

# First Light

## Consequences

By Art Hyde

It was a very hot night. The full moon illuminated his sleeping quarters as he attempted to catch some much-needed sleep. Outside, the unusually faint noises of the city did little to help him find repose as he tossed and turned with the hope that his mind would find peace and slumber. His constant reflection of all that had happened over the last few days caused him great anxiety and guilt, the kind of guilt that lives within one's soul like a rotting corpse.

As the night turned to morning, he gave up on his futile attempt to sleep and told his primary house servant to bring him breakfast, and the latest news regarding the previous day's activities.

The morning gave way to slightly cooler temperatures, but it would still be a very hot August day. He ate only a few bites of breakfast, stood, and began pacing the room. With each step, he raced to the place in his mind he did not want to visit. It was an emotional collision between the impassioned thoughts of his lover's beautiful body, and the acknowledgment of his crime, and the consequences that were to no doubt take place in the very near future. He slowed his gait near the open window that overlooked the ceremonial grounds of the city. He fell to his knees, looked to the heavens, and began to pray. Each word he spoke became a justification of his crime; words that never left the air just above his face. He could not justify what he had done, and whom he had murdered. Nevertheless, he knew his responsibilities would have to be fulfilled for the day. He dressed in his usual business attire, then made his way down the stairs to the city leaders' conference quarters. His emotional battle would have to be, somehow, placed on hold until the many demands of the day were addressed.

As his meeting with city leaders was well underway, his most valued consultant entered the room. The consultant motioned to him as to get his attention, then mouthed the words, "I must talk to you now." He asked those sitting at the table to excuse him, then walked to the doors at the back of the room toward the consultant. He said to Nathan, "What is so important, what's going on?" Nathan asked him to follow him outside the room into the hallway. Once they made their way to an unfrequented, and quiet area between two large marble columns, Nathan began to speak to his friend and leader.

"There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, 3 but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup, and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

4 "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

Reveal from the Bible: 2 Samuel: 11 and 12.

5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! 6 He must pay for that lamb four times over because he did such a thing and had no pity."

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7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 9 Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

11 "This is what the Lord says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes. I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."

Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. 14 But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for[a] the Lord, the son born to you will die."

15 After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. 16 David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth[b] on the ground. 17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

18 On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

19 David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

20 Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions, and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request, they served him food, and he ate.

21 His attendants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The Lord loved him; 25 and because the Lord loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.