



### **What happened before?**

David had been made king over all of Israel and moved his headquarters to Jerusalem. David also brought the ark of God to Jerusalem. He wanted to build a temple there, but God rejected his plan and refused to allow him to build it. However, God did promise that David's son, Solomon would build it.

### **BIBLE STORY:**

In our recent studies we have learned a lot about David and his strengths. He killed a lion and a bear while just a young shepherd boy and he killed the Philistine giant, Goliath. Even though King Saul made several attempts to kill David, David still respected him and was a loyal friend to Saul's son, Jonathan. God chose David to be king of Israel and he served his people well. God loved David and had blessed him in many ways. However, David was not perfect and in this lesson we will see how David sinned.

In the spring of the year, David remained in Jerusalem while he sent Joab and the army of Israel to fight the people of Ammon. One evening, when David was walking on the roof of his house, he looked in a nearby court and saw a beautiful woman bathing. David was attracted to this woman and asked who she was. He learned that her name was Bathsheba and that she was married to Uriah, one of David's soldiers who was away from home fighting in the war. Even though David knew she was married to Uriah, he sent for her and slept with her. By taking another man's wife as his own, he committed adultery. Later, David commanded the captain of the army to send Uriah to the front of the battle where he was killed. David then Married Bathsheba.

David thought that his sins were hidden, but no one can hide sins from God. God always knows when someone sins. We are told that "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord." God sent the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan told David about a rich man who had many sheep of his own, but who killed a poor man's only lamb to feed his guest. David was angry when he heard that story. He said that the man who had done such a thing should die and that he should give the poor man four sheep. Imagine how surprised David was when Nathan said to him "You are the man!" David had many wives but he had Uriah killed and took his wife.

David said, "I have sinned before the Lord." Nathan told him that God forgave him of his sins, but because of his sins his household would always be troubled. This prophecy came true. First, David and Bathsheba had a child who became sick and died, and later three of David's other sons died violent deaths.

David and Bathsheba had another son whose name was Solomon. God loved Solomon and promised David that Solomon would be king after him. David also had other children, among whom were Absalom, Amnon and their sister, Tamar. Tamar was very lovely and Amnon wanted her, but it was improper for him to have her. Amnon treated his sister very badly and forced her into bed with him. When Tamar told Absalom what had happened, Absalom hated Amnon for what he had done to his sister, Tamar. He later had Amnon killed; then Absalom fled from Jerusalem. After three years, David arranged for Absalom to come back to Jerusalem.

Absalom was very handsome and evidently one who had personality and charm. He wanted very badly to become king. He prepared himself a very fine chariot drawn by beautiful horses and had fifty men to run before his chariot as he drove through the streets. These men would shout to the people as they passed that the king's son was coming behind them. This got Absalom much attention. He went daily to the gates of the city where the people came to let the king settle disputes. He would flatter the people, then tell them if he were king, he would settle the disputes in their favor. Of course, he was lying. Disputes cannot be settled in everyone's favor. Nevertheless, he stole the hearts of the people.

Now a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee; or we shall not escape from Absalom." David and his followers fled from Jerusalem. Absalom then went to Jerusalem.

Absalom did not want to wait until David died to become king and decided to get rid of him right away. He asked two men what they thought would be the best way to kill David. The first man, Ahithophel, urged Absalom to let him take 12,000 men and pursue David that very night. He promised to kill only David then return the rest of the people back to Absalom. When Absalom asked the second man, Hushai, he told him that David was an experienced warrior and that Absalom should take time to make careful plans before going after him. He told him he should take all of Israel to fight David. Absalom agreed with Hushai to wait. Hushai was a good friend of David and quickly sent messengers to David, telling him of Absalom's plan to kill him.

David had time to make plans of his own and when the battle began, David was ready. David won a great victory over the men of

Absalom. As Absalom fled from the battle, riding a mule, his head was caught in the low-hanging limbs of a tree. (Perhaps it was his hair that caught on the branches. We are told that he had so much hair that when he cut it once a year the amount he cut off weighed about 5 pounds.) David had asked his men not to harm Absalom during the battles, but when Joab heard that Absalom was caught in the tree, he went immediately and threw three spears at him. The men with Joab finished killing him

When David heard of Absalom's death, he was deeply grieved. He said, "O my son Absalom—my son, my son, Absalom—If only I had died in your place!" David still loved his son even though he had tried to kill him and take his throne. David returned to Jerusalem. He had not lost his throne, but he had lost his son.

David's troubles were far from being over. A man named Sheba rebelled against David. All of Israel followed Sheba. Only Judah stayed with David. Sheba and his men were holding up in the city of Abel of Beth Maacah. When Joab, David's captain, and his men began to batter the walls, a woman called to Joab to speak with him. She asked him not to destroy the city. He told her to deliver Sheba and he would spare the city and the other people. She told him to watch and his head would be thrown over the wall. She was a wise woman and went to the people in the city. They killed Sheba and threw his head over the wall. Joab blew his horns and went back to the king in Jerusalem.

Problems for David continued. After the rebellion of Sheba, there was a famine in the land for three years. Following that, there was more war with the Philistines. Toward the end of his time as king, David ordered his captains to go throughout Israel to count the people. Perhaps David was depending on his men rather than God to win his battles and wanted to make sure he had enough to do the job. Later David realized he had sinned by numbering the people. Because of David's sin, God sent a plague and 70,000 men died in Israel. When the angel of the Lord stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, The Lord relented from His destruction and said, "It is enough." and the plague ended.

David wrote several Psalms praising God for His help in delivering him from Saul, from the Philistines and from all those who rebelled against him. Two of those songs are found in chapters 22 and 23 of this section.

David's life was one of trouble. It is important to remember that many of the troubles David had were brought upon him by his own deeds. Even though David sinned, God forgave him of his sins when he repented. God continued to work out his plan to bring a Savior into the world through David's family.

