

that he raped Bathsheba in the biblical Hebrew understanding of rape would be to push the evidence too far and read too much of our contemporary conception of rape into the biblical text. If one considers the text critically, it is clear that the type of physical force implied in the biblical Hebrew concept of rape is absent in 2 Samuel 11:1-27. For this reason, the sexual encounter between David and Bathsheba is not written clearly as rape but an abuse of power by the renowned King David since he had the right to see but not to touch.¹⁵¹

Regarding the composition and literary structure of 1 and 2 Samuel, the research agrees with Newson, Ringe and Lapsley (2012:150) that the books are a goldmine for readers interested in the role women played in ancient Israel. However, while Birch (2005:118) is considered helpful to this study, his analysis is limited in that he only mentions that the books witness to the transitions of power in ancient Israel – which of course is inadequate as one can see clearly that there is more to the books, as the close reading of our passage suggests.

This research rejects the view that the David, Bathsheba and Uriah event is justifiable and that Bathsheba was the brain behind the episode because she bathed where she could be seen by the respected King David (Gordon, 1986:252; Collins, 2004:240; Garland, 2008:23). Rather, it agrees that both David and Bathsheba were culprits in the event and that the thing that David had done was a twin sin of adultery and murder which was considered evil and displeasing to the Lord (Anderson, 1989:152; Bergen, 1996:361).

In addition, this study concurs that 2 Samuel 11 portrays David's deepest, and darkest weakness (Cartledge, 2001:495; Abasili, 2011:7). David's decision to remain behind in Jerusalem while his army went out to war was the root cause of the entire story and of the sin committed by the king. If the king had gone to war with his people and not remained behind at home in Jerusalem, this event could not have happened. On the other hand, the research disagrees that the strong political desire to become the king's wife made Bathsheba to take her bath at an opportune place and time since we do not have any record to justify such an assumption (Abasili, 2011:1). It is understood in this thesis that, many readers at first accused Bathsheba in this episode but when given a second reading, verse 27 emphasises that no blame was put on Bathsheba. As such the accusation by the narrator challenges the reader to realise that David did wrong not

¹⁵¹ Biblical rape is forced sexual intercourse or other sexual activity on a person without his or her consent while the person being forced cried for help and there was no one to help (Deut 22:25-30). Thus, unlike in the case of Amnon and Tamar (2 Sam 13:12-14), we cannot say that the David and Bathsheba event was a rape since we do not know whether Bathsheba resisted and the episode took place in a patriarchal setting.

