



## DAVID AND BETHSHEBA: ADULTERY OR RAPE?

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### Abstract

*Different scholars offer various perspectives on the David and Bathsheba plotline part of 2 Samuel 11. Certain interpretations view it as a romantic tale, while others consider it a narrative of infidelity, meanwhile, some scholars interpret it as an account of David's crime of sexually assaulting another man's wife. Through this study, the author aims to clarify whether Bathsheba engaged in adultery with David or was a victim of rape. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method. The author examines 2 Samuel 11 by conducting exegesis and analyzing the historical context provided within the text. Arguing from the study's results, the author posits Bathsheba as a victim of David's authority, not rape. This narrative urges caution in how we interpret it, as failing to view Bathsheba's story as one of adultery may lead us to overlook the prevalence of sexual sin among God's people and foster a tendency to unfairly blame women as the cause of adultery or rape.*

**Keywords:** 2 Samuel 11, David, Bathsheba, Adultery, Rape

### Abstrak

Berbagai sarjana menawarkan perspektif yang berbeda-beda mengenai alur cerita Daud dan Batsyeba dalam 2 Samuel 11. Beberapa tafsir memandangnya sebagai kisah romantis, sementara yang lain menganggapnya sebagai narasi tentang perselingkuhan. Di sisi lain, beberapa sarjana menafsirkannya sebagai catatan tentang kejahatan Daud yang melakukan pelecehan seksual terhadap istri orang lain. Melalui studi ini, penulis bertujuan untuk mengklarifikasi apakah Batsyeba terlibat dalam perselingkuhan dengan Dauda atau menjadi korban pemerkosaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis deskriptif. Penulis mengkaji 2 Samuel 11 melalui eksegesis dan menganalisis konteks historis yang terdapat dalam teks. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, penulis berpendapat bahwa Batsyeba adalah korban dari kekuasaan Daud, bukan pemerkosaan. Narasi ini mendorong kehati-hatian dalam menafsirkannya, karena gagal melihat kisah Batsyeba sebagai kasus perzinahan dapat membuat kita mengabaikan prevalensi dosa seksual di kalangan umat Allah dan memicu kecenderungan untuk menyalahkan perempuan secara tidak adil sebagai penyebab perzinahan atau pemerkosaan.

**Kata kunci:** 2 Samuel 11, Daud, Bathsheba, Perzinahan, Pemerkosaan

## INTRODUCTION

The account of David and Bathsheba plotline of 2 Samuel 11 is frequently regarded as a blemish on King David, he would be a king of Israel. There is a lot of disagreement on what to call this story. Some call it an adultery scandal or an affair between two people.<sup>1</sup> But there are also those who call it an abuse of power by David or can be equated with an act of rape<sup>2</sup>. The pros and cons occurred because neither David nor Bathsheba were in a situation where a natural romantic relationship could develop between them. David was a king with multiple wives (even more than one) and countless concubines, whereas Bathsheba was a married woman. Although as a ruler, David could choose any woman to marry, he still had to respect moral boundaries, especially not taking someone else's wife. However, 2 Samuel 11:1-4 tells us that David slept with the wife of his subordinate who was fighting on the battlefield.

We no longer need to debate whether what David did simply wrong. 2 Samuel 11:27 clearly indicates that what David did was displeasing to the Lord, Nathan's act of confronting King David with a prophetic reprimand, as documented in 2 Samuel 12 strengthened this judgment. The discussion surrounding whether this narrative should be labeled as adultery or sexual harassment (potentially amounting to rape) stems from the ambiguous role of Bathsheba in the events. If we say that it is adultery then both David and Bathsheba are equally guilty because the expression implies that they both loved each other. But if we say rape, then only David committed the crime.

Although extensively studied by scholars, the sexual encounter and its consequences (2 Samuel 11–12) continue to be a subject of debate, interpretations of the passage often fall into two opposing camps. On one side, These scholars, including Nicol, Randall, and Hertzberg, assert Bathsheba enticed David and was not raped.<sup>3</sup> Nicol posits Bathsheba's bathing so close to the palace was a deliberate act of allurements.<sup>4</sup> According to Baily's analysis of 2 Samuel 11–12, Bathsheba was a "consenting and balance

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<sup>1</sup> H. Sewakpo, "Seduction of Leadership Success: A Reconsideration of King David and Bathsheba Seductive Practice," *Insight: Journal of Religious Studies* 10 (2014): 1–12, [https://www.academia.edu/34288580/SEDUCTION\\_OF\\_LEADERSHIP\\_SUCCESS\\_A\\_RECONSIDERATION\\_OF\\_KING\\_DAVID\\_AND\\_BATHSHEBA\\_SEDUCTIVE\\_PRACTICE](https://www.academia.edu/34288580/SEDUCTION_OF_LEADERSHIP_SUCCESS_A_RECONSIDERATION_OF_KING_DAVID_AND_BATHSHEBA_SEDUCTIVE_PRACTICE).

<sup>2</sup> J. Andruska, "Rape in the Syntax of 2 Samuel 11:4," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 129, no. 1 (2017): 103-109, <https://doi.org/10.1515/zaw-2017-0007>.

<sup>3</sup> R. C. Bailey, *David in Love and War* (1990), 88.

<sup>4</sup> G. G. Nicol, "The Alleged Rape of Bathsheba: Some Observations on Ambiguity in Biblical Narrative," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 73 (1997): 43-53.

participant.<sup>5</sup> In this view, he argues Bathsheba's desire to be queen led her to strategically time and place her bath.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, scholars like Davidson, David and Garland, Spielman, and Exum present alternative viewpoints on the issue.<sup>7</sup> The scholars argue within this plot, Exum directly characterizes what happened to Bathsheba as "rape" and/or abuse. However, rather than focusing solely on physical sexual assault, Exum contends that the narrator and certain interpreters metaphorically "rape" Bathsheba through their interpretive writings. Similarly, Davidson concludes Bathsheba was a victim of "coercive rape" by comparing their encounter to an adult-minor relationship where consent is meaningless.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Garland argue the circumstances of the encounter increased Bathsheba's distress, making consent impossible.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, they deduce that David committed rape against Bathsheba. Larry W. Spielman argues that, given the significant power disparity between David and Bathsheba, genuine mutual consent was absent. Therefore, "driven by his own authority rather than Bathsheba's allure, David ultimately overpowered her".<sup>10</sup>

Undoubtedly, these studies have significantly illuminated the narrative of 2 Samuel 11–12, enhancing comprehension of the text. Nevertheless, the conflicting outcomes of these diverse interpretations frequently provoke ongoing questions in the reader's mind: What accounts for such divergent conclusions? Which interpretation can be deemed 'accurate'? Or does the text possess such ambiguity that it permits multiple valid interpretations simultaneously? These inquiries necessitate a renewed analysis of the passage. Accordingly, this research adopts a novel perspective in examining 2 Samuel 11–12.

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<sup>5</sup> R. C. Bailey, *David in Love and War* (1990), 88.

<sup>6</sup> R. C. Bailey, *David in Love and War* (1990), 88

<sup>7</sup> D. E. Garland and D. R. Garland, "Bathsheba's Story: Surviving Abuse and Loss," in *Flawed Families of the Bible: How God Works through Imperfect Relationships* (Grand Rapids, 2007). 25

<sup>8</sup> R. M. Davidson, "Did David Rape Bathsheba? A Case Study in Narrative Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17 (2006): 81-95.

<sup>9</sup> D. E. Garland and D. R. Garland, "Bathsheba's Story: Surviving Abuse and Loss," in *Flawed Families of the Bible: How God Works through Imperfect Relationships* (Grand Rapids, 2007). 25

<sup>10</sup> L. W. Spielman, "David's Abuse of Power," *Windsor & Windsor* 19 (1999): 251-259.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study is grounded in a descriptive approach, analyzing the content of 2 Samuel 11 to construct a comprehensive understanding of the events involving David and Bathsheba. Throughout the interpretive process, the author employs a narrative analysis method, positioning the text as a reflective tool that encourages readers to uncover meanings applicable to contemporary Christian life.<sup>11</sup> The author's initial approach is, of course, to analyze the text to fully grasp the narrative. The author delves into the account presented in 2 Samuel 11 by analyzing the significance of each verse, while considering the historical and cultural context of the Israelites during that period. This approach aims to discern how the author of Samuel positioned the characters within this narrative. Furthermore, the author investigates Bathsheba's perspective by reviewing various scholarly works that address her role, subsequently drawing conclusions about the lessons that can be gleaned from the narrative, particularly for women. Additionally, a meticulous analysis of the sexual encounter (2 Samuel 11:4) challenges the rationale behind some scholars' dismissal of Bathsheba's (at least implicit) consent.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The notion of sexual assault as depicted in the Old Testament

There's no direct translation of "rape" in Biblical Hebrew. Despite the lack of a direct term, some biblical scholars interpret the Hebrew verb ענה (pi'el form) as Assault. In a recent comprehensive study, Van Wolde persuasively contends that "rape" or "sexual assault" are misinterpretations of the root meaning of ענה. She ascribes such interpretations to insufficient clarity, this error arises from an incomplete study of the entire biblical text and all instances of ענה with female objects. Semantically, analysis of ענה, considering linguistic expressions and syntactic structure, demonstrates its use within a legal context as an evaluative term denoting a reduction in societal status or significance.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, Van Wolde argues for "degradation" as the correct rendering of the pi'el form of ענה, instead of "rape." The Septuagint (LXX) supports this

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<sup>11</sup> P. A. D. Tarmedj, "Narrative Analysis: A Christian Method of Biblical Hermeneutics," *Cross* 29, no. 3 (2013): 331-360.

<sup>12</sup> E. Van Wolde, "Does 'Inna' Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word," *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002): 528-544.

interpretation by consistently translating ענה as ταπεινός, meaning "degrade" or "demean."<sup>13</sup>

The aforementioned research does not entirely preclude the application of the term "force" for certain sexual encounters in the Hebrew Bible. However, the author leans toward a negative response. Given that Hebrew has no precise term for "rape," using this word to describe specific sexual interactions in the Bible demands careful thought. This emphasizes the cultural and contextual gaps between the Hebrew Bible's view of sexual coercion and modern "rape" concepts." The author strongly supports Sandie Gravett's view that any "rape" translation of Hebrew words or phrases must be based on detailed analysis of vocabulary, syntax, and textual indicators. Furthermore, it requires a judicious integration of the text's social and cultural milieu with the imperative to convey the content accurately and effectively in English.<sup>14</sup>

This discussion will not fully examine the modern concept of "rape", it is necessary to offer several clarifications at this point—particularly to aid in understanding how this modern perspective diverges from that of the Hebrew Bible. Modern society sees considerable variation in the definition of rape, influenced by its intended use and the viewpoint of the individual or institution defining it. For instance, Fortune approaches the definition of rape from a legal standpoint, describing it as “Non-consensual insertion into the vagina, oral cavity, or anus, whether with a penis or an object.” Although this legal articulation effectively reflects the understanding of rape in numerous societies, it is important to note that such definitions differ across national contexts, shaped by variations in legal frameworks, constitutional provisions, levels of societal development, and the prevalence of sexual violence.<sup>15</sup> As noted by Groth, from a psychological standpoint, rape is considered a pseudosexual behavior that is predominantly motivated by factors such as hostility, aggression, and a need for control, rather than by authentic sexual desire. It is most often perpetrated by individuals exhibiting dysfunctional personality traits.<sup>16</sup> From a psychopathological perspective, it is understood that anyone has the potential to become either a perpetrator or a victim of rape. Russell points out that rape can occur in different relational contexts, citing examples like husband-wife,

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<sup>13</sup> E. Van Wolde, "Does 'Inna' Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word,"

<sup>14</sup> S. Gravett, "Reading 'Rape' in the Hebrew Bible: A Consideration of Language," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 28 (2004): 279-299.

<sup>15</sup> M. M. Fortune, *Sexual Violence: The Unmentionable Sin* (1983). 7

<sup>16</sup> N. Groth and J. Birnbaum, *Men Who Rape* (1978). 2

boyfriend-girlfriend, father-daughter, and female-female. Irrespective of the identity of the victim, the defining element of rape lies in the coercion involved—namely, the imposition of sexual activity against the individual's will and consent.<sup>17</sup> Victims continue to experience the enduring psychological, emotional, and traumatic impact of rape's violent nature.<sup>18</sup> As articulated by Hilary Lipka, the modern understanding of rape may be succinctly characterized as the physical, psychological, and/or emotional infringement upon an individual through non-consensual sexual acts, carried out by means of dominance, coercion, and/or violence.<sup>19</sup>

The perspective of the Hebrew Bible on forced sexual relations or rape can be more clearly understood through the examination of specific legal instructions, as illustrated in corridor from Deuteronomy 22:23–24 (NIV):

If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the young woman because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you.

This Deuteronomic passage (22:23-24) presents adultery committed "within the city" by a man and an Intended untouched, resulting in the death penalty for both. The reference to the setting—specifically, the city—is a critical element in the legal judgment rendered. The text suggests that the sexual act occurred in a populated area where the presence of others would have made it possible for the woman to call for help. Thus, the act of intercourse suggests "She remained silent." Her silence is therefore interpreted as consent, implying her participation in the sexual offense.<sup>20</sup>

We find a parallel case, though in a different context, in Deuteronomy 22:25-27 (NIV):

But if out in the country a man happens to meet a young woman pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man who has done this shall die. Do nothing to the woman; she has committed no sin deserving death. This case is like that of someone who attacks and murders a neighbor, for the man found the young woman out in the country, and though the betrothed woman screamed, there was no one to rescue her.

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<sup>17</sup> D. E. H. Russell, *Dangerous Relationships: Pornography, Misogyny, and Rape* (1998). 8

<sup>18</sup> W. T. Herbert, *Sexual Violence and American Manhood* (2002). 34

<sup>19</sup> H. Lipka, *Sexual Transgression in the Hebrew Bible*, Hebrew Bible Monographs (Sheffield, 2006). 21

<sup>20</sup> A. D. H. Mayes, *New Century Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, 1981). 312

In this instance, the sexual encounter is described as having occurred not within the urban area however, "in the field, in a relatively isolated location. As a result, the young woman is deemed innocent, given the presumption that her cries for help would not have been heard in such an isolated setting.<sup>21</sup> What is evident in this context is that any attempt by the victim to cry out for help would go unheard due to the isolated nature of the setting. Consequently, she would be subjected to non-consensual sexual intercourse. The use of the Hebrew verb *ḥāzaq* (חָזַק) in the passage underscores the application of physical force against the virgin, further indicating the act as one of coercion rather than consent. As Robin Wakely aptly observes, the use of the hiphil form of the verb *ḥāzaq* (חָזַק), when followed by the preposition *b-* (בְּ), consistently conveys the meaning of "to seize," "to arrest," or "to restrain," thereby indicating the application of force or violence—particularly in cases involving a betrothed virgin.<sup>22</sup> This highlights the critical role that physical violence plays in shaping the conceptual understanding of the act.

How the Hebrew Bible depicts rape is notably illustrated through one of its most explicit narratives—Amnon's assault of Tamar. This account underscores the use of physical dominance in the act, portraying Amnon's superior physical strength as a decisive factor in overpowering Tamar: "But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her." (2 Samuel 13:14 NIV). The narrative underscores Amnon's exertion of physical violence among subduing Tamar, alongside Tamar's active physical resistance to evade his brutal, sexually motivated assault. Amnon's success in violating her is attributed to his superior physical power.<sup>23</sup> The narrator provides a vivid account of Tamar's immediate response following the assault "and she went away weeping" (2 Samuel 13:14–16)—which strongly suggests that the sexual act was indeed forced. When considered alongside the legal framework outlined in Deuteronomy 22:23–27 and the narrative details of 2 Samuel 13, it is reasonable to define rape, according to within the Hebrew Bible, as a man's application of physical force to coerce a woman into sexual relations without her consent. While the concept of power in this context may encompass psychological, social, political, or emotional dimensions, the defining characteristic The Hebrew Bible understands rape as a man applying physical

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<sup>21</sup> J. H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (1996). 207

<sup>22</sup> *Lexicon of the Old Testament*, HALOT 3, 1415 (n.d.).

<sup>23</sup> S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, JSOTSup 265 (1989). 265

force to make a woman have sex against her will of bodily and violent force. Consequently, the victim is expected to demonstrate physical resistance against perpetrator, typically signified by her act of crying out for help—or at the very least, the presumption that she did so but was not heard (Table 1).

**Table 1. 2 SAMUEL 11 ENGLISH TRANSLATION - HEBREW<sup>24</sup>**

Verse	English (Translation from Indonesian)	Hebrew
1.	And it came to pass, at the turn of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab, along with his servants and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.	וַיְהִי לְתַשׁוּבַת הַשָּׁנָה לָעֵת   צָאֵת הַמִּלְחָמִים וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד אֶת-יֹאָב וְאֶת-עֲבָדָיו עִמּוֹ וְאֶת-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁחָתוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן וַיִּצְּרוּ עַל-רַבָּה וַדָּנָד יוֹשֵׁב בִּירוּשָׁלָּם: {ס}
2.	One evening, David rose from his bed and began to walk upon the roof of the royal palace. From that vantage point, he observed a woman engaged in bathing, and the text emphasizes that she was exceedingly beautiful in appearance.	וַיְהִי   לָעֵת הָעֶרֶב וַיָּקָם דָּוִד מֵעַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹ וַיֵּתֶהְלֶךְ עַל-גֹּג בֵּית-הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּרְא אִשָּׁה רֹחֶצֶת מַעַל הַגֹּג וְהָאִשָּׁה טוֹבַת מְרֹאֶה מְאֹד:
3.	David then sent messengers to inquire about the identity of the woman. In response, someone informed him, saying, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”	וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד וַיִּדְרֹשׁ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא-זֹאת בַּת-שֶׁבַע בַּת-אֱלִיעֶזֶר אִשְׁתׁי אִוְרִיָּה הַחִתִּי:
4.	David proceeded to send messengers to bring her to him.	וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד מַלְאָכִים וַיִּקְחֻהָ וַתָּבֹא אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב־בָּהּ וְהָיָה מִתְקַנֵּן שָׁת מִטְמְאָתָהּ וַתָּשָׁב אֶל-בֵּיתָהּ:

<sup>24</sup> The source text is the Masoretic Hebrew Text. The translation has been rendered directly from the original Hebrew into English



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- She came, and he lay with her. (At that time, she was undergoing ritual purification from her menstrual impurity.) Afterward, she returned to her house.
5. The woman conceived and subsequently sent word to David, informing him with the message: "I am pregnant."
 

ותהר האשה ותשלח ופגד לדוד ותאמר הרה אנכי:
  6. David then sent a message to Joab, requesting, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." In response, Joab complied and sent Uriah to David.
 

וישח דוד אל-יואב שח אלי את-אוריה החתי וישח יואב את-אוריה אל-דוד:
  7. When Uriah arrived, David questioned him regarding Joab's well-being, the condition of the troops, and the progress of the war.
 

ויבא אוריה אליו וישאל דוד לשאב ולשהעם ולשל המלחמה:
  8. David then said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." Uriah departed from the king's residence, and a royal gift was sent after him.
 

ויאמר דוד לאוריה בד לביתך ורחץ רגלך ויצא אוריה משש ית הלך ותצא אחריו משמֶצת הילך:
  9. However, Uriah did not go to his house; instead, he slept at the entrance of the royal palace alongside all the servants of his lord.
 

וישכב אוריה שמת בית המלך את כל-עבדי אדניו ולא ירד אל-ביתו:
  10. When David was informed that Uriah had not gone to his house, he questioned Uriah, saying, "Have you not just returned from a
 

ויגדו לדוד לאמר לא-ירד אוריה אל-ביתו ויאמר דוד אל-אוריה הלא מדרך אתה בא מדוע לא-ירדת אל-ביתך:
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	journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"	
11.	Uriah responded to David, saying, "The Ark, along with Israel and Judah, is dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat, drink, and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing!"	וַיֹּאמֶר אֲוִיָּה אֶל-דָּוִד הֲאֶרְוֹן וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהוּדָה יֹשְׁבֵימִים בְּסֻכּוֹת וְאֲדֹנִי יוֹאָב וְעַבְדֵי אֲדֹנִי עַל-פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה חֲנִים וְאֲנִי אָבוֹא אֶל-בֵּיתִי לֵאכֹל וְלִשְׁכַּב־בָּם-אִשְׁכְּבִי חֵלֶף וְחִי נַפְשִׁי אִם-אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה:
12.	David then said to Uriah, "Remain here today as well, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the following one.	וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-אֲוִיָּה שֵׁב בְּנֶגְהָ גַם-הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר אֲשַׁלְחֶנּוּ וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲוִיָּה בִירוּשָׁלַם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וּמִמָּחָרָת:
13.	David summoned Uriah, and he ate and drank in his presence, and David caused him to become intoxicated. Yet in the evening, Uriah went out to sleep on his bed among his master's servants; he still did not go down to his house.	וַיִּקְרָא-לּוֹ דָּוִד וַיֹּאכַל לֶפְנָיו וַיִּשְׂתֵּה וַיִּשְׂתֵּה וַיִּשְׁתַּבֵּהוּ וַיֵּצֵא בַעֲרֵב לִשְׁכַב בְּמִשְׁבְּבוֹ עִם-עַבְדֵי אֲדֹנָיו וְאֶל-בֵּיתוֹ לֹא יָרַד:
14.	The next morning, David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.	וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַיִּכְתֹּב דָּוִד סֵפֶר אֶל-יֹאָב וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּיַד אֲוִיָּה:
15.	In the letter, David instructed: "Position Uriah at the forefront of the fiercest battle, then withdraw from him so that he may be struck down and die."	וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר לֵאמֹר הִבּוּ אֶת-אֲוִיָּה אֶל-מוֹל' פְּנֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה הַחֲזָקָה וְשַׁבְתֶּם מֵאַחֲרָיו וְנָגַהּ וָמָת: {ס}

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|-----|---|--|
| 16. | As Joab besieged the city, he assigned Uriah to a position where he knew the enemy's strongest warriors were stationed.   | וַיְהִי בְשָׂאב אֶל-הָעִיר וַיִּתֵּן אֶת-אוּרִיָּה אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם<br>אַשֶׁר יָדַע כִּי אֲנָשֵׁי-חַיִּל שָׁם:  |
| 17. | The men of the city came out and engaged Joab in battle, and some of David's soldiers fell in combat; among the dead was Uriah the Hittite.   | וַיֵּצְאוּ אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר וַיִּלָּחֲמוּ אֶת-יוֹאָב וַיִּפֹּל מִן-הָעָם<br>מֵעַבְדֵי דָוִד וַיָּמָת גַּם אוּרִיָּה הַחִתִּי:   |
| 18. | Joab sent a messenger to report to David all the details concerning the progress and outcome of the battle.   | וַיִּשְׁלַח יוֹאָב וַיִּגְד לְדָוִד אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה:  |
| 19. | He instructed the messenger, saying, "When you have finished reporting to the king all the details concerning the battle..." '  | וַיִּצְוֵנוּ אֶת-הַמַּלְאָךְ לֵאמֹר כְּכֻלּוֹתָךְ אֵת כָּל-דִּבְרֵי<br>הַמִּלְחָמָה לְדַבֵּר אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ:  |
| 20. | And if it happens that the king becomes angry and says to you, 'Why did you draw near to the city to engage in battle? Did you not know that they would shoot from the top of the wall?'  | וְהָיָה אִם-תַּעֲלֶה חֲמַת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאָמַר לְךָ מִדּוֹעַ נִגַּשְׁם<br>אֶל-הָעִיר לְהִלָּחֵם הֲלוֹא יִדְעֻתֶם אֵת אֲשֶׁר-יִירוּ מֵעַל<br>הַחוֹמָה:  |
| 21. | 'Who was it that killed Abimelech, the son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who threw a millstone down on him from the wall, causing his death at Thebez? Why then did you go so near the wall?' Then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead.'" | מִי־הִכָּה אֶת-אַבִּימֶלֶךְ בֶּן-יִרְבִּישֶׁת הַלְּוִאי־אִשָּׁה<br>הַשְּׁלִיכָה עָלָיו פֶּלֶח רֶכֶב מֵעַל הַחוֹמָה וַיָּמָת בְּמִבְזָץ<br>לְמָה נִגַּשְׁתֶּם אֵל־הַחוֹמָה וְאָמַרְתֶּם גַּם עַבְדְּךָ אוּרִיָּה<br>הַחִתִּי מָת: |
| 22. | So the messenger departed, came to David, and reported all the  | וַיֵּלֶךְ הַמַּלְאָךְ וַיָּבֹא וַיִּגְד לְדָוִד אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר שָׁלְחוֹ<br>יוֹאָב:  |

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- matters that Joab had instructed him to convey.
23. Then the messenger said to David, "The enemy forces prevailed against us and came out to confront us in the open field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the city gate."
24. The archers fired arrows at your servants from the top of the wall, and some of the king's soldiers were killed; your servant Uriah the Hittite also died.
25. David said to the messenger, "You shall say this to Joab: 'Do not let this matter trouble you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your assault against the city and overthrow it.' Encourage him."
26. When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him with lamentation.
27. After the period of mourning had ended, David sent for her and brought her into his household. She became his wife and bore him a son. However, the act that David had committed was displeasing in the sight of the LORD.
- וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל-דָּוִד כִּי-גִבְרוּ עָלֵינוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּצְאוּ  
אֵלֵינוּ הַשָּׂדֶה וַנִּהְיֶה 06 עָלֵיהֶם עַד-פֶּתַח הַשָּׁעַר:
- וַיִּרְאוּ הַמּוֹרָאִים אֶל-עֶבְדֵיךָ מֵעַל הַחוֹמָה וַיִּמְּוּתוּ  
מֵעֶבְדֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְגַם עֶבְדְּךָ אֲוִרְיָה הַחִתִּי מָת: {ס}
- וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ כֹּה-תֹאמַר אֶל-יֹאבֵל אֶל-יִרְעֵה  
בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֶת-הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה כִּי-כִזָּה וְכִזָּה תֹאכַל הַחֲרֹב  
הַחֹזֵק מִלִּחְמָתְךָ אֶל-הָעִיר וְהָרָסָה וְסִנְּקָהּ:
- וַתִּשְׁמַע אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲוִרְיָה כִּי-מָת אֲוִרְיָה אִישְׁמַע אִשְׁתּוֹ  
וַתִּסְפֹּד עַל-בָּעֻלָּה:
- וַיַּעֲבֹר הָאֵבֶל וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד וַיִּאֲסָפָהּ אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ וַתְּהִי-לּוֹ  
לְאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד לּוֹ בֶּן וַיִּרְעֵה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה דָּוִד בְּעֵינֵי  
יְהוָה: {פ}
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## REINTERPRETATION 2 SAMUEL 11

Israel's military campaign against the Ammonites, as told in 2 Samuel 11, was centered on Rabbah, and simultaneously tells of King David's forbidden sexual encounter with her and the orchestrated the cessation of her husband. David's first action at plot of story, writer tells us, was to dispatch Joab, and the entire Israelite army to end the Ammonite war by seizing Rabbah. However, the text pointedly states, וַיֵּשֶׁב בִּירוּשָׁלַם ("but David remained in Jerusalem"), highlighting his conspicuous absence from the battlefield. One may ask why King David chose to remain at home during such a critical occasion, when the security of his authority—and by extension, his own throne—was at stake. While numerous excuses and justifications may be proposed to explain David's intention to stay behind while the rest of Israel engaged in battle against the Ammonites, one indisputable fact remains: this decision plays a pivotal role in shaping. David's decision to stay in Jerusalem drives the story forward. Having stayed away from the battlefield, the narrator depicts the king passing a relaxed day, which involved a nap. Yet this is only the beginning. Upon awakening, the king וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ—engaged in strolling or pacing—on his position roof. The narrator does not pause to inform the reader whether this was a habitual activity for the king; instead, the focus immediately shifts to one particular object that catches the king's eye: אִשָּׁה רֹחֶצֶת "a woman taking a bath." Notably, storyteller offers the essential detail the woman—one that is critical for the unfolding of the context: וְהָאִשָּׁה טוֹבַת מְרֹאֶה מְאֹד ("the woman was very beautiful," 2 Sam 11:2). This phrase in Biblical Hebrew is typically reserved for individuals of exceptional physical appearance, these characteristics are evident in the portrayals of Rebekah (Gen 24:16; 26:7), Vashti (Esth 1:11), and Esther (Esth 2:7).<sup>25</sup>

Bathsheba's extraordinary beauty has two significant implications. Nicol rightly points out that the narrative subtly draws attention to the woman's closeness to the palace, which allows David to see her beauty in detail. Meaning, her proximity allows her to be plainly seen without any aid.<sup>26</sup> To the observations made by Bailey and Nicol, it must be added that the narrator gives no indication of assigning blame to Bathsheba for intentionally seducing the king. Rather, the text simply conveys the geographical

<sup>25</sup> F. Gaebelein and R. P. Polcyn, *Deuteronomy-2 Samuel, The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, vol. 3 (1992). 929

<sup>26</sup> Nicol, *The Alleged Rape of Bathsheba: Some Observations on Ambiguity in Biblical Narrative* (n.d.).  
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proximity of Uriah's house to the royal palace—they were, quite literally, neighbors. It is reasonable to assume that Bathsheba would not have anticipated that the "righteous" King David would compromise his moral integrity and royal reputation by interfering in the life of a married woman. Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that Bathsheba would have willingly orchestrated her own downfall. Living under the constraints of Israelite law and society, she would have fully understood the grave repercussions of committing adultery—potentially including the death penalty (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22), public trials and ordeals (Num 5:11–31), as well as the public humiliation and execution of adulterers by stripping and lapidation (cf. Hos 2:5; Ezek 16:37).

Secondly, by highlighting despite other possible views, the narrator highlights Bathsheba's beauty, underscoring that—of all the sights—she was the one David noticed available to David during his rooftop stroll—it was the image of the bathing woman that seized his attention. As Exum aptly puts it, "While other things were visible, the narrator stresses Bathsheba's beauty, making it clear she was the sight that caught David's attention." This paradox suggests that while David physically observed her, he failed to perceive the ethical and personal boundaries his gaze was crossing.<sup>27</sup> From David's vantage point, how did he react to seeing the beautiful woman bathe?

The text implies that David experienced arousal and sexual longing for Bathsheba the moment he saw her.<sup>28</sup> The quickened pace of the narration shows this. Consequently, David immediately inquired about the woman's identity: וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא-זֹאת בֵּת-שֶׁבַע בֵּת-אֱלִיעֶזֶר (v 3a). "The response was, 'Surely this is Bathsheba, Eliam's daughter, married to Uriah the Hittite?'" (v 3b).<sup>29</sup> It is somewhat perplexing that David, while clearly recognizing the woman's comeliness, not simultaneously recognize her identity. This narrative detail may be the author's deliberate strategy to convey two significant things. Firstly, It indicates that David and Bathsheba had no existing relationship or familiarity, thereby establishing the encounter as spontaneous and unpremeditated from her perspective. Each individual inhabited their own social and physical sphere, which helps explain why David had not previously recognized Bathsheba and had perhaps only seen her in passing during his rooftop walks. Secondly, the narrative's delayed identification of the woman serves to emphasize her full identity: Beyond her beauty, she is identified

<sup>27</sup> J. C. Exum, "Bathsheba Plotted, Shot, and Painted," *Semeia* (1996): 47-73.

<sup>28</sup> S. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (2000). 157

<sup>29</sup> R. C. Bailey, *David in Love and War* (1990). 87

as Eliam's daughter and Uriah the Hittite's wife. This underscores her familial and marital ties, framing her not simply as an object of desire but as someone integrated within Israel's social and relational fabric. While Bathsheba's patronymic identity is not without significance, the most critical aspect of her characterization for the purpose of this analysis is her designation as אִשְׁתּוֹ אֻרִיָּה הַחִתִּי, "the wife of Uriah the Hittite." This designation appears no fewer than four times throughout the narrative (2 Sam 11:3, 26; 12:9c, 24a), highlighting narrative emphasis on the fact that she was married. As Garsiel astutely notes, the explicit mention of her marriage placed David in the midst of a profound moral dilemma—the temptation to covet and pursue another's wife, a direct violation of divine law. found in Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18.<sup>30</sup> In this context, revealing Bathsheba's married state implicitly cautions King David. It serves as a narrative device to underscore the significance of her identity—not merely as a woman of exceptional beauty, but as a married woman, whose proximity to the palace posed a moral and legal boundary the king was expected to recognize and respect.<sup>31</sup>

If the mention of Bathsheba's marital status functioned as a warning, it appears to have had little effect on David. In the brief and understated report of 2 Samuel 11:4, writers reveals that King proceeded to satisfy his desire for Bathsheba—an act that signifies a pivotal shift in both his character and the trajectory of his reign.<sup>32</sup> The succinct and restrained manner in which the sexual encounter is narrated aligns with the typical literary style employed in biblical texts when referring to such intimate events. It is characteristic of the Hebrew Bible to describe sexual relations—whether legitimate or illicit—in highly condensed form, often following more elaborate narrative build-up, as evidenced in texts such as Genesis 19:33, 35; 34:2; 38:18; and Deuteronomy 22:25. What stands out in this passage is the compact and action-driven construction of the sentence, which contains a sequence following four verbs in order: "sent," "took," "came," and "lay" with"—underscoring the swiftness and decisiveness with which the events unfold.<sup>33</sup> Through this narrative structure, the narrator subtly conveys that David's desire bypassed any form of persuasion or courtship; instead, he leveraged his royal authority to fulfill his intentions. Consequently, despite his esteemed with his authority and

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<sup>30</sup> M. Garsiel, "The Story of David and Bathsheba: A Different Approach," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 55 (1993): 244-262.

<sup>31</sup> K. Bodner, *David Observed: A King in the Eyes of His Court* (2005). 92

<sup>32</sup> K. Bodner, *David Observed: A King in the Eyes of His Court* (2005). 88

<sup>33</sup> S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, JSOTSup 265 (1989). 216

Bathsheba's clear identification as a married woman, David proceeded to engage in sexual relations with her. The syntax structure of the writer's account in 2 Samuel 11:4 emphasizes a series of swift and deliberate actions through the use of sequential verbs: (a) "David sent a letter" (וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד וְיָדָרָשׁ), (b) "he obtained her" (וַיִּקְחֶהָ), (c) "she reached to him" (וַתִּבְרֹא), and (d) "he lay with her" (וַיִּשְׁכַּבְּבָהּ). This compact verbal progression underscores the immediacy of the actions and highlights David's initiative and authoritative role within the episode.

The passage features a syntactic structure composed of four verbal clauses, each employing the *qal wayyiqtol* (וַיִּקְטֹל) form to convey a sequence of interconnected and swift actions. Each action presented in these clauses functions as both a temporal and logical consequence of the preceding one, thereby reinforcing the narrative's progression and coherence. There is a clear causal relationship among the four verbal clauses. In three of them (clauses a, b, and d), David serves as the grammatical subject, while in beginning clause, the message function as the objection ("David sent a word"). The verb *šālah* (שָׁלַח), which appears nine times throughout the passage, underscores David's authoritative control over the entire situation. The narrator thus presents David, situated on the roof of the royal palace, as a sovereign figure who dominated all within his gaze and possesses the capacity to 'dispatch' based on what he perceived. Accordingly, upon seeing the beautiful woman bathing, he exercised his royal power by sending messengers.

Following that, verbal phrase, וַיִּקְחֶהָ ("and he took her"), David is unequivocally identified as the grammatical concept, while Bathsheba occupies the syntactic position of the direct object—indicating that she is the recipient of the action and the one who is taken. Although the text states that David sent messengers to bring Bathsheba, the Hebrew syntax attributes the action of taking directly to David, thereby emphasizing his personal responsibility for the actions carried out by his subordinates. Thus, the narrative presents David as both the initiator and executor of the act. The verb *lāqah* (לָקַח), which appears in the *qal* stem here, carries a broad semantic range, including meanings such as "to take," "to carry," "to seize," "to capture," and "to grasp," all of which highlight the element of control and initiative on David's part.<sup>34</sup> *qal* stem, the verb choices convey the subject's exertion of authority or dominance over the object, as illustrated in Genesis 2:22, where YHWH takes one of Adam's ribs. Additional examples include

<sup>34</sup> D. J. A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. 4 (1998). 564-567



Genesis 20:3, 24:7, and Jeremiah 27:20. Furthermore, qal form of מלקח may imply application that physical pressure as an alternative coercion upon the object. This nuance is evident in narratives involving the seizing of sacrificial animals, such as in Genesis 15:9–10, as well as in Exodus 4:17, 20; 17:5; and Deuteronomy 1:25.

Based on the syntactic and contextual analysis, the verb in this passage primarily emphasizes David's authoritative control over the situation. That is, David exercised his royal prerogative by sending messengers to bring Bathsheba to the palace. Nonetheless, the narrative does not offer explicit evidence suggesting that Bathsheba was forcibly seized or physically dragged by the messengers. Rather, the text highlights the king's capacity to command and orchestrate events according to his will. It is reasonable to assume that Bathsheba—like any woman in a similar socio-political context—would not have been expected to refuse a royal summons. The apply root of מלקח in 2 Samuel 11:4 closely aligned its application in Genesis 20:2, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, "summoned and obtained" Sarah, unaware that she was the wife of Abraham. In both narratives, the expressions "sent and took" serve to underscore the sovereign authority of the respective monarchs. Nevertheless, in neither case does the text provide any indication of physical coercion being employed against the women involved (cf. 2 Sam 12:9). The emphasis, rather, lies in the exercise of royal power and control over the situation.

Bathsheba appears as the grammatical third topic action sentence—וַתָּבוֹא אֵלָיו ("and she came to him"). Writer deliberate insertion of this phrase, positioned between three other clauses in which David is consistently the subject, is particularly significant. The attendance of וַתָּבוֹא אֵלָיו propose Bathsheba was unforcibly taken to the royal palace; rather, Batsheba responded to the royal summons of her own accord. This element of the narrative implies a level of agency on Bathsheba's part, even within the broader context of David's authoritative control over the situation. Naturally, Bathsheba's compliance with the royal summons appears entirely ordinary, particularly given her lack of knowledge regarding the king's intentions. As a direct result, the completion of the sexual act is taken to suggest the absence of any vocalized resistance from the woman., she could not have anticipated the true purpose behind the summons; after all, who could have known what message the king wished to convey?<sup>35</sup> Bathsheba may have been confused by the summons, possibly fearing news of her husband Uriah's death.

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<sup>35</sup> J. C. Exum, "Bathsheba Plotted, Shot, and Painted," *Semeia* (1996): 47-73. 49

In this context, we concur with Klein's observation that the use of \*וַתָּבֹא אֵלָיו\* ("she came to him") serves to reduce Bathsheba's passivity in the narrative.<sup>36</sup> This suggests that David may not have used physical violence against Bathsheba before or during their illicit encounter. The marked imbalance of power between David and Bathsheba lends credence to the idea that Bathsheba might have responded with passivity rather than physical opposition. In this context, she likely perceived submission to the king's desires as her only viable choice.<sup>37</sup> In this context, Bathsheba's agency was significantly diminished, but not entirely erased. While she was a victim of the circumstances, she cannot be considered entirely innocent, as she shares some responsibility in the situation.

Our contention posits that the phrase 'and he came to her' cannot constitute sufficient evidence for Bathsheba's 'balance and blissful' involvement in participating in coitus. emphasis is crucial, as Bailey claims that the inclusion of this sentence renders Bathsheba 'a willing and balance participant in the event'<sup>38</sup> including sexual intercourse.<sup>39</sup> Thus, it is suggested that the salient implications of the sexual liaison, encompassing sexual intercourse, would be balance apportioned between him and her. However, this view is contested by several factors indicating that king was more deserving of the major portion of the repercussions resulting from the sexual offense. Firstly, the divine entity, יהוה (Yahweh), explicitly levied a malediction upon David, as opposed to Bathsheba, as evidenced by the scriptural passage: הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה דָּוִד בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה, translated as, 'Yet the feat that David committed was displeasing as seen by YHWH' (2 Samuel 11:27f). Secondly, יהוה (Yahweh) dispatched Nathan to deliver a reproof and condemnation specifically to David, and not to Bathsheba. Consequently, Nathan's allegorical narrative was exclusively addressed to David, and the punitive measures articulated therein were also directly 'aimed' at him: perpetual internal strife within his lineage and the public sexual violation of his consorts by his contemporaries (2 Samuel 12:1-7a). Indeed, scholars such as Davidson, who emphasize the unilateral nature of יהוה (Yahweh)'s censure, have extrapolated to the point of asserting Bathsheba's complete

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<sup>36</sup> L. R. Klein, "Bathsheba Revealed," in *Samuel and Kings: A Feminist Companion to the Bible, Second Series*, ed. A. Brenner (2000), 49.

<sup>37</sup> J. C. Exum, *Fragmented Woman; Feminist (Sub)Versions of Biblical Narrative* (n.d.). 73

<sup>38</sup> R. C. Bailey, *David in Love and War* (1990). 88

<sup>39</sup> L. R. Klein, "Bathsheba Revealed," in *Samuel and Kings: A Feminist Companion to the Bible, Second Series*, ed. A. Brenner (2000), 73.

exoneration.<sup>40</sup> Notwithstanding the veracity of the disproportionate punitive burden borne by David for the transgression, Bathsheba nonetheless experienced penal consequences, albeit indirectly. Specifically, יהוה (Yahweh)'s pronouncement of capital punishment pertaining to sexual offenses against a child constituted a form of retribution that profoundly affected both David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:14c). It is reasonable to posit that the demise of a neonate would inflict considerable psychological distress upon the mother. Consequently, while David incurred a more substantial portion of the penalty, commensurate with his dominant and influential position in the sexual offense, Bathsheba also endured a form of punishment. The seemingly lesser degree of her chastisement may suggest a diminished level of culpability and potentially weaken the arguments of those who posit that she was subjected to rape, as understood within the context of Hebrew biblical terminology.

In the fourth clause, וַיִּשְׁכַּב מֶלֶךְ, translated as 'and king slept alongside Bathsheba,' He is reiterated as a grammatical focus, with Bathsheba as the direct object. Analogous syntactic arrangements within the Holy Hebrew Book is frequently employed to denote unsanctioned and illicit sexual liaisons, wherein the female participant is typically represented as the object of the action (cf. Genesis 19:29; 34:2; Deuteronomy 22:25; 27:20, 21, 22, 23; Leviticus 20:11-13, 18). Though, the phrase 'and David slept alongside Bathsheba' not inherently denote the explicit application of bodily coercion by king in his interaction with her. Indeed, the linguistic construction employed herein is devoid of the explicit depiction of physical coercion evident in Amnon's sexual assault upon Tamar (2 Samuel 13). Consequently, Bathsheba is not portrayed as exhibiting vocal distress, either during or subsequent to the sexual interaction. Furthermore, the assertion that the disparity in power dynamics between Bathsheba and David might account for her lack of outcry is deemed insufficient to fully elucidate the context of a violent subjugation; therefore, this event does not represent an instance of 'biblical rape.' Up to, Davidson postulates, possible that psychological<sup>41</sup> (even social and political) coercion that could potentially permit the application of contemporary conceptualizations of rape to characterize the event. However, based on our comprehension of the 'Jewish biblical'

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<sup>40</sup> R. M. Davidson, "Did David Rape Bathsheba? A Case Study in Narrative Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17 (2006): 81-95. 91

<sup>41</sup> R. M. Davidson, "Did David Rape Bathsheba? A Case Study in Narrative Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17 (2006): 81-95. 89

notion of sexual non-concern, this instance unmeet the criteria for categorization as 'biblical rape'.

For the current analysis, the subordinate clause in verse 4 holds primary importance, as it details Bathsheba's bodily state when she was with David: וְהָיָה מִתְקַדְּשֶׁת מִטְּמֵאַתָּה, meaning, 'She had just undergone purification from her ritual uncleanness.' The narrator's choice to include this aside warrants careful investigation. Steve McKenzie highlights that in the context of the Hebrew Bible, menstruation commonly led to ritual impurity. The regulations in Leviticus 15:19-30 specify that a woman was generally deemed ritually impure throughout her menstrual cycle and for a subsequent week.<sup>42</sup> Given the biblical convention of demarcating the conclusion of a diurnal cycle at the onset of nightfall, a woman who has recently concluded her menstrual period was expected to undergo ritual immersion in consecrated water during the nocturnal period immediately following sunset on the seventh day.<sup>43</sup> It is probable that Bathsheba was performing her post-menstrual purification ritual in holy water at her house after sunset, possibly not knowing she was being spied upon by the king.<sup>44</sup> This reading makes it clear that Bathsheba did not intend to lure David and absolves her of the negative insinuation that she purposefully scheduled her washing at a convenient time to 'provoke' the sovereign..<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, the parenthetical annotation ('She had recently undergone purification from her state of impurity.') indicates that Bathsheba's sexual intercourse with David transpired during a period conducive to conception and fertility. This observation also negates the plausibility of Uriah being the biological father of the subsequent offspring.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, this interpretation is contested by Guttman, who posits that the parenthetical account serves as the narrator's means of indicting David for a transgression of the regulations pertaining to ritual impurity.<sup>47</sup> The possibility that David was not knowledgeable about women's ritual impurity diminishes the strength of

<sup>42</sup> S. McKenzie, *King David: A Biography* (2000). 157

<sup>43</sup> R. M. Davidson, "Did David Rape Bathsheba? A Case Study in Narrative Theology," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17 (2006): 81-95. 85

<sup>44</sup> R. P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Commentary* (1986). 253

<sup>45</sup> R. C. Bailey, *David in Love and War* (1990). 89

<sup>46</sup> K. P. McCarter, *2 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary, The Anchor Bible*, vol. 9 (1984). 286

<sup>47</sup> K. P. McCarter, *2 Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary, The Anchor Bible*, vol. 9 (1984). 286

the interpretation discussed before. Additionally, the narrator's parenthetical comment ('he had just purified himself from her impurity'), placed solely after the intercourse, underscores David's prior unawareness of this state. Following the sexual interaction, the narrative states that 'he then returned to his house' (2 Samuel 11:4e). This suggests Bathsheba's leaning towards resuming her married life with Uriah. In addition, unveils David's unconcern for Bathsheba after their sexual act, evidenced by his apparent initial absence of intention to form a marital bond with her. The fact that David then attempted to conceal the activity by sending for Uriah at the battlefield so he would go home and be intimate with Bathsheba lends credence to this interpretation.

## CONCLUSIONS

This investigation highlights a subtle but important contrast in the conceptualization of rape between the Jewish Bible of the Old Testament and its present-day meaning. In contemporary language, rape involves, among other things, the abuse of an individual through sexual acts without consent, achieved through intimidation, dominance, subjugation, and/or violence. In considering whether David committed rape against Bathsheba, the initial observation is that David's power over the sexual interaction, rooted in the imbalance of authority between them, created possibilities for subtle (non-physical) pressure. To assert that David 'raped' Bathsheba, using the Jewish holy book perception of 'rape,' goes beyond the available proof and applies contemporary notions of rape to the biblical narrative. Crucially, the kind of bodily violence intrinsic to the Hebrew Bible's thing of raped is not found in 2 Samuel 11:4. Consequently, interaction Bathsheba and king cannot be categorized as biblical rape. Nevertheless, it is apparent that her a casualty king David's sexual appetite.

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