

Moses: Unwanted Responsibility [Faith is Trust]
Saul: Unwilling Unfaithful King [Faith is Obedient]
David: Unexpected Guilt [Faith is Dependent]

Introduction

The books of Samuel—texts fascinated with David. Originally one book—split in LXX.

Text covers 135 years from birth of Samuel to end of David's reign.

If we do the text justice, we will not hurry to David. We must begin where the author begins—Samuel embodies the ancient covenantal commitment.

Enter David

The one anointed as king (chapter 16) is qualified by his right heart. Great stories—choice, Goliath, contrast with Saul [in attitude, humility, presence of Spirit, power, war, relationships, selfishness, dependence on God]. To hasten on, come to the artificial distinction placed between the two books as we have them, and think of what happens after Saul's death. How can legitimacy be transferred?

2 Sam. 1—news of Saul's death, lesser person would rejoice and thank the news-bearer. David is not a lesser person. Responds in pathos, for king is dead. Laments over Saul and Jonathan. David in grief is in most faithful, most powerful form.

2 Sam. 2:1—first act is to inquire of God.

Chapter 1-4 summary:

Saul and Jonathan die at hand of Amalekite, David laments.

Abner dies at hand of Joab, David grieves and fasts.

Ishbosheth dies at hand of Rechab and Baanah, David takes revenge.

There are killings, no other conclusion to Saulide threat is possible, but David is innocent. David knows that only God redeems life (4:9).

Chapter 5—thus David is established as successor with covenantal solidarity, 5:1. The shepherd term is usual metaphor in ancient world for king, indicating role of guarding, feeding, nurturing, protecting (Psalm 23, Ezek. 34). We must not miss Nathan's use of the metaphor in the upcoming parable.

The prince term is disputed, but avoids king. V. 3 uses king, but actual wording leaves room for God, thus escaping idea that human kingship automatically rejects God as king.

David's Reign

List of family, 5:13-16

Battle with Philistines, 5:17-25

Ark as old, 6:1-20

Oracle as new claim, 7:1-29

Battle with two nations, 8:1-14

List of officials, 8:15-18

David can handle the Philistines, but he asks the pre-king question of God, v. 19 (also in v. 23 at the second victory).

Then he remembers the ark, and rejoices when it arrives in Jerusalem, to the disgust of Michal. David is utterly God's man, a fact Michal either cannot understand or refuses to acknowledge. David is the one who humbles himself and by God's power is exalted.

He wishes to build a temple for God.

The kingdom expands, because the power is of God, 8:6,14. 8:15 is a summary statement of David's governance.

After God's Own Heart?

- 2 Sam. 9 begins new section of literature. We see again a theological dimension, cunning and artistic. This section dares to articulate the interior hurt, anguish, conflict, ambiguity. Utterly human in hurt,

hate, hope. See what humanness is about when lived in presence of haunting God and power that seduces and destroys. The impact is so contemporary—as every great drama or novel it tell us how it is with us.

- 2 Sam. 9—David is man of hesed, loyalty. Kind to all—first, in his relationship to house of Saul, 9:1-8, see 1,3,7.
- 2 Sam. 10—David again proposes to practice hesed, 10:2; hesed to house of Nahash (cf. 1 Sam. 11:1-11). He seeks to honor oaths and keep faith.
- Ch. 10 standing alone has no great theological significance, but it looks ahead to war account of 11-12. Perhaps no real interest in Ammonite war except as context for personal episode which shapes the future of David's life. Ch. 10 also looks back against ch. 9. We see David as a man of fidelity. Ch. 9-10 provide introduction to real action now to be presented.

2 Sam. 11—here is invitation into presence of delicate art, deep/aching psychology, ruthless political action. David stayed in Jerusalem—four words that change the subject of the narrative.

Sees what he wants—a woman with a dangerously hyphenated name.

Notice the v. 4 verbs—he sent, he took, he lay. She conceived. He took her. Samuel had warned that kings are takers, 1 Sam. 8-11-19. Mostly David has not had to take—everything has been graciously given him by God. Harah anoki, I am pregnant.

v. 6—quick, decisive action. No vacillation, no debate.

v. 7—shalom, 3 times.

v. 25-27—evil. David presumes to be moral arbiter. People die in wars.

v. 26-27—pause, two events, and a verdict.

2 Sam. 12—David thought no one would notice.

The struggle of this narrative is how truth shall speak to power. Such is dangerous. The truth is bold, direct.

Vv. 7b-12—long speech in mouth of God.

In the narrative of ch. 11 and the verdict of ch. 12, the text contrasts two views of historical reality.

David, seduced by the wrong worldview, demonstrates that the king is always answerable to the covenantal reality—he cannot escape because of his position.

In 1 Sam. 15—David is the neighbor who is better than Saul and will receive the throne.

In 2 Sam. 12:11—Absalom is the neighbor who will arise from David's own house.

David's response is confession, 12:13. Perhaps some do not see much to celebrate of David's life in this narrative, but there are two things: David still has a considerable degree of moral courage and sensitivity. He can face truth. Second, it is not too late for David's repentance.

Harah 'anoki; 'attah ha'ish; hata'ti lyhwh. 11:5; 12:7; 12:13.

In 12:24-25, second son is born to this ill-wrought marriage. Shalom, Solomon, loved and treasured by God. The placement is stunning. Solomon, born close to sordidness, still within the echo of the prophetic lawsuit. But life continues for this family.

It continues in conflict and turmoil, with a separatist coup under Sheba, but always under the guidance and oversight of God.

Note the significant turning points, contrasts.

- The continued presence of the spirit, take not your holy spirit from me (Ps. 51)
- The willingness to repent up front
- The knowledge that the king is also accountable
- A man after God's own heart
- The continuation of God's promise

This God has an amazing capacity to work life at the border of death, to act in promise-keeping ways when the promise seems impossible. Alienation and judgment, but gestures of grace.