2 Samuel - Commentaries by T.W.P. Wolston, Editor

The Gospel Messenger: Volume 9 (1894), "Thou Art the Man."

Article from https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb

NATHAN'S parable; as he confronted the guilty David, was very touching and heart-reaching.

"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 bad 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 traveler 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 had come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that bath done this thing shall surely die" (2 Sam. 12:1-6).

It was then that the faithful prophet hurled the dart at the guilty king, hardened in his wickedness; which sent divine convictions into his conscience, and laid him low in the dust before God, to abhor himself and his sin. "Thou art the man," was Nathan's faithful word.

Sad, awful, and aggravated was David's sin, and correspondingly deep must be the conviction and repentance. And deep and genuine it was, as the 51St Psalm, assures us. "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned; and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest."

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." Every sin that is committed is against God, and He will have to say to man about his sins, "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14). "God will bring them into judgment" (ch. 11:9).

Have you realized this solemn fact, my reader, that, in the first place, your sin is directed against God; that it is an outrage upon Him; and that God will bring you into judgment? You may have sinned against your neighbor, or against yourself, but primarily it is against God, — "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

Tremendous fact this, for all who are disposed to ignore the claims and judgment of God: "But know thou, for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." And God says what He means, and means just what He says. As well might you contend with the lightning's flash, as to contend with this fact. God will be God, in spite of all the cavillings of men; and when He judges, He will be vindicated in His judgment.

Before Nathan went to David, he was hardened in his sin, and blinded by it, and his anger wits kindled against the robber of the poor man. He said, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing he shall surely die." In these words David pronounced his own condemnation, and the condemnation of every sinner under heaven; for "the wages of sin is death," and "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment" (Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27).

Death and judgment are the portion of each and all. It is no question of someone else having sinned, but, as in David's case, "Thou art the man." You may be eloquent about the sins of others, but, nevertheless, "Thou art the man."

You may be able to depict certain sins, in all their awful deformity, and never have thought of your own; now God speaks to thee, and says, "Thou art the man."

You may have helped to send missionaries to heathen lands to convert and save them, and you may, never have been converted yourself. The voice of God is heard in the words of Nathan the prophet, as He looks at thee, saying, "Thou art the man."

Moralist— "Thou art the man."

Religionist— "Thou art the man."

Unsaved church-goer— "Thou art the man."

Unconverted Protestant— "Thou art the man."

Unconverted Roman Catholic— "Thou art the man."

Infidel— "Thou art the man."

Atheist— "Thou art the man."

Materialist— "Thou art the man."

Drunkard— "Thou art the man."

Unconverted Pope, cardinal, priest, bishop, preacher— "Thou art the man."

It is the arrow of the Almighty God for thee— "Thou art the man."

Oh, that it might work in thee what it wrought in David—sorrow, self-loathing, bitterness of spirit, self-judgment, real repentance toward God. “I have sinned against the Lord,” cried the convicted king. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin,” is the language of the now awakened sinner. What but mercy would do for him? —pure, sovereign, and undeserved mercy? And what but the death of God’s Son, and His shed blood, could be the ground upon which that mercy could righteously reach us?

God, who is rich in mercy, responded to David’s confession of his sin. David said. “I have sinned against the Lord.” The Lord, by Nathan, replied, “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.” How genuine it was too: “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin” (Psa. 32:3, 5).

Yes; “and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” Blessed, peace-giving words! They remind us of the words of the Saviour to the woman, in Luke 7:48-50, “Thy sins are forgiven.... Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

And surely we can add, in the language of Psalms 32, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

To be without guile before God is to make a clean breast of everything. Is it thus with you, my reader?

“Covered.” What can cover the sinner’s sins and iniquities? Can tears? Oceans of them would not. Would promises of self-amendment? Nay; for human promises are made to be broken, which only adds to the awful list already recorded.

Oh, what can cover the sins of the sinner, and hide them from the sight of a holy God forever?

What? —The precious blood of Christ.

On this ground alone could God forgive the sins of David; and on this ground only can God forgive your sins, dear reader, if they are yet unforgiven.

“Covered.” Blessed thought for every truly repentant believing soul! “Covered!” yes, thank God, and covered forever!

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (Rev. 1:5, 6.)

E. A.

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