

Uriah the Hittite

One of the most famous stories in the Bible concerns the time that King David committed adultery with Bathsheba. When Bathsheba got pregnant David tried to cover up his sin, but his attempts failed. David ultimately decided to hide his sin by having Bathsheba's husband (Uriah the Hittite) killed. Instead of personally killing him, though, David devised a plan to place Uriah in danger and then withdraw so that enemy forces could kill him:

2 Samuel 11:14: "And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it **by the hand of Uriah.**

15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, **Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die."**

It must have taken quite a lot of nerve for David to have Uriah carry his own death sentence to Joab, but that's not what I want to focus on right now. What often gets overlooked is that Uriah was not just a random soldier in David's army. Uriah was actually an important man, and David probably knew him well.

The reason we know this is because 1 Chronicles 11 lists the mighty men of David. These were David's special forces; they were the heroes of his army. These people were great men who did great deeds. David's mighty men were divided into two groups: there were the three superheroes, and then there was a larger group of heroes. If you read the list of heroes you will discover a very familiar name:

1 Chronicles 11:41: "**Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai,**"

There is a similar list in 2 Samuel 23, and Uriah is mentioned in 2 Samuel 23:39. Uriah, then, was not just a common soldier; he was one of David's greatest warriors – a man of tremendous integrity, honor, and loyalty. He was one of David's greatest and best servants, *and David had him murdered so he could steal his wife*. David wasn't murdering some random guy; he was killing someone he knew quite well.

If you are familiar with the story of David then you know that David was one of Saul's most faithful servants. Like Uriah, David was one of Saul's greatest soldiers. Like Uriah, David served Saul faithfully – but Saul was not appreciative. Saul grew jealous of David and spent years trying to kill him. In fact, Saul even took David's wife and gave her to someone else:

1 Samuel 25:44: “But Saul had given **Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti** the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.”

Do you see how all of this makes the situation even worse? David, of all people, should have known what it was like to serve someone faithfully and get punished for it. He should have known what it was like to have your wife taken from you *because it happened to him*. Instead, though, he acted just like King Saul. David persecuted one of his most faithful soldiers and then stole his wife. David went from being the abused victim to being the abuser.

In the end David got what he wanted: Bathsheba became his wife, and their son Solomon sat on the throne and became the king of Israel – and part of the Messianic line. However, David also got something else: God cursed him for the rest of his days (2 Samuel 12:10) and David's life was never the same. David sincerely repented of his sin, but there was no way to undo what he had done.

There is one other component of this tragic story that needs to be mentioned. Some time after David committed this sin

his son Absalom launched a rebellion against him. Ahithophel, David's trusted adviser and counselor, helped Absalom in his rebellion. It turns out that Ahithophel actually had a personal connection to what David had done. You see, Bathsheba's father was a man named Eliam:

2 Samuel 11:3: "And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this **Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam**, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

Who was Eliam's father? Why, it was Ahithophel:

2 Samuel 23:34: "Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, **Eliam the son of Ahithophel** the Gilonite,"

When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then murdered her husband he was actually doing it to *the granddaughter of his most trusted adviser*. I strongly suspect that Ahithophel became very upset over what David had done, and he jumped at the chance to get his revenge. David did more than just murder one of his loyal friends; he also turned his counselor into his enemy.

