

Summary Handout

“Create Within Me a Clean Heart”

Lesson

24

Summary

2 Samuel 11; David lies with Bath-sheba and she conceives—He then arranges for the death in battle of her husband Uriah.

2 Samuel 12; Nathan tells David the parable of the ewe lamb—The Lord gave many wives to David, who is now cursed for taking Bath-sheba—David fasts and prays for his son, but the Lord takes him—Solomon is born—David conquers the royal city of the Ammonites.

Psalm 51 David pleads for forgiveness after he went in to Bath-sheba—He pleads: Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Good Similarities Extend to Latter-day David: As discussed in lesson 22, the Jews expect a “latter-day” David. He would be similar to the former David in that he would be militarily, politically and spiritually capable. The tradition continues on, however, Jews choose to reflect on David’s good characteristics rather than on his grievous mistakes. His repentance is recognized. Yet, we feel that the payment for his immorality and murderous conspiracy extends into the eternities. In comparing Saul of Tarsus (Paul) with David, President Joseph F. Smith said the following.

Comparing Paul with David: “. . .and yet this man (Saul) committed no unpardonable sin, because he knew not the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:3; 9:1; 22:4; 26:10, 11); while, for the crime of adultery with Bathsheba, and for ordering Uriah to be put in the front of battle in a time of war, where he was slain by the enemy, the Priesthood, and the kingdom were taken from David, the man after God's own heart, and his soul was thrust into hell. Why? Because "the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David"--or, in other words, David possessed the gift of the Holy Ghost, and had power to speak by the light thereof. But even David, though guilty of adultery and murder of Uriah, obtained the promise that his soul should not be left in hell, which means, as I understand it, that even he shall escape the second death.” (*Gospel Doctrine, Joseph F. Smith, page 433*)

Bar Mitzvah “David” Expectation: There is a tradition to anticipate the expected latter-day David. This is done in joyful singing at a Bar Mitzvah celebration when a boy is thirteen years old (some do it at twelve years if the boy has no father). That is the age Jews traditionalize the ancient David was chosen and ordained by the Prophet Samuel to be the King of Israel. The folk song of David has even become a pop-song: “David, Melech Israel, hai, hai ve kayam.”

Repentance Causes Some Good to Come from Bad: “It is interesting that in an absolute monarchy such as David's, Nathan was able to publicly criticize the king without being killed immediately; what is even more remarkable is that David apparently realized his transgression, and repented his act. Nathan subsequently became a partisan of Bath-Sheba, and prophesied that her son Solomon would become king.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Latter-day Joseph and David: There are rabbinic suggestions of expected heaven-sent visitors that include a latter-day Messiah, Ben-Joseph, who will receive the keys of the gathering of Israel and restore temple worship. This was referred to by the Chief Rabbi Abraham HaCohen Kook when he explained that the Temple could not be built right away because there was no priesthood. There are other versions of this tradition of a Joseph of latter days. Also a latter-day David is expected (this is implied at almost every Bar Mitzvah as the congregants sing “David King of Israel” to the young lad). Their expectation is of a David who will emerge from obscurity to be a great king or leader in these last days. “But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” (*Jeremiah 30:9*) “And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.” (*Ezekiel 34:24*) “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.” (*Hosea 3:5*)

Latter-day Messiahs: Latter-day scripture refers to the Lord, to the Lord's servant (possibly a latter-day David), and to another latter-day servant (Joseph Smith). These servants are of dual descendancy. These ideas are seen in the answers given to questions from Isaiah chapter 11. "Who is the stem of Jesse? . . . It is Christ. What is the rod? . . . It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim. . . . What is the root of Jesse? . . . it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days." (*Doctrine & Covenants 113:1-6*)

David's Righteous Life Is the Model: The sinful part of his life is considered something he must work out with God. On the subject of repentance, Jewish thought includes the following. "Also to be learned is the fact that true repentance is accepted by God and earns His pardon for almost any sin. Because of its theme of sin, repentance, and forgiveness the Book of Jonah is read every Day of Atonement at the *Minbah* service."

Sin and Repentance: "The very fact that Judaism has a doctrine of *mitzvot* means that it must also take sin into consideration. Performing a *mitzvah* is doing God's will; sin is doing something which is against God's will. In biblical Hebrew there are about 20 different words which denote sin which range from a deliberate act in defiance of what God has forbidden to accidental, unwilling transgression. The Bible is therefore very much aware of sin." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Two Categories of Sins: "Sins can be divided into two categories --- those of commission and those of omission. The former are more serious insofar as they involve a positive action -- doing something which is forbidden. The latter consist of the failure to perform *mitzvot*. As far as the rabbis were concerned, the three most serious sins are murder, idolatry, and adultery or incest. They ruled that rather than commit these, a person must give up his life. In order to save his life . . ." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Moral Cleanness: Judaism is strong in its standard for Jews and non-Jews. Since there is an inclination for sinful drives, a purposeful effort to replace them is necessary. "Feelings of hatred, envy, self indulgence, sexual drives, greed are woven into man's nature as God created him. But these impulses can be re-directed by the *yezer ha-tov*, guided and disciplined by the laws of the Torah, so that instead of destructive forces they become creative powers for good. The sages taught that studying the Torah and living according to its commandments are the best way to assure this good. Men then marry, have children, develop commerce, act against injustice and persecution in a spirit of responsibility and high purpose. One need only look at the world around us to see the tragic results when the *yezer ha-ra* is irresponsible and unrestrained."

No One Immune: "Neither great personalities nor simple folk are immune to the power of the *yezer ha-ra*, which in rabbinic literature, is usually depicted as the influence of Satan. The function of Satan is to tempt all humanity and to test a person's sincerity. The rabbis taught that one must therefore always be aware of the power of temptation, for the *yezer ha-ra* can grow and become a bad habit. At first it resembles the thread of a spider's web, the wise men tell us, -- fragile and barely visible. If not controlled it will become as strong as a stout rope. Judaism places a high value on the good that results from man's victory over his evil inclinations. "Who is mighty?" ask the sages. "One who subdues his inclinations." " (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

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