

The nature of Bathsheba is the same as all the sons and daughters of Adam which includes the Lord Jesus Christ. All who are born under Adamic Condemnation are cursed with the old man of sin and death. They are mortal and subject to death, they become old and infirm and will all die unless God intervenes in that natural cycle. They are also prone to transgression because the propensity to sin resides within them. The temptation of man is common to all, it occurs when everyone is drawn away of their own lusts and enticed. Bathsheba was the same in this regard as other people.

Bathsheba is included in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew as Solomon's mother, although she is not named but referenced as "*her of Uriah*" emphasising her original husband. It must be remembered that this deals with Joseph's lineage and not Mary's. She is, however, still a direct ancestor of Jesus as both Nathan and Solomon were her sons, see 1 Chronicles 3v5. Nathan produced the line of Mary as depicted in Luke's genealogy, 3v31. There are none in the direct line of Christ who are established as being unfaithful, when they sinned, they repented. We cannot say that all these people without any doubt were faithful, although it seems that way. This should be the starting position when looking at them, that we should look especially for examples of faith not just examples of sin in such people. The Bible is even handed in exposing the dichotomy of mankind as they struggle between the old man and the new man inside. It contains examples of both. The good and true are given to exhort us to embrace and emulate them. Also, the evil and the false to avoid and condemn. Which was Bathsheba?

It is her character rather than her nature that seems to be the main differential and makes her an interesting consideration, as one important in the divine story. Everyone has the choice as to how they will live their lives. Those brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Truth have the advantage of strong righteous

influences from an early age. However, they must still choose who they will serve, God or King Sin. That all commit sin and come short of the glory of God, does not mean that some strive to not do so, and whilst they fail through weakness, foolishness and most assuredly of all, a lack of love towards God, they are imputed as righteous in God's grace even when they have sinned, because of their faith in the divine solution to man's predicament.

That David and Bathsheba committed adultery, a sin punishable by death under the law of Moses, is not under dispute. Both were sinners because they disregarded the sanctity of the marriage vows which Uriah and Bathsheba had bound themselves together with. They should have been stoned and put out of the congregation, but their intimacy was assumed by others never actually evidenced. No doubt they were careful in that regard. Many would have had their suspicions, such as the messengers which the King sent to fetch her. However, these servants were loyal to the King and presumably just did not want to know why the King called a beautiful woman to his private chambers in the absence of his wives or other family. There were no witnesses, if there were such, they were also guilty if they remained silent. The exposure of this sin in the Bible would not have been made public immediately, although the transgressions of the King were subsequently brought out into the open, but perhaps not whilst the King was still alive. Imagine if our sins were thus brought to the light! How would cope with that? Sin is always messy and defiling in ways that are beyond the control of man. In mercy we often get to hide from others, if not from the cognisance of God Himself, who sees all.

Under the law, if a woman was being forced, she must cry out, Deuteronomy 22v23,24. In a city there was an expectation that she would be heard. Whilst a rapist can silence his victim at the time, afterwards she would expose him. This was not the case here. Both were willing participants. However, this does not mean that it was all preplanned. It could have been an unwise liaison

that erupted into an incident of passion. The man has the chief responsibility and if it was the result of sudden passion then it was clearly most unwise to compromise oneself by putting yourself in that position where this was possible. Prudence is necessary in matters of such delicateness, a lesson to be heeded.

The incident does underline the need to not only regulate yourself in such matters but also consider how your behaviour would be understood by others. It is always necessary to avoid the appearance of evil, 1 Thessalonians 5v22. If David had acted with this presiding consideration the whole incident would have been avoided. Are we also blind?

David was the king and could and did marry more than one wife, even though the Law warned against this, Deuteronomy 17v17 *“Neither shall he multiply wives to himself”*. He could marry any nubile virgin he desired in the whole of his kingdom, but that stood against the divine type of one man one woman for life, which Jesus understood was taught from Eden when everything was very good. That David knew to do good and did it not, was also sin, James 4v17. If Bathsheba had not gotten pregnant perhaps, he would have just moved on from this affair and returned to the appearance of normality with his actual wives, but God did not allow this to happen. Why was David so selfish?

Later, when David was seeking to cover his transgression, it seems that he acted alone. He did not decide in conjunction with Bathsheba what to do about Uriah. It was David alone who concocted the ruse to get him drunk and then to sleep with his wife, so that the pregnancy could be passed off as within the marriage. There is no record that Bathsheba asked David to do that. It did not work anyway. If she had been the promoter of such a strategy, then it would have been more likely to have been successful! As a desperate sinner, he sought to extricate himself from the mess he had put himself and others into. She would be stoned if the matter was left, he could escape by abandoning her to her fate and unless she accused him subsequently, which he

could always deny, she would receive the harsh punishment of the law in isolation. Panic causes the problem to get worse, in this context, many times worse as Uriah ends up dying for his integrity and striving to do the right thing in serving his King and the nation of God. How sullied must David have felt when the full weight of what he had done hit home!

Why did Bathsheba become involved in sexual relations outside of marriage? There are many reasons why people stray. It might have been because as she was up to that point childless, she regarded herself as infertile and therefore had less to be concerned about with regard to pregnancy. This would paint her as a calculating individual, but this is mitigated by her lack of guile in the latter incident regarding Abishag when it was Solomon who saw through the unsubtle ruse of Adonijah, not Bathsheba, 1 Kings 2v18-22. It seems that even after many years she was still relatively innocent if not naïve.

Some say that it was her grandfather Ahithophel who put her up to it. He was a great schemer and one who well understood human nature, perhaps he plotted to ingratiate himself with the King in this way. Others counter that it was for revenge for his sweet lamb, Bathsheba that he turned against David, although she remained thoroughly loyal to her second husband without exception 2 Samuel 15v16. She is described as being, both the daughter of Ammiel 1 Chronicles 3v5 and also Eliam 2 Samuel 11v3. The record in 2 Samuel 23v34 has Eliam, one of David's mighty men, as the son of Ahithophel. Uriah was also such a champion and perhaps that is where he sourced his bride. This implies that she was younger than he was, and this was common in the ancient world. David himself was older, it seems in his forties, with many children and a twenty-year age gap between him and Bathsheba is quite possible if not actually probable. Uriah could have been in age between the two, a younger mighty man marrying the daughter of an older champion. Not only was David her King but she might also have looked to him as a

mature experienced man with a degree of awe, was she thus smitten in her naivety and the heat of the moment?

Bathsheba should not be regarded as a dumb airhead who was easily manipulated, having only the assets of vain physical beauty. It seems entirely against type that David would seek any companionship merely on that basis. She was “*very beautiful to look upon*” as David had seen for himself from the roof top. Why was she in sight of others when washing herself? There is no implication of her “putting herself out there”, as the modern parlance expresses it. David was not able to sleep, and he was the active person in this matter, not her. From the roof he saw her, whether he strained to see this beauty or could easily observe her without effort is not revealed, both are possible. The issue is not commented upon and the foolishness of the incident was probably a bit of both as is often the case. The affair is not put across as being either an elder man taking advantage of an innocent bride, nor is it portrayed as being a slut seducing the foolish man. It happened and the lack of evil intent may be why on this occasion God used the incident to preach possible forgiveness for the sinner, which is within us all. This would place the focus on the aspect of divine mercy which provides hope to the struggling mortal, rather than sordid unbridled licentiousness.

She mourned her husband when she learnt that he had died in battle. There was no realisation that David had manipulated the circumstance through his trusted agent Joab, how would she have acted differently if she had been privy to that information? Does knowing everything in a relationship always produce the best results, or is it sometimes true that ignorance is bliss, which is not an absolute principle! Joab knew that David was an evil plotter like himself, and he kept that information close, so he had a degree of power over the King. If the Biblical record was a matter of public knowledge, then he also would have been exposed as a sinful man of disrepute. He was concerned enough about his reputation to try to ride the wave of popularity and acceptance by

the nation, which he had managed successfully to do over many years. He kept the secret of the King to his own advantage, David had to tread very carefully with him now, even more than before. Joab did not side with Bathsheba or Solomon when David died. Instead, he threw in his lot with Adonijah against the decision of his former King who had nominated the younger Solomon, not the older son of another wife. Was this a deliberate aversion of Bathsheba? Did Joab blame her for turning the head of his friend and sovereign? Did he resent her for having such a dramatic and catastrophic influence upon the formerly successful King? The tables had been turned!

A Voice from the Altar

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