

The Significance of God Naming Solomon 'Jedidiah'

Did you know that Solomon had another name in the Bible? And did you know that his other name was given by divine inspiration?

And did you know that there is a special message for all of us found in Solomon's other name?

We read in 2 Samuel 12:24-25 that, after David and Bathsheba's first son, they were intimate again and she gave birth to another son whom they named Solomon. The text then states, "The LORD loved him; and because the LORD loved him, He sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah."

So, God Himself named the baby Jedidiah, pronounced in Hebrew *ye-deed-yah*, meaning, "loved by Yahweh."

Why is this so significant?

Let's go back to chapter 11 of 2 Samuel.

We read there that, at the time of the year that kings would go out to war, David stayed back in his palace. One night, as he walked on the palace roof, he saw a very beautiful woman bathing. That woman was Bathsheba. And that woman was married to a man named Uriah, a loyal soldier who was away from home because he was serving on the battlefield—the very place where David should have been.

Yet not only did David take notice of this woman. He had her brought to the palace, knowing full well that she was married, and he slept with her.

But that's only the beginning of the story.

When David learned that Bathsheba was pregnant, he called

Uriah back from the battlefield under the guise of asking how things were going and with the obvious hope that he would sleep with his wife, thus thinking the baby was his own. But Uriah was such a devoted soldier that, rather than go home to his wife, he spent the night sleeping at the entrance of the palace.

So David had him stay one more night and this time got him drunk. Surely Uriah will head home now! But he didn't.

What did David do? Did he come clean and confess? Or did he send Uriah back to the battlefield, leaving Bathsheba to fend for herself?

No. David did something more wicked still. He sent instructions to Joab, the army commander, to put Uriah on the front lines and then to withdraw so Uriah would be killed. David even sent the instructions through Uriah himself, knowing he would not try to learn the contents of the communicate.

Talk about wickedness. Talk about treachery. It doesn't get much worse than this.

When news came that Uriah was killed, David expressed no remorse, instead taking Bathsheba as his wife after her time of mourning. "But," the Scripture states, "the thing David had done displeased the LORD" (2 Sam. 11:27).

The next chapter—2 Samuel 12—recounts how Nathan the prophet came with a stinging word of rebuke for David, guaranteeing much suffering and pain in the future: "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."

"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. You did it in

secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel'" (2 Sam. 12:10–12).

David said in response, "I have sinned against the LORD" (2 Sam. 12:13; for his heartfelt psalm of repentance and confession, see Psalm 51.)

In reply, Nathan said, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die" (2 Sam. 12:13–14, NIV).

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In the verses that follow, we read how the Lord struck down the child conceived in adultery, and, despite David's pleas, the baby died.

It is after this that we read that David and Bathsheba then had another child, Solomon, and it was this child that the Lord loved and named Jedidiah. How remarkable!

It is true that David's sin brought lasting damage on his household and tarnished his legacy. And it is true that both Uriah and the illegitimate child of David and Bathsheba died as a result of his sin.

It is also true that Solomon fell headlong into sexual sin himself, more than any king in Israel's history.

But that was not his destiny from birth. It was his own sinful choice.

That's because, despite the terrible sin of David, Solomon's father, God saw David's deep repentance to the point that He set His love on Solomon from birth. He even sent the prophet Nathan—the same man who rebuked David—to tell the king of His love for the child. To say it again: How remarkable!

The lesson for us is that even after our worst, most regrettable sins, if we truly humble ourselves and repent, if we get low and accept the consequence of our misdeeds, we can encounter the love of God afresh.

In this case, it would seem that the Lord wanted to let David and Bathsheba know that He had forgiven him/them, hence the naming of their child, removing the stain of guilt. He even wanted them to know that He would bless them from here on—this is almost inconceivable—to the point that Solomon was the one chosen to be David's successor.

Not only so, but if Solomon had remained faithful, the line of David would have become known as the line of Solomon as well. What love!

To be sure, it's so much better if we don't commit grievous sins against the Lord and against others. Our sins can really harm innocent people, not to mention ourselves.

And yet, God is a redeemer, filled with a love beyond anything we can imagine—think of the cross—to the point that a child born to a couple that itself was the fruit of adultery can be named Jedidiah, loved by Yahweh. How remarkable!

But there's still more to the story.

Perhaps you yourself are a Jedidiah. Perhaps you yourself were the product of sin. (I immediately think of two great Christian leaders, one male and one female, both of whom were conceived in rape.)

Perhaps the origins of your life or ministry or family can be traced back to a sinful union or unfortunate event. And perhaps, to this day, you feel a stigma or shame over your life or work.

Perhaps, as you submit your life afresh to Him, the Lord, in His love, will rename you Jedidiah as well. {eoa}

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