

Did God promise to give David multiple wives in 2 Samuel 12:8?

Many claim that having multiple wives is acceptable to God because He told David that He gave him Saul's wives.

1. What does it mean that Saul's wives were given into the “bosom” of David?

Genesis **16:5**

Deuteronomy 13:6; 28:53-57

2 Samuel **12:2-4**

Jeremiah 32:18

Numbers **11:12**

Ruth 4:16

1 Kings **1:1-4; 22:35**

The idea behind the word translated “bosom” sometimes carry the thought of a close intimate relationship like that between a husband and a wife. It also carries the idea of being close or in the midst or presence of another. The idea behind the wives of Saul being the “bosom” of David could very well indicate that Saul's wives are under his care and authority because the kingdom has been given to David. Although the context of the passage has to do with David having a deeply intimate relationship with another man's wife, David was not claiming her to be his wife. There is no requirement that God told David that the wives of Saul are to be considered to be like wives of David, although they are under his care and authority.

2. What does it mean that God would have given David 'such and such things'?

1 Samuel **21:2**

Genesis **41:19**

2 Kings **6:8**

The Hebrew literally says that God would have given unto David “according to them and according to them”. The English phrase only occurs twice more. Both are used to indicate a generic statement associated with specific instructions from another. The Hebrew word 'cahna' occurs 1 other time indicated something similar. The phrase could mean that God would have been willing to grant David more wives if the wives that David had were too few for him.

3. Does God ever specifically condone/encourage multiple wives?

Deuteronomy **21:15-17**

Hosea **3:1-3**

The closest there is to condoning plural wives is what the Law of God tells man about dealing with the children that could be the result of plural wives. This could be nothing more than acknowledging a cultural norm, though not desired by God, that was taking place and how Israel should respond in the face of it. The second closest is the question of whether Hosea was commanded by God to obtain a second wife or whether his wife, Gomer, had run away. Since the text is not specific, it is difficult to use it for such a purpose.

4. Does God ever specifically condemn/discourage multiple wives?

Genesis **2:24**

1 Corinthians **7:2-5**

1 Kings 11:1-4

Ephesians **5:31-32**

Deuteronomy **17:17**

Genesis **6:1-5**

It is fairly clear that God's design from the beginning was for the marriage relationship to be one man and one woman even as there is only one Christ and one church. One of the sins that would

mark the downfall of the nation of Israel is the king to “multiply wives to himself” because his wives would turn the king's heart away from God. This is one of the things that lead to the downfall of King Solomon and the nation of Israel. Furthermore, the only specific sin that is identified with the worldwide flood during the days of Noah is that men saw the beautiful women and “took them wives of all which they chose”.