

# Mistake to Majesty



What a mess! A big, terrible, awful mess produced by a big, terrible, awful mistake—a sinful mistake. Then that big, terrible, awful mistake generated a most shocking, unlikely ending: Majesty.

The Biblical account of David and Bethsheba, as recorded in 2 Samuel 11, does not reveal much about the woman involved in the scandal. Scripture tells us she was a daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah, a well-respected military man. She practiced good habits of hygiene and was considered a beautiful woman.

In chapter 12 the prophet Nathan uses a metaphor to describe Uriah's view of Bathsheba as a "little ewe lamb." He indicates she is loved, protected, and is affectionately described as laying at her husband's bosom. The story tells us she was summoned by her king and that visit resulted in a sexual encounter. Bathsheba became

in the matter? Did she desire sex with someone other than her husband?

Was Bathsheba aware that David required Uriah to return home? His homecoming wasn't a secret since many people in the area obviously knew about it. If she knew, did she attempt to convince or entice him to come home or was she

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pregnant with King David's child. In an attempt to cover up the pregnancy, David ultimately had Uriah, her husband, murdered. Bathsheba eventually married King David, and their son, conceived out of wedlock, lived only a short time.

One of the first intriguing things we notice about this story is its lack of detail. Details that the inquiring minds of human culture hunger and seek. For example, Scripture does not reveal to us if Bathsheba knew she was being watched while she was bathing. If she knew, did she like that attention or did she remove herself from it? Did King David ask for Bathsheba's consent before they had sex? Did her king give her any choice

secretly hoping he wouldn't? (By the way, when Uriah, based on principle and empathy for his soldiers on the battlefield, refused to return home and be with his wife, what did Bathsheba think? Did she recognize a difference in his character and David's?)

No indication is given that Bathsheba felt love, lust, or infuriation toward David. Many details were omitted—maybe to spark our curiosity as we examine this drama.

Curiosity is natural. We were all created with an element of curiosity. It can be a driving force used in very good ways. Inquisitive minds have produced new inventions and developments, making life easier and

less challenging. New medical advances, reducing pain and saving lives, had their start in inquisitiveness. Curiosity can take us to new adventures and experiences, thus opening our minds and hearts to new worlds of opportunity for work, pleasure, or ministry.

But curiosity/inquisitiveness must be monitored and sometimes tamed, for left to its own volition can create mayhem, making messy matters even worse. When our curiosity propels us toward information with the potential to benefit us and/or others, it can be good. But when we allow it to push us toward information that manipulates, harms, or judges, curiosity becomes hurtful and damaging. If we want to be the *first to know*, or have the *inside scoop*, we must capture our curiosity.

Let's use the case of Bath-

sheba as an example. Are we seeking answers to our questions so we can decide what 'to do with' Bathsheba? Will we allow the answers to determine what we think of her? Do we need to know so we can decide whether to pity her or shame her? Comfort her or judge her? Befriend her or abandon her? Do we allow the motivations behind the sin to determine how we treat the sinner? We should not.

When we learn about sinful mistakes, we must keep in mind they were committed by people with souls; people whom Christ gave His life to save. Our first, and often our only response, needs to be compassion that leads us to pray. When the urge is strong to perpetuate the story, we should recognize that as our warning to pray for strength to remain silent.

## A Lesson For The Outsider Looking In

When we want to know the nitty and the gritty in our world today, multiple options are available, such as accessing the news 24/7 from numerous sources. If that fails to satisfy our curious minds, the tabloid industry will gladly supply innuendos and speculation that is appealing and fulfilling in our 'need to

know' society. Of course, if the news hits closer to home (information about a family member or a fellow church member, for instance), good, old-fashioned gossip works well to quench the thirst of its pursuers.

Is there a lesson to be learned about the absence of detail in this story? Or, several lessons?

First, it is clear God intended to include it in the Bible, so very possibly He intended not to tell us everything. Certainly Samuel, the author, was not negligent when sparing some details. Maybe we are not to be privy to everything? With the exclusions, could God be saying those things are not the point of the story? If so, what are we to take from that idea?

What is the application here? When the big, terrible, awful messes occur in the life of someone else, (another believer perhaps), we are to be mindful, aware, and in control of our imaginations and thoughts, just as Paul warned the Corinthian believers in 2 Corinthians 10:5. As we know, these workings in our mind can lead to words spoken out loud or posted on social media for the world to see.

Sometimes when messes occur, the noises of gossip, rumor, and hearsay become so captivating they cause us to lose sight of the troubled souls within the mess. Our responsibility toward them has been forgotten. Instead of talk, we need to pray. Instead of criticizing, we show compassion. Instead of slander, we show our support. Instead of hate, we love.

Another lesson we recognize in this account, as well as in other stories in Scripture, is how these narratives and characters teach us and reveal to us the characteristics of God. When we learn about God and how He worked in the lives of biblical characters, we realize His ways also apply to us right now—in the world we live in today. This is a beautiful description of God, and how He deals with sin and the sinner.

## *A Lesson For Those In The Mess*

Mistake after mistake after mistake takes place in the story of David and Bathsheba. If you read the account in its entirety, you see how the first mistake led to others, all in an effort to hide what can't be hidden, to deceive who can't be deceived, to make right with wrong. Attempts to avoid the truth often defy logic and reasoning. Good

sense is impaired by efforts to conceal sin. But no scheme is impervious to the omniscience of God.

Proverbs 28:13 states, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper..." In efforts to conceal his sin, David engaged in lying, deceit, bribery, drunkenness, ill-fated strategic planning, and murder. Attempting to hide sin

is a full-time job. It steals time, energy, and attention meant for good and better things. In all these plots, during all this time, expending all that energy, not once is God consulted, recognized, or requested, leaving no opportunity to move forward from sin.

However, the second part of Proverbs 28:13 is also evident in this story. The verse continues,

awful transgressions and yet, he experienced first-hand the grace and forgiveness found in God. David is saying that the severity, heinousness, or the inhumanity of the sin does not limit or restrict the completeness of God's forgiveness. David knows and teaches us that after sincere repentance, God will purge away our every sin.

David and Bathsheba mar-

*"Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away." (Psalm 65:3)*

"...but whosoever confesseth and forsaketh them (sins) shall have mercy." After Nathan confronts David about his sins (II Samuel 12), David repents, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan tells him, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin..."

Were David's sins forgiven? Absolutely. Without a doubt. God did not hesitate. He did not contemplate. Forgiveness was immediate. David mentions this truth several times in his writings, but in one particular passage he states, "Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away" (Psalm 65:3). David is well aware of his transgressions—his terrible,

ried and experienced many beautiful, happy events after their mess. God blessed them with three more sons. One son, King Solomon, is considered the wisest person who ever lived. What a blessing for David and Bathsheba!

But notice even after forgiveness, the forgiven still experienced pain and suffering. David and Bathsheba lost the child who was conceived in sin. They also suffered other loss and tragedy directly related to their sin throughout the rest of their lives. But the thing that mattered most, the only thing that held eternal significance, was graciously, lovingly granted: **FORGIVENESS.**

## *A Lesson For All Our Messes*

When God is invited to intervene, mistakes can lead to majesty. During the account of the birth of Christ, in Matthew 1:1, the first name mentioned in connection with Jesus is David, (“son of David”)—the same David who made a mess. A big, terrible, awful mess brought on


by a big, terrible, awful mistake—a sinful mistake.

David’s (and Bathsheba’s) listing in the genealogy of Christ is evidence there is forgiveness in confessed sin, and a beautiful promise of a future after sin. God’s forgiveness gives us a way forward.

## *A Lesson For Us All*

Believing our mistakes, our sins, have been forgiven is not always easy. The devil’s trick is to convince us that forgiveness is beyond our reach, beyond our mistake, and we don’t deserve it. God’s truth is, when we seek His forgiveness, He does not struggle with the decision to forgive or not forgive. He does not weigh the cost of forgiveness against the cost of our sin. That price has already been paid at the cross. The most difficult aspect of forgiveness is observed from God’s perspective—He endured heartbreak when He allowed His perfect, sinless Son to be crucified in preparation for our need of forgiveness.

Preachers, who once lived behind prison bars, are proclaiming the Gospel in churches across this world. Sunday School teachers, who once followed their own lusts and tendencies and lived lives of shame and disgrace, are now influencing children to follow Christ. Bible studies are taught by people who once believed there was no God. Forgiveness brought all of these from lives of tragedy to lives of majesty.

Our mess, our sin, does not restrict the power of God. A life of contribution after sin is not reserved for biblical characters only. It is true for us today. When God intervenes, your mess can lead to majesty! 

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