



Part 4

A Broken King, A Deeper Hope

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CHRISTIAN
FORMATION

The point of this study

The goal of every Inspire study is to draw closer to Jesus Christ. In this series, we will explore the life of David, the shepherd king, and consider how his story helped shape Israel's hope for the Messiah and the early Church's understanding of Jesus as that Messiah.

This study draws on four ancient lenses of interpretation: the literary, the metaphorical (which we will call the theological), the epic (which we will call the kingdom of God), and the ethical. Each lens helps us engage more deeply with the passages we read, leading us ever closer to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God to whom the Scriptures bear witness. If you would like to explore these lenses further, you can find more in the Inspire video series [How to Read the Bible \(Part 2\)](#).

The check-in & opening prayer

As we begin this study, let's take a moment to check in with ourselves and to ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate our heart. You can do this through personal journaling or by sharing with the group.



I wonder what was a highlight of your week.

**I wonder where you may have needed
prayer or support this week.**

I wonder where you noticed God at work this week.

I wonder what you are bringing to this study.
(questions, concerns, distractions, hopes, fears, learnings...).

I wonder what you hope to receive from God through this study.

Holy God,
**open our eyes that we may behold you;
open our lips that we may proclaim your praise;
open our ears that we may listen for your Word;
and open our hearts that we may be transformed,
to become like Jesus, the Son of David,
the Son of God, our friend and helper.**

Amen.

Context (*read and reflect*)

*Reading the Scripture through the **Literary Lens**.*

Before we turn to 2 Samuel 11, let's place it in context.

Much has happened since David was secretly anointed in Bethlehem. The overlooked shepherd has become king. He has united the tribes of Israel, established Jerusalem as his capital, brought the ark to the city, and received God's promise that his house and kingdom would endure forever (2 Samuel 7). David appears to be everything Israel could hope for in a king: chosen by God, victorious in battle, and the recipient of a covenant that will shape the future of God's people. At this point in the story, it would be easy to imagine that David's reign is secure and that God's promises have found their fulfillment in him.

I wonder whether there have been moments when everything seemed to be going well, only for hidden weaknesses to emerge beneath the surface.



Yet 2 Samuel 11 marks a dramatic turning point. The chapter begins with David remaining in Jerusalem while his army fights on his behalf. What follows is a story of desire, deception, abuse of power, and violence. The king who was called to shepherd God's people instead harms one of his own sheep. The story is difficult to read, but it serves an important purpose. It reminds us that even Israel's greatest king remains deeply human. David's failure creates a longing for a more faithful king — one who will embody God's justice and mercy without corruption. The story prepares us to look beyond David toward the Messiah who is still to come.

I wonder why Scripture preserves stories that reveal the failures of its heroes rather than hiding them.



The Story (mark and note)

*Reading the Scripture through the **Literary Lens**. As you read, circle, underline, and make notes on the passage, notice the characters, the setting, the verbs, the allusions to other parts of Scripture, the metaphors, and anything else that draws your attention. Throughout this study, you will notice that certain words or themes are highlighted. These are simply some of the things that stand out to me as I read. You may notice different details, patterns, or questions – and that is part of the beauty of reading Scripture together. Mark the text with what you notice, what surprises you, and what you sense the Spirit drawing your attention toward.*

2 Samuel 11:1-17, 22-27

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

Write down all the verbs associated with David.

It happened, late one afternoon when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, "This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite." So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself after her period.) Then she returned to her house. The woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."

So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the people fared and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. But Uriah slept at the entrance of the king's house with all the servants of his lord and did not go down to his house.



"Uriah" means "The Lord is my Light." He is also identified as a Hittite, meaning he is not originally part of the Israelite community. How do these details deepen the contrast between Uriah, the faithful outsider, and David, the anointed king?

Stories of violence are often difficult to read. We may wonder why our spiritual ancestors chose to preserve them in Scripture. Perhaps they remain because they tell the truth about the human condition. They remind us that the capacity for both great good and great harm exists within humanity, and they invite us to seek God's healing and transformation.

I wonder how you feel when you encounter violent stories in the Bible. What emotions or questions do they raise for you?

When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "You have just come from a journey. Why did you not go down to your house?" Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah remain in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing." Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. On the next day, David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk, and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die." As Joab kept watch over the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant warriors. The men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite was killed as well.

Remembering Bathsheba.
What actions or words
are given to her?

So a messenger went and came and told David, "The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall; some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab, 'Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours now one and now another; press your attack on the city and overthrow it.' And encourage him."

When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him. When the mourning was over, **David sent** and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son.

But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.



Where has God appeared in
this story?

Consider reading the prophet Nathan's response to David's behaviour in 2 Samuel 12. Notice the shepherd imagery in the parable and how it helps reveal the contrast between the king David was called to be and the king he had become.

The Hidden King

*Reading the Scripture through the **Theological Lens**.*

Let's take a moment to reflect on the theological theme of **the limits of human kingship**.

David is often remembered as Israel's greatest king. He was chosen by God, anointed by Samuel, victorious over Goliath, and entrusted with the promise that his house and kingdom would endure forever. Yet the story of David and Bathsheba reminds us that even the greatest king is still human.

In this story, David abuses his power, takes what does not belong to him, and arranges the death of Uriah to conceal his actions. **The shepherd who once protected the flock now harms one of his own sheep.** David remains God's chosen king, but he proves unable to live up to the fullness of God's calling.

Why does Scripture tell this story? One reason is that it reminds us that God's promises do not depend on human perfection. David fails, yet God remains faithful. But the story also creates a deeper longing. If even David cannot be the king God's people truly need, then who can?

The hope of Israel gradually shifted toward the expectation of a future Messiah — not merely another king, but a faithful king; someone who would resist the temptations of power, embody God's justice and mercy, and lead God's people in righteousness. Christians believe this hope is fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of David, who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life for others.

I wonder where we see the limits of human leaders.



I wonder where we place our trust in people when only God can ultimately save.



I wonder how Jesus shows us a different kind of king.



Sharing

*Reading the Scripture through the **Kingdom of God Lens**.*

I wonder what this story teaches us about the difference between human kingdoms and the Kingdom of God.

I wonder what this story teaches us about the difference between human kingdoms and the Kingdom of God.

*Reading the Scripture through the **Ethical Lens**.*

I wonder where power, privilege, or position might tempt us to place our own desires above the well-being of others.

I wonder what this story teaches us about repentance, mercy, and God's ability to continue working through imperfect people.

I wonder where we see signs of God's grace even in stories marked by failure and brokenness.

You may close in prayer.



The Parish of St. Mark – Ocean Park