

Read the Bible in a Year

Week 22 – October 31st, 2021

Read on Your Own this Week:

Psalms 64-66

John 17-21

Readings in Class:

2 Samuel 1-16

Introduction to 2 Samuel

2 Samuel continues right where 1 Samuel ends. Saul and his sons were killed in battle and the first chapter is when David finding out about it. The remainder of the book is all about how David became king, first over Judah, then over all of Israel, his triumphs, and his failures. While David falls short of the ideal king, his reign is used as a measuring stick for all the kings that followed him. We also get a very important prophecy of Jesus in this book. In Chapter 7 we find out that the promise of a savior, which we've traced all the way back from Genesis 3, has now been passed to the line of David.

A brief overview of 2 Samuel

1. David Mourns Saul and Jonathan (ch. 1)
2. David King over Judah (2-4)
3. David made king over all of Israel (5:1-5)
4. Conquering Jerusalem (5:1-6:25)
5. The Ark comes to Jerusalem (6)
6. The Davidic Covenant (7)
7. David's victories (8)
8. Kindness towards Jonathan's family (9)
9. David commits adultery (10-12)
10. The sins of David's sons (13-20)
11. Final reflections on David's reign (21-24)

David Mourns for Saul

Even though Saul kept trying to kill David, David still mourns over Saul's death. He grieves because Saul was the Lord's anointed, because of his friendship with Jonathan, and for the people of Israel who also fell. He could have gloated over the death of his enemy, but he doesn't. In this way he fulfills the command that David's Great-great something grandson, Jesus, gives in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. He does something similar when Saul's son Ish-Bosheth is killed.

Judah and Israel

After Saul's death, David doesn't immediately become king over Israel. He is first anointed King over the tribe of Judah. One of Saul's sons, Ish-Bosheth, becomes king of the other tribes. This is the first time the Kingdoms are split like this. They reunite under David and his son Solomon, but for basically the remainder of the Old Testament we see the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. They are often at odds, just as we see here in 2 Samuel.

Davidic Covenant

Of the important chapters to know in the Bible, 2 Samuel 7 is right up near the top. This is where the idea of the Messiah (Jesus) as David's son comes from. David wants to build a house for God, but God turns the tables and says that HE will build a house (dynasty) for David. One of David's sons will build a house for God. This is partially fulfilled when Solomon builds the temple but is ultimately fulfilled when Jesus steps into creation. Jesus, the Son of David, is THE Temple. He is also the fulfillment of the first part: a son of David will always sit on the throne.

David and Bathsheba

Perhaps one of the most well-known stories about David (after David and Goliath) is the story of David and Bathsheba. This is a story about how one sin leads to another and about repentance and forgiveness. We are told that it is the time when Kings go to war, but David remains home. This is our first clue something is about to go wrong. He's not fulfilling his vocation as King. He then sees a woman bathing and covets her (10th Commandment). He sends for her and sleeps with her (6th Commandment). When he finds out she is pregnant, he tries to cover his sin by calling her husband Uriah home from the war so they can pretend the child is his (8th Commandment). When this doesn't work, he sends orders back with Uriah that eventually get Uriah killed (5th Commandment).

Nathan the prophet then comes to David and convicts him of his sin. David's response is simple: "I have sinned against the LORD." No self-justification like we saw with Saul. David knows what he did was wrong and admits it. The response from God answers the questions that Eli had back in 1 Samuel 2: "If someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" Who can but God himself? "The LORD has taken away your sin." The punishment for adultery and murder were usually death, but God was gracious towards David, though David would face the consequences a different way, through the death of his infant son and the rebellion of his older sons.

The Sins of the Sons

Much of the second half of the book deal with the sins and failures of David's sons. Much of it stems from the fact that David had multiple wives, another sign that polygamy never works out well for anyone. First Amnon desires his half-sister Tamar and rapes her. Then Tamar's brother Absalom kills Amnon. Absalom flees but is eventually pardoned and brought back. He then proceeds to conspire against David and steal the crown. There is eventually a battle and Absalom is killed. David's failures as a father almost led to his kingdom being taken from him.