



December 30, 2007

Prophets: Nathan

What would it be like to be sent to confront a strong political figure of his crimes? Crimes that involve adultery, conspiracy and murder. God's servants, the prophets were often confronted with that responsibility as God charged them to warn the sinful and unruly of their need for correction, or, of their doom. Nathan is a prophet who was called on to do just that. He lived during a peaceful time in the beginning, but then saw the instability and upheaval of insurrection, flight and the installation of a new king in the midst of challenges to the throne. The life of Nathan demonstrates how a servant of God can be wrong, but if one has the correct attitude will make adjustments and change. Such was the case when David desired to build a house for the Lord. David, characterized as a man after God's own heart, had the best of intentions and when he revealed these to the prophet Nathan, the prophet agreed that this was well and advised the king, ***"Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee."*** (2 Sam 7.3). We might have good intentions in our service to God and we may even come up with good ideas, but we have to compare what we think with what God has to say about it. This happened with Nathan. After encouraging the king to do all that he planned, God spoke to Nathan with a different message to deliver. ***"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."*** (2 Sam 7.12-13). Nathan could have continued with his own encouragements, as false prophets would have, but when the word of the Lord was revealed, Nathan spoke as the Lord commanded. The same thing is true today. We are told to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet 4.11) and we are warned about teaching things that can lead others astray (Jas 3.1). Later, after David committed adultery with Bathsheba, had Uriah her husband killed, and had taken the woman for himself, Nathan was charged with rendering God's verdict against David. Nathan

stated, ***"Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."*** (2 Sam 12.10-12). David could have reacted in any number of ways to this pronouncement and confrontation but he demonstrated the kind of mind that we need to have. David repented and accepted the consequences for his transgression. Nathan, a faithful servant of God, did not shrink from his obligation to take this message to the king, regardless of what the outcome might be. We do not know what might have gone through the mind of Nathan when he discharged these duties, but we can conclude that he set aside whatever fears he may have entertained in order to do the will of God. In our lives there may be times that we are called upon to face the less than desirable situations that arise. Most of us like things to be going well and would have peace and harmony rather than trouble. The desire to create this "peace" has caused many to stray, and sometimes digress or neglect the commands of God. The consequences that were imposed on David meant that there would be turmoil in the kingdom and there may have been some who associated the prophet with these negative things. There are those today who will associate Christians with negative ideas based on the teaching of the truth. Many religious people have traded truth for a false unity that denies the gospel. Nathan is an example of one who did what God commanded in spite of the uncomfortable nature of what he was called on to do. He was more interested in being justified in the sight of God than the acceptance of man.

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