

Who was Bathsheba in the Bible?

Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, was initially married to Uriah the Hittite, one of David's loyal soldiers (2 Samuel 11:3). However, she later became the wife of King David and the mother of King Solomon (2 Samuel 11:27; 12:24). The name Bathsheba means "daughter of abundance." The Bible describes her as "very beautiful" (2 Samuel 11:2).

Bathsheba is best known for the story of David's adultery, as described in 2 Samuel 11. This narrative highlights the contrast between the faithfulness of Uriah and Bathsheba and David's lustful desires. One evening, Bathsheba was taking a bath, probably to purify herself according to the Law of Moses (2 Samuel 11:2, 4). David saw her bathing and desired her. Despite knowing of Bathsheba's marriage to Uriah, David summoned her to the palace and slept with her. Later, Bathsheba sends word to David that she is pregnant (2 Samuel 11:5).

In an attempt to conceal his sin, David called Uriah back from battle, hoping that Uriah would sleep with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:6-10). However, Uriah, remaining faithful to his duty as a soldier, chose not to go home to his wife (2 Samuel 11:11). Frustrated by this, David devised a wicked plan to send Uriah to the front line of the battle. At the same time, David instructed Joab, the army commander, to withdraw, leading to Uriah's death at the hands of the enemy (2 Samuel 11:14-25).

Bathsheba received the devastating news of her husband's death on the battlefield and mourned for Uriah (2 Samuel 11:26). Subsequently, Bathsheba became David's wife. Unfortunately, the sorrow did not end there. David and Bathsheba's newborn baby, unnamed in the narrative, died just seven days after birth as a consequence of David's sin (2 Samuel 12:18). In Psalm 51 David confesses his sin with Bathsheba and prays for

forgiveness.

As queen, Bathsheba bore Solomon, her second son, who later became the king of Israel (2 Samuel 12:24). This son was dearly loved by God and given the name Jedidiah, which means “loved by the Lord.” In modern terms, Bathsheba experienced the joy of a “rainbow baby.”

Bathsheba recedes from the biblical narrative until later, when she plays a crucial role in securing Solomon’s succession to the throne (1 Kings 1:11-35). When Adonijah, another son of David, declared himself as the King of Israel during David’s old age, the prophet Nathan reminded Bathsheba of David’s oath that Solomon would be his successor. Bathsheba and Nathan promptly approached David to remind him of his promise. Bathsheba bowed before King David and told him of Adonijah’s actions. Then she emphasized the dire situation she and Solomon faced: “My lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to learn from you who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise, as soon as my lord the king is laid to rest with his ancestors, I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals” (1 Kings 1:20-21). Nathan confirmed Bathsheba’s report. Consequently, David gave the order, and Solomon was officially crowned as the king of Israel.

There are a few additional details to note about Bathsheba. After Solomon ascended to the throne, Bathsheba innocently assisted Adonijah in requesting that Solomon allow him to marry Abishag the Shunammite, who had been David’s platonic companion (1 Kings 2:13-21). Solomon rejected the request, recognizing that Adonijah was attempting to use Bathsheba to finagle his way to the throne. Solomon had Adonijah executed along with everyone else who took part in the plot to wrest the throne from him (verses 22-35).

Many scholars argue that Bathsheba may have been the mother of Lemuel mentioned in Proverbs 31:1-9. Considering that King Lemuel is believed to be a nickname for Solomon, it is possible that Bathsheba, as his mother, instructed him to walk in reverence of the Lord. Also, in the genealogy of Jesus provided in Matthew 1:1-17, Bathsheba is indirectly referred to in verse 6 as “the wife of Uriah” (ESV).

Bathsheba’s story reminds us that God has a plan, and He can work even through difficult situations with imperfect people to bring about something good. Queen Bathsheba, despite the unsavory events surrounding her coming to the palace, became the mother of the wisest and most successful king ever to grace the throne.