

Start to Finish

1 Kings 1:28-31, 37

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I. Unwanted Start 2 Sam 11

- a. David sexually assaulted and abused her
 - i. He took and lay with her 2 Sam 11:4
- b. Lost her Child and husband 2 Sam 11:15-24; 11:26-12:14
- c. David bore more children with her and made her his seventh wife 1 Chron 3:1-9

II. Unwanted Problem 1 Kings 1:11

- a. Possible Danger
 - i. Adonijah tried to become king in place of Solomon 1 Kings 1:5
 - ii. Solomon was promised the throne from David 1 Kings 1:43-44
- b. She went to King David humbly 1:16
 - i. This plan requires humility- prostrating herself
 - ii. This plan requires selflessness- Saving her son
 - 1. Maintaining Purpose-big picture
 - 2. Farsightedness 2 Peter 1:9
 - iii. This plan required hope in promises
- c. She called David to act on behalf of Solomon v.17
 - i. Reminded him of what happens if he does not pronounce Solomon king v.20-21

III. Wanted Finish 1 Kings 1:28-31

- a. Her call to action led and following the counsel led to a vow
 - i. David called her back to his chambers
 - ii. Acceding to the pressure from Nathan and Bathsheba, David designates Solomon as his co-regent (cf. vv. 43–44, 47–48) to act as full regent during his sickness (vv. 46, 53).
 - iii. **Ru 1:16-17 Ruth; 1Sa 1:9-28 Hannah; Est 4:15-16 Esther;**
 - iv. **He vowed to the God that saved him from his distress and redeemed him**
- b. With Gratitude prostrated herself

- i. It is a complimentary wish; God had promised to bless the righteous with length of days. These words therefore implied that the king had acted righteously and was worthy of God's blessing.¹
- c. Solomon was brought down and made King v.34-37
 - i. Anointed, Appointed and Announced

¹ Thomas L. Constable, "[1 Kings](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 489.

Background

While Uriah was off fighting under Joab, King David saw a beautiful woman taking her evening bath. Discovering her name and that her husband was away on duty, he sent for Bathsheba and had sexual intercourse with her (2 Sm 11:1–4). When Bathsheba later informed him that she was pregnant, the king ordered Uriah back to Jerusalem, hoping that the husband's return would make Bathsheba's pregnancy appear legitimate. But Uriah considered himself still on active duty and slept with the palace guard, refusing to go home (vv 5–13). Frustrated, David sent him back to the front and ordered Joab to put Uriah in the front lines and then pull back. Consequently, Uriah was killed (vv 14–25).

After Bathsheba's period of mourning, David installed her in the palace as his seventh wife, and she bore the child. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to pronounce judgment on David's sin through a parable. Nathan prophesied a series of tragedies in David's household, beginning with the death of Bathsheba's infant son (2 Sm 11:26–12:14). David confessed his sin and repented, but the infant became sick and died. The prologue (or superscription) of Psalm 51 describes it as the psalm of repentance David wrote when confronted by Nathan over his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah. David comforted Bathsheba, and eventually they had other children (2 Sm 12:15–25).

Character Study

The daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11:3), who became one of David's wives (2 Sam 11:27) and mother of his son and heir, Solomon (2 Sam 12:24–25). The name may mean "daughter of abundance" (*ID²B* 1:366). The story of David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba, resulting in her pregnancy, and David's stratagem to cause her husband's death and take her as wife (2 Sam 11:1–27) is one shrouded in ambiguity (Yee 1988:240–253). The character of Bathsheba and her motivations are particularly puzzling. The author gives no clues to the emotions of a woman who commits adultery, becomes pregnant, loses her husband, and marries her royal lover. From a literary perspective, according to Berlin (1983:25–27), Bathsheba is simply an agent, a person necessary for the plot, and not a full-fledged character. Since 2 Samuel 11 is a story about David's adultery, and since such a story requires a married woman, Bathsheba fulfills this function.

However, according to Bailey (1989), David and Bathsheba are co-conspirators in a political scheme to marry. Their nuptial union is similar to David's other political marriages, where he weds a woman from an influential family who will assist in either his rise to or his maintenance of power (Cf. also Levenson and Halpern 1980). In this view, Bathsheba is no longer an innocent victim, but a willing partner in the affair who wishes her own son to become David's royal successor. Her claim in 1 Kgs 1:17, that David had sworn that Solomon would rule after him,

²*IDB Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. G. A. Buttrick. 4 vols. Nashville, 1962

suggests that David was able to convince Bathsheba to marry him by promising that her son would be his heir to the throne.

One finds a portrayal of Bathsheba in 1 Kings 1–2 which would support the view of her as a co-conspirator in the adultery. Here she is a key figure in the ruthless political intrigue surrounding her son Solomon's rise to power. With the prophet Nathan, she holds David to his oath that Solomon would succeed him as king (1 Kgs 1:11–31). Moreover, she plays a vital role in Adonijah's death by personally bringing his request to Solomon to marry David's concubine, Abishag. Since such a request is equivalent to a claim to the throne, Solomon is provided with grounds to eliminate his rival (1 Kgs 2:13–24, Berlin 1983:27–30).³

Bathsheba. Uriah's wife, with whom David committed adultery and whom he later married. Bathsheba, also spelled Bath-shua (1 Chr 3:5), was the daughter of Ammiel or Eliam (2 Sm 11:3) and possibly the granddaughter of Ahithophel, the king's adviser (2 Sm 15:12; 23:34). Her Hittite husband was one of David's top military heroes (2 Sm 23:39).

While Uriah was off fighting under Joab, King David saw a beautiful woman taking her evening bath. Discovering her name and that her husband was away on duty, he sent for Bathsheba and had sexual intercourse with her (2 Sm 11:1–4). When Bathsheba later informed him that she was pregnant, the king ordered Uriah back to Jerusalem, hoping that the husband's return would make Bathsheba's pregnancy appear legitimate. But Uriah considered himself still on active duty and slept with the palace guard, refusing to go home (2 Sm 11:5–13). Frustrated, David sent him back to the front and ordered Joab to put Uriah in the front lines and then pull back. In spite of the casualties suffered, David congratulated Joab on learning that Uriah was dead (2 Sm 11:14–25).

After Bathsheba's period of mourning, David installed her in the palace as his seventh wife, and she bore the child. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to pronounce judgment on David's sin through a parable. Nathan prophesied a series of tragedies in David's household, beginning with the death of Bathsheba's infant son (2 Sm 11:26–12:14). David confessed his sin and repented, but the infant became sick and died. The prologue (or superscription) of Psalm 51 describes it as the psalm of repentance David wrote when confronted by Nathan over his adultery with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah. David comforted Bathsheba, and eventually they had other children (2 Sm 12:15–25).

Of David's 19 sons by his 7 wives (1 Chr 3:1–9), the 4 born to Bathsheba were Shimea (also spelled Shammua, 2 Sm 5:14; 1 Chr 14:4), Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. Nathan (Lk 3:31) and Solomon (Mt 1:6) appear in N⁴T genealogies of Jesus Christ. At the very end of David's life the prophet Nathan told Bathsheba that David's son Adonijah (by his wife Haggith) was conspiring to usurp the throne. Bathsheba and Nathan persuaded David to make Solomon king as he had promised (1 Kgs 1:1–53). Later Bathsheba presented to her son Solomon, now king, a request from Adonijah for permission to marry Abishag, the woman who had taken care of their dying

³ Gale A. Yee, "[Bathsheba \(Person\)](#)," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 627–628.

⁴NT New Testament

father. Solomon saw in the request a new plot and this time had Adonijah executed (1 Kgs 2:12–34).⁵

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ADONIJAH (PERSON) [Heb *ʾădōnîyāh (û)* (אָדֹנִיָּהוּ)]. A name given three OT characters which means “Yah (weh) is (my) Lord.”

1. The fourth son of David by his wife Haggith in Hebron, while David was king of Judah (2 Sam 3:4; 1 Chr 3:1–2); and heir apparent to the throne at the time of Solomon’s accession. Adonijah’s personal ambition led to his own demise in a story that echoes that of the rebellion and death of his elder brother Absalom.

⁵ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *“Bathsheba.” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 268–269.

⁶ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 152.

The story begins with a note on the feebleness of David in his old age. Since the elder half-brothers Amnon, Absalom, and presumably Chileab were dead (1 Kgs 2:22), it was assumed by Adonijah, and perhaps by the general populace, that he was next in line for the throne. Though David may have promised Bathsheba, his favorite queen, that her son Solomon would succeed him—a fact that finds some confirmation in the exclusion of Solomon from Adonijah’s feast—that pledge does not appear to have been seriously considered. The subsequent nomination of Solomon came as a surprise to the followers of Adonijah, who himself later claimed in conversation with Bathsheba: “You know that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel fully expected me to reign” (1 Kgs 2:15).

With the help of David’s general Joab and the priest Abiathar, Adonijah prepared a sacrificial feast near the spring En-rogel, to which he invited “all his brothers, the king’s sons (except for Solomon), and all the royal officials of Judah (except for Nathan, Zadok, and Benaiah),” hoping to become king before his aged father died (1 Kgs 1:9). His plans were thwarted by the prophet Nathan, the priest Zadok, and Benaiah, commander of the royal bodyguard, who allied themselves with Bathsheba to forestall his succession.⁷

Commentary Studies

e. David’s promise (1:28–31)

1:28. **Bathsheba** had evidently left the room when Nathan entered as was customary in that culture. **David** called her to return, which she did.

1:29–30. **The king** invoked the sacred name of Yahweh, the living God **who** had **delivered** him from **every** one of his troubles. **As surely as the Lord lives** meant that David’s intended action was as certain to take place as God’s very existence. Those words occur frequently in the Old Testament including 14 times in 1 and 2 Kings (1 Kings 1:29; 2:24; 17:1, 12; 18:10, 15; 22:14; 2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6; 3:14; 4:30; 5:16, 20). David could not more forcefully have guaranteed that he would indeed do what he now said he would do. The God who had delivered David would now, through David, “deliver” Bathsheba and her son. David repeated his promise that **Solomon**, Bathsheba’s son, would succeed him as **king** and **sit on the throne** that God had promised to bless.

1:31. With gratitude for his granting her request **Bathsheba bowed** before her **king**. The expression, **May my lord the king ... live forever** (cf. v. 34), is a common expression found often in Scripture signifying a desire that God would bless a monarch by granting him long life. It is a

⁷ Duane L. Christensen, [“Adonijah \(Person\).”](#) ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 75.

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f. David's instructions (1:32–37)

1:32. David's plans skillfully defused the rebellion which was building just south of Jerusalem at the spring of En Rogel (cf. v. 9). **Zadok ... Nathan**, and **Benaiah** were the ranking priest, prophet, and soldier respectively (cf. v. 8), who had remained unallied with Adonijah. Their leadership in the events to follow would demonstrate to the general population that they were acting as the king's representatives.

1:33. **Your lord's servants** were the Kerethites and the Pelethites (v. 38; cf. 2 Sam. 8:18), David's special military guards under Benaiah (2 Sam. 23:22–23). They were responsible to protect **the king**, his family, and his city. David told them to place **Solomon** on a **mule** and lead **him** through Jerusalem to the place of anointing. Kings rode on mules in the ancient Near East, symbolizing their role as the people's servants. The people would understand that Solomon's riding on a mule implied his kingship. The mule specified by David was to be his **own** personal animal. Perhaps the people would have recognized that mule by its trappings and concluded that David had given Solomon permission to ride it as his designated successor.

The officials were to lead Solomon **down to** the spring of **Gihon**. Two springs provided most of the water for Jerusalem: the En Rogel spring southeast of Jerusalem not far from the city wall where Adonijah was feasting his guests (cf. v. 9), and the Gihon spring about one-half mile north

⁸ Thomas L. Constable, "[1 Kings](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 489.

and directly east of Jerusalem also outside the city wall. On that day two processions, one by rebels and one by the king's men, were going to two neighboring springs.

1:34–35. At the Gihon spring both **Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet** were to **anoint** Solomon. There was no prophet in Adonijah's camp. Nathan's presence symbolized the divine choice of Solomon as **king** in a way that Zadok's presence alone could not. Blowing **the trumpet** signaled the official nature of the anointing. Every king of Israel was anointed. The ceremony symbolized the coming of the Spirit of God on His chosen leader through pouring oil on his head.

The **shout, Long live King Solomon!** expressed the people's desire and prayer that the new king's reign would be long and prosperous. The leaders had been instructed to return **up** Mount Zion to the city of David and place Solomon **on** David's **throne**. This would be the ultimate proof of his election. Solomon was to commence his rule at that moment; the official seating on the throne was to be perceived not as simply a symbolic act. David clearly explained that he himself by the authority of his kingly office had **appointed** Solomon **ruler over Israel and Judah** effective immediately. Israel and Judah were distinguished (cf. 4:20, 25) because 1 Kings was written after the kingdom was divided in 931 B.C. and/or because a rift was already evident between the northern and southern parts of the kingdom (cf. 2 Sam. 19:41–20:2).

1:36–37. As military commander and the man responsible to execute these orders **Benaiah** responded to his commander in chief. His response, **Amen! May the Lord ... so declare it**, means, "May what the king has said be what Yahweh has declared." Benaiah then requested that **God** would **be with Solomon** and bless his reign **even** more than He had blessed David's reign.⁹

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