

## Women in the Bible: Bathsheba

Scripture: 2 Samuel 11-12, 1 Kings 1:1-37, 2:1-25

- Bathsheba shows up in a few different books of the Bible. 2 Samuel sets the stage, 1 Kings is where the story begins to play out. She is also named in 1 Chronicles 3:5 where the lineage of David is named.
- As much of women's stories are from the perspective of men, Bathsheba's story is told from the perspective of David. What is missing?

Background Information:

Bathsheba

- Speaks 192 words: 3 in 2 Samuel and 189 in 1 Kings
  - o First words: "I am pregnant" (2 Samuel 11:5)
  - o The woman who speaks the most in 1 Kings
- Wife and Widow mourning her husband, and her first-born child
  - o Suffers extreme trauma at the hands of King David
- Becomes the most favored wife of King David and has four more sons

Abishag

- Never speaks in the scriptures
- Sought after for her beauty
- Men [try to] use her and end up dying: King David of old age, Adonijah from deceit
- We know very little about her, but her witness is powerful

Things to Consider:

- This story is from the perspective of King David and thus we get very little about Bathsheba and even Abishag. This is the case for the stories of many women in the Bible.
- Due to the lack of information, there is an incredible amount of room for helpful and harmful interpretation.
- Looking closer into the narrative we can see the power, respect, and influence Bathsheba holds with her husband David and her son Solomon in the way people act towards her.

Reflection Questions:

- Bathsheba suffered the loss of a child conceived by adultery; how might her relationship with God and with David have been tested through this experience?
- What part did politics play in Bathsheba's story? Are there places in the world where the same political dynamics are at play?
- We can look at Bathsheba's story through the lens of dysfunctional families: how might the family relations play an important role in the story?

Bonus!

Of the 7 wives and 10 concubines of King David, we hear the testimony of three. Read about the story of Michal and Abigail. How are they similar or different to the story of Bathsheba?

- Michal: 1 Samuel 18:20-29, 19:8-17, 25:33; 2 Samuel 3:12-16, 6:16-23
- Abigail: 1 Samuel 25:2-42

If you are interested in reading or discovering more about the story of Bathsheba, check out some of these resources. I own all of these books and love them. I also included art to look at for those of you interested in looking at the ways art and interpretation influence each other. Feel free to send me any resources that you find!

#### Further Reading:

- Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture
- Bible Women: All Their Words and Why They Matter by Lindsay Hardin Freeman
- All of the Women of the Bible by Edith Deen
- Women's Bible Commentary by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley
- Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld
- Life: Women of the Bible special edition magazine printed in 2019

#### Art to Consider:

I love looking at the way art can influence our perspective on stories. Check out some of these artistic representations of Bathsheba and her story. How do they change or impact how you view the story? **Art is incredibly important in relation to this story because there is so much missing information! The way art has told the story has had a really important impact on how the story is interpreted and told.**

David and Bathsheba by Marc Chagall

Bathsheba at her Bath by Angele Dequier

Bathsheba makes an appeal to David by Govert Flinck

David and Abishag by Pedro Americo

Abishag, Bathsheba, Solomon, and Nathan tend to the aging David (the Hague)

Bathsheba: The Bible Series (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5fElkgijE8>)

- This is a short clip with the actress explaining her experience of playing Bathsheba in this series from the History Channel in 2013

**\*\*If you know of or find other artistic depictions, please feel free to send it along!**