

David the King

2 Samuel 5 v 1 – 12 & 7 v 8 – 17

People can learn much from history, if they're willing to learn. We have been studying some of the historical accounts of the nation of Israel around 1000 BC. Here are lessons for nations, families and individuals if we're open to receive them!

Samuel was a prophet, a spokesperson for God, and his lasting legacy in Israel was that he established an education system that taught not just literacy and numeracy but ethics and character based on the knowledge of God and His Word. With the benefit of such an education, David came to faith at a young age, learning to trust in the Lord as his Shepherd.

Israel's first King, Saul, had been patriotic but disappointing. Under David the 12 tribes of Israel became united and powerful, subduing enemies and establishing borders, earning the respect of neighbouring nations and kings. For the times in which he lived, David governed justly and generously. He gave Israel one capitol in Jerusalem and one religion through his undivided devotion to the God of their forefathers Moses, Jacob and Abraham.

In 2 Samuel 7, enthroned in a secure royal palace, David recognises his success has been granted by God and expresses a desire to build a permanent house for the Lord in Jerusalem.

Up to this point God's presence among His people was symbolised by the 'Ark of the Covenant', a gold-covered chest containing the stone tablets with the God-given 10 Commandments bequeathed by Moses. This 'ark' had been housed for generations in a tent-like enclosure called the 'Tabernacle'. Now that Israel was well-established in the Promised Land, David reasoned it was time for the ark to be housed in a more permanent structure.

One of his advisors, the prophet Nathan, is prompted by God to instruct David about this. David is not the one to construct a temple, one of his sons will do that. But Nathan's prophecy offers much more. It constitutes a renewal of God's previous covenants to Abraham and Moses. Each time the Lord Almighty reveals something of His nature and plan to human beings and graciously promises blessing in return for trust and obedience. In this case God promises David a succession of kings from his family line with a hint of even wider blessing through one extra special descendant!

There are many lessons about many things from these ancient books of the Bible. Let me suggest three for today:

First of all let's note a principle well-summed up later by Solomon in Proverbs 14 v 34: "Righteousness exalts a nation...."

We might say that Israel was blessed at this time in having a godly and noble king and that would be true, but David would quickly point out that their security and prosperity came from a higher Administration than his! God blesses individuals, families, villages, towns, communities, nations, peoples and societies where leaders and people fear the Lord and live to please Him. For now, in a still-fallen world things will never be 100% perfect or tidy, or without some trial and sorrow, but the principle is sound. God honours those who honour Him. Here He promises to bless David and his family and his kingdom.

Here is a such an incentive to pray for God's grace and blessing on our homes and children and grandchildren, on our communities, local businesses and schools and colleges, on our leaders, elected representatives and governing bodies. Righteousness exalts a nation. A nation that practices righteousness will do well, will know blessing from heaven. In our day, we need to pray for a revival of faith in God and Christ, for a new hunger and thirst for all that is right and good. For a new willingness to practice Christian values.

Because remember this secondly: Good leaders can only be effective when people are willing to follow! A government can only govern a people who are respectful and law abiding. And public attitudes are formed by popular culture. If the culture encourages us to be self-centred and exploit personal freedom in greedy, irreverent, immoral speech and behaviour why are we surprised by new stories of lawlessness and atrocity?

But culture can change, it is not static. And if the culture can nurture positive life-attitudes such as gratitude, reverence for God, people, property and environment, collective responsibility and so on how much better will our communities be? And how much easier to govern?

David contributed hugely to the culture of his day by using his artistic talents. He was a musician and poet and wrote a majority of the 150 Psalms in our Bible. This king invested generously in the arts, particularly employing musicians and singers to lead the praise when people gathered for worship.

These songs became the pop tunes of the day and they taught people to honour God.

Each of us must use whatever influence we have to positively impact our culture so that government can legislate with popular support in ways pleasing to God.

It doesn't always happen simply. The OT recounts very honestly how not all kings were like David and ancient Israel fluctuated spiritually and morally.

The constant factor bringing hope throughout the very human drama of the OT is the grace of God, His often undeserved mercy and kindness, and this is my third point today.

People come and go, kings and queens no exception. The one unchanging source of hope for our present and future well-being is the Lord and His amazing grace, which He here demonstrates by making a new covenant promise to David.

This is the Lord we worship, not One distant and uncaring but One Who takes initiative, One Who gets involved. He promises David his son Solomon will be king and build the Temple, more that his family line will continue in leadership for generations to come.

Christians reading these gracious promises through NT eyes inevitably see foreshadowings of our Lord Jesus. David was a fine king, but one day from among David's descendants the Lord would bring His own Son to establish a Kingdom that would be global and eternal. Christians from all nations are part of that Kingdom with a God-given mandate to share the invitation of grace far and wide.

That not just our family, our people but all nations, all people might experience salvation and new life and everlasting love in the Kingdom and family of God forever.

Thanks be to God through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Let us pray and live for the coming of His Kingdom, for His glory.

Amen

