Michal - The Wives of King David, Book One

by Jill Eileen Smith

About the Book

Can their epic search for true love survive a father's fury?

The daughter of King Saul, Michal lives a life of privilege --- but one that is haunted by her father's unpredictable moods and competition from her beautiful older sister. As a girl, Michal quickly falls for the handsome young harpist David. But soon after their romance begins, David must flee for his life, leaving Michal at her father's mercy in the prison that is King Saul's palace.

Will Michal ever be reunited with David? Or is she doomed to remain separated from him forever?

Against the backdrop of opulent palace life, raging war, and daring desert escapes, Jill Eileen Smith takes you on an emotional journey as Michal deals with love, loss, and personal transformation as the first wife of King David.

Discussion Guide

1. The story begins with Michal's longing for the singer, David, to come and soothe the madness of her father. She fancies herself in love with David but discovers, to her dismay, that David appears to care for her sister, Merab, instead of herself. How does this discovery set the tone for the rest of the story?

2. Determined to win David's love and the right to marry him, Michal goes to great lengths, even lying to her father, to ensure she succeeds. Have you ever gone after something you wanted at the expense of someone else? How did that make you feel? What was the ultimate outcome?

3. After Michal and David marry, their joy is short-lived. David's life is in constant danger from Michal's father, and Michal finally sees no choice but to help him escape, leaving her behind. In order to protect David, Michal lies to the guards, and then later she lies to her father, saying that David threatened her life. Do you think she was wrong to lie to protect the man she loved? If she had not lied to her father, do you think the outcome for her future would have been different? Have you ever told a lie only to regret the consequences? What did you do to make it right?

4. Nearly a year after their wedding, David flees for his life and Michal's father gives her in marriage to another man, Paltiel. How does the foundation of this second marriage affect Michal's attitude? What significant event causes her to stop pining for David and embrace Paltiel? Do you think she was wise to do so?

5. Michal's cousin Abner uses his power and influence to do all he can to keep David from ruling all Israel.

Whether Paltiel helped him or not is conjecture, but Paltiel did have a definite reason for not wanting David to be king in Saul's place: he knew he was living unlawfully with another man's wife. While the Scripture does tell us that Paltiel later wept at the loss of Michal, indicating he cared for her, what do his actions overall tell us about his character? Should we feel sympathy for him, or did he get what he deserved? (According to the Bible, he deserved death.)

6. Michal and Paltiel have been married about seventeen years when David's rise to power over all Israel gives him the right to demand that Michal be returned to him. What feelings do you think went through Michal's heart when she realized that her second marriage was at an end and she would be returned to her first husband? While you may not be able to relate to the life of a princess or the wife of a king, you may be able to understand how it feels to suffer a broken marriage. From that perspective, what struggles might Michal have faced upon her return to David?

7. On the heels of Michal and David's reuniting, Michal's cousin Abner and brother Ishbosheth are murdered. In addition to that grief, Michal is now forced to share her husband with six other wives and their children, while she remains childless. What struggles might these new circumstances lead to? In a culture where children are highly prized, how might Michal's barrenness have led to her bitterness? Have circumstances in your life ever left you feeling abandoned and resentful?

8. All of her life, Michal has wanted the power to control her circumstances, but nothing has ever gone right. She now believes that her only recourse is to get David to make her his queen, to give her the influence she needs over his other wives and over her life. But David puts her off because they have no heir. In the meantime, his decisions consistently go against her wishes. He attempts to reconcile with her and to get her to join him in bringing the ark to Jerusalem. The first time she reluctantly agrees. The second time she refuses. Did she make the right choice in staying behind? If she had gone with David, how might her attitude have changed? Do you think she would have been as moved by the sacrifices as David was? Why or why not?

9. Unfortunately, Michal did choose to stay behind, and when she saw David dancing with joy before the ark, she despised him in her heart. Later, she berated him publicly to his face. David put her in her place with his response, and the Bible tells us that "Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death." This statement follows on the heels of Michal's outburst against David. How might things have gone differently if she had not harbored bitterness, allowing it to build up against David? Do you think God might have allowed her to bear a child if she had not despised His anointed? Or do you think Michal and David's relationship was doomed from the start because she was Saul's daughter and God had rejected Saul as king?

10. The Bible ends Michal's story with the statement of her childlessness until her death. In the fictional account, Michal lives to see the deaths of her five nephews, making her the last remaining child of Saul and leaving Jonathan with the only living heirs. In the story, this event is the catalyst that brings Michal to question God, to wonder if perhaps He was trying to tell her something. In various circumstances of your life, have you ever come to the point where you realized that the situation might have been God's way of getting your attention? What did you do when you realized this? How did it change the way you looked at your life?

11. Michal's realization brings her to her knees in prayer, and she repents of all the wrong things she's done. She comes away with a clean and humble heart. Have you ever recognized the need to repent of sin before the Lord? Have you ever experienced the peace Michal finally realizes?

12. Michal is banned from David's presence and the rest of court life, but her newfound faith keeps her from despair. She prays for a chance to one day share her faith with David, and that day finally comes. Her honesty and humility bring about David's forgiveness, but she can tell he is not likely to bring her back into his confidence again, to share the love they once had. But Michal has learned to accept the death of a dream, allowing in its place a peace with God and with David. Have you ever had to let go of a long-held dream, knowing that what you had gained in its place was far better? Have you ever reconciled with someone after long years apart? What was it like? Was it hard to do? Why?

Author Bio

Jill Eileen Smith is the bestselling author of the *Wives of King David* series, the *Wives of the Patriarchs* series, and the ebook novella THE DESERT PRINCESS, book 1 in the *Loves of King Solomon* series. Her research has taken her from the Bible to Israel, and she particularly enjoys learning how women lived in Old Testament times. When she isn't writing, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She can often be found reading, testing new recipes, grabbing lunch with friends, or snuggling Tiger, her little writing buddy who chews her fingers as she works. She lives with her family in southeast Michigan. She loves hearing from her readers.

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