

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

Background Characters in the Old Testament **Lesson 6: “Uriah: Faith of a Foreigner”**

The story begins in 2 Samuel 11:1 where it says that it was the time of the year when the kings went out to battle, but David was in his palace and here is the first red flag pointing to the change in David. In the first part of David’s life, he was known as a man after God’s own heart, but not so any longer for David’s heart was knowing only self.

David lusts after Bathsheba and has her taken from her home, and he commits adultery with her. Later Bathsheba sends David a message that she is pregnant. David’s mind begins to scheme to protect self and image.

He sent for Uriah, thinking that when he would go to his home and lie with his wife, the pregnancy would be covered up. Uriah appears. David encourages him to go home and wash his feet, eat, drink and lie with his wife. Uriah departs the king’s presence, goes just outside, and stays with the king’s servants—never once going near his house.

The next day David questions Uriah as to why he had not gone home, and Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing” (2 Sam. 11:11).

Uriah’s words come from a man sincere in his love for God and His people. The natural human spirit has no such concern and is motivated only by what they want, when they want it and how they want it. Everything they do is centered in self and so their motivation is called an egocentric motivation. EGO stands for Easing God Out of the heart and life. The egocentric person finds the idea of a higher motivation too restrictive.

David was demonstrating an egocentric motivation – “Its all about me and what I want.” Uriah demonstrated a higher motivation than self – this higher motivation is the natural motivation of a converted person under the influence of *agape*.

“A higher motivation becomes realized in the close of time than has prevailed in the church in the past ages—a concern for Christ that He receive His reward and find His ‘rest’ in the final eradication of sin. All egocentric motivation based on fear of hell or hope of reward is less effective” (Robert J. Wieland, *Ten Great Gospel Truths*, #8, p. 27).

Uriah had an appreciation of the *agape* of God, which delivered him from egocentric motivation. We too can experience this change in motivation, providing we do not resist the drawing of the cross.

“Now as never before, we are to repent and be converted, that our sins may be blotted out, that an utter end shall be made of them forever in our lives” (A. T. Jones, *The Consecrated Way*, p. 127, Glad Tidings Publishers ed.).

This is the power and truth Uriah pointed out when speaking of the ark (sanctuary). While the ark and the congregation dwell in tents, David lounges in the palace shepherding his uncontrolled lusts with just as much concern as when he was tending his sheep.

Uriah rebukes David by asking, under the circumstances; shall I go home to eat and drink and lie with my wife? Then he takes an oath and says, “I will not do this thing.”

“Christ is a Good Shepherd who is seeking His lost sheep even though we have not sought Him. A misunderstanding of God’s character causes us to think He is trying to hide from us. There is no parable of a lost sheep that must seek and find its Shepherd” (Robert J. Wieland, op. cit., #4).

David the shepherd king is now only a lost sheep in a king’s palace.

“Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:15, 16). David then hated God and plotted His murder just as surely as he did Uriah’s.

The LORD sent Nathan to David—because the Good Shepherd always seeks His lost sheep—with the parable of the ewe lamb: “The light was flashed sharply upon the king, while he was in *utter darkness* as to what was thought of his actions in regard to Uriah. ... The king was *so completely wrapped in his garments of sin*, that he did not see that he was the sinner” (Ellen G. White, Letter 57, 1897; *Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1023; emphasis supplied).

“Then 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. However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die’” (2 Sam. 12:13, 14).

“David awakens as if from a dream” (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 379).

“The Lord draws us, but does not employ force. He calls, but does not drive. ... God has purposed salvation for *every soul that has ever come into this world*” (Ellet J. Waggoner, *Waggoner on Romans*, pp.140, 143).

David’s confession was deep and sincere. “Confession means, speaking the same thing; acknowledging that which is said; agreeing together. The confession of sin is the acknowledgment of sin that has been pointed out. The Holy Spirit comes as a convicter of sin, and says, ‘You have sinned in this thing,’ and we confess our sin when we speak

the same thing, and say, 'Yes; that is true.' ... Confession, therefore, means the acknowledging of what has been made known to us" (Ellet J. Waggoner, "Confessing Christ in the Flesh," *The Present Truth*, March 8, 1894).

"Abraham believed [agreed with] God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). This is righteousness by faith. Confession is the same thing as this for it is arrived at the same way. When the Holy Spirit points out our sin and we agree with Him that it is true, we are made clean—righteous. He believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

"The wrong was done to a man; the sin was against God; and to God the transgressor was accountable. 'So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God,' both for our sins against God and our wrongs to our fellowmen. *All sin* is, without qualification, against God" (A. T. Jones, "Divine and Human Government," *American Sentinel*, July 16, 1896).

"Every act which shows a lack of love for our neighbor, shows a lack of love for God; the wrong which one may do to his fellow-man is only secondary; the greater wrong is against God" (Ellet J. Waggoner, "The Consequence of Pleasing God," *The Signs of the Times*, April 20, 1888).

—Daniel H. Peters