



David's Great Sin

2 Samuel 11

David Has Been Successful

- **Chuck Swindoll says:**

“Our most difficult times are not when things are going hard. Hard times create dependent people. You don’t get proud when you’re dependent on God. Survival keeps you humble. Pride happens when everything is swinging in your direction. When you’ve just received that promotion, when you look back and you can see an almost spotless record in the last number of months or years, when you’re growing in prestige and fame and significance, that’s the time to watch out...especially if you’re unaccountable...Our greatest battles don’t usually come when we’re working hard; they come when we have some leisure, when we’ve got time on our hands, when we’re bored.”

2 Samuel 11:1

1 Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem.



The Ammonites Were Defeated in Ch. 10

But the proximity of Ammon to the tribal territories of Gad and Manasseh meant that David could not ignore them, and a focused military effort against them is necessary.



“But David stayed at Jerusalem”

- This may have been a dereliction of duty, and based on v. 1, I think that is a likely possibility.
- There is another possible influence that we see in 2 Samuel 21:17 –

“Then the men of David swore to him, saying, “You shall not go out again with us to battle, so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel.”



David & Bathsheba

This is perhaps the
second most
notorious sin in the
Bible, after the Fall.



2 Samuel 11:2-5

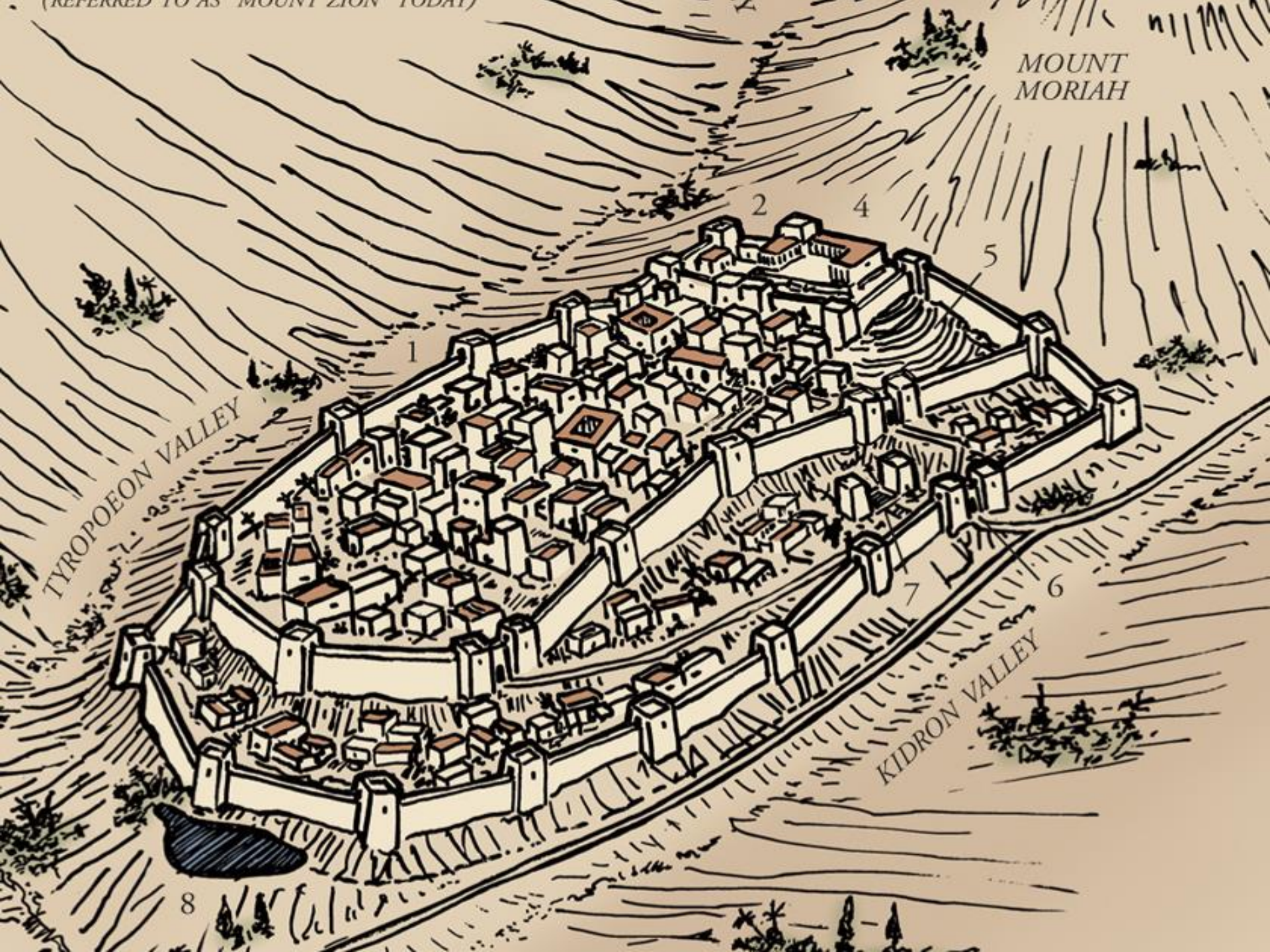
2 Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. **3** So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" **4** David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. **5** The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant."

(REFERRED TO AS 'MOUNT MORIAH' TODAY)

MOUNT
MORIAH

TYROPOEON VALLEY

KIDRON VALLEY





David “saw a woman bathing”



Cultural Context

- No Israelite house had running water at this time, so bathing most likely occurred in the enclosed courtyards that were prevalent in homes of the time.
- **The point being:**

There is no indication in the text that the woman deliberately positioned herself so as to entice David.



“the woman was very beautiful”

- David sends a messenger, and we discover that the woman is “Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.”
- This phrase is used in the OT of Rebekah, Vashti, and Esther.
- She is also not a nobody...

Thus, Bathsheba is:

- The daughter of one of David's best fighters: Eliam
 - 2 Samuel 23:34 – “Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite...”
- The granddaughter of his most trusted counselor: Ahithophel
 - 2 Samuel 16:23 – “The advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom.”
 - This incident may be why Ahithophel abandons David and supports Absalom in the rebellion.

And Of Course...

- The wife of Uriah, one of his inner circle of honored soldiers, who is mentioned in 2 Samuel 23:39 as one of David's mighty men.
- Since David was properly informed of this latter fact, for him to pursue Bathsheba was already sin.



And a Serious Sin at That

- **Exodus 20:14** – “You shall not commit adultery.”
- **Leviticus 20:10** – “If there is a man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, one who commits adultery with his friend’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”



This is James 1:14-15 Personified

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.



“David sent messengers and took her”

- Literally, “collected her”
- And “Bathsheba came to him.”
 - Perhaps she was naïve.
 - Perhaps she lacked the will to resist a request from the king.
 - Perhaps her intent was to be unfaithful to her husband all along.
- The text does not tell us; but the text does explicitly spell out the sin of David.

David “lay with her”

- An idiomatic Hebrew expression indicating that he engaged with her sexually.
- And as a result, David and Bathsheba conceive a child.
- When she becomes aware of this fact, she sends word to the king informing him of the pregnancy.



This is so Unlike David...

One commentator notes:

“The king who is content to be given the kingdom (2 Sam. 2-4) nevertheless seizes with violence the woman of his desire.”



But He Had Wives & a Harem!

- Swindoll writes:

“This king who took another man’s wife already had a harem full of women. The simple fact is that the passion of sex is not satisfied by a full harem of women; it is increased. Having many women does not reduce a man’s libido, it excites it...it stimulates it...One of the lies of our secular society is that if you just satisfy this drive, then it’ll be abated.”

David Tries 3 Cover-Ups

- As Walter Vogel contends:

1. A “clean” one (vv. 6-11)
2. A “dirty” one (vv. 12-13)
3. A “criminal” one (vv. 14-17)



2 Samuel 11:6-9

6 Then David sent to Joab, saying, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” So Joab sent Uriah to David. **7** When Uriah came to him, David asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war. **8** Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house, and wash your feet.” And Uriah went out of the king’s house, and a present from the king was sent out after him. **9** But Uriah slept at the door of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

David's Foolproof Plan

- Bring Uriah back to Jerusalem temporarily, have him spend one intimate night with his wife, and then send him back to war.
- Approximately nine months later, Bathsheba would have her child, Uriah would be ecstatic, and David would possess total deniability.



Why Am I Here?

- Uriah, perhaps weary from the hasty return to Jerusalem (over 40 miles) in response to a royal summons, enters the king's presence.
- He is probably genuinely surprised when that David only “asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war.”
- He is one of David's mighty men!

David Commands Uriah

“Go down to your house, and wash your feet.”

- David's reference to footwashing was a suggestion that he clean up, stay awhile, and enjoy a night of intimacy with his wife.
- To further encourage Uriah, David sends a gift, probably food and wine, to Uriah's house.



But Uriah...

“slept at the door of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.”

This speaks volumes about Uriah.

Understand that this is a religious decision.

His name means, “Yahweh is my light”

Uriah was Devoted to the Lord

- All sanctioned military activity was a form of service to the Lord, and it required the Lord's blessing for success.
- Based on what we know of David, it seems perfectly logical that he may have required soldiers carrying out military assignments to keep themselves in a state of ritual purity, which necessarily meant refraining from all sexual contact.



In Uriah's Mind

If he had sexual relations with Bathsheba, he would have rendered himself temporarily unfit for military service, and thus, unfit for service to the Lord.



And Don't Miss this Fact:

Uriah is a
Hittite!



2 Samuel 11:10-13

10 Now when they told David, saying, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” David said to Uriah, “Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?” **11** Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing.” **12** Then David said to Uriah, “Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. **13** Now David called him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with his lord’s servants, but he did not go down to his house.

David is Starting to Panic

“Have you not come from a journey?”

“Why did you not go down to your house?”

In other words:

“What kind of a man are you?”



Uriah's Response

“The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing.”

If Uriah's brothers in arms were forced to be separated from their wives, Uriah would not break that solidarity.

David is Stalling...

“Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go.”

- This time, David employs a simple but underhanded tactic:

“he made him drunk”



And It Still Doesn't Work!

“and in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with his lord’s servants, but he did not go down to his house.”

David is now in full on panic mode.



2 Samuel 11:14-15

14 Now in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. **15** He had written in the letter, saying, “Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die.”



Uriah Carries His Own Death Warrant

Undoubtedly the letter that Uriah carried was parchment sealed with the royal signet ring so that its contents would have been unknown to anyone but Joab.





2 Samuel 11:16-21

16 So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant men. **17** The men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David's servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died. **18** Then Joab sent and reported to David all the events of the war. **19** He charged the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling all the events of the war to the king, **20** and if it happens that the king's wrath rises and he says to you, 'Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?' **21** Who struck down Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?'—then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"

Joab Complies With David's Order

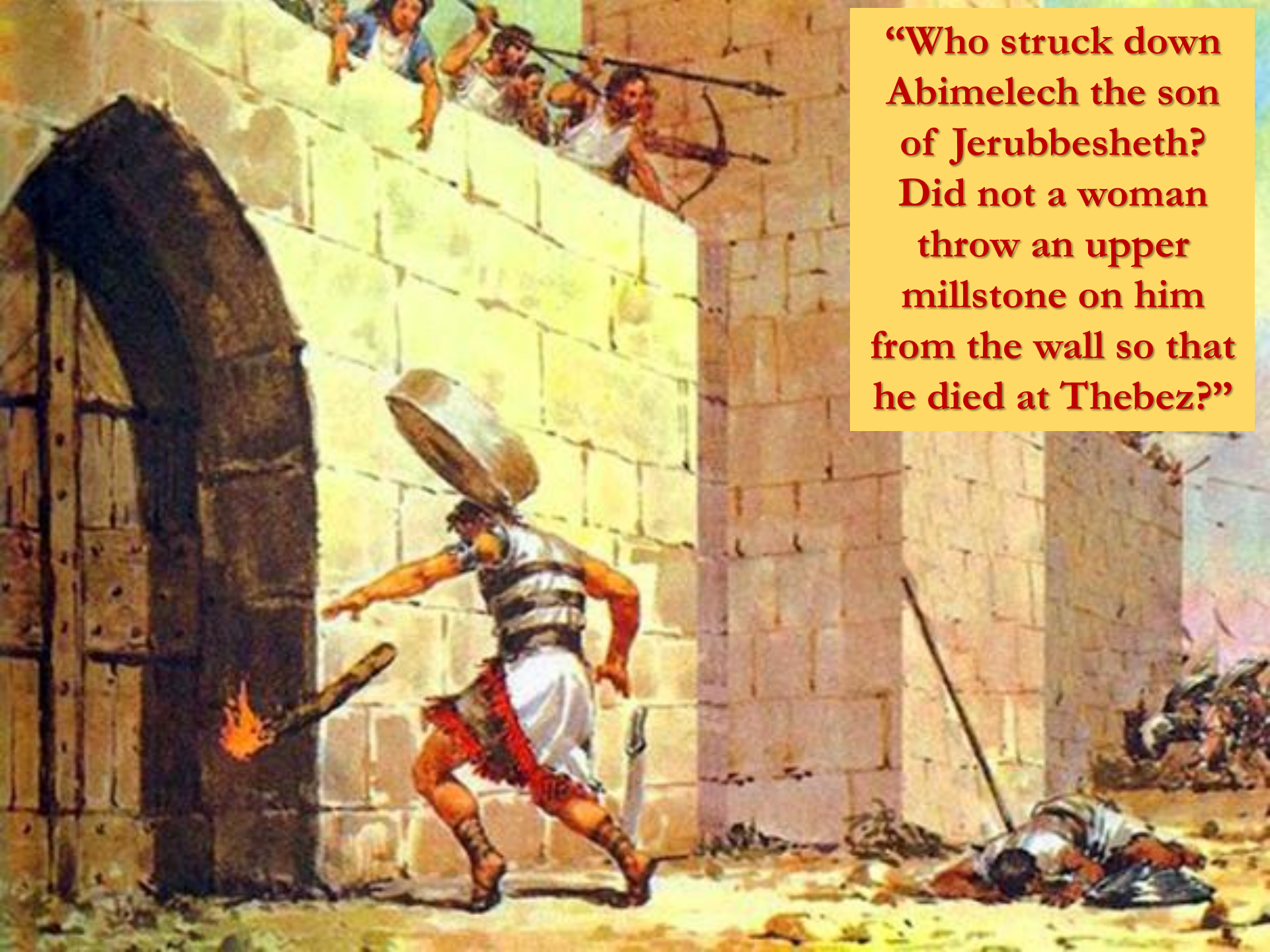
- We know from 11:1 that Rabbah is besieged.
- Direct attacks against a walled city are dangerous, and at this point, unnecessary.
- Yet, Joab obediently orders Uriah to attack the city at its strongest point (probably near the city gate), and exactly as David hoped, Uriah was killed (along with several other of David's men).

“Joab sent and reported to David”

- The news was not good on this occasion, so Joab provided the messenger with a set of additional instructions.
- Whether this is part of the royal cover-up or whether Joab genuinely feared some reprisal from the king is not clear.
- At any rate, Joab closes his letter with what David wants to hear.



**“Who struck down
Abimelech the son
of Jerubbesheth?
Did not a woman
throw an upper
millstone on him
from the wall so that
he died at Thebez?”**



Another Commentator writes:

“David, God’s anointed and a great king, is otherwise poles apart from a petty thug like Abimelech...that David is likened to Abimelech has—because of the very distance between them—the effect of diminishing his image. The more so since Abimelech fell at a woman’s hands while at the head of his army: David falls at a woman’s hands precisely because he plays truant from war.”

Parallel in
1 Kings 21
“Naboth
is...dead.”



4
E dūcūnt Naboth extra ciuitatem, & lapidibūs obriūnt.

2 Samuel 11:22-25

22 So the messenger departed and came and reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell. **23** The messenger said to David, “The men prevailed against us and came out against us in the field, but we pressed them as far as the entrance of the gate. **24** Moreover, the archers shot at your servants from the wall; so some of the king’s servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead.” **25** Then David said to the messenger, “Thus you shall say to Joab, ‘Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another; make your battle against the city stronger and overthrow it’; and so encourage him.”

The Messenger Returns to David

- David waxes philosophical as he quotes from an ancient proverb to remind Joab that war's unpredictable appetite sometimes consumes a nation's best men.
- While Uriah's death is lamentable, Joab should make his "battle against the city stronger and overthrow it."
- I think this is David at his very worst.

2 Samuel 11:26-27

26 Now when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. **27** When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.



Mourning Practices in the OT

- Weeping
- Wailing
- Rolling in Dust
- Modifying one's diet for a period
- Modifying one's clothing (i.e., sackcloth; widow's garb)



Is David Allowed to Marry Bathsheba?

Under OT law, what
would be the legal
parameters for
Bathsheba's
remarriage?



“kinsman redeemer”

- David may have been acting as a royal, surrogate kinsman redeemer since Uriah (a Hittite) may not have had a near kinsman in Israel.
- As such, David would have assumed the lifelong responsibility of caring for the needs of Uriah’s widow and was obligated to father a child in order to preserve the family line.



The Point is:

Such a pretext would have made
David's actions toward
Bathsheba following Uriah's
death seem truly noble and
would have accounted nicely for
the birth of the son.



On the Surface:

David has gotten away
with it, and he even comes
out of it looking
honorable in the eyes of
Israel.



However...

“the thing that David had done was evil
in the sight of the Lord”

- By law, David deserves death.
- The same expression is used of Onan in Genesis 38:10 –
“But what he did was *displeasing in the sight of the Lord*; so He took his life...”

Next Week: “You are the man!”



