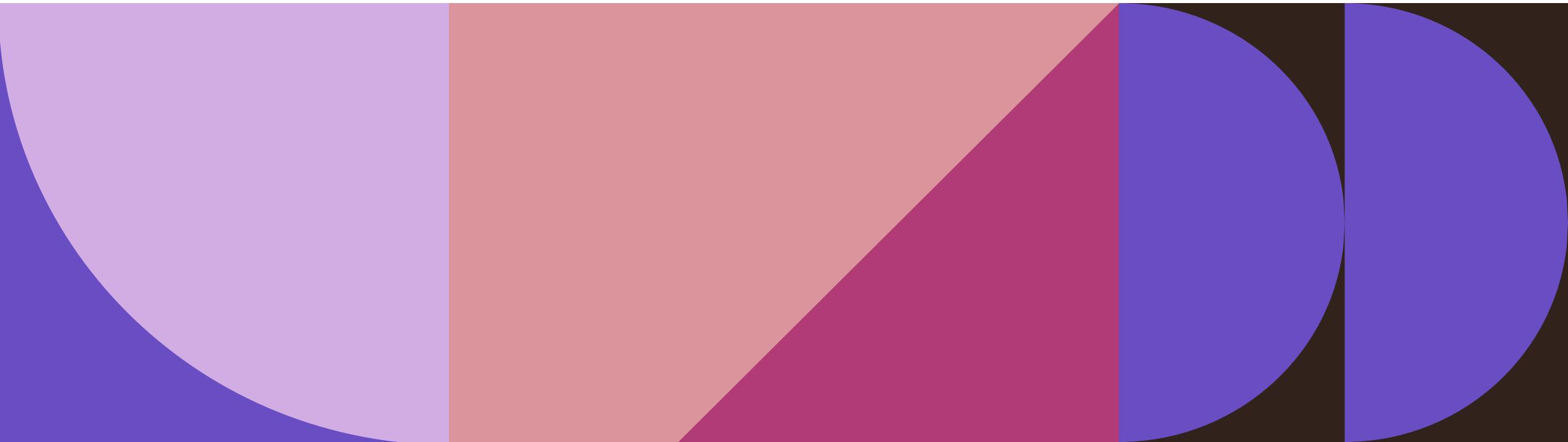


# **PSALM 51**

Prayer for Cleansing and Pardon

# What's The Background for the Prayer?



# David Commits Adultery with Bathsheba

<sup>11</sup> In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> It happened, late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. <sup>3</sup> David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, "This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite." <sup>4</sup> So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself after her period.) Then she returned to her house. <sup>5</sup> The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."

<sup>6</sup> So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. <sup>7</sup> When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the people fared, and how the war was going. <sup>8</sup> Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. <sup>9</sup> But Uriah slept at the entrance of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. <sup>10</sup> When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "You have just come from a journey. Why did you not go down to your house?" <sup>11</sup> Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah remain in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing." <sup>12</sup> Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. On the next day, <sup>13</sup> David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

# ***David Has Uriah Killed***

<sup>14</sup>In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. <sup>15</sup>In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die." <sup>16</sup>As Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant warriors. <sup>17</sup>The men of the city came out and fought with Joab; and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite was killed as well. <sup>18</sup>Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting; <sup>19</sup>and he instructed the messenger, "When you have finished telling the king all the news about the fighting, <sup>20</sup>then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? <sup>21</sup>Who killed Abimelech son of Jerubbaal? Did not a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead too.' "

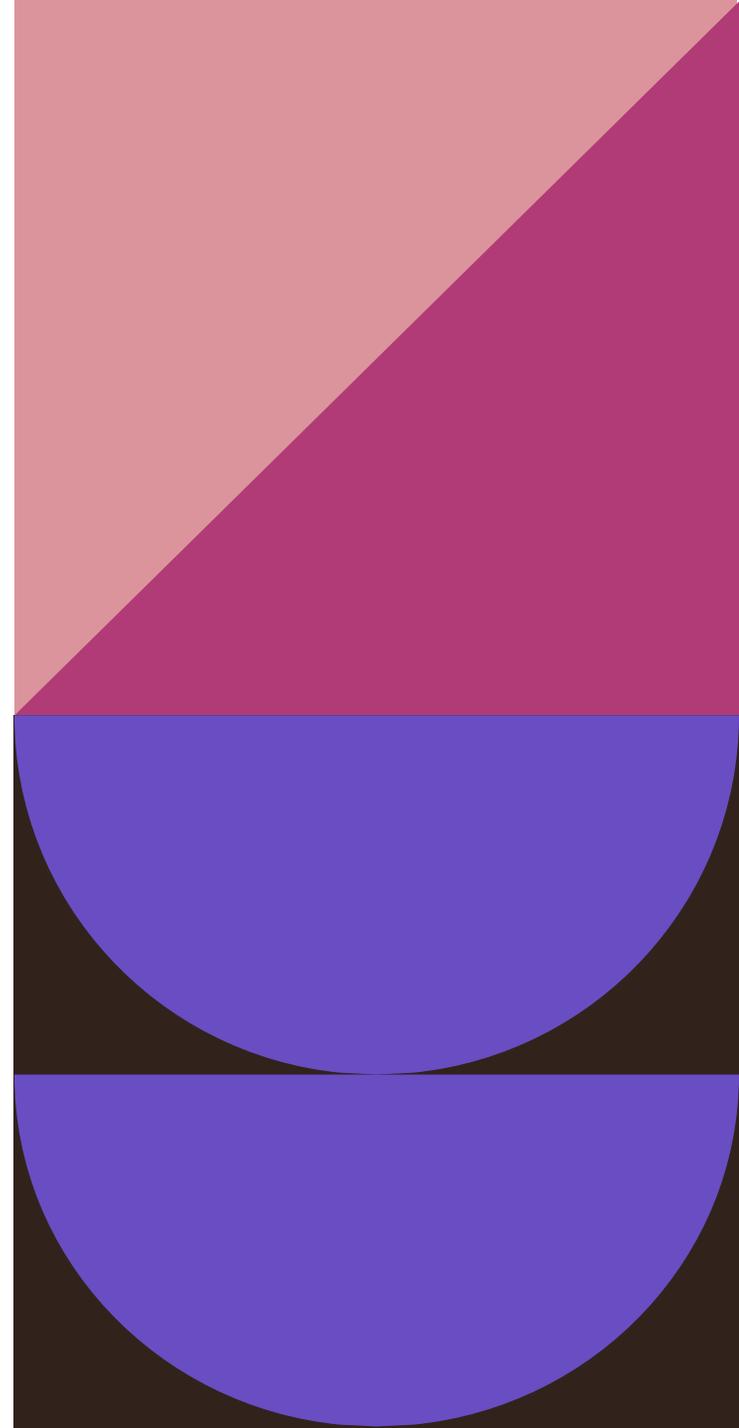
<sup>22</sup>So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell. <sup>23</sup>The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage over us, and came out against us in the field; but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. <sup>24</sup>Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall; some of the king's servants are dead; and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." <sup>25</sup>David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab, 'Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one and now another; press your attack on the city, and overthrow it.' And encourage him."

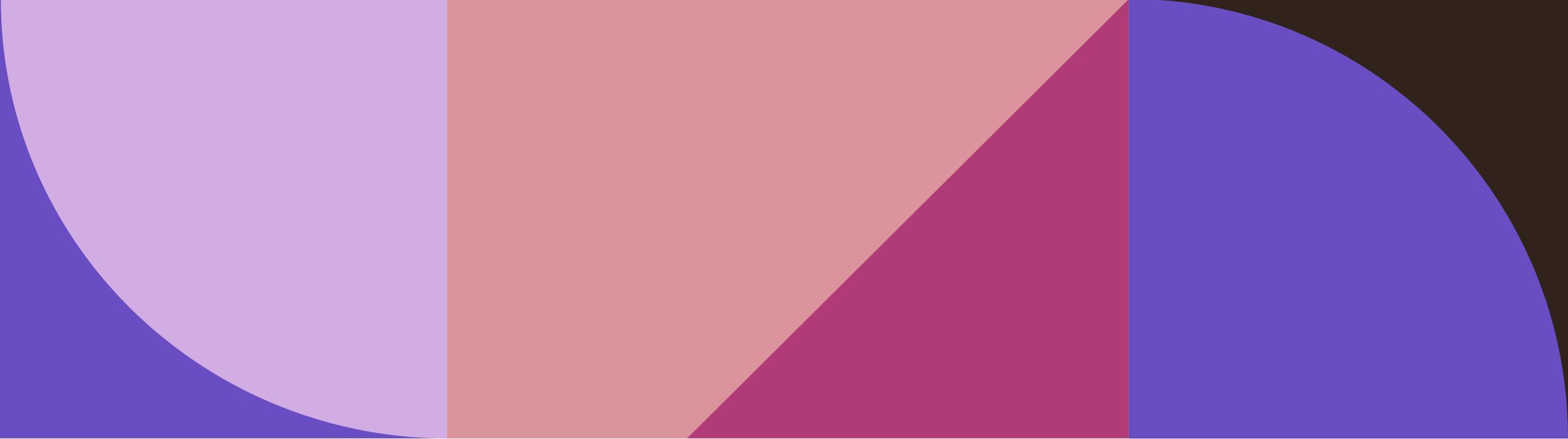
<sup>26</sup>When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him. <sup>27</sup>When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son.

# ***Nathan Condemns David***

But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, <sup>12</sup> <sup>1</sup> and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup> The rich man had very many flocks and herds; <sup>3</sup> but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. <sup>4</sup> Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him." <sup>5</sup> Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; <sup>6</sup> he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

<sup>7</sup> Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; <sup>8</sup> I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. <sup>9</sup> Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. <sup>10</sup> Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. <sup>11</sup> Thus says the Lord: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun. <sup>12</sup> For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." <sup>13</sup> David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan said to David, "Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the Lord, the child that is born to you shall die." <sup>15</sup> Then Nathan went to his house.





**What did David do next?**

# Guilty Seeking a Pardon

- It is a pity indeed that in our devout addresses to God we should have any thing else to do than to praise God, for that is the work of heaven;
- but we make other work for ourselves by our own sins and follies:
- we must come to the throne of grace in the posture of penitents, to confess our sins and sue for the grace of God;
- and, if therein we would take with us words, we can nowhere find any more apposite than in this psalm, which is the record of David's repentance for his sin in the matter of Uriah, which was the greatest blemish upon his character: all the rest of his faults were nothing to this.

# The Inlet of Sins

- David fell.
- He was not utterly cast down, for God graciously upheld him and raised him up.
- The sin which, in this psalm, he laments, was the folly and wickedness he committed with his neighbor's wife, a sin not to be spoken of, nor thought of, without detestation.
- His debauching of Bathsheba was the inlet to all the other sins that followed; it was as the letting forth of water.
- This sin of David's is recorded for warning to all, that he who thinks he stands may take heed lest he fall.

# Find a Friend and Be a Friend – Point Back to God

- The repentance which, in this psalm, he expresses, he was brought to by the ministry of Nathan, who was sent of God to convince him of his sin, after he had continued above nine months without any particular expressions of remorse and sorrow for it.
- But though God may suffer his people to fall into sin, and to lie a great while in it, yet he will, by some means or other, recover them to repentance, bring them to himself and to their right mind again.
- Herein, generally, he uses the ministry of the word, which yet he is not tied to. But those that have been overtaken in any fault ought to reckon a faithful reproof the greatest kindness that can be done them and a wise reprover their best friend.
- *Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be excellent oil.*

# Pray for Mercy and Grace to the Lord

- David, being convinced of his sin, poured out his soul to God in prayer for mercy and grace.
  - Where should backsliding children return?
  - Whom are they backsliding from?
  - Who can heal their backslidings?
- 

# Set An Example

- He drew up, by divine inspiration, the workings of his heart towards God, upon this occasion, into a psalm, that it might be often repeated, and long after reviewed;
- and this he committed to the chief musician, to be sung in the public service of the church

# Psalm 51: 1-8

## Prayer for Cleansing and Pardon

To the leader. A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone into Bathsheba.

<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.

<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.

<sup>4</sup> Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence

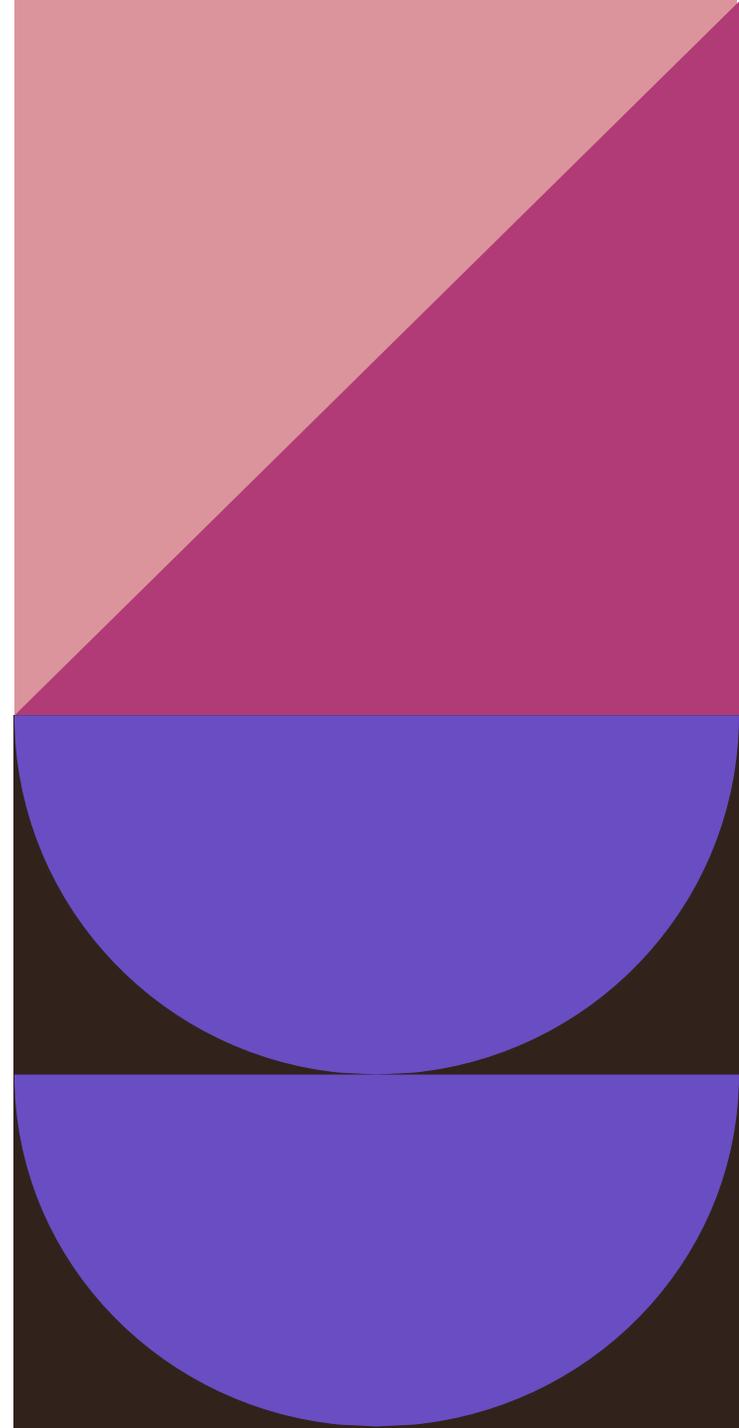
and blameless when you pass judgment.

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, I was born guilty,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

<sup>6</sup> You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore, teach me wisdom in my secret  
heart.

<sup>7</sup> Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be  
clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed  
rejoice.



# Psalm 51:9-19

<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.

<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.

<sup>14</sup> Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your  
deliverance.

<sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.

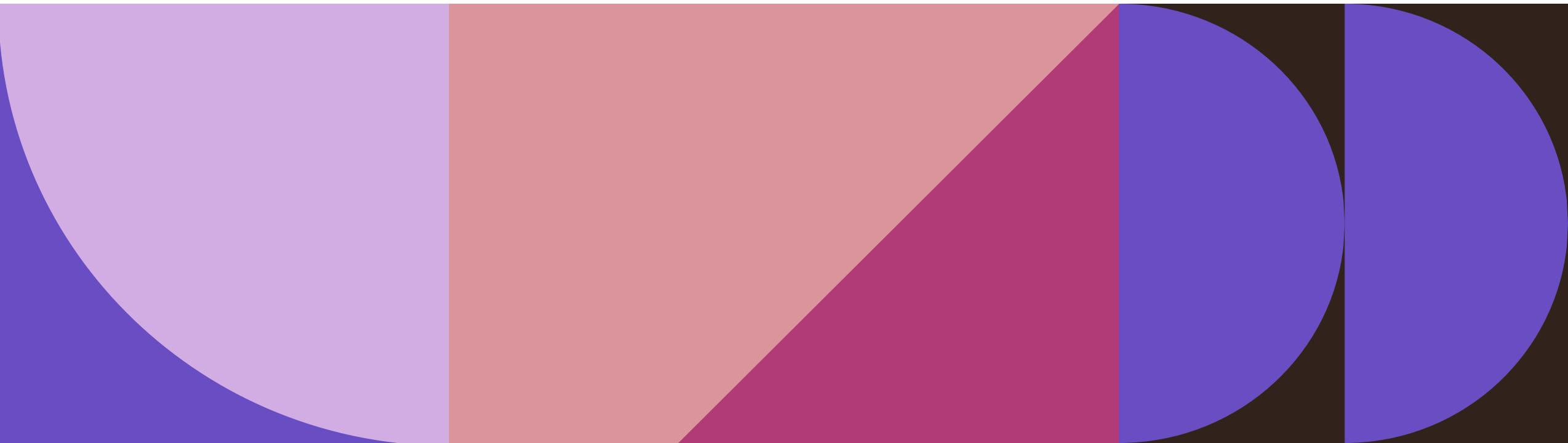
<sup>16</sup> For you have no delight in sacrifice;  
if I were to give a burnt offering, you would  
not be pleased.

<sup>17</sup> The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken  
spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will  
not despise.

<sup>18</sup> Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;  
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,

<sup>19</sup> then you will delight in right sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

# The Turnaround



# Sin

- Sin and Death – Death is the unnatural divorce of the immaterial soul and the physical body, resulting from the separation between God and humanity, brought about by sin.
- Actual Sin – Actual sin refers to the volitional disobedience of created beings to God their creator. In the case of Adam's descendants, actual sin realizes or affirms original sin.
- Original Sin – Original sin is the doctrine that, as a result of Adam's fall, all mankind are sinners by nature, having a propensity to sin that underlies every actual sin.
- Personal Sin – Personal sin is an act of revolt against the God toward whom every person owes love and obedience. The fall of Adam and Eve is the paradigm for the nature of personal sin and its consequences.
- Punishment for Sin – The nature of divine justice and holiness is such that any and every sin must be punished, and the punishment must fit the crime.
- Condemnation for Sin – The condemnation of sin is an expression of God's holy and righteous character against all manner of sin, personal as well as structural, and involves his judicial wrath toward those on the receiving end of such dealings, whether that sin be of human origin or of fallen angelic origin.
- Structural Human Sin – Structural sin refers to patterns of rebellion, idolatry, and hatred that are embedded in fallen human social life, often in institutional forms of structural sins committed by human groups and institutions and cultures.

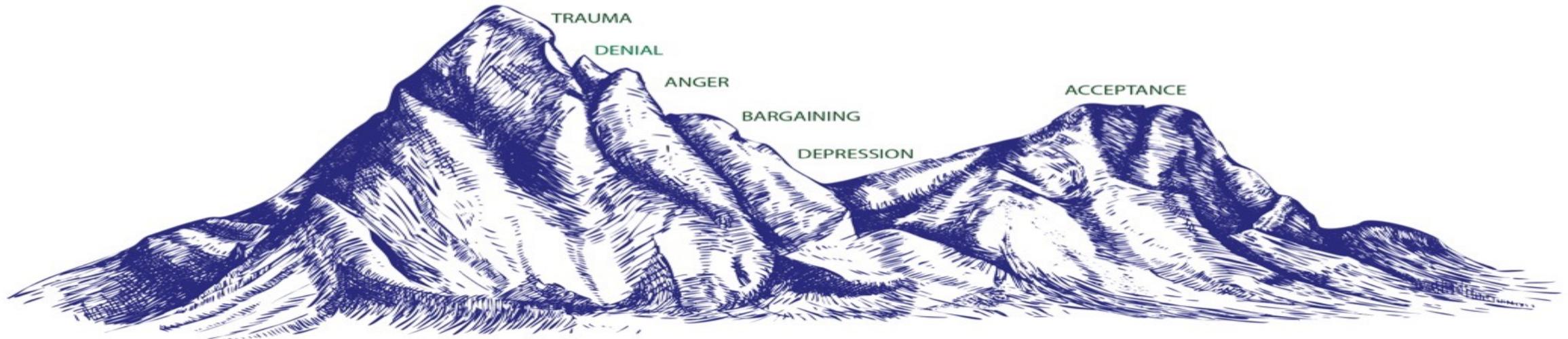
# Trauma

Sin leads to trauma. Every trauma doesn't leave us traumatized, but some do.

Trauma - an emotional shock that causes lasting psychological damage

## ACCEPTING TRAUMA

Seek to Understand Before Seeking to Be Understood.



# Repentance

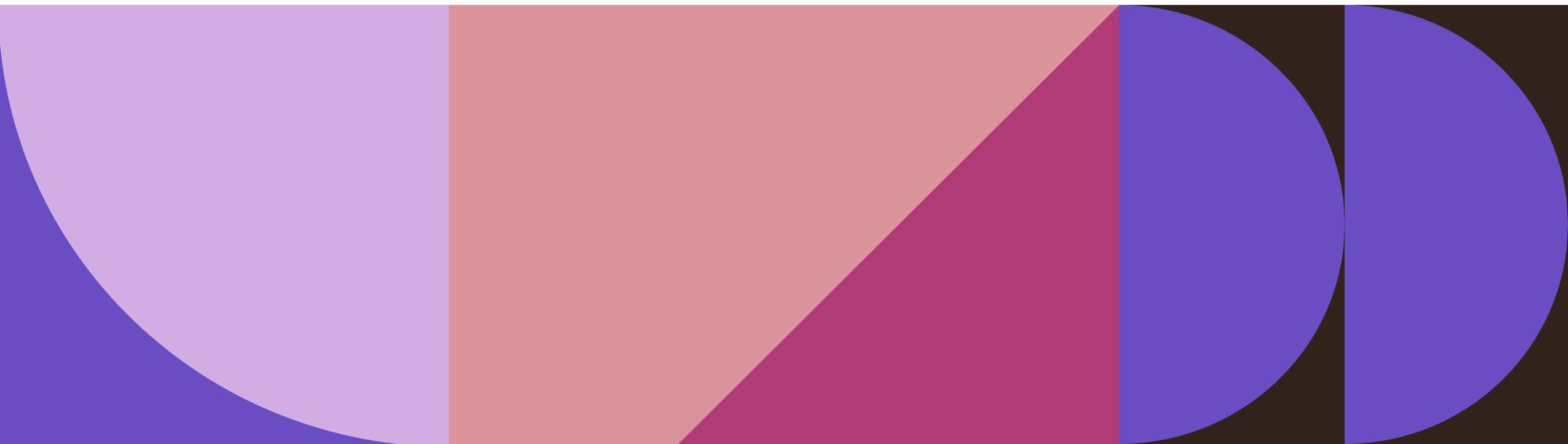
- Repentance is the act whereby one turns from his or her sin, idolatry, and creaturely rebellion and turns to God in faith.
- The presupposition of repentance is the tragic phenomenon of sin.
- The totality of creation was made to exist in perfect fellowship with and before God, so sin represents a contradiction of the end for which the world was made.
- Restoration of fellowship with God, therefore, requires sinful people to forsake their rebellious posture and return to a life of creaturely peace in obedience to the Creator God.
- Repentance is this act of turning and returning.

# Turn Around - Return - Retreat

- In the Old Testament, the verb generally translated “repent” means “to turn around” or “return.”
- The term can be used in a literal sense (e.g., a hostile force “turning back” or “retreating”; Ps 9:3), but also in a more spiritual or moral sense: “Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness” (Isa 1:27).

**Think of a time when you prayed for cleansing and pardon.**

**Now, Thank God for His mercy and grace!**



## Questions

- How may you use your knowledge of David in 2 Samuel 11 and his prayer in Psalm 51 to encourage someone else?
- Have you ever had to deliver a message like Nathan?

## References

**Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 816.**

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