

GOD IS WATCHING

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” (Heb. 4:13)

DAVID LEARNED THIS LESSON THE HARD WAY

The familiar story of David and Bathsheba is found in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12. David was the king of all Israel and foolishly thought he could do anything he wanted to. So he took the wife of Uriah the Hittite and then had Uriah killed. The fact that Uriah was a “Hittite” is significant. Even though Uriah was one of David’s mighty men (2 Sam. 23:30), he was still a second class citizen in David’s eyes. As you know, the Hittites were one of seven nations God ordered to be driven out of the Promised Land. Israel was specifically commanded to “show them no mercy” and not to intermarry with them (Deut. 7:1-6). Solomon, David’s son, made slaves of the Hittites but he did not make any slaves of the Israelites (1 Ki. 9:20-22). To say “your mother was a Hittite” was a racial slur in the days of Ezekiel (Ez. 16:3, 45). Uriah, however, had come to believe in Jehovah and was a loyal servant of King David!

When David lusted after the beautiful Bathsheba he inquired who she was and was told that she was the “daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite” (2 Sam. 11:3). As we have already mentioned, Uriah was a faithful soldier and one of David’s mighty men. Bathsheba’s father, Eliam, the son of Ahithophel, was also one of David’s mighty men (2 Sam. 23:34). The fact that Uriah was a Hittite may well explain why David felt free to take his wife. The fact that Eliam was the son of Ahithophel may also explain why Ahithophel didn’t like David and joined with Absalom in rebellion against him (2 Sam. 16:15).

It is important to understand that Uriah was no longer a pagan! He not only believed in Jehovah but, as we have said, was also a loyal servant to King David. When David learned that Bathsheba was pregnant he tried to cover his sin by enticing Uriah to come home from the battle and sleep with his wife. The noble Uriah, however, responded to the sinful David: **“The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord’s men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live I will not do such a thing.” (2 Sam. 11:11)**

Uriah’s spiritual integrity is further established by the fact that David trusted him to carry his own death warrant to Joab. David’s gave a letter to Uriah instructing Joab: **“Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is the fiercest. Then withdraw from him so that he will be struck down and die” (2 Sam. 11:15)**. This cowardly command not only resulted in the death of Uriah, but also some other loyal men in David’s army (2 Sam. 11:17). After Bathsheba had time to mourn the death of her husband **“David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.” (2 Sam. 11:27)**

God, of course, was watching! God knew everything that David had done and sent the prophet Nathan to rebuke him (2 Sam. 12:1). Nathan told David a story about a rich man who oppressed a poor man. David burned with anger against the rich man and said: **“As surely as the Lord lives the man who did this deserves to die.”** Then Natan said to David: **“You are the man!” (2 Sam. 17:7)**

Sin has consequences and here are some of the consequences of David's sin (See 2 Sam. 12:10-14):

- The sword never departed from David's house.
- David's own son would bring calamity on him and sleep with his wives.
- David sinned in secret but God punished him in broad daylight.
- The child David fathered with Bathsheba died!

DAVID REPENTED

Instead of getting angry with Nathan, David was angry with himself and confessed: **"I have sinned against the Lord."** (2 Sam. 12:13) In 1 Kings 15:5 we are told: **"David had done what was right in the eyes of the Lord and had not failed to keep any of the Lord's commands all the days of his life – except in the case of Uriah the Hittite."**

David also demonstrated his repentance by composing the 51st Psalm. Here is a part of that beautiful psalm: **"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you . . ." (Ps. 51:1-13)**

DAVID IN PSALM 139 TESTIFIED THAT GOD IS ALWAYS WATCHING

Here is a part of Ps. 139: **"You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you . . ." (Ps. 139:1-12)**

We also need to learn that God is always watching: **"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."** (Rom. 15:4)

DAVID'S SINS WERE COVERED

When Adam and Eve sinned they realized that they were naked and sewed fig leaves together to make “coverings” for themselves (Gen. 3:7). Their “coverings,” however, were not sufficient so **“The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” (Gen. 3:21)** Thus the concept of “covering” became associated with having your sins forgiven. David wrote: **“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.” (Ps. 32:1)**

Yom Kippur is the holiest day in the Jewish Year. The word “yom” means “day”, and the word “kippur” means “atonement” and comes from the Hebrew word “kaphar” which means “to cover”. So “Yom Kippur” was the “day of the covering”. On that day the high priest entered into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood on a golden slab “covering” the Ten Commandments (Lev. 16:13-14).

The symbolism of this special day is significant.

- The covenant that God made with his people was the Ten Commandments. **“He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets.” (Deut. 4:13)**
- God designed this Law to condemn us by giving us the knowledge of our sin: **“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.” (Rom. 3:19-20)**
- The Ten Commandments were placed in a box called the “ark of the covenant” (Nu. 10:33).
- On top of the ark of the covenant was a golden slab called the “atonement cover” (Ex. 25:17).
- At each end of this covering were two angelic creatures called “cherubim.” They were facing each other with their wings out stretched over the “covering” with their faces looking at the “covering” (Ex. 25:18-20).
- Cherubim, as you know, were assigned by God to keep sinful man from the tree of life (Gen. 23-24). Now these angelic beings were represented as looking down on the Ten Commandments which condemns us as sinners.
- The Cherubim, however, didn’t see the Ten Commandments. They only saw the “covering”. All the cherubim saw was the golden atonement cover sprinkled with blood!
- The Apostle John tells us that Jesus Christ is that “covering.” He is also called our “propitiation” (1 Jn. 2:1-2).
- Thus the ark beautifully symbolizes that our sins are “covered” by Jesus! When God looks at us, He doesn’t see our sins, He only sees Jesus! That’s why there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1).

BETTER NEWS

It was “good news” that under the Old Covenant our sins were “covered”, but in Christ we have “better news.” In Christ our sins are not merely “covered”, they are completely “wiped out”. Peter said: **“Repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.” (Acts 3:19)** In Christ we are completely innocent as though we had never sinned at all!

When the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies with the blood of animals it was only an **“annual reminder of sins because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.” (Heb. 3-4)** **“Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest (Jesus) had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” (Heb. 10:11-14)**

This “one sacrifice” by Jesus “wiped out” all sins for believers both in the past and in the future. For **“He died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant” (Heb. 9:15)** This “better news” is the very essence of the Gospel. It assures us that Jesus **“by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”**

WHEN YOU ARE JUSTIFIED BY JESUS IT IS JUST AS THOUGH YOU HAD NEVER SINNED!

THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION IN CHRIST

After explaining how the law produced death (Rom. 7:13), Paul states triumphantly **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:1-4)**

THE FACT THAT GOD IS WATCHING IS REALLY GOOD NEWS

David, as a warrior for God, was constantly in danger. The “Good Shepherd,” however, protected David. The “Good Shepherd” watches over his sheep and will die to protect them. Jesus said: **“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (Jn. 10:14-15)** David took comfort in the fact that the Lord was his Shepherd. He wrote: **“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my**

cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” (Ps. 23:1-6)

Our “Good Shepherd” is not watching over us to condemn us, but to save us. The devil is the accuser of the brethren, not God (Rev. 12:10). In fact, the Scriptures assure us that **“God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Cor. 10:13)**

Here is another Psalm extolling the virtue of God’s watchful eye: **“I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.” (Ps. 121:1-8)**

ONE EXAMPLE OF HOW GOD PROTECTED DAVID

Here is just one of many examples of the way God protected David: **“Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted. And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David. But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David’s rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David’s men swore to him, saying, “Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished.” (2 Sam. 21:15-17)**

In this instance God used Abishai to rescue David from danger. In the case of Daniel he used an angel (Dan. 6:22). In the case of Elijah God instructed the ravens to feed him (1 Ki. 17:6). When Elisha needed help God caused an ax head to float (2 Ki. 6:3-7). When Joshua needed daylight God caused the sun to stand still (Josh. 10:212-14). When Peter needed money God provided his need with a coin from a fish’s mouth (Matt. 17:27). **“Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear” (Is. 59:1).**

YES! GOD IS A VERY PRESENT HELP IN TIMES OF TROULE (PS. 46:1)! IT IS GOOD NEWS THAT HE IS CONSTANTLY WATCHING OVER US!

OTHERS ARE ALSO WATCHING

On May 6, 1954 Roger Bannister broke the four minute mile for the first time in history. The conditions were less than ideal. The day was cold and the track was wet but with several thousand people cheering in the stands Bannister made history running the mile in 3 minutes and 59.4 seconds. 46 days later John Landy ran the mile in 3 minutes and 58 seconds. A year later 3 runners broke the four minute mile in a single race. Today, over 50 years later, over 1,000 runners have conquered the barrier that was once thought to be impossible.

There can be little doubt that cheering crowds increase the adrenaline flow of an athlete pushing them to greater feats of skill, speed, and strength. In this regard the book of Hebrews encourages us by stating: **“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”** (Heb. 12:1-3)

Paul wrote: **“None of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.”** (Rom. 14:7) In addition to God watching us, we are surrounded by family and friends and a great many others who are also watching us. It is also possible that the writer of Hebrews was advising his readers that the great heroes and heroines of the faith were also watching from heaven. After listing these faithful ones the writer connects Hebrews chapters 11 and 12 with the word “therefore”. The word “therefore” may well indicate that the great cloud of witnesses are spirits watching us from heaven. The Apostle John also reveals that we are being watched from heaven. In Revelation 6:9-11 John reveals that the souls of those who had been slain by the word of God were observing us on earth and wondering how long it would be before their blood was avenged.

Even more to the point however, the writer of Hebrews emphasizes the spiritual nature of Christian worship. Jewish worship emphasized the physical (Heb. 12:18-21). The Hebrews worshiped at a mountain you could “touch” but Christian worship involved spiritual realities that can not be touched. Please consider: **“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.”** (Heb. 12:22-24)

Yes! In addition to human witnesses watching us on earth, we are also being watched by thousands upon thousands of angels and the spirits of the righteous made perfect. Praise God! **“There is rejoicing in the presence of God over one sinner who repents.”** (Lk. 15:10)

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”

