.

[7:12] In chapter 11, we notice that there were 12 times this word was used. And 8 of the 12 times, David sent. It was used of David. David sent Uriah back to the battlefield.

David sent for Bathsheba to come to the temple, or to his, not the temple, his house. David sent for, you know, whatever. It may have been.

And so, there were definitely some power in there. Even Bathsheba sent word to David, or Joab sent for certain things as well, on behalf of David for the most part.

And so, the Lord did not send anything at all in chapter 11. Really, the only time the Lord was ever named was right there in that last verse of chapter 11. When we get to the first verse of chapter 12, it said, the Lord sent Nathan to David.

The Lord has taken control. Now, this was happening about a year after the beginning of chapter 11. I mean, I'm sure you can tell there was a baby born.

[8:14] Those don't take overnight, as you mothers know, being Mother's Day. Those certainly don't happen fly by night either. So, anyway, it's been over, it's been about a year around this point that the Lord has really allowed David to kind of be there.

I mean, just, you know, did David forget the fact that, oh yeah, I slept with Bathsheba and I killed her husband and I married her and all that. Now, he probably wasn't just, you know, putting it in the back of his mind.

He was probably dwelling on it. We'll get to another passage later that really gives us good inference that he was dwelling on that during that time. So, we see that the Lord sent Nathan in this case.

The Lord has taken control. We see in this parable also, this disguised parable, verses 1 through 4, we see a lot of double meaning, a lot of irony in the parable.

We see that in verse 3, the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb which he had bought and he brought it up and, you know, he would, you know, lie in his arms, you know, slept with him, that kind of thing.

[9:25] That was the same word used. David slept with Bathsheba. Bathsheba. I mean, it's kind of more metaphorically, this one more literally and so, it was used in this way.

Even, it was like a daughter to him. The Hebrew word for daughter is bat, like Bathsheba. The daughter of Sheba would be her name.

So, even using, you know, even bringing in some of these hints, I guess, if you want to call it that, in some way, even taking the ewe lamb in verse 4, the rich man, he took the ewe lamb as David took Bathsheba in the same, in the same instance.

Very much in the parable as well as with David, a critical abuse of power. Quite a terrible thing. And you see, you see David's response to this.

In verses 5-6, you see that he is the judge. And in Israel, he is the ultimate judge. Everyone, the Israelites knew that. When they went to Samuel, in 1 Samuel chapter 8, and demanded for a king, they asked for Samuel, give us a king to be our judge.

[10:43] I mean, they realized that the king was going to judge them. So, David had to be the judge. This wasn't just some kind of disguise, you know, kind of used for deceptive purposes to bring to David.

No. David was the judge of that land. So, he had to judge this himself. And if we definitely notice, it has a lot to do with David. And David's judgment is going to have a lot to do with what he did in chapter 11.

And what does he judge? Well, he, you know, it's like any other case, even cases today, he gives an opinion, he convicts, the punishment, and then the sentence is laid out.

His opinion, he gives this fellow, this rich man, a certain rich man, he deserves death due to his greedy lack of pity and compassion. And even it says in verse 5, I don't know if it says in my translation or not, but it says, it says he deserves to die in the ESV here, but literally, it means he's a son of death.

I mean, he is deserving of death in this situation. Very serious charge given to this person.

[11:57] But that's his opinion. But the conviction is that he's simply guilty of stealing. The rich man, in this case, is guilty of stealing. So the punishment, according to Exodus 22, 1, which David knew, interesting, almost ironic there, he would know the law, but he still chooses to do his own thing.

Restitution of four lambs for every one lamb stolen. This is a common thing, lots of lambs in Israel, lots of sheep. So when someone steals a lamb and cooks it for his own purposes, he's got to restore it fourfold.

And even David says that right there in verse 6, he shall restore the lamb fourfold. Now this is a very serious situation. A situation that's going to come back to David as well.

So the sentence is this. What the punishment is, according to Exodus 22, 1, without any mercy, without any grace extended, that punishment is to be fulfilled.

The rich man will pay in full, according to the law, fourfold. And then thereafter, he will get a bunch of scorn.

[13:15] You know, that's also, it's kind of in the text, kind of inferred in the text, that even thereafter, people will know about this guy and will be concerned about what kind of business they do with him.

Okay. So, we compare this to David's sin, we see some, quite a few comparisons as well, which we will see right here in Nathan's rebuke to David.

It's not really Nathan's rebuke. We've got to understand, Nathan is the messenger, a brave messenger, but a messenger nonetheless. God's fierce rebuke is verses 7 through 12.

And so, here's what God does to David in the first part of this. He's established his new king. But Nathan says, you are the man.

But look what God does after this. I anointed you king over Israel and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul.

[14:16] Look, these great things that the Lord has done and we can read back in 1 Samuel and see all the ways that God delivered David out of the hand of King Saul.

Gave David opportunity to even take King Saul out. David refused to do that because King Saul was the anointed of the Lord. I mean, there were so many things that happened in the process of delivering David from the hand of King Saul.

Saul. And so there's terrible, really the fact that he did what he did was just awful despite what God has done for him.

And then verse 8, all of these things that were given from King Saul's house, where the master's house, the master's wives into your arms. Now, King Saul's wives did not become David's wives or anything of that nature.

What basically that means is King Saul's harem is to be taken care of by the next king. Every harem of a king, this is just true in Eastern, during this time period, in any country in this area, that the harem of the former king is to be taken care of by the next king.

[15:34] Now, in the more secular world, the next king would just take them as his own wives and concubines and do them as he wished. But nonetheless, they were to take care of that because that is part of the establishment of being a king.

Anybody that takes care of the king's harem is, well, he's basically given the reign to be the king. So that's part of the idea there. And what's really being said there is that everything that belonged to

Saul now belongs to David.

Really, everything that belongs to Saul now belongs to David except for what he gave to Mephibosheth. But that was what David did in kindness, in covenant kindness for Mephibosheth. But that's the simple reality there.

God gave all of these things to David. God took this shepherd in Bethlehem, the humble shepherd, and he set him on the throne of Israel.

And all of, not just Judah, but all of Israel became subjects to David and to David's line.

[16:38] I mean, the last time Nathan spoke to David as recorded in scripture, he let him know that the Davidic line would never end, that it would continue on, and so that he would continue to be king of Israel at that time.

And so this is a serious reality of what the Lord has done for David. And so we also see the fact that he's done some great things to establish, but then we also see the Lord's rebuke of the reply that David gave to that.

I mean, the reply that's given to that is what happened in chapter 11, what happened with Bathsheba, with Uriah the Hittite, and on the battlefield with the Ammonites. And so this is the king's heinous reply to this.

In verse 9, it says, why have you despised the word of the Lord? Just in general, what's being said here, and if you look in other passages of scripture, you will see that the same Hebrew words are used to rebuke Eli and his sons in 1 Samuel 2.

I mean, his sons did some evil, horrible things in the front of the Lord, and Eli refused to rebuke them, refused to discipline them for that purpose, even though he had all the authority to do such a thing.

[18:02] And so they despised the Lord. Now David is despising the Lord. It doesn't bode well for David to be compared to Eli and his sons. You also see in verse 9, 2, to do what is evil in his sight, or evil in his eyes.

That's said of Saul, when he did not wipe out the Amalekites as he was commanded to do back in 1 Samuel 15. It's also said of the Israelites during the time of the judges, between the judges when it said a number of times throughout the book of Judges, the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord because of their idolatry.

Okay, now being compared to the Israelites that are idolatrous during the time of the judges, being compared to Saul when he is refusing to do what the Lord is commanding him to do, does not bode well.

And then we see this so-called sandwich of destruction in the last half of that verse. You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, you've taken his wife to be your wife and you've killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.

I mean, you kind of see this really kind of sandwich if you want to call that disgusting sandwich that is, but he did that. He killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, but not only that, but he used the sword of the Ammonites to do that very thing.

[19:23] So the Ammonites, they weren't committing murder, it was war. They were defending their own land, defending their own territory, but David used the Ammonites as his instrument, as his way of committing this murder.

And that's how God is seeing that. And that's how God is also seeing Bathsheba. Bathsheba is not just adultery situation, he took her, he stole her, he committed, you know, the eighth, you know, he failed to keep the eighth commandment in scripture, not to mention the sixth and the seventh and the tenth.

So, wow, it just keeps going and going. Okay, so this, this is this, the Lord's rebuke of David's heinous reply, and now he gives his sentence.

David was the judge, and now God's judgment of the disguised parable, and now God's judgment of the actual.

Verse 10, the sword shall never depart from your house. And we're going to see throughout 2 Samuel and into 1 Kings, a fourfold restitution.

[20:47] We're going to see the son in this chapter, the son of David and Bathsheba dying. We're going to see his son Amnon, his oldest, dying. We're going to see Absalom dying.

And we're going to see Adonijah dying. All untimely deaths, all violent deaths, and at least the last three.

And so, terrible, terrible situations, highly untimely, and we're going to see the sword shall never depart from your house. And not only that, but I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. The neighbor, there's a neighbor, apparently some neighbor out there has got to lie with his wives in the sight of everyone. one. Well, that neighbor comes from his own house.

As we'll see in chapter 16, that's Absalom. And that's on the same roof that David spied out Bathsheba. And it's not going to be in secret like David did, but it's going to be in the sight of everyone.

[22 : 03] It says the sight of the sun. What that means, the sun's going to reveal it all. And everyone will get to see it, hear it, hear of it, know about it.

Whether they see it or not, they're going to know about it. And it's going to be common knowledge, common gossip. You think that's going to taint David's kingdom a bit?

You think that's going to taint his leadership a bit? Of course it is. How could it not? And then we find in verse 13, God's fathomless reprieve.

We see the table turns a little bit, just a little, but we see that the Lord not only disciplines, but he also forgives and extends mercy.

David confesses. And you look at the confession, you're like, oh, there's not much to it. I have sinned against the Lord. And we like to think, you know, because we've heard these kinds of confessions before, and we think, oh, they're probably not real.

[23 : 24] But you look deeper into it, especially when you go into the Psalms and see what David wrote in response to this.

He did understand that he sinned against the Lord. He did understand what happened. He did understand the need for repentance.

So we have to take it at face value. It is an immediate confession without any attempt to rationalize or justify his sin.

The commentator Ronald Youngblood says this, in his total and immediate response of repentance, there is no hint in the narrative that this is anything less than an authentic, rightly intentioned confession.

It is presented without irony or suspicion. At the end of this message, I'll read from Psalm 51, but I want to read a little part of it right now in verses 3 and 4.

[24 : 28] For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

David really understood something. And this understood something that we need to understand every time we sin. That ultimately that sin, even though we may be affecting so many people out here, and we need to go and ask for forgiveness.

forgiveness. And we need to repent. It's ultimately against God. Ultimately against our Creator. Who has saved us.

Who has done great and abundant things in our lives. Who has sent Jesus Christ to this earth. To die on a cross.

On our behalf. For our sins. God has saved us. So yeah, when we sin, it is against God that we sin.

[25 : 33] We need to recognize that. And David's also given something that he does not deserve. An assurance of forgiveness. It's two parts here in verse 13.

The Lord has put away your sin, and you shall not die. That's a big phrase. The Lord has put away your sin.

That is pardon. That is pardon from the ultimate penalty. From his sin. That is a true pardon.

We sing about that. We sing about it this morning. The vilest offender who truly believes. That moment from Jesus, a pardon receives. It's an amazing thought.

And then he shall not die. Now we talked about last week, the sentence for adultery in the Hebrew law, the Torah, is death, execution.

[26 : 37] And the sentence for murder, as you might imagine, is also execution as well. You're to be stoned to death. death. But yet, he's not going to die.

Now let us not even think about saying, oh, he got off. That will condemn us for starters. We don't want to do that.

He didn't get off. Just keep reading. Anyway. Because now we see God's frightening ruling. God's frightening ruling.

In verse 14, because of this deed, you have utterly scorned the Lord.

What is utterly scorned the Lord about? Well, the King James Bible helps us with this. the way they word it. Thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

[27 : 47] The enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. That is this. They already blasphemed the Lord, but now they have a great reason to do it.

And you know what? They do blaspheme the Lord for reasons like this. They do blaspheme the Lord when they see someone that is a servant of the Lord committed moral failure.

I mean, I've seen this before, whether it's someone that's well-known or someone that maybe we know personally, that we have someone else that knows that person personally.

And that's happened to me twice. People that I know that have committed moral failure had to go to prison for it.

So, yeah, they already do. Now, the enemies of the Lord that's talking about here is actually something in particular, someone in particular, or a group of people in particular.

[28 : 52] Not about the heathen, the world, the Gentiles, whoever it might be out there, but talking about unbelievers who are Israelitish, people who are Judaizers who are unbelievers who don't really follow.

They just kind of are that by blood or whatever. And they would scoff at all religion when one in David's position fell into terrible open sin.

But the death of the adulterous offspring of David and Bathsheba would prove to these irreligious men that the Lord's righteous rule could reach and punish the king himself and would thus vindicate his justice from their reproach.

Now that's from the pulpit commentary from quite a long time ago. Help us with that idea. And then this other one from another commentary called Kiel and Delich from the 19th century.

It says this, the visible occasion for any further blasphemy should be taken away so that David was not only to feel the pain of punishment in the death of his son but was also to discern it a distinct token of the grace of God.

[30 : 08] They're tying these two together because you have utterly scorned the Lord. You've caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme these Israelitish unbelievers to blaspheme and given great reason to do it.

You know, I have to take your son away from you. Now this is, I have a difficult time justifying such a thing and I don't even want to try to do that.

This is so difficult to read and so hard to understand but the God is, God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform.

that really applies here. It's the idea that we don't know why God does the things that he does. We don't know why these happen and the fact is, I can't describe why he's doing this kind of thing.

That's why I read what these two commentators that are much smarter than I am and they both have gone to be with the Lord. That's why I read that because that's about as good as I can do there.

[31 : 25] But we do need to understand a reality here. Again, Psalm 51, 4, against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

God moves in a mysterious way. He works in a mysterious way. And we need to understand that his ways are blameless. His ways are justified. His ways are perfect.

And so this phrase, your son will die, where it says, the child who is born to you shall die. Now we need to look back at what is said by David in chapters 11 and 12.

There are two phrases that are haunting him right here. Talked about last week, the sword devours now one and now another. He told that to Joab to encourage him in his understanding that yes, he made this mistake to send these men to the wall of Rabbah.

And yes, Uriah the Hittite and other people died because of that. sword devours now one and now another.

[32 : 46] And using that as an encouragement, of course, it's all feigned. Well, it's coming back to haunt him. Because yes, casualties happen in war.

That's really what that phrase is about. But now there is another casualty happening here. And now it's very sad. And then that fourfold retribution I talked about earlier.

Untimely deaths of four of David's sons that will happen one by one by one. One after David passes away. But nonetheless, still untimely.

God forgives the guilt of sin, but inflicts the consequences of sin. But this is more to see here. David has a substitute.

Now this text is not a, we don't want to throw any New Testament meaning into this, but there is a pattern here. There's something that still benefits us. It's still something that we need to see about us as well.

[34:00] There are some of us who know this paradox of forgiveness that is both free and costly. because the son of David has become our substitute.

And that is our testimony. Christ has become our substitute for our sin. Psalm 51.

Let's all turn to that psalm. It is an important psalm for this text as we will see in the introduction of that psalm. Psalm 51.

It says in the introduction to the choir master, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone into Bathsheba.

So this is quite pertinent. So let's read it in its entirety. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.

[35:09] According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness in the bones, or let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins, and blot out my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

[36:21] restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You will not be pleased with the burnt offering.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God.

You will not despise. Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings, in whole burnt offerings.

Then bulls will be offered on your altar. To obey is better than sacrifice, is another thought that goes well with this.

[37:33] Before an offering is to be given, the true offering is a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. Micah has said it this way in chapter 6, verse 8.

He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. Let's remember when we sin, it is to the Lord that we sin.

that we ask for forgiveness and repent of our sin to the Lord, that we keep a short list of sins, that we come to him consistently, constantly, to confess our sin, and that we encourage one another to do the same.

When we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us be people that are contrite in spirit, and broken in heart, broken and contrite heart, and we confess, and we repent, and the Lord makes us new.

Thank you.