

OUT OF THE BLUE: ADVENT DEVOTIONS SAMPLE

Introduction

Welcome to the *Out of the Blue: Advent Devotions* from Barn Geese Worship. The idea for this devotional resource grew from a specific seed. The scripture stories we have selected and the way we mark them in these devotions emerge from the tradition of the Jesse tree.

The Jesse tree is a medieval symbolic depiction of Jesus' ancestry. It's also a symbol of the Advent season, sometimes used for home devotions during the weeks leading to Christmas. When used at home, a Jesse tree tells the stories of Jesus' ancestors by using Bible stories and accompanying symbolic ornaments, one for each day of Advent. By Christmas, the Jesse tree is full of biblical imagery, and you've spent the season dwelling in stories of faith.

In the traditional Jesse tree used for home devotions, the Bible stories are taken from the genealogy of Jesus as described in Matthew 1. The stories we've curated for these devotions are also mostly drawn from Matthew 1, with a particular focus on the women in Jesus' lineage. It's unusual that women are listed as ancestors in scripture, so their inclusion stands out. These stories give us important clues about who Jesus will be. They testify to the consistency of God's promise within the messiness of human existence. Often, God's action seems to come out of the blue in these stories. You'll find the same biblical stories in the *Out of the Blue: Midweek Worship* and the *Out of the Blue: An Advent and Christmas Pageant*.

Brokenness Reclaimed: December 7, 2025

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Content notification

This week's reading and remarks deal with David's sexual assault of Bathsheba, the murder of her spouse, and the death of an infant.

Read

2 Samuel 11:2-27a

The story of David and his family is told over the course of several chapters in 1 and 2 Samuel. David, youngest son of Jesse, is unexpectedly anointed as the second king of Israel to succeed Saul.

As an illustrious youth, David defeats Goliath with nothing more than a sling and a stone, but as he ages and reigns, he finds navigating his newfound power much more difficult. In a striking abuse of his power, 2 Samuel 11 tells the story of how he took Bathsheba, another man's wife, to his bed and then sent Uriah, her unwitting husband, to die on the front lines of battle. Bathsheba, impregnated by David, gives birth to a son, who dies just days later.

This is not the end of Bathsheba's story. Eventually she becomes the mother of the future King Solomon and several of David's other children. She also becomes a political force in the kingdom, a stark contrast to her seeming voicelessness in today's reading.

The flow of the story is dreadfully deliberate, as though the narrator wants us to mark all the opportunities David missed to make a different choice: He sees Bathsheba. He decides he wants her. He asks after her. He brings her to his palace. He lies with her. As Bathsheba's king, David's job is to protect her. Instead, he exploits her.

What did Bathsheba think? We can only imagine. Her feelings and preferences are not once referenced in the story. The narrator's exclusion of her voice echoes David's own refusal to acknowledge the fullness of her personhood. In fact, except for a servant's report, even Bathsheba's name is unspoken in this story.

Generations later, the author of Matthew once again refers to her only as "the wife of Uriah" as he includes her in Jesus' genealogy. In this context, the title doesn't seem to obscure Bathsheba as much as it reveals the truth of David's failure. Matthew refuses to bleach out the sin that colors the threads of Jesus' ancestral tapestry. Bathsheba encounters some of the worst actions of a corrupt ruler. Is it a coincidence that she is the foremother of Jesus, the sovereign who does not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but who empties himself instead (Philippians 2:6-8)?

Consider

God took a transgression that David and Bathsheba thought had ruined them beyond recovery and made it part of God's plan for salvation. When has God taken a catastrophe in your life and found a way to bless you?

Pray

God, sometimes we think we're too broken for you to redeem. Prove us wrong. Remind us of how you love to take brokenness and transform it into blessing. Remind us of how the lost sheep was the one that was found. When we lose hope in our own goodness, surprise us with your overflowing grace. Amen.

Find

Find something broken that you still care about. Examples include a piece of jewelry or tableware waiting for repair, a beloved stuffed animal with a rip, or a favorite sweater that's beginning to unravel. Place it near your Jesse tree.