

BIBLE WOMEN – Lesson 11

Bathsheba

I. BATHSHEBA - The historical setting for the events involving the relationship between David and Bathsheba:

- A. 2 Samuel 3 and 4 - Saul's son, Ishbosheth, who began to reign over Israel after Saul's death was murdered by the sons of Saul's captains.
1. **2 Samuel 5:1-5** - David was finally crowned king over all of Israel. He was about 38 years old.
 2. After David defeated the Philistines, David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. It had been captured when Samuel was young.
 3. While Israel enjoyed peace, David also wanted to build a house for the Lord, but was told that his son, Soloimon would build it instead (chapter 7).
 4. **2 Samuel 9** – David asked, Ziba (who had been Saul's servant), if there were anyone left of the house of Saul that he could show kindness to for Jonathan's sake.
 - a. Ziba told David that a of son Jonathan's, who was lame in his feet, was still living.
 - 1) When Saul and Jonathan were killed, Jonathan's son (Mephiboheth) was five years old.
 - 2) The child's nurse took him and fled because she feared for his life. As she ran with the child, he fell and became lame in both his feet. **2 Samuel 4:4**
 - a. David learned where he was living and he sent servants to bring Jonathan's son to him.
 - b. By the time David found Mephibosheth, he was a grown man with a young son of his own.
 - c. When Mephibosheth was brought to David, he was afraid. He knew that when a new king ascended to the throne that the descendants of the previous king were all killed to eliminate any competition for the throne; so naturally he feared for his life and that of his son.
 - d. **2 Samuel 9:7** – David said to him, *"Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."*
 - e. Then David called Ziba, and said to him: **Vs. 9** – *"I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house.¹⁰ You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in the harvest, that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always."*

- f. Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants, so Mephibosheth was to be well cared for and he was always welcomed at the table of King David as well.
- B. While David was in this charitable mood, the king of the people of Ammon died. These were the descendants of Lot through one of his daughters.
1. **2 Samuel 10:2** – David said, *"I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me."*
 2. David sent servants to comfort the prince concerning his father's death.
 3. Some officials in Ammon said to Hanun, the king's son, **Vs. 3** – *"Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not rather sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"*
 4. Hanun listened to his advisors and they took David's servants and shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments at the waist and sent them away in shame.
 5. When David heard of this, he sent men to meet his servants because they were greatly shamed. David told them to wait at Jericho until their beards had grown out and then they could return to Jerusalem. This was to spare them shame among the Israelites.
 6. By this time the people of Ammon realized that they had made themselves repulsive to David, so they hired mercenaries to help defend themselves from the wrath of David: They hired:
 - a. Syrians, with twenty thousand foot soldiers
 - b. From Maacah, one thousand foot soldiers
 - c. From Ish-Tob twelve thousand men
 7. David learned that Ammon was gathering forces and he sent Joab and all the army of Israel to face them in battle.
 - a. When Joab's army came near for battle, the Syrians ran away.
 - b. When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were running away, they also ran to the city.
 - c. When the Syrians realized how they had been embarrassed by their shameful performance against the army of Israel they decided to gather their forces to attack Israel in an effort to regain their reputation.
 - 1) When David heard this he sent his army against them again.
 - 2) Again the Syrians fled before Israel.
 - 3) David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians.
 - 4) They also killed the commander of their army.

- d. When all of the kings that were servants to Hadadezer of Syria heard that Syria had been defeated, they all made peace with Israel and served them.
- e. After this the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore **2 Samuel 10:15-19**

II. DAVID'S SIN - It was during this war with Ammon that David first noticed Bathsheba. **2 Samuel 11**

- A. While Joab and the army of Israel were fighting, David remained in Jerusalem.
 1. One night David was walking on the roof of his house when he saw a very beautiful woman bathing next door. **Vs 2**
 2. Since we are not given any insight into Bathsheba's mind, we can only speculate as to why she placed herself in this situation:
 3. If she was aware that her rooftop was in view of anyone on the roof of the Palace next door, then could she have been purposely tempting someone?
 4. If so, she would have had to know that David was on the roof at that specific time, which would have involved planning on her part.
 - a. I believe it is much more likely that she did not know that she could be seen by anyone while on the roof of her own home.
 - 1) Nothing in the scripture ever implies that her motives were impure or that she "set a trap" for King David.
 - b. David sent and inquired about the woman and was told that she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite.
 - c. David sent messengers to bring Bathsheba to him. David took advantage of his position and power since she would have been hesitant to refuse any demand of the king of Israel. David lay with her and sent her home.
 - d. Later when Bathsheba learned that she had conceived a child, she sent a message to David saying, "I am with child."
 5. When David received the news, he sent a message to Joab saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." **Vs. 6**
 - a. When Uriah arrived, David started with "small talk" – "How is Joab?", "How are the people doing?", "How is the war going?".
 - b. Then David offered to reward Uriah for his service by sending him home to his wife to relax and eat some good food.
 - c. Uriah left the king's house and a gift of food from the king followed him, but Uriah slept in the door of the doorway of the king's house along with all of David's servants.
 - d. The next day, when they told David that Uriah did not go to his house, David asked Uriah why he didn't go home.

- e. Uriah said, *"The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing."*
2 Samuel 11:11
 - f. Then David said to Uriah, *"Wait here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart."* **Vs. 12** So Uriah remained in Jerusalem
 - g. Later David called for Uriah and they ate and David provided plenty of drink until Uriah was drunk. David thought then surely he would go home to his wife.
 - h. However, Uriah did not go home but slept in the doorway with the servants again.
6. David's plan to hide his sin by sending Uriah home to Bathsheba failed and he was desperate for another solution.
- a. David sent Uriah back to the battle with a letter to Joab the next day.
 - b. The letter said: *"Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die."* **Vs. 15**
 - c. Joab obeyed David and Uriah was killed in the battle and he sent a message to David informing him.
 - d. When Bathsheba heard that Uriah was dead, she mourned for him. When her mourning was over, David sent for her and she became his wife and bore him a son.
 - e. But David had greatly displeased God in this action. **Vs. 27**
7. After this, God sent Nathan, the prophet to David. Nathan told David a very interesting story:
- a. **2 Samuel 12:1-15** – *"There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.² The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds.³ But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him.⁴ And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."*
 - b. When David heard this, he became very angry against the man and said to Nathan, **Vs. 5-6** – *"As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!⁶ And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."*
 - c. Nathan replied, *"You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the*

*hand of Saul. ⁸ I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! ⁹ Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. ¹⁰ Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. ¹¹ Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from 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 sun. ¹² For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'" **Vs. 7-12***

- d. After all David had done to hide his sin, he could not hide from God.
- C. Even though David transgressed God's law on several occasions, verse 13 shows us the reason that David was considered "a man after God's own heart". **Acts 13:22**
1. Immediately David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."
 - a. While David was an imperfect man and he committed a terrible sins.
 - 1) First by committing adultery with Bathsheba
 - 2) Second, by killing an innocent man to cover his own lustful sin
 - b. However, he was also one who did not hesitate to confess his sin and sincerely repent.
 2. Because David repented, he was not sentenced to die, but he still had to face the consequences of his sin.
 - a. Israel would never have rest from their enemies as long as David was king. **2 Samuel 12:10**
 - b. Adversity would arise within his own household. **Vs. 11**
 - c. The final and worst consequence was that the son born to David and Bathsheba would not survive. **Vs. 13-15**
 - 1) This last punishment also affected Bathsheba as well, perhaps because she participated in the adulterous act with David. However, for the most part, she was caught in circumstances far beyond her control.
 - a) While she was guilty of adultery, we must consider the power a king had over his subjects at this time. Perhaps Bathsheba was afraid to refuse the king's advances.
 - b) The king had the power of life or death and few people were courageous enough to refuse anything the king demanded from them.

- c) Bathsheba certainly had no part in the death of her husband, and since she was about to have a child, she may have felt that marriage to David was her only option.
 - 2) David and Bathsheba both mourned the death of their infant son. Later she gave birth to another son, named Solomon.
 - a) The Lord loved Solomon. **Vs. 24**
 - b) Nathan, the prophet called the child "Jedidiah", which means "beloved of the Lord".
- B. Very soon the punishment God pronounced upon David began to occur.
- 1. The son born to Bathsheba became sick and died. **Vs. 13-15**
 - 2. Adversity was also about to arise within his own household. **Vs. 11**
 - a. David's first born son, Amnon fell in love with his half-sister, Tamar. **2 Samuel 13:1ff**
 - a. He pretended to be sick then requested that his sister, Tamar, bring him some food.
 - b. When Tamar arrived, Amnon sent everyone else away, then he forced Tamar to submit to his advances.
 - c. Afterward, Amnon hated Tamar so much that his hatred was greater than the love he first had for her. **Vs. 15**
 - d. When David heard of this, he was very angry, but Tamar's brother Absalom hated Amnon from that day. He prepared for two years to take vengeance against Amnon for the disgrace he caused Tamar.
 - e. Absalom devised a plan: He planned a feast at the end of the sheep shearing and he invited all of David's sons. He invited David and all servants as well. But David refused (as Absalom knew he would) saying it would be too much of a burden for Absalom to have the king present.
 - f. So Absalom said, "Then just let Amnon go with us." So Amnon went to the feast with all of his brothers.
 - g. Absalom commanded his servants saying, **Vs. 28-29** -- "*Watch now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon!' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant.*"²⁹ So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each one got on his mule and fled.
 - h. David learned that Absalom had killed Amnon because of what he did to Tamar.
 - i. Absalom ran away to Geshur (Syria) and stayed there three years.
 - j. After mourning for Amnon, David forgave Absalom and longed to see again, so he sent Joab to bring him home to his own house.

3. Absalom then began to stand daily at the gate where the people of Israel came to bring their lawsuits to the king for judgment. Absalom would tell them that their case was good but the king had no deputy to hear their cases.
 - a. Then Absalom would say, *"Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice."* **2 Samuel 15:4**
 - b. Absalom also showed affection to the people by bowing to them when they approached, he also reached out and kissed them as a greeting. He was quite a "politician".
 - c. Absalom continued this until he stole the hearts of all of the men of Israel.
 - d. Verse 7 says *"Now it came to pass after forty years that Absalom said to the king, 'Please let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I made to the Lord while I was in Geshur.'"*
 - 1) This reads like it means – for forty years Absalom won the hearts of all of Israel and then he asked David for permission to go to Hebron.
 - 2) This poses a great problem of accuracy. It is another of the examples that Bible skeptics use to point out contradictions in the Bible.
 - 3) One obvious conflict is that it is very unlikely that Absalom would be asking permission to fulfill a vow he made over forty years before when he was in hiding in Geshur after killing Amnon.
 - 4) The major problem is that Absalom could not even be forty years old at this time. Most likely he was about 30-35 years old. He was born when David was reigning as king in Hebron. Since David only reigned forty years and six months, Absalom could not have spent forty years "stealing the hearts of Israel", since he was an adult when he began this campaign.
 - 5) Some commentaries have suggested that this was an obscure way of counting time in Israel and it means "forty years after David was anointed to be the next king by Samuel when David was a young boy". There is no evidence to confirm this idea.
 - 6) The most accepted thought is that an error was made by a scribe writing the original Hebrew text. Since the Hebrew word for "forty" is very similar to the Hebrew word for "four", it is much more likely that this is a "scribal error", which is very possible since copying Hebrew text was a very tedious, time-consuming job.
 - 7) Even four years of continuing the campaign to "steal the hearts of all of the Israelites" is quite a show of dedication to a goal.

- However, Absalom knew that he could never usurp his father's throne unless he had the majority of Israel on his side.
- e. David gave permission to go to Hebron, however instead of fulfilling a vow, he put his plan to usurp the throne into action.
 - f. Absalom sent spies throughout all of the tribes of Israel saying, "*As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'*" **Vs. 10**
 - g. Absalom had two hundred men invited from Jerusalem who didn't know Absalom's plan. Then he sent for Ahithophel (David's counselor), then the conspiracy grew strong while the people with Absalom continually increased in number.
4. When David heard that Absalom was gathering a multitude to support him, David said to all of his servants in Jerusalem, "*Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom.*" **Vs. 15**
- a. David took all of his household and his servants and left the city. Even six hundred men from Gath followed him. David tried to send them back, since they were foreigners, but they refused to leave David.
 - b. David left ten concubines in his house to keep things there.
 - c. The high priest, Zadok, and all of the Levites, bearing the Ark of the Covenant wanted to go with David, but he sent them back to Jerusalem saying, "*If God wants me to remain King, he will bring me back to Jerusalem. If he has no delight in me, then let Him do to me as seems good to Him.*" **Vs. 25-26**
5. Meanwhile Absalom was receiving bad advice from his counselor saying, "*Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong.*"²² *So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.*" As we have mentioned before, this act was an outright statement that Absalom intended to take the throne from his father.
6. This was a direct fulfillment of the punishment God declared on David when he said, ¹¹ *Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from 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 sun.* ¹² *For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'* **2 Samuel 12:11-12**
7. David and thousands of his supporters were still in the wilderness hiding from Absalom, but eventually Absalom lead an army out to pursue David.

8. David divided his army into thirds with his commanders being Joab, and his brother Abishai along with Ittai, who was a foreigner that supported David.
- a. David gave them orders to “deal gently with Absalom” for David’s sake.
 - b. When Absalom met David’s men, he was riding on a mule and he went under a great tree and his hair was caught in the boughs of the tree and he was left hanging there.
 - c. Someone told Joab what had happened to Absalom. Absalom scolded the man saying, *“Why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten shekels of silver and a belt.”*
2 Samuel 18:12
 - d. But the man said to Joab, *“Though I were to receive a thousand shekels of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king’s son. For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, ‘Beware lest anyone touch the young man Absalom!’”*
 - e. Joab left with three spears in hand and went to Absalom where he struck Absalom in the heart as he hung by his hair in the tree, and ten men with him also struck Absalom’s body.
 - f. Then Joab blew the trumpet to let the Israelites know that they should return.
 - g. They cast Absalom’s body into a large pit in the woods and laid a very large heap of stones over him. Joab sent a messenger to tell David that the battle was over but he was not to tell David that Absalom was dead. However, Ahimaaz, the son of the priest followed the messenger because he wanted to tell the good news to David.
 - h. Ahimaaz outran the first messenger and said, *“All is well! The Lord your God has delivered up the men who raised their hand against the king.”* **Vs. 28**
 - 1) Immediately David asked, *“Is the young man Absalom safe?”*
 - 2) Just then the first messenger arrived saying, *“There is good news, my lord the king! For the Lord has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you.”*
 - 3) Again, David asked if Absalom was safe and the messenger said, *“May the enemies of the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!”* (In other words, dead.)
 - 4) When David heard this he went to his chamber and wept saying, *“Oh my son Absalom – my son, my son Absalom – if only I had died in your place!”* **Vs. 33**

9. Joab was angry when he heard that David was mourning so much for Absalom because Joab felt that David was dishonoring those who fought against Absalom to save the lives of David, his sons, his wives and his concubines.
 - a. Joab said, *"...for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well."*
 - b. Joab also told David that he must go out and comfort his servants (those who had supported him against Absalom) because Joab feared that none of them would remain loyal if he did not, so David went out and comforted the people.

- D. In the fortieth year of his reign, David was almost seventy years old and very sick, his third son, Adonijah decided he would be king, since his two older brothers were dead. **1 Kings 1**
 1. The problem was, Adonijah didn't wait for David to die. He made plans to be anointed king without David's knowledge.
 - a. Adonijah was also a very handsome man and his father had never questioned anything that he did or corrected his behavior in any way. **Vs. 5-6**
 - b. Adonijah enlisted Joab and Abiathar, the priest to help him. But Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and three mighty aids to David did not support Adonijah.
 - c. Adonijah sacrificed sheep and oxen and fattened cattle in countryside and he invited all of his brothers and all of the men of Judah and the king's servants. But he did NOT invite King David or Nathan the prophet or the mighty men who supported King David. Neither did he invite his brother Solomon.
 2. When Nathan the prophet heard of Adonijah's plans, he went to see Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon saying, *"Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it?"¹² Come, please, let me now give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. ¹³ Go immediately to King David and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, "Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?'¹⁴ Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words."*
 - a. So Bathsheba went to see David. She reminded him that he had promised her that Solomon would reign as king after David.
 - b. Then she told David that Adonijah was about to be anointed as king without David's knowledge. She reminded him also that if Adonijah

became king that she and Solomon would both be in danger of being killed by Adonijah to rid him of any competition for the throne.

- c. Bathsheba told David that all of Israel was waiting to see what David would say.
- d. As Bathsheba was speaking, Nathan the prophet came in and confirmed the facts to David saying, "My lord, O king, have you said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne'? ²⁵ For he has gone down today, and has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, and the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and look! They are eating and drinking before him; and they say, 'Long live King Adonijah!'"
- e. Then David called for Bathsheba to be brought back in and David took an oath saying, "*As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from every distress,* ³⁰ *just as I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day.*" **1 Kings 1:28**
- f. David also called for Zadok the priest and Benaiah, one of his mighty men and instructed them to have Solomon ride on David's mule and take him to Gihon.
 - 1) There Zadok and Nathan would anoint him king over Israel.
 - 2) They were then to blow the horn and say "Long live King Solomon!"
 - 3) Next they were to bring him back to sit on David's throne and he would be officially king in David's, ruler over all of Israel and Judah.
 - 4) When all of this happened, the people shouted and made a great noise, which Adonijah could hear.
 - 5) Adonijah was informed that Solomon had been made king and then all of his supporters became afraid so they all left.
 - 6) Adonijah was also afraid of Solomon, so he went to the temple and held on to the horns on the corners of the great altar saying that he would not leave there unless Solomon would swear that he would not put Adonijah to death.
 - 7) Solomon said, "*If he proves himself a worthy man, not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.*" ⁵³ *So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."* **Vs 52**

III. David died and was buried in Bethlehem and Solomon was established as the king of all Israel. I Kings 1

A. Adonijah came to Bathsheba after David's death and said, *"You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother's; for it was his from the LORD. ¹⁶ Now I ask one petition of you; do not deny me."* **Vs. 15-16**

1. Bathsheba told him to make his request.

2. Adonijah said, *"Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife."* **Vs. 17**

a. Abishag was a young woman who was considered a concubine of David's.

b. She was acquired when David was very sick before he died. He was always cold and could not get warm. So David's servants suggested bringing in a young woman who could lie next to him and keep him warm. Her only job was to care for David in his illness and help to keep him warm.

3. Bathsheba went to Solomon to speak for Adonijah. She said, *"Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as wife."*

a. Solomon was shocked at this request and he asked his mother, *"Now why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also—for he is my older brother—for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah."*

b. Obviously, Bathsheba did not know that Adonijah was using her to try to gain an advantage over Solomon.

c. To Solomon, the request the concubine of King David was equal to asserting his right to the throne; so Solomon told his mother that she might as well ask him to give the throne to Adonijah along with Abiathar the priest and to Joab, who also betrayed King David in support of Adonijah.

d. Solomon promised that Adonijah would be put to death that very day for his disloyalty. **Vs. 24**

e. Solomon also exiled Abiathar the priest.

f. When Joab heard this, he ran to the Tabernacle and held on to the horns of the great altar, like Adonijah had done previously with David.

g. Benaiah, one of David's mighty warriors, told Solomon what Joab said, so Solomon ordered Benaiah to kill Joab at the altar because Joab was guilty of killing two men in vengeance, though David did not know it.

B. Bathsheba was apparently the most influential of all of the women in David's life. She influenced two kings in Israel and no criticism was ever mentioned about her.