

1.4.21 - David and Bathsheba The Innocent Lamb

This story is often used to show that public nakedness causes men to lust. Their position has a few flaws that suggest no understanding of history. At this point in history, clothing was very expensive. Few people had more than one garment. Some had none. The Laundromat was a stream or fountain. If you have only one garment, you will be naked while you wash it, or it is being washed. You also do not wear your garment to do work that could damage or soil your garment. All that to say that nakedness was common, and David was not programmed to see nakedness as an invitation to or preparation for sex. Instead of expanding on all of that, we are going to look at Nathan's story to confront David about his sin.

The analogy is short, so we will include it and save you looking it up. **2Sa 12:1-4 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.**

First part of understanding an analogy is deciding who or what is represented by the characters in the story. The rich man represents King David with the wealth of the kingdom at his command and as many wives as he wanted. The flocks and herds were the many wives and concubines that David had at the time of his sin. The poor man would be Uriah. Poor is a relative term and you need to know "compared to what" to know the meaning of "poor". Here the standard is King David,

but Uriah was not poor in comparison to the general population. He married a grand daughter to King David's chief advisor, and he was one of the thirty mighty men. He would have gotten a lot of spoil from the people they conquered. Poor could also mean in terms of wives. Uriah had only one to David's many. The lamb is Bathsheba, Uriah's only wife. The traveler is temptation. You can decide if it is Satan, lust, boredom, human sex drive, or something we may have missed.

Was David so enticed by Bathsheba's beautiful body that he lost control? That is not in the analogy. More on that later. This is not the only housetop with women bathing from time to time. David's mighty men were all living nearby since they took the city from the Jebusites, which made the houses part of the spoil. They would pick houses near each other for both convenience and the safety of the inner circle. They would also pick first since they were high ranking men in the military. The rich man had a choice of taking of his flock and decided not to do so. David could have called any of his wives and they would have been happy to spend time with him physically. There must have been a lot of the tension between the wives that Leah and Rachael displayed over who Jacob would sleep with. **Gen 30:15 And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.** There is no mention of the owner's protests over taking the lamb, which fits Uriah being at the battle. where David should have been.

For a little side bar, we will look at the message from God that Nathan delivered to King David after the analogy. **2Sa 12:7,8 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.** That is a LIST of blessings! Did it keep King David doing what God wanted? You can see it didn't.

God is not likely to bless us into keeping His laws. Remember that fear does not work either. The golden calf came a little over a month from God's appearance on Mount Sinai with a display that had the people begging to deal with Moses instead of directly with God.

Let's talk about the lamb. The lamb was getting very special attention like one of the family. Do you think the lamb wanted to be part of the rich man's flock? We don't either. The lamb had no reason to look for something better. That part of the analogy would make it hard to think Bathsheba was enticing David or whoever might be up at the palace looking while she was bathing. Remember that public bathing was the norm at this time and had no sexual content. The analogy does not include the method of getting the lamb, but we assume no struggle when the rich man took it to dress it for his traveler. The king at that time had the power to execute whom he wished without a trial. Bathsheba had a choice to follow the messengers or face punishment or maybe even death. Like the lamb, she did not have much of a choice. David's sin is usually called adultery, but the analogy indicated that rape would be closer to what happened.

Remember the traveler is temptation. It is not a sin to be tempted. It is the choice on how to deal with the travelers that come our way that can be sin. The analogy is clear that the lamb was not at fault for the rich man's decision. The lamb was innocent. That means that Bathsheba's nakedness was not the cause for David's sin. All the blame is the rich man's and his decision to feed the traveler with the poor man's lamb. God's message in verses 7 & 8 above does not even hint at David being enticed or not having control because Bathsheba was naked. God made it obvious that Bathsheba was not to blame for what happened...even choosing one of her sons to be the next King of Israel. It's really key here to understand that the naked lamb was innocent!

Many pastors try to use this account as "proof" that we need to be dressed in order to prevent sexual sins. Since the innocent lamb analogy was authored by God and since it reflects how He saw the situation and

since God did not make that point, I believe I would refrain from making a case that God didn't make. Since God didn't blame the lamb, I believe I'd avoid that as well. Nakedness was common then and yet there is nothing to suggest that adultery and rape were common. Now sexual misconduct is common, and nakedness is not. An interesting conundrum leading us to ask what is the best choice? Is it better to live as God intended from the beginning or is it better now that we have an oversexualized society and the church teaching the neck to knees dress code?