

KINGS OF ISRAEL I: 1 & 2 SAMUEL

WEEK 3

Patrick Reeder

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OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION TO DAVID

David's Anointing
David and Goliath

SAUL'S DETERIORATION

David and Saul
Leadership and Authority

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SAMUEL'S LESSON

Although David is “object” of the narrative, Samuel is the “subject.”
God instructs him on leadership:

1. In this episode, God's prophet shows a realistic (bad) sense of God's timing. At first Samuel resists God's call to go anoint, then he reverses and assumes that it's the first son he meets.
2. God's commentary on Eliab could easily be said for Saul: "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him." God has already signaled his preference for the heart (13:14). Why would Samuel assume the next king is like Saul?
 - ▶ The fact that even Samuel (God's prophet) prefers looks signals both our human limitations (only God knows the heart) and our depravity (valuing a necessarily ephemeral feature)
 - ▶ It is both natural and mistaken to assume that the next king will resemble the first. God sometimes defies our expectations to deliberately teach us dependence

DAVID'S CHARACTER

I Sam 13:14 and 16:7 signal that the next king will be one whose heart is after God's own. What about David's life fit this?

1. He has an abiding faith in the LORD from the very beginning.
 - ▶ 17:26—"For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?"
 - ▶ 17:37—"The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."
2. David won't take revenge on Saul, despite his unambiguous wickedness. This is because Saul is the "LORD's anointed."
3. *Reams* of psalms, including the highest praises for and the most intimate communion with God

DAVID'S CHARACTER

Even in his darker, later years, we witness these:

1. Immediate repentance when the Bathsheba incident is exposed. (He could have killed Nathan.)
2. Unusual appreciation for God's sovereignty even while being pelted by Shimei son Gera.
3. Following his census, there are several signals of his faith:
 - ▶ He surrenders Israel to the direct influence of God, because "His mercies are great." (II Sam 24:14)
 - ▶ David asks God to curse him in the place of the people because "it is I who have sinned." (24:17)
 - ▶ David insists on paying Araunah for his land even though Araunah offered it; indeed, David could have taken it by force. (24:18ff)

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ON SOURCES

There are features of the David and Goliath story that signal that its textual source is distinct from the sources in ch. 16. In particular, why do we receive a “double-helping” of information about David, Jesse and their family (17:12-16)?

The one portion that people find most confusing is Saul apparently not knowing who David is (cf. 17:15). Is this a contradiction?

- ▶ Commentator's have observed that Saul query focuses on David's family because part of the reward involves the family (17:25).
- ▶ Although armor-bearers were considered serious military figures, the word translated 'armor' is very flexible, including instruments.
- ▶ A minstrel (veritable slave) is probably not going to draw much attention, especially if Saul is in a fit of insanity.

FAITH FROM IRONY

This story's interest is primarily due the ironic disparity between David and the others around him. Examples?

- ▶ Goliath—Goliath was a warrior since youth and David is only a youth (and ultimately not a warrior). David refuses even to wear armor or carry a weapon. There was no combat—David defeats him instantly.
- ▶ David's Brother—Eliab (jealously?) judges David for coming to the battle even though David was sent by their father. David ends up doing what Eliab was supposed to do (as a warrior) on top of his task. Most ironically, Eliab says David's *heart* is insolent and wicked.
- ▶ Saul—Although Saul is himself large, he's afraid of Goliath. Saul does not mention the LORD until David does. All his calculations are “horizontal.”

Most strikingly, David never ascribes his victory to novel combat skills. He comes in the name of the LORD. (cf. Psalm 20:7)

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EVIL SPIRIT FROM THE LORD

This passage is particularly puzzling to modern readers.

1 Samuel 16:14 (NASB) Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.

There are a few different ways to explain this.

- ▶ The straightforward interpretation is that God sent a demon to possess him—hard to buy since it implies that he's exorcised by mere music.
- ▶ Given the book's devotion to God's sovereignty, God's permissive will is represented using active language. (Cf. 2 Sam 24:1; 1 Chron 21:1).
- ▶ Comparing to Pharaoh, is God "strengthening" Saul's heart?

All told, whatever happened is an act of judgment suited to someone with elevated accountability and limited excuses.

KEEP YOUR FRIENDS CLOSE...

Saul's instincts of self-preservation and paranoia are on full display through this section. Consider these ironies:

- ▶ His insane hatred of David increases the love of his own family (Michal and Jonathan) for David.
- ▶ In spite of hesitation to kill Agag, he kills one of God's priests. This also strengthens David's position by placing the priests under his care.
- ▶ David rescues Keilah from the Philistines (a genuine enemy) and Saul will destroy Keilah (family, friend) to get David (family, friend).
- ▶ Any time Saul is close to David, he is humiliated: naked prophesying, almost killed while defecating and sleeping.

FEAR BREEDS FEAR

After a long flight, David succumbs to fear.

1 Samuel 27:1 (NASB) Then David said to himself, "Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand."

Some brief observations:

- ▶ Saul's afraid of Goliath, David's afraid of Saul; Saul's not afraid of David, David's not afraid of Goliath. (All-too-human incongruity)
- ▶ We find no mention of the LORD in this plan, which is a conspicuous absence for a man who mentions God in almost everything he says.
- ▶ He has been spared many times and God even delivered Saul over to him. He isn't king yet but he was anointed by a prophet!
- ▶ It is striking that as David's wives increase, his fears multiply. This observation is hard to ignore: a woman is at the center of his downfall!

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DAVID'S EXAMPLE

Even in the midst of Saul's murderous pursuit, David maintains the highest integrity as it concerns the relationship between someone and a superior (in office.)

How would David's example inform how we relate to the following people in our lives?

- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Bosses
- ▶ Spiritual Leaders
- ▶ Public officials

BIBLICAL TEACHING ON LEADERSHIP

Biblical teaching is unambiguous on following leaders.

- ▶ Husbands—Eph 5:22ff, Col 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:1-6.
- ▶ Bosses—Eph 6:5-8, Col 3:22, 1 Tim 6:1-2, 1 Pet 2:18-20, Titus 2:9-10 (No OT? Why?)
- ▶ Parents—Exo 20:12, Deut 21:20, Prov 30:17, Col 3:20.
- ▶ Spiritual Leaders—Num 12, Deut 18:19, Heb 13:17, 1 Thess 5:12-13.
- ▶ Public officials—Exodus 22:28, Rom 13:1-7, 1 Pet 2:13-17

There are plenty more! Why do you think God make such an issue out of this?

Why do you think we have such a low view of leadership today?

BIBLICAL TEACHING ON LEADERSHIP

These must all be set in balance against prior obedience to God.

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; [20] for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:19-20 NASB

Some great examples:

- ▶ Exodus 1:15ff—Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, refuse to kill the newborns at Pharaoh's command and also lie to him.
- ▶ Daniel 3—Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego refuse to bow down to the golden image and are saved. (See too Daniel 1 and 6)
- ▶ Esther—Queen Esther enters the king's presence unbidden (risking death) in order to save her people.
- ▶ Ironically, it's actually rare in the NT to see an outright example of disobedience (excepting Acts 4). Why do you think that is?

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