

# Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 21, David and the United Kingdom Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 21, David and the United Kingdom, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture transcript from Dr. Elaine Phillips explores the complex narrative of David in the Old Testament. It encompasses David's rise to power, including his early reign in Hebron and the unification of Israel. The lecture examines his personal failings, specifically the Bathsheba and Uriah incident, and their consequences as prophesied by Nathan. It then looks at family turmoil, including the rebellion led by Absalom. The transcript explores David's character as one who sought God, but was also a warrior and a man of his time. Finally, the lecture touches on David's desire to build a temple and the census that led to a plague, setting the stage for Solomon's reign and the eventual construction of the temple.

2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 21 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → OT Introduction → OT Lit).



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on21.mp3

### 3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 21, David and the United Kingdom

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Elaine Phillips' Old Testament Literature Lecture 21, focusing on David, Bathsheba, Absalom, and the overall narrative of 2 Samuel:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Elaine Phillips' Lecture 21 - David, Bathsheba, Absalom**

**Overview:** This lecture focuses on the complexities of David's reign as portrayed in 2 Samuel, moving beyond a simplistic view of David as solely a righteous figure. It highlights the "seamy sides" of his life, including the Bathsheba and Uriah incident, the internal strife within his family, and the political machinations that characterize his rule. The lecture also contrasts the portrayal of David in Samuel/Kings with that in Chronicles and examines key theological themes such as repentance, mercy, and the consequences of sin.

#### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

##### **1. Literary Perspective on Historical Texts:**

- Dr. Phillips emphasizes that the books of Samuel and Kings are not simply "dry history" but rather "wonderful literature... narratives that just engage our hearts and make us see ourselves all over again in the faces of these people." She urges students to recognize the literary and divinely inspired nature of these texts.
- The books of Samuel and Kings present a more emotionally charged and personal account, including the "seamy sides" of David's life, which are absent in Chronicles.

##### **1. Contrasting Chronicles with Samuel/Kings:**

- Chronicles, written later, emphasizes the unbroken tradition of God's people through genealogies and raises the profile of the Davidic dynasty, particularly its positive aspects.
- Chronicles focuses more on the temple, temple personnel, and the role of Levites and priests.
- The negative events in David's life (like the Bathsheba incident) are downplayed in Chronicles.

##### **1. David's Character: Complexity and Contradictions:**

- David is presented as a man who "over and over and over again seek[s] the Lord," even while running from Saul. He uses means like the Urim and Thummim to seek God's counsel (though how these functioned is not entirely clear).
- He is described as a "person after God's own heart," but this doesn't mean he is perfect. He struggles with sin and makes mistakes.
- A defining characteristic is his mercy, often "to his own detriment." He is merciful even to his enemies. As Dr Phillips says "if that isn't a quality after God's own heart, I don't know one. Because as we know, God is extraordinarily, unspeakably merciful to us day after day and merciful to his people, even though they're horrendous sinners."
- David's actions during the establishment of his kingdom (e.g., the treatment of the Moabites in 2 Samuel 8:2, turning over Saul's household to the Gibeonites) demonstrate that he is not a "perfect paragon of virtue" but a complex figure operating within a specific historical context.

#### 1. **Key Figures and Their Roles:**

- **Ish-bosheth:** Saul's son, established as king of the remnants of Saul's kingdom. His name interestingly means "man of shame".
- **Abner:** The commanding officer of Saul's forces, later assassinated by Joab.
- **Mephibosheth:** Jonathan's lame son, cared for by David due to his covenant with Jonathan.
- **Joab:** David's brutal and conniving commanding officer.
- **Amnon and Tamar:** Half-brother and sister; Amnon rapes Tamar, leading to Absalom's vengeance.
- **Absalom:** David's son who raises a military coup against him after Amnon rapes his sister Tamar.
- **Bathsheba and Uriah:** David commits adultery with Bathsheba and arranges for Uriah's death.
- **Ahithophel and Hushai:** Counselors to David and Absalom, functioning as spies and counter-spies during Absalom's rebellion. Hushai pretends to be on Absalom's side but is secretly loyal to David.
- **Nathan and Gad:** Prophets who advise and rebuke David.

### 1. **David's Sins and Their Consequences:**

- The Bathsheba and Uriah incident is a major turning point, leading to Nathan's prophecy of violence and calamity within David's household (2 Samuel 12).
- Nathan states: "Now therefore, the sword will never depart from your house," foreshadowing the turmoil and violence that will plague David's family.
- Absalom's actions, such as lying with David's concubines, fulfill Nathan's prophecy in a "measure-for-measure way."
- While David repents (as reflected in Psalm 51), he still faces the consequences of his actions.

### 1. **Absalom's Rebellion:**

- Absalom wins the hearts of the people through appearances and promises. "He stole the hearts of all the men of Israel."
- He orchestrates a coup, advised initially by Ahithophel, but Hushai's counterintelligence efforts frustrate Ahithophel's plans.

### 1. **David's Actions Regarding the Ark of the Covenant:**

- David seeks to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem to create religious unity, but the first attempt fails because it is carried on a cart, violating Torah law. "They set the ark of God on a new cart. What's the problem? After all, isn't that what the Philistines did?"
- Uzzah's death underscores the need to approach God with reverence and according to his prescribed methods.
- The second successful attempt involves David wearing a linen ephod, a priestly garment, suggesting he may be functioning in a priestly role.

### 1. **David's Desire to Build the Temple:**

- God refuses David's request to build the temple, stating that his son Solomon will do so because David has blood on his hands.
- God's covenant with David, delivered through Nathan, promises an enduring dynasty and a kingdom that will last forever, with messianic implications. "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever. Your throne will be established forever".

### 1. **The Census Incident (2 Samuel 24):**

- David's decision to number the Israelites is portrayed as being incited by God (or Satan, according to Chronicles).
- This act is seen as a punishment for the Israelites' rebellion against David.
- The plague is stopped at the threshing floor of Araunah, which later becomes the site of the temple.
- David insists on paying for the threshing floor and the sacrifices, stating, "Shall I offer sacrifices to the Lord that have cost me nothing?"

### **Important Names and Concepts to Remember (from lecture announcements):**

- **From Saul's side:** Ish-bosheth, Abner, Mephibosheth
- **From David's side:** Joab, Amnon, Tamar, Absalom, Bathsheba, Uriah, Ahithophel, Hushai, Nathan, Gad
- **Urim and Thummim:** A means of seeking counsel from God.
- **City Gate:** Center of judicial, commercial, and governmental activities.
- **Linen Ephod:** Garment typically worn by priests.

**Concluding Thought:** The lecture emphasizes the importance of understanding David not as a simple hero but as a complex figure whose life and reign were marked by both great achievements and significant moral failings. Understanding these complexities is crucial for interpreting the narratives of 2 Samuel and the broader theological themes they explore.

## **4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 21, David and the United Kingdom**

### **David, Bathsheba, Absalom: A Study Guide**

#### **Quiz**

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. Why was the tribe of Judah favorably disposed toward David when he became king?
2. Why was it politically strategic for David to move the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem?
3. Describe the events surrounding the Ark of the Covenant and Uzzah's death. What was the lesson to be learned from that story?
4. What reason did God give David through Nathan for why David would not be the one to build the temple?
5. Briefly explain the story of David and Bathsheba and how it is portrayed in 2 Samuel.
6. What was Nathan's role in confronting David after his sin with Bathsheba, and what was the prophecy that Nathan gave about the consequences of David's actions?
7. Describe the events surrounding Amnon and Tamar, and what was Absalom's response?
8. Explain Absalom's strategy for winning the hearts of the people of Israel.
9. Describe the roles of Ahithophel and Hushai in Absalom's rebellion against David.
10. Why was God angry with the Israelites when David numbered them, and what were the consequences of David's actions?

#### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. The tribe of Judah was favorably disposed toward David because he had been protecting the southern clans in the tribe of Judah from Amalekite raiders, even while he was "with the Philistines." Also, he was a member of the tribe of Judah.

2. Moving the capital to Jerusalem was politically strategic because Jerusalem was located just over the border to the north, technically an Israelite city in the tribe of Benjamin. This was a way of reaching out to those tribes, particularly the tribe of Benjamin from which Saul, the first king, had come, reuniting the tribes and fostering unification.
3. David and his men attempted to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, but they did so incorrectly by placing it on a new cart instead of having the Levites carry it on poles. When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark and was immediately struck dead by God. The lesson was that God is holy and had given particular requirements in terms of how to approach Him, and they hadn't taken them seriously.
4. God said through Nathan that David would not build the temple because he was a man of war and had blood on his hands. Instead, David's son Solomon, whose name suggests peace (shalom), would be the one to build the temple.
5. David, while in Jerusalem, saw Bathsheba bathing on the roof of her house. David desired her, slept with her, and she became pregnant. To cover this up, David arranged for her husband Uriah to return from battle, hoping that Uriah would sleep with his wife and think that the child was his. When Uriah refused, David had him intentionally killed in battle.
6. Nathan confronted David using a parable about a rich man who stole a poor man's lamb. When David pronounced judgment on the man in the story, Nathan revealed that David was the man. Nathan prophesied that the sword would never depart from David's house and that calamity would come upon him from his own household, including his wives being taken and lain with in broad daylight.
7. Amnon, David's firstborn son, raped his half-sister Tamar, and she went out utterly disgraced. Absalom, Tamar's full brother, was enraged by this act and plotted revenge. Two years later, Absalom arranged for Amnon to be killed during a feast.
8. Absalom was handsome and charming, winning people over with his appearance. He also positioned himself at the city gate, offering to solve the problems of those who came to him, stealing the hearts of the people of Israel by making them feel heard and cared for while undermining David's authority.
9. Ahithophel was David's trusted counselor, whose advice was considered as wise as advice from God. Absalom enlisted Ahithophel's help to overthrow David.

Hushai was a spy sent by David to infiltrate Absalom's ranks and frustrate Ahithophel's advice, which he did successfully by offering counter-advice that seemed good but ultimately benefited David by buying him time.

10. God was angry with the Israelites because of their rebellion against David, God's chosen leader, and against the Davidic dynasty, which was beginning to foment. As punishment, God gave David a choice of three punishments: three years of famine, three months of fleeing from his enemies, or three days of plague. David chose the plague, which resulted in the death of many Israelites.

## Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the portrayals of David in 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Chronicles. How do these books differ in their emphasis and purpose, and how does this affect their depiction of David?
2. Analyze the role of women in the narratives of David's life, focusing on Bathsheba, Tamar, and Abigail. How are these women portrayed, and what do their stories reveal about the social and political dynamics of the time?
3. Explore the theme of covenant in the story of David, considering both God's covenant with David and David's covenants with others (e.g., Jonathan, Mephibosheth). How do these covenants shape the narrative and David's actions?
4. Discuss the significance of Jerusalem in the reign of David. Why was it important for David to capture and establish Jerusalem as his capital, and how did this contribute to the unification of Israel?
5. Examine the concept of divine justice in the story of David's sins and their consequences. How does God balance forgiveness with accountability, and what lessons can be learned from David's experience?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Absalom:** David's third son, known for his good looks and ambition. He led a rebellion against his father, David, and was eventually killed by Joab.
- **Abner:** The commander of Saul's army. He initially supported Ish-bosheth after Saul's death but later switched his allegiance to David before being assassinated by Joab.
- **Ahithophel:** David's trusted counselor who later betrayed him by joining Absalom's rebellion.
- **Amnon:** David's firstborn son, who raped his half-sister Tamar. He was later killed by Absalom.
- **Ark of the Covenant:** A sacred chest containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments, symbolizing God's presence.
- **Bathsheba:** The wife of Uriah the Hittite, with whom David committed adultery. She later became one of David's wives and the mother of Solomon.
- **Chronicles (1 & 2):** Old Testament books that retell the history of Israel, often with a focus on the southern kingdom of Judah, the Davidic dynasty, and the importance of the temple.
- **Ephod:** A priestly garment, often made of linen, worn by priests. David is seen wearing this in the account of the Ark's arrival in Jerusalem.
- **Gad:** A prophet who served David and delivered messages from God.
- **Hebron:** A city in Judah where David initially reigned as king over Judah for seven and a half years.
- **Hushai:** David's loyal friend and counselor who infiltrated Absalom's camp to undermine his plans.
- **Ish-bosheth:** One of Saul's sons who was briefly made king over Israel after Saul's death but was eventually assassinated.
- **Jebus/Jerusalem:** A city captured by David and made the capital of the united kingdom of Israel.
- **Joab:** David's ruthless and often conniving military commander.

- **Mephibosheth:** Jonathan's son, who was lame. David showed him kindness due to his covenant with Jonathan.
- **Nathan:** A prophet who confronted David about his sin with Bathsheba and delivered God's message about the consequences.
- **Rephaim Valley:** A valley located just west of Jerusalem, where David fought the Philistines.
- **Samuel (1 & 2):** Old Testament books that narrate the history of Israel from the time of Samuel to the reign of David.
- **Tamar:** David's daughter (by a different mother), who was raped by her half-brother Amnon.
- **Uriah the Hittite:** A loyal soldier in David's army and Bathsheba's husband, whom David arranged to have killed in battle.
- **Urim and Thummim:** Objects used by priests to discern God's will. Some believe David used them as well.

## 5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 21, David and the United Kingdom, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### David, Bathsheba, Absalom, and the Fracturing Kingdom: An FAQ

- **Why are the books of 1 & 2 Samuel considered wonderful literature, and how do they differ from 1 & 2 Chronicles in their portrayal of David?** The books of Samuel are lauded for their engaging narratives that deeply connect with readers, allowing them to see themselves reflected in the characters. They present a more emotionally complex and personally revealing account, including the "seamy sides" of David's life, such as the Bathsheba and Uriah incident, which is absent in Chronicles. Chronicles, written later, aims to establish the long, unbroken tradition of Israel as God's people, emphasizing the Davidic dynasty's positive aspects and the importance of the temple, its personnel, and the Levites.
- **What were the key political moves David made to unify Israel after Saul's death?** David made several strategic moves to unify Israel. First, he captured Jebus and moved the capital from Hebron (deep within the tribe of Judah) to Jerusalem, which was situated on the border between Judah and Benjamin (Saul's tribe). This neutralized tribal favoritism. Secondly, he subdued the Philistine threat by winning victories in the Rephaim Valley. Finally, he sought to create religious unity by moving the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.
- **How did David's initial attempt to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem go wrong, and what lessons were learned?** David's first attempt to bring the Ark to Jerusalem failed because he transported it on a new cart, mirroring the Philistines' actions, rather than having the Levites carry it on poles as prescribed in the Torah. When Uzzah touched the Ark to steady it, he was struck dead. This incident underscored the importance of adhering to God's specific instructions regarding holiness and the proper way to approach Him.
- **Why was David not allowed to build the temple, and what promise did God make to him instead?** God did not allow David to build the temple because David was a man of war and had shed much blood. Instead, God promised David that his son Solomon, whose name suggests peace, would build the temple. God also established a covenant with David, promising that his house (dynasty) and kingdom would endure forever, which carries messianic overtones regarding the coming "son of David."

- **How did David's sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah lead to turmoil within his family and kingdom?** David's adultery with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder of Uriah had devastating consequences. The prophet Nathan declared that the sword would never depart from David's house and that calamity would arise from within his own household. This prophecy was fulfilled through the violence and betrayal within David's family, including Amnon's rape of Tamar, Absalom's murder of Amnon, and Absalom's rebellion against David, and sleeping with David's concubines.
- **How did Absalom manage to stage a rebellion against David, and what role did Ahithophel and Hushai play?** Absalom staged his rebellion by winning the hearts of the people through his handsome appearance, his promises to solve their problems, and his criticism of David's leadership. He then went to Hebron and had himself crowned king. Absalom enlisted Ahithophel, David's trusted counselor, for his wisdom. However, David sent Hushai to undermine Ahithophel's advice. Hushai pretended to be on Absalom's side but ultimately thwarted Ahithophel's plans, buying time for David to regroup and ultimately defeat Absalom.
- **Why did David number the people of Israel, and what were the consequences of this act?** David numbered the people of Israel because God was angry with the Israelites for their rebellion and lack of loyalty to David's dynasty. God incited David to number the people, or as Chronicles notes, Satan incited David to number the people, and God used Satan. The consequences included a choice of three punishments: three years of famine, three months of fleeing from enemies, or three days of plague. David chose the plague, and the destroying angel was stopped at the threshing floor of Araunah, which David then bought to offer sacrifices to the Lord.
- **What does it mean that David was a man after God's own heart, given his flaws and sins?** Being a man after God's own heart doesn't imply perfection but rather a deep desire to follow God and align his heart with God's. While David struggled with sin, he consistently sought the Lord's guidance, repented sincerely when he erred, and demonstrated mercy, even to his own detriment. His merciful nature, humility, and willingness to seek forgiveness are key components of what made him a person after God's own heart.