

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# DEVO

MAY 13 - 17, 2024

**1 and 2 Kings**

# TRUTH TO POWER



Sermon Series 5.19 - 8.18



Read **2 Samuel 11:1-12:15**

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Just as Pinocchio had the assistance of his “conscience,” Jiminy Cricket, so David had the prophet, Nathan. Nathan helps us commence the teaching series on Israel’s and Judah’s kings and their prophets, his prophetic career overlapping the reigns of David and his son, Solomon.

“[Several Bible] stories ... featuring [the prophet] Nathan [occurred] during some of the darkest and most emotional times in [King] David’s life. ... David tells Nathan [his desire] to build a house for God, and Nathan [encourages him accordingly] because the Lord is with him (2 Samuel 7:2-3). Then God [tells] Nathan ... to [advise] David ... that God doesn’t need [him] to build him a house; rather, God would establish David’s dynasty through his son ... Solomon would be the one to build God’s house (2 Samuel 7:4-17), ... [prompting David’s responsive], grateful and beautiful prayer to God for His grace (2 Samuel 7:18-29). ...

“After David [sinned against] Bathsheba (and God!) and [orchestrated] her husband’s death ... (2 Samuel 12:1), ... David made Bathsheba his wife ... [to further the cover-up]. Nathan went to David and wisely told the king a fable ... [illuminating David’s sin]. David confesses to Nathan that he has sinned ... and Nathan comforts him, saying that ... his sin [is forgiven] and that David’s life will ... [be spared, though his]

child by Bathsheba was to die. David ... [penned] Psalm 51 after this encounter with Nathan. ...

“Bathsheba ... [subsequently birthed David’s son], Solomon, ... [who] later built ... the temple and became an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ. King David and Queen Bathsheba named one of their [other] sons ... Nathan (1 Chronicles 3:5), ... [undoubtedly in] appreciation for the prophet Nathan’s faithfulness, friendship, and tough love through the years.” (GotQuestions.org)

The prophets represented God before the people and their kings, helping them navigate ancient Israel’s complex religious, social and political landscape. Nathan’s story illustrates that tough love—if truly godly and loving—is still love. Nathan helped David overcome huge failings as Israel’s greatest king and forefather to the Messiah, demonstrating that God can redeem anything.

## QUESTIONS

What was the role of God’s called prophets in ancient Israel? Why do you believe God wanted Solomon to build His temple rather than his father, King David? How did God’s grace gloriously show up in David’s life?

## PRAYER

Emre Uflazoglu and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in Turkey

Pray for three computer engineering students (among many others) with whom Emre has shared the Gospel. May they put their trust in Jesus. And may the Lord allow Emre to launch student ministries in Malatya, Elazig, Samsun, Ankara, and Balikesir.

The image shows two ornate golden crowns with blue gemstones, resting on a rough stone ledge. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "TUESDAY" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

# TUESDAY

Read **1 Samuel 16:3-13; 1 Kings 1:5-45**

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Intrigue and scandal have plagued royal families throughout history. It is true today within England's monarchy and so it was among prominent biblical families, including David's. Covetous Cain killed his brother, Abel, not long after humankind's creation (Genesis 4:8). Isaac's twin sons vied for parental favor, second-born Jacob tricking Esau and their father to gain both the birthright and Isaac's blessing (Genesis 25 and 27). Jacob's own son, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his brothers who were envious of their father's favor toward him (Genesis 37:28).

David—the youngest among the ambitious brothers in his household—was an afterthought when high priest Samuel arrived to anoint Israel's next king (1 Samuel 16). David's predecessor to Israel's throne, King Saul, resented David's growing popularity and favor with his own son, Jonathan, prompting Saul's repeated attempts to kill David.

Today's 1 Kings passage shares a rivalry between potential fraternal successors to David's throne. Adonijah, David's fourth son, preemptively claimed Israel's kingship as his father's death loomed (1 Kings 1:5-9). This occurred years after David's thirdborn son, Absalom, vengefully murdered his half-brother, Amnon (the firstborn son who raped his half-sister, Tamar); David was lax in punishing him accordingly (2 Samuel 13). Absalom, who later led a coup to displace David as king, was killed amidst a related campaign (2 Samuel 15-18).

Adonijah's attempt to take the throne came despite David's earlier declaration that "[God] has chosen Solomon ... to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel" (1 Chronicles 28:5). However, Solomon, David's tenth-born son (one of David's twenty-one sons by various wives and concubines), ruled over Israel upon his father's death. Solomon's reign was economically and politically prosperous, though his worldly sinfulness enabled Israel's eventual kingdom split and spiritual decline.

Contemporary tabloids would have a field day with the dysfunction enveloping David, his forerunners and family. Despite this, Samuel characterized David as "a man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). How?! David pursued God's will and ways despite his varied failings, always prayerfully repenting. Be encouraged knowing that God could use one so deeply flawed to lead Israel, his ancestry including Jesus Christ, "the Son of David" (Matthew 1:1)!

## QUESTIONS

Which of the dark incidents shared regarding Israel's forebearers do you find most troubling? What underlying themes do you see in these stories? Why did the Bible call David "a man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14)?

## PRAYER

Emre Uflazoglu and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in Turkey

Pray for a student leader named Hilay; pray that the Lord will help her wisely address the challenges that come with her new leadership role. May the students she disciples be encouraged to grow and to reach out to others, as well.

The image shows two ornate golden crowns with blue gemstones, resting on a rough, dark stone surface. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "WEDNESDAY" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

# WEDNESDAY

Read **1 Kings 1:1-4; Esther 2:1-18**

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Today's 1 Kings passage could be a *Game of Thrones* episode—aged, failing David has a beautiful young woman “*be in his service ... [and] lie in [his] arms, that ... the king may be warm.*” (1 Kings 1:4) This feels strange and distasteful, Abishag being objectified in serving a king who has many wives, concubines, and children.

Also shocking is Lot's offer to Sodom's citizens who were surrounding his home and threatening his guests. Lot offered his virgin daughters to placate them. When they refused, Lot's angelic visitors blinded them, drawing Lot to safety and evacuating the family before Sodom's destruction (Genesis 19). Judges 19 shares the appalling incident of a Levite traveling with his concubine, offering her to appease Gibeonite assailants. These men accepted the offer, their abuse killing her. Esther's story begins strangely. Mordecai, Esther's guardian uncle, encouraged her pursuit of joining King Ahasuerus' harem, hoping that she might become queen (Esther 2).

These incidents highlight the troubling misogyny prevailing within many ancient cultures. They exemplify how the Bible can be descriptive (unblinkingly documenting what happened), while not always prescriptive (conveying righteous principles). In the David-Abishag story, the practice of a maiden accompanying an old man to warm him was common—however, “common” is not synonymous with “commendable.” Lot's encounter with Sodom's men and the Levite's concubine tragedy appalled morally-oriented Israelites.



God the Redeemer used the Sodom incident to free Lot and his family from corrupting influences. The horror of the Levite's concubine's murderous violation mobilized Israel, prompting the destruction of wicked countrymen. Esther became queen, thwarting anti-Semitic Haman's murderous plans and securing the Messianic line.

Some criticize Christianity for "promoting sexist patriarchy"—however, Jesus' life and teaching refute this. The Lord reinforced women's creation in God's image (Matthew 19:4), addressed women respectfully and publicly (John 4:27, etc.), and affirmed one whom He healed as a "daughter of Abraham" (Luke 13:16). Jesus honored the poor widow (Mark 12:43-44), included Mary Magdalene and sisters Mary and Martha among His closest friends and disciples, healed women (Luke 4:38-39, etc.), and comforted female mourners while approaching Calvary (Luke 23:27-28). Jesus radically, counterculturally elevated women's status to equal men's. Such emphasis rightly continues within Glenkirk and ECO.

## QUESTIONS

Which of today's featured incidents do you see as an enduring problem in modern society? What does "the Bible can be descriptive while not always prescriptive" mean? How did Jesus' life and teaching refute the criticism that "Christianity promotes sexism"?

## PRAYER

Emre Uflazoglu and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in Turkey

Pray for Efe and Davut, two members of Emre's Antalya ministry team, and Sevda, launching a new team in a nearby city. May all three continue to find joy in serving the Lord, and may the spiritual fire in their hearts continue to burn brightly and grow.

The image shows two ornate golden crowns with blue gemstones, resting on a dark, textured stone ledge. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "THURSDAY" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

# THURSDAY

Read **1 Kings 1:11-46; 1 Kings 2:13-25**

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On Tuesday we glimpsed at the politics within King David's household. Let's consider Nathan's corresponding role and methods. As Israel's prophet, Nathan was to declare God's Word and enable His will being done.

David's fourth son, Adonijah, aiming to assume the throne before the king passed, acted to displace his half-brother and David's named heir, youthful Solomon. Ancient aspiring or newly-seated kings often had rivals and rival's closest relatives and key supporters killed to pre-empt uprisings or other potential hostilities—Adonijah later learned this the hard way (1 Kings 2:13-25).

Nathan, discovering Adonijah's scheme, warned Bathsheba, enlisting her maternal and self-preservation instincts while mobilizing her influence: "*Let me give you advice, that you may save your own life and ... [Solomon's]*" (1 Kings 1:12). Nathan waited and then joined David and Bathsheba in their subsequent conversation, asking David rhetorically, "*Have you said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne'?*" (1 Kings 1:24). The declining king then rallied and ratified Solomon as his successor.

Was Nathan being manipulative and opportunistic in navigating the palace's social dynamics? Or did he anticipate Jesus' centuries-later teaching that God's people be "*wise as serpents and innocent as doves*" (Matthew 10:16)? Nathan was simply doing his job faithfully



and deftly, ensuring that the Lord's will prevailed. He kept his eyes open, listened actively and surveyed the situation, engaging the right people at the right time for God's kingdom purposes.

When encountering someone evidently far from the Lord, do you avoid related conversations to "minimize awkwardness"? Or, worse, do you affirm their apparent misguidedness, succumbing to "*the fear of man*" (Proverbs 29:25)? Conversely, do you gracelessly err to the other extreme, confronting them self-righteously?

In the aftermath of Adam's rebellion, God asked him, "*Where are you?*" (Genesis 3:9)—this question was not geographic but relational, a call to introspection. Jesus likewise asked insightful questions to prompt another's self-awareness. A favorite example is His encounter with Bethesda's invalid, wherein He thoughtfully asked, "*Do you want to get well?*" (John 5:6). Nathan demonstrated such perceptive skillfulness. We should do the same, whether in sharing our faith or other interpersonal situations.

## QUESTIONS

What impresses you most about how Nathan managed through the dysfunction in King David's household? What does our call from Jesus to be "*wise as serpents and innocent as doves*" (Matthew 10:16) mean? How can you apply such ways in witnessing?

## PRAYER

Emre Uflazoglu and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in Turkey

Pray for the countless earthquake victims who still have no homes and no basic services after all this time either in or beyond their demolished communities. May the Lord's people find strength to comfort and assist them wherever and however they can.

The image shows two ornate golden crowns with blue gemstones, resting on a rough stone ledge. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The word "FRIDAY" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

# FRIDAY

## Read 1 Kings 11

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Though Nathan served under King Solomon, there is little documentation of this wise, faithful prophet impacting the reign of Israel's third king. Yesterday we considered Nathan's role in Solomon assuming the throne, but the Bible is silent regarding Nathan thereafter—an ominous indicator of Solomon's career.

Solomon began well, though the Bible indicates an early problem with syncretism (melding corrupting practices with godly faith): *“Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father, only he sacrificed and made offerings at the high places”* (1 Kings 3:3, emphasis added). When God asked Solomon his wishes, the young king requested *“an understanding mind to govern Your people”* (v. 9), pleasing the Lord. Yahweh granted him unparalleled wisdom, riches and honor. Unfortunately, Solomon later squandered these regularly.

Solomon violated God's Law by taking many pagan partners (Deuteronomy 4:3-4, 17:7), 1000 total between wives and concubines (1 Kings 11:1-4). This appealed to his carnality; this was also “a misguided effort to protect Israel, Solomon [using these unions] to establish foreign treaties. ... Solomon's ... descent into covetousness [proved costly]. He turned from God and began to worship ... the pagan gods that his many wives worshiped.” (Inspired Scripture) Solomon's unfaithfulness set the tone for Israel and Judah for centuries to come.

God judged Solomon accordingly, the consequences dire for Israel. The relative peace prevailing under Solomon gave way to attacks from without—Aram and Edom—and a from within. “God [used] Jeroboam’s evil heart to judge Israel with civil division ... [leading] a revolt that caused [Israel’s division] into two kingdoms [under Solomon’s son and successor, Rehoboam].” (Inspired Scripture)

We’ve seen Solomon’s cautionary tale repeated frequently among contemporary celebrities. The entertainment, business, political, religious and sports landscapes are littered with such wreckage. But God loves to redeem! Aging Solomon began applying his God-granted wisdom, hard-won amidst many missteps and reflected in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes: “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge*” (Proverbs 1:7); “*The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil*” (Proverbs 8:13). Solomon’s insightful summary, learned the hard way, was: “[Love] God and keep His commandments, for this is [our] duty” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Wisdom indeed!

## QUESTIONS

What is “syncretism” and how did it figure into Solomon’s spiritual decline? How did God judge Solomon, and Israel, for the idolatry that he sponsored in his kingdom? What indications are there that Solomon learned from his errors and repented?

## PRAYER

Emre Uflazoglu and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) in Turkey

Pray for God’s provision of a “family visa” for Emre’s wife, Feven, and their son, Joah. Their deep desire is to remain in Antalya, Turkey, serving in their church and university ministry there. (Feven, though Turkish, was born in the Netherlands and faces deportation.)



## Sources

- GotQuestions.org's quotes are from [www.gotquestions.org/Nathan-in-the-Bible](http://www.gotquestions.org/Nathan-in-the-Bible).
- Inspired Scripture's quotes can be found at <https://inspiredscripture.com/bible-studies/1-kings-11#gsc.tab=0>.

*These devotionals are written by a team of Glenkirk volunteers who represent a range of beliefs within the evangelical spectrum. As such, some of the expressed views may not necessarily represent those of pastoral leadership. If you find yourself challenged by a devo, explore why that might be and, should you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Pastor Kate Wallace Nunneley at [KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org](mailto:KNunneley@GlenkirkChurch.org). If you are interested in joining those who pen Glenkirk devotionals, please contact Pastor Kate.*

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