

A Biblical Look at *Macbeth*

1. Much of the action and drama of *Macbeth* deals with how he responds to the prophecies he receives. Look up these biblical responses to prophecy or commandment:

- Abraham – Genesis 15:4-6, 16:1-12, 17:15-21
- Jacob – Genesis 25:21-26, 27:1-45
- Gideon – Judges 6:11-7:25
- David – 1 Samuel 16:1, 11-13, 18:1-10, 24:1-22, 26:1-11, 31:1-7, 2 Samuel 2:1-4

How are the passages about Abraham and Jacob similar to each other? How are the passages about Gideon and David different from Abraham and Jacob? What general rule can we glean from these examples?

2. Read 1 Sam. 16:1, 11-13. What plan does God have for David?
3. Read 1 Sam. 24:1-15 and 1 Sam. 26. How do David's reactions compare to Macbeth's and Lady Macbeth's ideas about Duncan visiting their castle?
4. Read Psalm 51:1-7, 16, 17. Relate these verses to the experience of Macbeth & Lady Macbeth. How could they have benefited from the knowledge of these verses?
5. Macbeth convinces his hired murderers that they have been mistreated. Does this justify their actions? Read Proverbs 20:22, 24:29, and Romans 12:9-21. How do these verses instruct us to respond when mistreated?
6. In Act III, scene i, Macbeth says, "To be thus is nothing, ' But to be safely thus." Later, in scene ii, Lady Macbeth says, "Naught's had, all's spent, Where our desire is got without content./ 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy/ Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy." Read Proverbs 1:19 and 23:4. How do these verses fit with what Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are saying?
7. Note how often in Act V Macbeth reminds himself and others about his supposed invincibility and the prophecies of the witches and spirits. Why do you think this is? Read Proverbs 16:5, 18, 19. What do these verses predict for someone acting as Macbeth is?