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WHAT'S IN YOUR TEACHING GUIDE

This Teaching Guide has three purposes:

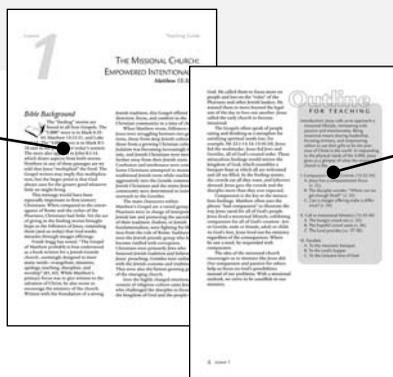
- to give the teacher tools for focusing on the content of the session in the Study Guide.
- to give the teacher additional Bible background information.
- to give the teacher variety and choice in preparation.

The Teaching Guide includes two major components: Teacher Helps and Teacher Options.

Teacher Helps

Bible Background

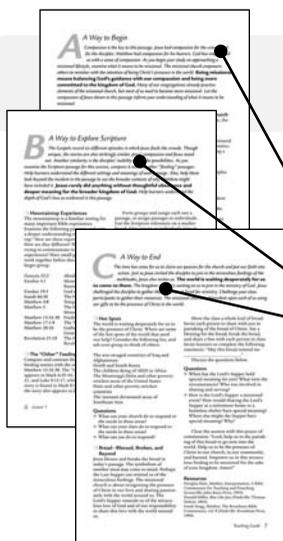
The Study Guide is your main source of Bible study material. This section helps you more fully understand and interpret the Scripture text.



Teaching Outline

provides you with an outline of the main themes in the Study Guide.

Teacher Options



The next three sections provide a beginning, middle, and end for the session, with focus paragraphs in between.

Focus Paragraphs

are printed in italics at the top of the page because they are the most important part of the Teaching Guide. These paragraphs will help you move your class from “what the text meant” to “what the text means.”

You Can Choose!

There is more material in each session than you can use, so choose the options from each section to tailor the session to the needs of your group.

Prepare Before the Session

Read the session for today in the Study Guide. Then read the options in this Teaching Guide, placing checkmarks beside the activities you plan to include. After you have decided which options to use, gather the appropriate materials.

THE ADULTRESS?

2 Samuel 11:2-5, 26-27a

Bible Background



David's Errors

“In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle,” the narrator begins in 1 Samuel 11:1. This statement may at first seem insignificant to the subsequent story of David and Bathsheba, but, in fact, it is essential. The narrator emphasizes two things: (1) it was spring and (2) kings led their armies into battle during this time.

King David sent forth his troops under the leadership of Joab, his commander. But David stayed in Jerusalem. Clearly, David was not where he was supposed to be, and that was the first of many mistakes.

One evening, David grew restless, arose from his bed, and began to pace on the palace rooftop (v. 2). The narrator offers no reason for David's restlessness. Whatever the reason, from his vantage point on the palace rooftop, David observed a beautiful woman bathing.

That the woman was bathing outside should not surprise us. There was no indoor plumbing, and water for household tasks came from cisterns that collected rainwater. As David ogled her, he transformed from an idle, house-sitting king into a royal voyeur.

The text clearly indicates that David observed the woman from *his* rooftop. In spite of this, some interpreters suggest that the woman was on *her* rooftop

bathing (Alter, 250). Others go so far as to say that Bathsheba purposefully exposed herself to David's innocent eyes, thereby entrapping the king (Nicol, 360). The story does not support such a conclusion, however.

David inquired about the woman (v. 3). He learned that she was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, a fact that should have stopped David in his tracks. As the wife of another man, Bathsheba was off limits. But David was not deterred. In a series of action verbs, the narrator describes David's single-minded conquest of Bathsheba in verse 4: “David sent,” “he took” (NRSV “to fetch her”), “he lay.” Untroubled by personal ethics or divinely mandated law, David saw what he wanted and brazenly took her.

Bathsheba's Point of View

What Bathsheba thought or felt in all of this is not explained. Because the text states that “she came” to David, some interpreters conclude that Bathsheba was a willing participant in the adultery. Several elements in the story suggest otherwise. First, how could Bathsheba know what David had in mind when he sent his messengers to retrieve her? Even if she suspected, could she, as one of David's subjects, refuse to come when summoned? Once she was at David's palace, if she resisted his advances and cried out, who would have intervened on her behalf? Second, the text clearly points

to David as the initiator, perpetrator, and mastermind of the crime and cover-up (11:4, 6-15). Bathsheba is never called an “adulteress,” and David is held solely responsible for the evils committed (11:27). Third, when Nathan confronts David with the parable of the rich man and poor man in 12:1-4, Bathsheba is portrayed as a victim. Most interpreters conclude that she is represented by the ewe lamb in the parable—an innocent victim slaughtered to satisfy the rich man’s desires. However, a case can be made that Uriah is the ewe lamb since he, like the lamb, is slaughtered, and Bathsheba is the poor man since she, like the poor man, loses a loved one (Frymer-Kensky, 154–55). In either case, the parable offers the most compelling evidence that Bathsheba was a victim, not an accomplice.

Immediately following the report of the act itself is a brief notice interjected by the narrator: “And she was purifying herself from her uncleanness” (author’s translation). Interpreters read this text in two different ways. Some believe it refers to Bathsheba performing the prescribed ritual cleansing after intercourse (Lev 15:18) (Frymer-Kensky, 147). More commonly, interpreters view this as a parenthetical statement by the narrator indicating that when David saw her bathing, Bathsheba was cleansing herself from her menstrual cycle (McCarter, 286). According to this interpretation, the statement establishes that Bathsheba was *not* pregnant when she went to David.

Bathsheba returned to her house, and sometime later she sent David a tersely worded note: “I am pregnant” (v. 5). These are the only words attributed to Bathsheba in the entire account. Bathsheba said nothing else in the note, but clearly pointed the finger at David, in essence saying, “You are the man” (see 12:7).

David’s Cover-up

David next takes immediate action to cover up the sin in a series of increasingly

Outline

FOR TEACHING

- I. Where David Should Have Been (11:1)
 - A. War Season (v. 11a)
 - B. David sent Israel to battle. (v. 11b)
 - C. David himself stayed home. (v. 11c)
- II. One Restless Evening (11:2-3)
 - A. David’s Insomnia (v. 2a)
 - B. Royal Voyeurism (v. 2b)
 - C. David’s Inquiry (v. 3)
- III. Adultery (11:4)
 - A. David’s Conquest (v. 4a)
 - B. A Note about Uncleanness (v. 4b)
- IV. Bathsheba’s Pregnancy (11:5)
- V. David’s Cover-up (11:6-25)
- VI. Bathsheba’s Grief (11:26)
- VII. David’s Acquisition (11:27)
 - A. David’s New Wife (v. 27a)
 - B. A Birth (v. 27b)
 - C. An Ominous Revelation (v. 27c)

desperate moves (vv. 6-25). He first tries to convince Uriah to go home to his wife, hoping that he will sleep with her and conclude that the child is his own. But Uriah, a righteous man, refuses to enjoy his wife when his comrades are out fighting the Lord’s battles. So David gets Uriah drunk, assuming that in his drunken state Uriah’s morals will wash away. When Uriah still won’t go home, David stages his murder on the battlefield.

In one brief verse, we are told of Bathsheba’s grief over her husband Uriah (v. 26). Although some might assume that Bathsheba was merely observing the required mourning period rather than truly grieving, the wording of the verse suggests otherwise. Three relational terms (obscured in the NRSV) emphasize Bathsheba’s intimate connection with Uriah: “And the *wife of Uriah* heard that

Uriah, *her husband*, was dead. And she mourned over *her lord*” (author’s translation). Bathsheba had lost a husband who truly loved her (see 2 Sam 12:3). Why should we question the legitimacy of her grief?

David wasted no time in procuring Bathsheba once the prescribed mourning period was over (v. 27). A second time he sent for her; a second time he took her, making her his wife. Soon thereafter, the baby was born. By marrying Bathsheba, David thought he had neatly covered over his sins. But he was dreadfully wrong, for “the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.” An ominous divine threat hovers over this baby’s birth, foreshadowing the tragic events to come.

A Way to Begin

A Many Bible studies focus attention on King David, one of the best-known characters in the Old Testament. Indeed, entire books have been written about him, movies made, statues carved, and children named after him. Yet, while many readers of the Bible are aware of David’s encounter with Bathsheba, few have considered the events from Bathsheba’s perspective. Who was this beautiful woman for whom David lusted? Was she a willing partner in David’s sins or an innocent victim crushed by David’s abuse of power?

○ Who Was Bathsheba?

Discuss the question, “Who was Bathsheba?” Have participants share as many details about Bathsheba as they can think of. List their details on the board without evaluating their accuracy or correcting misconceptions. If class members differ on particular points, list both perspectives and explain that such differences should be clarified as you study the text together.

Sometimes what we think about a character in the Bible is based less on the text itself than on tradition or unexamined assumptions we’ve made about the person. For the next four weeks we’ll consider the story of Bathsheba and examine how well we actually know her.

○ Blaming Victims

In today’s world, sometimes victims of violent crime are directly or indirectly blamed for what happened to them. The family whose house was burglarized is viewed less sympathetically because they forgot to turn on their alarm system. The rape victim is blamed because, when she was attacked, she was jogging after dark. The badly beaten mugging victim is criticized for talking on his expensive phone in the subway.

Why do we sometimes blame the victim instead of the perpetrator? (Note: Because some class members may themselves be victims of violent crime, if you choose this option, be prepared to address the issue in a sensitive manner.)

Those who read their stories sometimes fault biblical characters for what happens to them. Today we will read the story of David and Bathsheba and consider whether or not Bathsheba has been unjustly blamed for the actions of David.

B A Way to Explore Scripture

All readers of the Bible come to the text with assumptions, and often our preconceived notions about a character or story are based on what others have told us rather than what is in the text itself. Often readers assume that Bathsheba was an adulteress, a temptress who brought about David's demise. While this viewpoint is popular, does the biblical text support it? What does this story tell us about David, and, more importantly, what can we learn about Bathsheba from the text?

○ **Looking in the Text for Clues**

Have a volunteer read 2 Samuel 11:1-5.

Questions

- Why is it significant that David stayed in Jerusalem?
- Why do you think the story of David and Bathsheba begins with this detail?
- Where was Bathsheba when David saw her bathing? (Ask everyone to look at verse 2 carefully and examine whether she was on her rooftop, as is often assumed).
- Do you think the fact that Bathsheba came to David when he sent for her suggests that she desired to have sex with him? Why or why not?
- If you were a common person living in a monarchy, would you have the right to refuse to do what the king asked of you?

Summarize 2 Samuel 11:6-25 so the students are aware of David's cover-up and the death of Uriah. Have a volunteer read 2 Samuel 2:26-27.

Questions

- Was Bathsheba's grief real or obligatory? Why?
- What is the significance of the narrator's saying, "the thing *David* did displeased the LORD," and saying nothing of Bathsheba?

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-4. Although these verses are not part of the assigned text, they are important in examining Bathsheba's role.

Questions

- How is Bathsheba portrayed in Nathan's parable?
- What does her portrayal suggest about her complicity in the affair?

○ **Bathsheba Tells Her Own Story**

Have a female volunteer read each section of the resource page "Bathsheba Tells Her Own Story." Before each of the four scenes, have a volunteer read the appropriate Scripture passage.

Point out that this is a fictional depiction of Bathsheba's thoughts based on the Scripture. Discuss how imagining the story from Bathsheba's perspective enhances or informs our understanding of the text.

C A Way to End

Bathsheba found herself in one horrible situation after another. In most (though not all) contemporary cultures, women have rights—including the right to refuse unwanted advances, to have rapists prosecuted, and to marry whomever they choose. But in Bathsheba’s day women’s rights were extremely limited. She was in a no-win situation, so she did what was demanded, and she survived.

○ **Who Was Bathsheba? (Reprise)**

If you began with the first option in A Way to Begin, end with this option. Refer to the list the class created at the beginning of the lesson. Seek to identify where the list is correct and where it is incorrect in light of the biblical text.

Questions

- Why have certain misconceptions about Bathsheba arisen? Why, for example, do many people assume she was bathing on her rooftop? Why has she often been judged as a temptress?
- Have others ever misunderstood or misrepresented you?
- How did you deal with that situation?

Even if we have not personally experienced being misrepresented or misunderstood, we probably know people who have. What are some ways we can help restore broken relationships, repair damaged reputations, and correct misunderstandings?

○ **Solace for Victims**

Sometimes the violence in our world is overwhelming. Ask your class to think about the “Bathshebas” in the church, at their workplace, or in their neighborhoods. While we may not be able to erase the pain and horror of violent crime, perhaps we could reach out in compassion to those who have been victimized. How could our class reach out to victims this month?

○ **A Rock and a Hard Place**

Ask the class members to think about a time when they found themselves between a rock and a hard place—facing a difficult choice in which each option seemed as bad as the other. What led to this situation? How did they respond? Be prepared to tell a story of your own to prompt discussion.

How can we respond when we find ourselves in a no-win situation?

Resources

Robert Alter, *The David Story* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999).

Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible* (New York: Schocken, 2002).

P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 9, ed. William Foxwell Albright and Avid Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1984).

George G. Nicol, “Bathsheba, a Clever Woman?” *Expository Times* 99 (1988): 360–63.

2

THE MOURNER

2 Samuel 12:15b-25

Bible Background



The Ancient Question

“The LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David, and it became very ill.” The narrator does not record the child’s name, and, by omitting it, he not only foreshadows the baby’s untimely demise, but also contrasts this child with David and Bathsheba’s second child, who receives not one but two names (vv. 24-25).

The words of this verse are horrifyingly harsh: God struck the child with a deathly illness. The obvious question is, “Why?” The baby is innocent, so why does God kill him, not David? Shouldn’t David pay for his own sin? This is not something easily answered, especially from a Christian viewpoint. We think of sin as a personal responsibility; each person is held accountable for his or her own sin. Old Testament law says the same thing: if human blood was shed, human blood was required to atone for the death: “life for life” (Gen 9:6; Exod 21:12; Lev 24:17; Deut 19:21). Thus, the proper punishment for murder was the execution of the murderer.

However, the Old Testament also prescribes that, in certain cases, a surrogate could take the place of the murderer. For example, when a person killed another accidentally (what we would call “involuntary manslaughter”), the killer was not put to death but was allowed to live in a

city of refuge until the death of the high priest. The high priest’s death was accepted as a substitute for the killer, who was then allowed to return home (Num 35:9-34). While David’s murder of Uriah was intentional, the baby apparently served as a substitute for David, fulfilling the requirement of “a life for a life.” Why David himself escaped the death penalty is unclear. Perhaps the covenant God made with him (2 Sam 7) mitigated David’s punishment. Or perhaps the king, as God’s “son” and representative, could not be executed. The baby’s death does not seem fair to us, but it is in keeping with Old Testament law.

The Modern Question

Does God kill babies today? The writer of 2 Samuel obviously believed that God killed David’s baby, but must we? This is a difficult question with which many Christian readers struggle. Perhaps it is best to remember that the worldview of the people of Israel was dramatically different from our own. The writer(s) Joshua–2 Kings present God as the author of all events. They portray God throwing stones on fleeing Canaanites, killing more than Israel did with the sword (Josh 10:11), sending an evil spirit on Saul (1 Sam 16:14), and putting lying spirits in the mouths of the prophets to deceive Ahab (1 Kgs 22:20-23). From the writers’ perspective, all events were the result of God’s direct intervention.

Outline

FOR TEACHING

Things that we would attribute to disease, circumstance, bad weather, or human evil, the Hebrew writers attributed to God. Clearly these writers saw the death of this child as a fulfillment of Nathan's prophecy (2 Sam 12:14) and as one of the punishments for David's sin. However, should we extrapolate from this story that God causes every child's death or that God punishes people today by striking down their loved ones? To be sure, some Christians believe that God does, in fact, cause all things, good and bad, to happen even today. Others, however, do not believe that God still sends evil spirits or throws stones from the sky to kill people or puts lying words in peoples' mouths, so they do not accept the idea that God kills babies.

Universal Grief

These verses focus entirely on David's grief: he fasted; he prayed; he wept in the hope that perhaps he could persuade God to spare the child's life. His grief was so intense that the elders fretted over David's mental and physical state. But when the child eventually died, David stopped his grieving rituals, surprising those around him. When asked why he mourned while the child lived but stopped once the child died, he explained that while the baby lived he still had hope that God would intervene. Once the child was dead, there was nothing David could do to intercede on his behalf.

The statement, "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me," should not be construed as a statement of hope for reunion one day in heaven. In the Old Testament, there is no concept of heaven (or hell, for that matter). The Old Testament writers believed that everyone who died went to the place of the dead, a place called Sheol. Sheol was a neutral place; it was neither good nor bad. It simply represented the grave. David's statement indicates that he knew he would one day join his baby in death.

For the first time since 11:3, the narrator calls Bathsheba by her name. And, for

I. The Lord Strikes the Baby (12:15b)

II. David's Grief (12:16-17)

- A. David's Intercession for the Child (v. 16)
- B. The Elders' Concern (v. 17)

III. The Child's Death (12:18-19)

- A. The Child's Death on the Seventh Day (v. 18a)
- B. The Servants' Concern (v. 18b)
- C. David's Realization (v. 19)

IV. David's Response (12:20-23)

- A. David Ceases to Mourn (v. 20)
- B. The Servants' Inquiry (v. 21)
- c. David's Reply (vv. 22-23)

V. A New Baby (12:24-25)

- a. David Comforts Bathsheba (v. 24a)
- b. Bathsheba Gives Birth (v. 24b)
- c. David Names the Child Solomon (v. 24c)
- d. God Names the Child Jedidiah (vv. 24d-25)

the first time in 2 Samuel, the narrator identifies Bathsheba not as the wife of Uriah but as David's wife. The death of the baby seems to be the turning point in transforming Bathsheba's identity from being the wife of another into being David's legitimate wife.

While the narrator records David's grief in detail, he says nothing explicitly about Bathsheba's feelings for her dead child. Verse 24 only hints at her anguish when it says that David comforted her.

David had intercourse with Bathsheba again, this time as her legitimate husband, and she conceived. When the child was born, David named him Solomon, a name that probably means "peace" (Alter, 262). The narrator states emphatically that the Lord loved Solomon.

Because of God’s special love for Solomon, God sent Nathan to announce the divine name for the child. Jedidiah means “beloved of Yahweh.” The naming suggests that God bestowed special favor on the child, perhaps foreshadowing and legitimizing Nathan and Bathsheba’s intervention on Solomon’s behalf in 1 Kings 1. Nevertheless, Solomon is henceforth always identified as Solomon, not Jedidiah.

A *A Way to Begin*

The death of David and Bathsheba’s first child

forces us to consider what we believe about sin and consequences, suffering and death, grief and recovery. *Because this lesson deals with the loss of a child and intense grief, some class members may react emotionally to the content. Be sensitive to those who recently lost a loved one. Parents who have experienced the loss of a child may find this lesson particularly difficult; however, they may also be able to share valuable lessons from their personal experience.*

○ **Grieving Rituals**

Every culture develops rituals surrounding death and burial. List on the board the rituals class members have observed at funerals they have attended. Discuss how these rituals help us deal with grief.

Grief is intensely personal and yet, when a loved one dies, our rituals usually take place in public. What are some ways we express and deal with grief on a private level?

○ **Losing a Child**

Begin by sharing the following story or, if you know of one that is more recent or more personal, share that instead.

On April 13, 2006, Spencer Morrison, a popular middle-school teacher, was driving south along Route 8 in Richland, Pennsylvania. His four-year-old triplets, Garrett, Ethan, and Alaina, were in the minivan with him. Bradley Demitras was headed in the opposite direction on Route 8. He was returning from a tree-trimming job in his dump truck and was towing a wood chipper behind him. Suddenly, the trailer broke loose, sending the 5,000-pound wood chipper directly into the path of Spencer Morrison’s minivan. The impact crushed the front of the minivan and the driver’s door was sheared off. Morrison was killed instantly along with Garrett and Alaina. Only Ethan Morrison survived. (Ward and Silver, A-1, A-5)

The loss of a child has to be the most horrible nightmare any parent can imagine. Spencer Morrison’s wife, Nicole, had to contend with the loss of two children and her husband all at once.

Today we will consider a passage about the death of a child, devastating grief, and hope.

B A Way to Explore Scripture

The text raises two major questions. First, why did David and Bathsheba's baby die? Second, how did David and Bathsheba deal with their grief? We will need to examine the narrator's contention that the death of David and Bathsheba's baby was an act of God. Since the text focuses mainly on how David and Bathsheba expressed their grief, spend most of your class time discussing these expressions.

○ **Examining the Text**

Have a volunteer read 2 Samuel 12:15b. This verse states that God struck David and Bathsheba's baby with a mortal illness. What is your reaction to the idea expressed here that God killed the baby? (Expect a wide variety of responses.) Allow participants to discuss this question, but also encourage them to explain *why* they feel the way they do.

Ask someone to read 2 Samuel 12:16-23.

Questions

- In 2 Samuel 12:14, Nathan states emphatically that the child would die. Why did David think fasting, praying, and weeping might change God's mind?
- What is your reaction to how David handled his grief? Are you shocked by David's apparent callousness after the child's death? Do you see the logic in David's actions? Explain.

Ask someone to read 2 Samuel 12:24-25.

Questions

- How do you imagine Bathsheba felt when her child died? What might she have thought about how David responded to the sickness and death of the baby?
- Why do you think the death of the baby conceived in adultery and the birth of the baby conceived legitimately are brought together in the text?

- What was it about Solomon that caused God to love him so dearly? Why do you think Solomon is always called "Solomon" and not "Jedidiah," when Jedidiah is the name God gave him?

○ **David's Stages of Grief**

Read 2 Samuel 12:15b aloud. Review last week's text, reminding the students that the baby in verse 15 was conceived in adultery. Distribute copies of the resource page "David's Stages of Grief." Read through the handout together and discuss each stage.

Have someone read 2 Samuel 12:16-23. Ask participants to look for the five stages of grief in David's actions. (All five are not represented.) Write the relevant verses for each stage on the handout.

Summarize the events in verses 24-25. Explain that, while we don't know specifically how Bathsheba grieved, she obviously suffered, too. For her, perhaps the greatest comfort was becoming pregnant a second time and giving birth to a healthy baby boy.

C A Way to End

One of the main questions this story presents is, “How could God kill a baby?”

This isn’t an easy question to address, but try not to avoid it. Allow class members to grapple with the implications of the text and come to their own conclusions. The other main question the text raises is, “How can I deal with the sickness or death of a loved one?” **Regardless of what we may conclude about God’s role in sickness and death, we all must deal with the loss of loved ones. Engage your learners on how they can persevere through grief and questioning.**

○ **Helping Each Other Through Grief**

Grief is an intensely personal experience, and there is no “right” or “wrong” way to grieve. There is no timeline for grief, either. Death is not something you ever “get over”; grief loses intensity, changes, and becomes bearable, but it never really goes away.

Questions

- How have you dealt with grief in your life?
- What did people do or say that was helpful to you in your grief? What was less than helpful?
- What are some ways we can offer comfort to others who grieve?

○ **Why Bad Things Happen**

Unlike the characters in the Bible, when bad things happen to us we don’t have a narrator around to tell us why. Let’s explore the question, “Why do bad things happen?” Remind people that there is no easy answer to this question, so we must be respectful of those with differing beliefs and sensitive to those who have lost loved ones.

Questions

- What do you think of the idea that God strikes people dead or punishes people by hurting close family members? Why was this such a common view in biblical times?

- Does God respond to sin differently in the Old and New Testaments?
- The biblical writers saw God as the ultimate cause of every event—good or bad. Is this outlook still valid today? Why or why not?

Resources

Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999).

Paula Reed Ward and Jonathan D. Silver, “Accident on Rte. 8 Shatters ‘Miracle’ Family,” *The Pittsburg Post-Gazette*, April 15, 2006, A-1, A-5.

3

THE ADVOCATE

*1 Kings 1:11-31**Bible Background***Setting the Stage**

In order to understand the story of Nathan and Bathsheba's intervention (1 Kgs 11-31), one must first grasp the political situation at the time. First Kings 1:1-4 indicates that David was quite old but had not publicly chosen a successor. Why he had failed to do this is not recorded, but the king's silence created considerable uncertainty. Additionally, David's first-born son, Amnon, had been murdered (2 Sam 13:28-29); his second-born, Chileab, apparently died at an early age because he is never mentioned again (2 Sam 3:3); and his third-born, Absalom, was killed in a rebellion against his father (2 Sam 18:14). The next oldest son was Adonijah, a fact that made him the most likely successor (2 Sam 3:4).

On the pretense that David could not stay warm at night, his advisors searched the kingdom for a beautiful young virgin to sleep in the king's bed. One must immediately wonder why none of David's other wives could offer him warmth, if indeed that was the point. It was not, however, for when Abishag, the virgin, was brought to David, "the king did not have intercourse with her." This statement is quite significant because it indicates that even in the presence of a beautiful virgin, David was sexually impotent. For whatever reason, a man's sexual prowess

was seen as indicative of his political power. If he could not perform sexually, then he could no longer perform politically. Thus, David's impotence was the catalyst his son Adonijah used to claim the throne.

Two Factions

Adonijah's claim was strong. Not only was he next in line for the throne, but he also had the support of Joab, the commander over David's army, and Abiathar, the priest (1 Kgs 1:7). With first-born status and the support of both military and religious leaders, Adonijah's claim to the throne was almost incontrovertible. Almost. Nathan's motives for intervening in the succession are never stated. Neither he nor Benaiah, one of David's elite warriors, nor the other mighty men had been invited to Adonijah's coronation feast (1 Kgs 1:8). Furthermore, while all of David's other sons had been invited to the feast, Solomon had not (1:10).

Reading between the lines, it appears that there were two political factions vying for power: Adonijah's group, which included the support of all the men of Judah and David's servants, and Solomon's group, which included David's closest military champions and advisors. Some commentators suggest that Adonijah's group represented a Judean coalition centered at Hebron. This group advocated for the supremacy of Judah and was not interested in maintaining unity

between the tribes. The Solomon group represented a Jerusalem-centered coalition that was committed to a united Israel (see Provan, 24–25; Jones, 91–92).

Nathan instructed Bathsheba to go to the king first and remind him of his oath to make Solomon king. Subsequently, Nathan would arrive and confirm Bathsheba's claims.

Bathsheba's Role

Bathsheba obeyed Nathan's command and went to David's bedroom, where Abishag ministered to the king. The mention of Abishag here seems strange, but perhaps it reminds the reader of the king's weakened condition and sets the stage for Adonijah's later request (2 Kgs 2:13-25). After Bathsheba did obeisance before the king, David asked her what she wanted. Bathsheba reminded David of his oath, emphasizing that he swore to her by the Lord God (an element not present in Nathan's instructions in v. 13) that Solomon would be king.

Whether David actually made the oath upon which Bathsheba based her claim is uncertain. No report of such an oath occurs in 2 Samuel, though the favor the Lord displayed for Solomon (12:24-25) may imply that, from birth, he had been set apart for the throne.

Underlying the narrative is a word play not evident in English. In Hebrew the word "swear" (vv. 13, 17, 29, 30) is *sheba`*, which forms part of Bathsheba's name (which means "daughter of the oath"). Thus, throughout the story Bathsheba pressed David regarding the *sheba`* (oath) that he *sheba*-ed (swore) to Bathsheba.

Bathsheba also apprises David of the political situation: "Adonijah has become king, though you, my lord the king, do not know it" (v. 18). She tells David that Adonijah had sacrificed animals and invited Abiathar, Joab, and others to the feast—but excluded Solomon. Craftily, she omits any mention of Nathan, allowing the prophet to make his own case later. Then she presents the king with the decision he alone can make: "the eyes of all

Outline

FOR TEACHING

- I. Nathan's Plan (1:11-14)
 - A. Nathan Poses a Question to Bathsheba (v. 11)
 - B. Nathan Outlines the Danger (v. 12)
 - C. Nathan Prepares Bathsheba for Her Role (v. 13)
 - D. Nathan Acts as Confirmer (v. 14)
- II. Bathsheba's Audience before King David (1:15-21)
 - A. Bathsheba's Entrance (v. 15)
 - B. Bathsheba's Obeisance (v. 16)
 - C. Bathsheba's Plea to David (vv. 17-21)
- III. Nathan's Audience before King David (1:22-27)
 - A. Nathan's Entrance (v. 22)
 - B. Nathan's Obeisance (v. 23)
 - C. Nathan Questions David (vv. 24-27)
- IV. David Swears an Oath (1:28-30)
 - A. David Calls for Bathsheba (v. 28)
 - B. David's Oath (vv. 29-30)
 1. "As the Lord lives..." (v. 29)
 2. "I swore that Solomon would be king after me." (v. 30a)
 3. "Today, I will fulfill that oath." (v. 30b)
- V. Bathsheba's Response (1:31)

Israel are on you to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him." In her final plea (v. 21), Bathsheba advises David of the threat to her life and Solomon's if he fails to act.

Bathsheba apparently leaves the room upon Nathan's entrance. Bowing before the king, Nathan presents his version of the events, following the same order as Bathsheba's report. However, in his retelling, Nathan mentions that Adonijah excluded not only Solomon, but Zadok, Benaiah, and himself. Scrupulously avoiding any mention of the oath that

was so central to Bathsheba's plea, Nathan instead accused David of failing to inform his closest advisors that he had made Adonijah king.

The ploy is successful. David calls for Bathsheba to return to the room. Acknowledging that God had delivered him from distress, David confirms Bathsheba's claim that he had sworn Solomon would be king. Reiterating the words of the oath, David makes it a reality: "so will I do this day."

Satisfied, Bathsheba offers an idiomatic and ironic blessing on David: "May my lord King David live forever." David was on the brink of death, so obviously he would not live forever. However, the idiom in this context is a call for David to live on through his progeny. It is a particularly appropriate blessing since Bathsheba had just ensured that David would live on through her son, Solomon.

A Way to Begin

Many readers assume that Solomon was set apart as David's successor from birth.

But this story demonstrates that, in fact, David had failed to designate a successor. Of the two contenders, Adonijah actually had a stronger claim to the throne than Solomon. Ultimately, Solomon became king because of the intervention of Bathsheba and Nathan. The politics of succession were as complicated then as presidential politics are today.

○ **High-stakes Politics**

Ask class members to think about where they were last election and what influenced them to vote the way they did. Explain to the class that the point of this exercise is not to debate about who won or lost, but to think about what influences how we vote.

Questions

- What were the most important issues for you?
- How much did the candidate's experience influence your vote?
- Did you consider the opinions of others as you made your decision? Were any people especially influential in informing your decision?

- Did negative campaigning have any effect on your vote? Why or why not?
- If you had it to do all over again, would you still vote for the same candidate? Why or why not?

Today we're going to consider an ancient political race in which issues, birth order, key endorsements, and political wrangling all played a role.

○ **Standing Up for Others**

Ask the class members to share a story about how someone stood up for them—a teacher, a parent, a friend, or even a stranger. Be sure to think of a story you can share to start the discussion.

After several people have told their stories, explain that today's lesson addresses how Bathsheba and Nathan stood up for Solomon when the kingdom was in turmoil over who would rule after David. Their intervention changed history and the future of the Davidic kingdom.

B A Way to Explore Scripture

When we examine the two contenders for the throne, we might be surprised to discover that Adonijah seems to be the logical successor of David. He had the advantage of primogeniture (birth right). He had gained the support of most of Judah. He was championed by Joab and Abiathar. But Nathan and Bathsheba argued on behalf of Solomon. What was it about their pleas that convinced David to declare Solomon king over Adonijah?

○ **Comparing Nathan’s and Bathsheba’s Pleas**

Summarize the background to the passage as discussed in the “Setting the Stage” section of the Bible Background. Make sure the students can recognize each of the major characters in the story.

Divide the class into two groups. Ask one group to study Bathsheba’s audience with David (1 Kgs 1:15-21) and the other Nathan’s (1 Kgs 1:22-27). Have them look for (1) how this person approached David, (2) how this person characterized Adonijah’s rebellion, and (3) the gist of this person’s argument to David. Let each group share its findings with the rest of the class.

Discuss how Bathsheba’s and Nathan’s pleas were similar and different, and why you think they diverged from one another. Whose argument is stronger?

After the discussion, ask a class member to read 1 Kings 1:28-31. Explain how David’s choice of Solomon overruled Adonijah’s claim to the throne.

○ **Israelite Politics**

Summarize the background to the passage as discussed in the “Setting the Stage” section of the Bible Background. Make sure the students can recognize each of the major characters in the story.

Pass out the “Voter’s Guide” resource page and divide class members into two groups. Have one group research candidate Adonijah and the other candidate Solomon. Each group should read the texts cited in the voter guide related to its

candidate. Ask each group to come up with a campaign slogan in support of its candidate and be prepared to explain why its candidate should be king.

Let each group promote its candidate, then hold an election. Provide ballots and have volunteers count the votes and announce the results. Ask the students to discuss why they supported one candidate over the other.

○ **A Mother and Her Son**

Read 1 Kings 1:11-31. Ask the following questions.

Questions

- Would it have surprised you if Bathsheba had not intervened on behalf of her son? Why or why not?
- Should we dismiss Bathsheba’s support of Solomon as based purely on maternal interests?
- Is it possible to do God’s will with mixed motives? Explain.

C A Way to End

Had Adonijah become king, it is likely that Bathsheba and Solomon would have been outcasts—or worse. Nathan recognized that Adonijah had rejected all those who most closely supported David—the mighty men, Nathan himself, and Zadok the priest. He had the wisdom to see that Adonijah’s kingship represented a major shift away from David’s policies. **So Nathan and Bathsheba intervened and advocated for a cause they believed in.**

○ **Becoming Advocates for a Cause**

Ask participants to name the most important issues facing the church today. Write their suggestions on one side of the board with the heading “Issues Facing the Church.” Next, ask them to list the most important social issues today. Write these on the other side of the board under the heading “Issues Facing Society.”

Compare the two sides of the board. You’ll probably find that the issues that are important to the church are quite different from the issues that concern society.

Questions

- How can we, as a group or as individuals, become more concerned about the issues that concern society?
- What are some practical ways we can be advocates for these causes?

You may wish to choose one social issue for the class to embrace for the coming year. Ask volunteers to research the issue and find ways for the class to get involved.

○ **Becoming Advocates for Others**

Distribute paper and pencils to the class. Ask participants to write down the name of someone who is at risk, alone, needy, in danger, or otherwise in need of an advocate.

Ask participants to think of one practical way they can become an advocate for this person. Challenge them to consider seriously how they might become advocates for others this week.

Note: In some situations, advocacy may require professional intervention. If class members aren’t sure how to intervene—or whether to intervene—they should talk to someone who can assist them: the pastor, a psychologist, an abuse-center counselor, etc.

Resources

G. H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, vol. 1, The New Century Bible Commentary, ed. Ronald E. Clements (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984).

Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, The New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1995).

4

THE INTERCESSOR?

1 Kings 2:13–25

Bible Background



Adonijah's Request

After Solomon was named king, Adonijah's supporters abandoned him and he found himself in the unenviable position of being a usurper. He fled to the altar to plead clemency (1 Kgs 1:49-50). Solomon granted it, but with one provision: "If he proves to be a worthy man, not one of his hairs shall fall to the ground; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die" (1 Kgs 1:52).

The detail that Adonijah was Haggith's son might seem unnecessary, but it introduces intriguing ironies. Haggith means "feast"; Adonijah feasts throughout 1 Kings 1 in anticipation of taking the throne. In this chapter, Adonijah approaches Bathsheba, whose name means "Daughter of the Oath," to ask a favor. Ironically, Adonijah meets his end because of an oath sworn by Bathsheba's son, Solomon (Provan, 29–30).

When Adonijah arrives, Bathsheba asks, "Do you come peaceably?" The question might betray her uneasiness at being in Adonijah's presence. After all, until David named her son king, Bathsheba and Solomon were vulnerable to Adonijah's power. Perhaps she feared he came to take vengeance. Her question might also be a play on words. The word translated "peaceably" is *shalom*. Solomon's name is based on the same

root. Thus her question might employ a double entendre: "Do you come peaceably?" could mean "Do you come 'Solomonably'?"—that is, in support of Solomon.

Adonijah makes a request of Bathsheba. Broaching the issue carefully (v. 14), he explains what Bathsheba already knows: the kingdom was his, but then everything changed and Solomon became king instead. Tentatively, Adonijah got to the point: "Speak to Solomon, he will not refuse you. So that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as a wife" (vv. 17-18; author's translation).

Adonijah's request raises several questions. Why would Adonijah go to Bathsheba with this request? She was Solomon's mother; moreover, she was instrumental in securing the throne for her son. What was Adonijah's purpose in asking for David's last wife, Abishag? Were Adonijah's motives innocent, born out of love, perhaps, for Abishag? Or did he have ulterior motives born out of a desire to challenge Solomon?

While both are possibilities, many interpreters view Adonijah's actions as an attempt to reclaim the throne (cf. Provan, 38; Fretheim, 26; Jones, 111). In 2 Samuel 16:21, Absalom (another of David's sons) takes over Jerusalem and has intercourse with David's concubines (see also 2 Sam 3:6-7; 12:8). For whatever reason, seizing the king's concubines solidified Absalom's claim to the throne. Since

Abishag was David's wife, Adonijah's request amounted to a challenge for the throne. Considering Solomon's response (below), this seems to be a likely conclusion.

Bathsheba's Intercession

Bathsheba responded briefly: "Very well. I will speak to the king on your behalf." Once again the narrative is filled with ambiguities. Did Adonijah send his request through Bathsheba because he thought her naïve, an unwitting accomplice meant to dupe Solomon with her motherly charms? Was Bathsheba unaware that Adonijah's request would amount to a claim for the throne? Or, did she know exactly what Adonijah's request entailed and pass on the ill-fated plea because it would secure Solomon's future? Unfortunately, we cannot know with certainty, but considering her fearless efforts in 1 Kings 2, it seems more likely than not that Bathsheba knew exactly what she was doing.

Bathsheba went to Solomon. Verse 19 is striking because of the deference Solomon shows to his mother: bowing before her as she had bowed before David, providing her a throne, and seating her in a place of honor. Adonijah was correct to think that Bathsheba would be a powerful intercessor; Solomon clearly adored her.

Bathsheba said, "I have one small request.... May Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah, your brother, as a wife." Bathsheba may have used the words "your brother" to evoke familial empathy for Adonijah. More likely (considering Solomon's response), those words highlight the obvious problem of Adonijah's prior (and stronger) claim to the throne. As Solomon notes, Adonijah isn't just his brother; he is his *older* brother (v. 22).

Solomon's Response

Solomon's vehement response reveals how he interpreted Adonijah's request: "You might as well ask for him the whole kingdom, Mom!" We do not know if Bathsheba was pleased at her son's

Outline

FOR TEACHING

- I. Adonijah's Audience with Bathsheba (2:13-18)
 - A. Bathsheba's Caution (v. 13)
 - B. Adonijah's Request: Abishag (vv. 14-17)
 - C. Bathsheba's Response (v. 18)
- II. Bathsheba's Audience with Solomon (2:19-25)
 - A. Solomon's Obeisance before Bathsheba (v. 19)
 - B. Bathsheba's Request: Give Abishag to Adonijah (v. 20-21)
 - C. Solomon's Response (vv. 22-25)
 1. Solomon's Shock and Anger (v. 22)
 2. Solomon Swears an Oath (vv. 23-24)
- III. Adonijah's Demise (v. 25)

response or if she felt rebuked. It depends on her motives. If she was truly interceding for Adonijah, she probably felt chagrined at her stupidity. If, however, she was protecting Solomon's interests by having rivals executed, then she must have been pleased. In either case, Bathsheba fades out of this story and out of the Bible.

Evoking the language of David's oath to Bathsheba (1:29-30), Solomon swore his own oath. David's oath procured the throne for Solomon; Solomon's oath secured that throne. With Adonijah gone, Solomon would have no other rivals to contend for the kingship. Once again, the word "swear" (*sheba'*) appears as a play on Bathsheba's name. The "Daughter of the Oath" caused both David and Solomon to utter oaths that secured her son's future as well as her own.

The story concludes with Adonijah's obituary. Solomon sent Benaiah to carry out the execution, and Adonijah was quietly and finally silenced.

A Way to Begin

The story of Bathsheba's intercession for Adonijah is filled with political intrigue and ambiguity. As readers, we are never quite sure if the main players in the story are acting for good or for ill. Nevertheless, the story highlights Bathsheba's complete metamorphosis from a silent, powerless victim into a vocal, highly influential Queen Mother.

○ **Severus Snape**

One of the most intriguing characters in the *Harry Potter* series is Severus Snape. What makes him so interesting is that he is a complex character whose actions are difficult to interpret. Most of the time, Snape seems antagonistic and cruel toward Harry, the protagonist. But Dumbledore, the wise headmaster of Hogwarts, determinedly vouches for Snape, and, occasionally, Snape himself rescues Harry from danger. So is Snape a “good guy” or a “bad guy”? The reader doesn't find out the answer until the final book.

Today we'll consider two characters in the story of 1 Kings 2 who are just as ambiguous as Snape. Are they good or bad?

○ **Bad Decisions**

Direct the class members to think of a time when they made a bad decision. What were the circumstances? What did you decide? What were the consequences of your decision? How was the situation resolved?

In today's lesson, Solomon's brother Adonijah decides to ask Bathsheba to help him present a request to Solomon. Unfortunately, his decision has dire consequences.

○ **Woman in the Middle**

Ask participants if they've ever been caught in the middle of a dispute that forced them either to take sides or to be the go-between. Allow several volunteers to share their stories with an emphasis on their role and how the dispute was resolved.

Our lesson today had a woman in the middle: Bathsheba. She was put in the position of being a mediator between Adonijah and Solomon. Let's consider the role she played in this dispute's resolution.

B A Way to Explore Scripture

*Because Christian readers are preconditioned to view Solomon in a positive light, they may be surprised to discover that both he and Bathsheba may have engaged in questionable acts in order to solidify his claim to the throne. **Sometimes the biblical characters we've grown up viewing as "the good guys" are actually presented as ambiguous figures in the Bible.***

○ **Mixed Motives**

Divide the class into three groups. Have each group read the text in light of one of the three main characters:

- Adonijah group. Was he a conniving plotter attempting to regain the throne, or was he an innocent, naïve dupe who perhaps had fallen in love with Abishag?
- Bathsheba group. Was she an unwitting pawn in Adonijah's plot? Or did she take advantage of his request in order to assure the political stability of Solomon's reign?
- Solomon group. Did he really believe that Adonijah was a threat to his throne? Or did he choose to interpret an innocent request as a challenge, seizing the opportunity to rid himself of Adonijah out of petty vengeance?

○ **Conversations and Consequences**

Study the conversations between Adonijah and Bathsheba and Bathsheba and Solomon, focusing on Adonijah's request and its consequences.

2 Kings 2:13-18.

- How did Adonijah approach Bathsheba with his request?
- How did Bathsheba respond to Adonijah's approach? Did she trust him or not? Why?
- What was Adonijah's request, and why did he go through Bathsheba instead of going to Solomon directly?

- Was Adonijah's request threatening or innocent? Why?
- Why did Bathsheba agree to take Adonijah's request to Solomon?

2 Kings 2:19-24

- How did Bathsheba approach Solomon with Adonijah's request?
- What do Solomon's actions (bowing down, setting up a throne, etc.) suggest about his view of his mother?
- Did Bathsheba present Adonijah's request well? Why or why not?
- Why did Solomon respond so violently? What was it about the request that threatened Solomon's kingdom? (See 2 Sam 16:21 for background information.)

2 Kings 2:25

- Do you think Adonijah got what he deserved, or do you think Solomon overreacted and treated him too harshly? Why?

C A Way to End

The story of Adonijah and Bathsheba raises several interesting issues. First, we must interpret the actions of characters whose motives aren't necessarily clear. We face similar challenges today. How do we assess the character of others with whom we interact? Second, all of us have been betrayed in some way. Although our text doesn't offer suggestions for how to deal with betrayal, it raises the question of how to respond to another's betrayal. Third, we observe Adonijah sealing his fate with a foolish choice. Regardless of his motives in asking for Abishag, we recognize (at least by the end of the story) that his choice is disastrous. What are our responsibilities to those who make foolish choices?

○ **Assessing the Character of Others**

Today we've read a story of political intrigue with characters whose motives are ambiguous. Ultimately, we can only guess whether we think these people acted with integrity or with self-interest.

Questions

- How do we assess the character of others?
- What do we look for as signs of honesty, integrity, and character?

○ **Dealing with Betrayal**

Adonijah was betrayed. Whether by his own foolishness, Bathsheba's cunning, or Solomon's appetite for vengeance, Adonijah made a request and died because of it. Invite class members to share stories of betrayal, either their own or those of people they have known.

Betrayal can come in many forms. Sometimes we betray ourselves, crumbling under the pressure of our peers or our own desires. Sometimes others betray us—close friends, spouses, or the church. What are some constructive ways we can respond to betrayal?

○ **Intervening in the Foolish Decisions of Others**

Sometimes we observe others making foolish decisions. In some cases, those decisions might have dire consequences. What sorts of situations warrant direct

intervention? What are some practical ways we might do this without causing more damage?

Resources

Terence E. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings*. Westminster Bible Companion, ed. Patrick D. Miller and David L. Bartlett (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1999).

G. H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, vol. 1, The New Century Bible Commentary, ed. Ronald E. Clements (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).

Iain W. Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, The New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1995).

BATHSHEBA TELLS HER OWN STORY

Scene One: 2 Samuel 11:1

As a little girl, I loved spring—the wildflowers and ripe fields of barley. But as a woman, I dread this season. It brings war and fear and death. My husband, Uriah, is a warrior, one of King David’s mighty men. Every year he leaves home to fight battles, and every year I wonder if he will return home to me.

This morning he left for battle, and I wept as he embraced me one last time. He looked deeply troubled. When I asked what was wrong, he said, “Joab leads us forth this year, but the king remains behind.” “Why?” I asked, “Is the king ill?”

“I don’t know why,” my husband replied, and then he kissed me and walked through the door.

I never saw him again.

Scene Two: 2 Samuel 11:2-4

My monthly cycle had passed, and I sobbed bitterly as I bathed in the courtyard. I had hoped to have news of a baby for Uriah when he returned from battle. Patting myself dry, I returned to the house and prepared for another night without Uriah.

Loud pounding on the door awakened me from a restless sleep. Had something happened to Uriah? I opened the door and found royal messengers awaiting me. “The king has sent for you,” one of them said to me.

I had no idea why the king would send for me unless he had news of my husband. Horror-stricken, I followed the messengers, willing myself not to succumb to hysteria omach.

When we arrived at the palace, one of the messengers led me to the king’s chambers. When I saw the king’s lust-filled face, a sickening realization swept over me. Nothing had happened to Uriah, but something unthinkable was about to happen to me. Terror paralyzed me as the messenger closed and locked the door.

Scene Three: 2 Samuel 11:5

The days of terror and shame blended into weeks. I huddled in my house, too afraid to venture out except to draw water and buy grain. Nightmares tormented me, and I was frightened by any sound that might herald another visit by the king’s messengers.

When the nausea began, I tried to blame it on my fear and humiliation. But then the time of my monthly cycle came and went, and I knew I was pregnant—and Uriah was not the father.

What recourse did I have? If Uriah came home and found me pregnant, by law he could have me stoned. Would he believe my claim that the king—righteous King David—was the father? I sent word to David telling him the news. I don’t know what I expected—a confession, perhaps? An apology? A promise to make things right with Uriah so my life would be spared?

But profound silence greeted my message.

Scene Four: 2 Samuel 11:26-27

I heard the whispers in the marketplace. At first I thought they gossiped about my swelling belly. But then I noticed looks of pity, shaking heads, weeping of other women whose husbands fought with Uriah. Finally, one of the wives approached me “The battle went poorly,” she said. “They got too close to the city wall. They’re dead—Uriah too. They’re dead.”

I fell to the ground and screamed. Uriah was my life, my lord, my husband! He was dead, and I knew I was to blame. David had not made things right but had covered his guilt with lies and death. As I lay in the dust, I begged the God of Israel to let me die. And then the baby kicked.

One week later I was summoned to King David’s palace a second time. As horrifying as it was to go to the man who had wrenched all goodness from my life, I had no other choice. My husband was dead. I was pregnant with the king’s child. Where else could I go?

Devastated, I married my husband’s murderer and bore my rapist’s child and wondered why David’s God looked on in silence.

DAVID'S STAGES OF GRIEF

Elisabeth Kübler Ross identified five stages in the grief process: (1) Denial, (2) Anger, (3) Bargaining, (4) Depression, and (5) Acceptance. Not everyone experiences all five stages, and they do not always occur in a particular order.

Compare Kübler-Ross's stages of grief with the description of David's grief in 2 Samuel 12.

STAGES	DAVID'S GRIEF
<p>Denial. In this stage the person exhibits disbelief that his/her loved one is really dead. He/she may say something like, "I can't believe it." Or "this can't be real." Often the bereaved will continue old habits related to the deceased, like fixing two cups of coffee in the morning, turning to speak to the other person, or imagining he/she hears the deceased speaking.</p>	
<p>Anger. The second stage involves anger that the person is gone. Sometimes the bereaved will express rage at their loved one for leaving them. They may also exhibit anger at themselves for failing to intervene in some way that might have changed events.</p>	
<p>Bargaining. In this stage the bereaved may try to barter with God, offering to do something in exchange for God bringing the loved one back. For example, "God, I promise I will go to church faithfully from now on if you will bring Sarah back to me."</p>	
<p>Depression. The person may weep constantly, lack interest in life, change dietary habits (eating more, eating less), or display changes in personality.</p>	
<p>Acceptance. The person renews interest in life and begins to recognize the permanence of his/her loss.</p>	

Source: Elisabeth Kübler Ross, *On Death and Dying*, 40th anniversary ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008).

ISRAELITE POLITICS

Voter's Guide



ADONIJAH



SOLOMON

<p>Background</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Son of David by Haggith. • Fourth son of David and oldest surviving heir. • Next in line for the throne in terms of birth order. <p><i>2 Samuel 3:2-4; 1 Kings 1:6</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Son of David by Bathsheba. • Born after the scandal of David's adultery with Bathsheba. • In terms of birth order, a non-contender. <p><i>2 Samuel 5:13-16</i></p>
<p>Experience</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Endorsements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military: Joab, supreme commander of David's armies throughout all forty years of his reign • Religious: Abiathar, High Priest of Israel • Supported by the Judahites of Hebron <p><i>1 Kings 1:7, 9, 19, 2</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Military: Benaiah and the other "mighty men" (elite warriors)—those closest to David • Religious: Zadok, a priest (perhaps co-high priest with Abiathar); Nathan the prophet—David's strongest supporters • Supported by the Israelites of Jerusalem <p><i>1 Kings 1:8,10-12, 26</i></p>
<p>Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to Judahite supremacy over the other tribes • Has proactively moved to secure an orderly succession by assuming the duties of kingship. <p><i>1 Kings 1:5-6</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed to David's policy of a united Israel • The only candidate with God's blessing. <p><i>2 Samuel 12:24-25</i></p>