

Session 3 Reading Assignment

2 Samuel Chapter 11

¹At the turn of the year, the season when kings go out [to battle], David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him, and they devastated Ammon and besieged Rabbah; David remained in Jerusalem. ²Late one afternoon, David rose from his couch and strolled on the roof of the royal palace; and from the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³and the king sent someone to make inquiries about the woman. He reported, "She is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam [and] wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴David sent messengers to fetch her; she came to him and he lay with her—she had just purified herself after her period—and she went back home. ⁵The woman conceived, and she sent word to David, "I am pregnant." ⁶Thereupon David sent a message to Joab, "Send Uriah the Hittite to me"; and Joab sent Uriah to David.

⁷When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab and the troops were faring and how the war was going. ⁸Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and bathe your feet." When Uriah left the royal palace, a present from the king followed him. ⁹But Uriah slept at the entrance of the royal palace, along with the other officers of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰When David was told that Uriah had not gone down to his house, he said to Uriah, "You just came from a journey; why didn't you go down to your house?" ¹¹Uriah answered David, "The Ark and Israel and Judah are located at Succoth, and my master Joab and Your Majesty's men are camped in the open; how can I go home and eat and drink and sleep with my wife? As you live, by your very life, I will not do this!" ¹²David said to Uriah, "Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will send you off." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. The next day, ¹³David summoned him, and he ate and drank with him until he got him drunk; but in the evening, [Uriah] went out to sleep in the same place, with his lord's officers; he did not go down to his home.

¹⁴In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab, which he sent with Uriah. ¹⁵He wrote in the letter as follows: "Place Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest; then fall back so that he may be killed." ¹⁶So when Joab was besieging the city, he stationed Uriah at the point where he knew that there were able

warriors. ¹⁷The men of the city sallied out and attacked Joab, and some of David's officers among the troops fell; Uriah the Hittite was among those who died.

¹⁸Joab sent a full report of the battle to David. ¹⁹He instructed the messenger as follows: "When you finish reporting to the king all about the battle, ²⁰the king may get angry and say to you, 'Why did you come so close to the city to attack it? Didn't you know that they would shoot from the wall?' ²¹Who struck down Abimelech son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who dropped an upper millstone on him from the wall at Thebez, from which he died? Why did you come so close to the wall?' Then say: 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite was among those killed.'"

²²The messenger set out; he came and told David all that Joab had sent him to say. ²³The messenger said to David, "First the men prevailed against us and sallied out against us into the open; then we drove them back up to the entrance to the gate. ²⁴But the archers shot at your men from the wall and some of Your Majesty's men fell; your servant Uriah the Hittite also fell." ²⁵Whereupon David said to the messenger, "Give Joab this message: 'Do not be distressed about the matter. The sword always takes its toll. Press your attack on the city and destroy it!' Encourage him!"

²⁶When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she lamented over her husband. ²⁷After the period of mourning was over, David sent and had her brought into his palace; she became his wife and she bore him a son.

Chapter 12

¹But the Lord was displeased with what David had done, and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said, "There were two men in the same city, one rich and one poor. ²The rich man had very large flocks and herds, ³but the poor man had only one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He tended it and it grew up together with him and his children: it used to share his morsel of bread, drink from his cup, and nestle in his bosom; it was like a daughter to him. ⁴One day, a traveler came to the rich man, but he was loath to take anything from his own flocks or herds to prepare a meal for the guest who had come to him; so he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

⁵David flew into a rage against the man, and said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶He shall pay for the lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and showed no pity.” ⁷And Nathan said to David, “That man is you! Thus said the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘It was I who anointed you king over Israel and it was I who rescued you from the hand of Saul. ⁸I gave you your master’s house and possession of your master’s wives; and I gave you the House of Israel and Judah; and if that were not enough, I would give you twice as much more. ⁹Why then have you flouted the command of the Lord and done what displeases Him? You have put Uriah the Hittite to the sword; you took his wife and made her your wife and had him killed by the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰Therefore the sword shall never depart from your House—because you spurned Me by taking the wife of Uriah the Hittite and making her your wife.’ ¹¹Thus said the Lord: ‘I will make a calamity rise against you from within your own house; I will take your wives and give them to another man before your very eyes and he shall sleep with your wives under this very sun. ¹²You acted in secret, but I will make this happen in the sight of all Israel and in broad daylight.’”

¹³David said to Nathan, “I stand guilty before the Lord!” And Nathan replied to David, “The Lord has remitted your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴However, since you have spurned the enemies of the Lord by this deed, even the child about to be born to you shall die.”

¹⁵Nathan went home, and the Lord afflicted the child that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, and it became critically ill. ¹⁶David entreated God for the boy; David fasted, and he went in and spent the night lying on the ground. ¹⁷The senior servants of his household tried to induce him to get up from the ground; but he refused, nor would he partake of food with them. ¹⁸On the seventh day the child died. David’s servants were afraid to tell David that the child was dead; for they said, “We spoke to him when the child was alive and he wouldn’t listen to us; how can we tell him that the child is dead? He might do something terrible.” ¹⁹When David saw his servants talking in whispers, David understood that the child was dead; David asked his servants, “Is the child dead?” “Yes,” they replied.

²⁰Thereupon David rose from the ground; he bathed and anointed himself, and he changed his clothes. He went into the House of the Lord and prostrated himself. Then he went home and asked for food, which they set before him, and he

ate. ²¹His courtiers asked him, “Why have you acted in this manner? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but now that the child is dead, you rise and take food!” ²²He replied, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept because I thought: ‘Who knows? The Lord may have pity on me, and the child may live.’ ²³But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will never come back to me.”

²⁴David consoled his wife Bathsheba; he went to her and lay with her. She bore a son and she named him Solomon. And the Lord favored him.