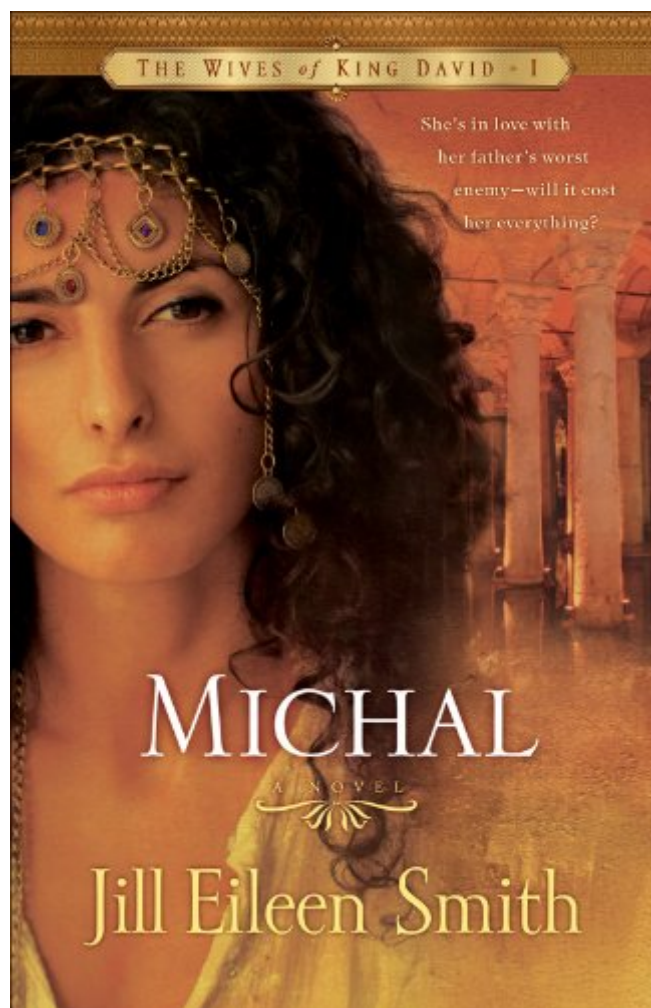


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Michal (The Wives Of King David Book #1): A Novel



Synopsis

As the daughter of King Saul, Michal lives a life of privilege--but one that is haunted by her father's unpredictable moods and by competition from her beautiful older sister. When Michal falls for young David, the harpist who plays to calm her father, she has no idea what romance, adventures, and heartache await her. As readers enter the colorful and unpredictable worlds of King Saul and King David, they will be swept up in this exciting and romantic story. Against the backdrop of opulent palace life, raging war, and desert escapes, Jill Eileen Smith takes her readers on an emotional roller-coaster ride as Michal deals with love, loss, and personal transformation as one of the wives of David. A sweeping tale of passion and drama, readers will love this amazing story.

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Customer Reviews

I was captivated from the very beginning of the book Michal. This was Biblical fiction at it's finest. It is such a highly imaginative account of what could very well have been Michal's, daughter of King Saul, story and life with David. I will have an even fonder appreciation of the actual Biblical account

of the life of David as shepherd and King after Saul because of your story dear Jill Eileen Smith. I very much look forward to reading the rest of the books in this series of The Wives of King David as well as looking very specifically for Michal's life in the Bible as it intersected with David's.

Michal, King Saul's pretty daughter, caught the handsome young David's eye in the early days of David's relationship with the 1st royal family of Israel...but he wasn't royalty. Not yet. He was a shepherd boy whose faith in God caused him to step up & face down Goliath for ONE reason: GOLIATH HAD INSULTED GOD. When you're willing, as a young teen, not fully grown, to face down a man upwards of 8 ft. tall, fully armored, a trained & battle-hardened warrior whose muscles have muscles that have muscles, who has more notches on his shield (I believe it was his shield) of vanquished battle-hardened champions than you have years under your belt, you're either out of your tiny little mind, or you love God, His Name, His Reputation, so much, that you can't stand for anyone of any size to insult Him, & you know one other thing most believers either don't know or have used amiss: You and God are a majority, stronger than anyone or anything that stands in your way. And he wouldn't be discouraged...not by the fact he was too small for anyone's armor...not by the fact that even if he had a sword or spear that wasn't too heavy to use, he had no experience whatsoever in using either. Nothing discouraged him. He carefully picked 5 stones from the brook, put them in a pouch, made sure his slingshot was in place, said a prayer, then, in tunic, sandals, & belt, walked out to face the fully armored & heavily armed Philistine champion...ignored his taunts...told him that he, David, wasn't about to stand for someone insulting the Living God, the God of Israel, nor his God's armies, then he took the stone, fit it into the slingshot, & with a true aim guided by God, nailed GOLIATH in the exact spot to hit one small, fragile bone. Most martial arts students know that fracturing that bone plus pushing it up into the skull means instant death. Suddenly, the main advantage the Philistine army had was gone, & while they panicked, a surprised but heartened Israeli army went after them. Saul discovered he had a singer/songwriter/harpist as well as a warrior, & David became a fixture at the Palace I've no doubt he learned all he could of diplomacy, treaties, embassy, & politics on general, but he was still a teen far from home, unable to leave without the king's permission. He soon found friends among the warriors...& a brother of the heart in the king's son Jonathan, whose loss he would mourn deeply..from the loss of companionship when he had to flee for his life from Saul's wrath, to the loss of his best friend & brother of the heart to an untimely death. During this honeymoon phase, he became very aware of Michal...but as a commoner, & the youngest of 13 sons, he had no way to pay the bride price. When King Saul asked him what he would like as a reward, he asked for some way to pay the bride price

for Michal...& the king gave him what he was certain was an impossible, bloody, disgusting task: 1,000 foreskin of Philistine warriors. David was likely grossed out, but he wanted Michal as his wife. Perhaps Saul had never known true young love, since he thought the task would deter David. He was wrong. And this is the part of Michal's life where Jill Eileen Smith picks up her story. With the heart of a romantic & an adventurer, Jill Eileen Smith writes about determined faith, impassioned romantic love, the terror of living on the run & molding a fighting force out of outlaws & brigands of all nationalities into a united fighting forces...doubtless aided immeasurably by his faith that, no matter how he felt, God would do what He promised in His time & not David's. She writes of the heartache young lovers feel in any separation...the regrets each carries at not risking being with the others..the times they question their decision...whether or not it was harder to be separated or endure living on the run. As the story progresses, the difference in their level of faith is shown, & the additional question surfaces, would her faith have grown as David upheld it, or would she have blamed both David & God for the privations & uncertainty of a life on the run? Jill Eileen Smith uses his relationship with the women in camp in general, & his wives in particular, to flesh out the possible answers to those questions. Her in-depth research into nomadic, royal, & what we might today call middle class life in Israel & the Middle East in those days adds depth to the tale she weaves, enriching the story's tapestry. A call to faith, but more, a call to marry only a partner who shares your faith as deeply, echoes throughout all the tales Jill Eileen Smith has written of King David's wives. Each one has a tale to tell...a lesson for us to learn...and shows the making of the "man after God's own heart" as he lives his life from shepherd to king, uniting Israel. Start here...but don't stop until you've read all 3 books in the series. All are beautifully crafted. Jill Eileen Smith has, I believe, been given an anointing of God as surely as have the Biblical women & their men, whose stories she brings to life. PS: As a young bride, I was separated from my husband, & every time we tried to shorten our time apart, it seemed to grow longer, until, counting even every 1/4 day we had together before we could take up housekeeping together, as our families called it, easy a good 6 weeks short of 4 years of separation. When we finally settled into real married life together, we'd both been scarred in many ways by the time apart. We both wondered if our love could overcome all the changes we'd undergone in our time apart. Like Michal, I found my family didn't approve of our marriage & seemed to hope I'd think better of it while I was still young enough to divorce & remarry - remarry someone of their choosing, not mine. I found that I felt sorry for them, thinking that a "secure" marriage to a "good provider" was better than marrying the man I knew God had directed me to marry. Had I lived in Michal's time & been in her station, I wouldn't have had a choice...& had my faith been less, I might not have fought in prayer for my marriage. Like Michal & David, my

husband & I questioned whether we'd followed our own lights or the Lord's leading in our decisions. Like David, my husband was tempted, & had he lived in a polygamous culture, might have been tempted to marry another woman until he could get me back. We know what it is to fight dark moods, nearly give in, even if just for a fleeting second, before we cried out in our hearts for His help. We know what it is to adjust after a separation, in a situation far different from the one in which we started, in a culture different, yet similar to our own. We know what it is to be one another's support, to nearly come to blows (in a manner of speaking), not over major crises but over stupid little stuff. We've been married 43 years & can't imagine being with anyone else. As I tell young couples, no matter how serious things get, if you never argue, you can never kiss & make up, & that's the fun part. We're totally complementary (opposite, to nitpickers). We share what's important, though: God, love, respect, values. I can attest to the accuracy of a lot of the subjects in the book, FWIW. Happy reading!

I began reading Jill Eileen Smith because I was interested in her Wives of the Patriarchs series. It took awhile for me to warm up to reading this one, because the wives of King David don't get much text time in the Bible. I mistakenly thought Jill couldn't find much to say about them, at least not much that would stick with Scripture. Wow, was I wrong. As usual, Jill recreates ancient Israel with a deft hand and beautifully researched detail. I felt like I was there, not because Jill tried to describe every little thing, but because she brought the setting to life and made the characters fully human. As noted, David's first wife Michal doesn't get many mentions in the Bible. What is there doesn't do much to recommend her (despising David for dancing before the Lord is the biggie, although her manipulation comes into play, too). In Michal, however, readers get a portrait of a real woman and the shepherd turned king who loved her--or tried his best to in a culture that really wouldn't allow it. Michal is oftentimes scheming, whiny, and manipulative. In fact, she's so crafty that she sometimes reminds me of Rebekah from Wives of the Patriarchs (one wonders if she took lessons from the stories she would have heard as a kid). Despite those bad traits, Michal never lost my sympathy. At her core, she is a lost young woman who yearns to be loved, who has never found a man trustworthy, and has bought the lie that she must take care of herself because no one else will. While I did not agree with the way David treated her at times, I found the last scenes, in which Michal gives herself over to Yahweh, beautifully wrenching. She is every inch the portrait of the sinner who has tried to tough it out, failed, and finally fallen on God's mercy. As for David, he's delightfully and refreshingly human as well. This young king is often held up to believers on a pedestal. He was a man after God's own heart, but let's be real. He was also impetuous, selfish,

and a real ladies' man (like father, like son, eh, Solomon)? As with Michal though, I rooted for him, although at times he frustrated me. Jill gave depth and shading to the time David spent trying to outwit Saul and escape with his life. I loved her addition of Psalms, written in as David composed them. I would have liked a bit more in some places. For instance, there is a major scene in 1 Samuel where David spares Saul's life after being given the perfect opportunity to kill him. I wanted to see it play out, but it was skipped. So too, many other important scenes, or those I felt would've added to the story, were left out. However, I guess that makes sense because Michal wouldn't have been privy to them. What exists is a beautiful book, and I highly recommend you read it.

Enjoyed after I got into it. In all honesty, I must admit that I started it on my tablet when I didn't have much free time, so perhaps it seemed to be a slow reader at first because I didn't give it the time. I finished it in the hospital, so I was able to read more in a sitting. It definitely improved. The writing is excellent, the characters are well rounded. I was moved to like and dislike the people, which tells me that they came to life.

Saul's daughter Michal was so deftly drawn that it was easy to follow her spiritual journey. While I found the frequent jumps over years of backstory to be a little disconcerting, I found myself eagerly turning pages to learn if Michal (do wish the author had provided proper pronunciation of her name) and David would ever resolve their issues and at least live in peace. This story of faith was well done and engrossing. Unpleasant realities of biblical times like human and animal sacrifice, exposing deceased folk to carrion and idolatry were addressed with tact if not realism.

Recommended for those who would like to read between the lines of the Old Testament and make the characters come to life in a fairly logical, well thought out and very human way.

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