

about Uriah

1.) If Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, had remained faithful rather than committing adultery with King David (2 Sam. 11:2-5), we would probably only know him as a lower level military leaders (2 Sam. 23:39). Perhaps there would be more to report about his life if it had not been cut short. We will never know; instead we have the detailed account of how David tried to deceive him (11:6-13) and, then, had him killed after failing to do so (11:14-25).

2.) Uriah is introduced in 2 Sam. 11:3 and remembered in 1 Kings 15:5 as a Hittite, from one of the powerful tribal groups that was driven out of the land by the Israelites (Deut. 7:1). Yet, his Jewish name, which means "the Lord is my light," and his godly comment in 11:11 indicates that he was a believer in the true God of Israel.

3.) Most of Second Samuel ch. 11 is about the evil actions of others. But Uriah's refusal to return to his own house (and sleep with his wife) while the ark and the army of Israel were still in the field (11:11) tells us much about his character. Moreover, the king's attempt to loosen his resolve and self-control by getting him drunk (11:13) failed. He consistently put duty before pleasure.

4.) Chapter 11 concludes with the Lord's displeasure re. David's actions (11:27). This summary places more blame on the king than on Bathsheba. Certainly, regarding Uriah's murder, David was most responsible, though others were also involved.

5.) Nathan's parable in 12:1-6 implies that Uriah was a poor man, and, of course, he was, compared to the king. The greater point of the parable, however, was that David sinfully mistreated Uriah. Like the rich man in the parable he was selfish and lacking in mercy (12:6). Again, nothing is said about the sin of Bathsheba. Though she was undoubtedly guilty to some extent, as well, the parable was aimed at David.

6.) Many Bible studies focus on Bathsheba, but she is rarely mentioned by name in chs. 11 and 12. Instead she is referred to as "the woman" (11:5) and as "the wife of Uriah" (11:26, 12:9, 10, 15). Only after the death of her first son, is she again mentioned by name (12:24). Uriah was a faithful soldier; she and David were unfaithful.

7.) The most important mention of Uriah comes later, in the genealogy of Jesus in Mat. 1:6. As far as we know Uriah had no children. However his wife later bore a son named Nathan (to David) who was in the line that led to Joseph, Jesus legal father. Unlike other women (Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth) Bathsheba is not directly named. Rather she is again called the wife of Uriah. The honor is his, not hers.

8.) Uriah was murdered and his wife committed adultery, but are these negatives the main things we should remember about him? Isn't it better to focus on his character, on what he said and did in 11:11? How different he was from David in this chapter!

What should we think of Uriah?

IS HE TO BE PITIED?

It's easy to think of Uriah as a man who is to be pitied, since he was faithful and self-controlled but betrayed and killed by others who were not. He was even betrayed by his own wife. He believed in and served the true God of Israel (11:11), but was killed by the king of Israel. How tragic and unfair!

If there were no God, no judgement, and no afterlife that would be the sad end of the story, but we know that it is not. David and Bathsheba didn't get off scot-free (12:7-18). Uriah is mentioned in the genealogy of the Messiah (Mat. 1:6) and is the only Gentile man who is so honored. Finally, like others who have suffered unjustly for the Lord, he is truly blessed (Mat. 5:3-12).

IS HE WELL REMEMBERED?

Being included in Matthew's messianic genealogy shows that Uriah was well remembered by God. But is he remembered by God's people? Bathsheba mourned for him for a short period (11:26); but she became David's wife soon thereafter (11:27). He apparently had no children or grandchildren to remember him. His name comes at the very bottom of the list of David's leaders in ch. 23. He isn't mentioned in the list of Jewish heroes in Heb. 11, at all. And finally many believer's today who think they know the story of David and Bathsheba don't even remember his name.

This too is tragic and unfair. Like David's daughter, Tamar (2 Sam. 13:1-20), he was mistreated and humanly speaking has been mostly forgotten. Like her, he too probably had no children (13:20). The only answer to these things, again, is that this life on earth is not all that there is. There is life after death and eternal blessings for those who have been saved from their sins through faith in the Savior. God doesn't forget any of his people, not even the most lowly.

WAS HE A GOOD SOLDIER?

One the most important thing that should be said about Uriah is that he was a good soldier in the army of Israel. This was based on his faith in the God of Israel as seen in his name and his words (11:11) and resulted in his putting duty before pleasure, as seen in 11:11-13. He is one of the best examples in the Bible of the faith-based self-control and dedication called for in 2 Tim. 2:3-4.

"You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier."