

July 2022

What's the Point....of 2 Samuel? **Mark Garner**

The books of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel tell us about a period of transition and significant changes in Israel. 2 Samuel begins after the passing of Saul, and covers the reign of David as Israel's king. He will face a number of revolts and other problems, and David at times makes bad decisions; yet at all times our Heavenly Father himself is our Rock who alone is worthy of being exalted.

Exalted Be God, The Rock (Overview Of 2 Samuel)

After Saul's death, conflicts still continue before David is finally recognized as king of Israel (2 Samuel 1-5). The book opens with David's lament over Saul and Saul's son Jonathan. After Ish-Bosheth (one of Saul's sons) puts up a resistance, and some misdeeds by David's unruly commander Joab, things settle down. After assuming the throne, David takes the Jebusite city of Jerusalem, which is then made Israel's capital.

During the time of calm that now begins, we can see David's gratitude to God (2 Samuel 6-10). David now sends for the ark of God to be brought to Jerusalem, which is met with rejoicing, yet the Israelites receive a shock when one of the attendants takes hold of the ark and dies. David is distressed and frightened, yet he prayerfully considers God's holiness, and he once more decides to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem, making sure the ark is handled more carefully.

In David's appreciation, he wants to build a temple for God. Through the prophet Nathan, God tells David that it will not be him but rather his son who may build the temple, and he also promises that he will preserve David's line, a promise ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. David's response and his prayer help us see why he is called "a person after God's own heart". David fully realizes that he hasn't earned nor deserved any of God's blessings, and he accepts them all as gifts of God's grace.

Yet after things have fallen together so well, there are soon times of trouble (2 Samuel 11-24). David makes a series of bad decisions, beginning with a temptation that could have been easily avoided, compounded it with immorality and plotting that lead to fatal results. When David finally realizes what he has done, he is deeply regretful, which we see in Psalm 51, and he remains king and he remains faithful. Sadly, though, this is followed by other distressing events.

David's son Amnon assaults his half-sister and is killed by their brother Absalom, which later leads to Absalom starting a revolt against David; and then another rebel leads another revolt. During all this, David is gracious to those who oppose him. Then, he makes another mistake by having a census taken against God's wishes; again he deeply regrets it. As David often acknowledges (as he expresses in chapter 22), God alone is our Rock, who is worthy of glory.

Overall Thoughts

In 2 Samuel, we learn about God's nature as well as about our walk with our Heavenly Father. We see God's constant care and grace to David, and we also see how quick David is to admit his wrongs when he realizes them. We see how God protects David during his times of trouble, as well as David's faith in God as well as his humility. We also see God's wisdom and understanding as he keeps in mind his promises and his long-term designs for Israel as a whole.

July 2022

What's the Point....of 2 Samuel? Caleb Dillinger

2 Samuel continues the story of 1 Samuel, quite literally like the next day's worth of events. Saul dies at the end of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel begins with David being informed of the news. David is also informed of his best friend Jonathan's death, and the end of chapter 1 is a moving song of his love for Jonathan. In fact, several parts of 2 Samuel are full songs or prayers of David, and it gives us rich insight into the way our emotions interact with our faith. Sometimes he is rejoicing, sometimes he is mourning, sometimes he is repenting, and all of these emotions are displayed in song and prayer.

2 Samuel continues to tell the story of David, especially focusing on his 40 year reign as king after Saul's death. However, whereas David was righteous and pure in most of 1 Samuel, in 2 Samuel his sins and challenges are equally present alongside his faithfulness. He mishandles his lust, mishandles his power, and mishandles his anger. David is human, and his story reveals some wonderful..and truly dark moments.

2 Samuel also tells the history of God's people in general - not necessarily the good parts of history, and not just the simple part. It is complex, showing the lives of side characters like Joab and Abner and Mephibosheth. Even the lives of David's sons, Absalom and Amnon, receive focus because their actions affect David and the entire kingdom of Israel. 2 Samuel is arguably one of the more fascinating, interesting, dramatic books of the Bible.

There are philosophical questions that come from this book that certainly perplex Christians today. Why did Uzzah have to die for touching the ark of the Covenant when the oxen carrying the ark stumbled? How can the same David who showed kindness to his enemies show such disdain for his commander Joab when Joab disobeys? How can David be a man after God's own heart when he rapes a woman and murders her husband? Why is this dark part of history recorded for everyone to know? Well, that's one of the points of 2 Samuel. Being God's followers is not easy, it's not all sunshine and roses. There's sin and darkness present, and God, while loving his people, does not stand for sin. There are consequences to sin. And 2 Samuel shows some of that.

Aside from the fascinating and horrifying stories found in 2 Samuel, it's worth reading because story after story testifies to God's faithfulness to a people who mightily struggle with lack of faith. The stories in 2 Samuel hopefully teach us the lesson that people are not "all good" or "all bad". Most of us struggle with faithfulness and obedience, righteousness and sin. There is not an assumption that godly people never sin, a mistake many in modern day culture may assume. However, just because people are on a whole "godly" does not entitle them or excuse them to sin. They still suffer. The stories in this book show us the reality of people who know God and still battle sin, and that's the point of reading 2 Samuel.