

The Books of Samuel Bathsheba

Interpreting the Text:

1. What are the moral implications of the death of David and Bathsheba's firstborn son? How does this demonstrate the precarious and particular rules about the monarchic line for the Israelite kings?
2. Why is such an entirely accusatory story included in the narrative of David's life? What is the author trying to do in the manner that David and Bathsheba's story is told?
3. How does Nathan function as a strategic judge in this moment of David's reign? How do his actions compare with what Samuel may have done?

Applying the Text:

1. Although we may all admit that the episode with Bathsheba paints David in a bad light, to what extent does it contribute to the humanizing of this biblical hero? Can we imagine a David without the flaws evident in this story?
2. How have you previously understood the story of Bathsheba? Is she framed as a temptress, a villain, or something else? What do you think about Bathsheba having studied this series of chapters?