

a lesson:

ON THE BOOK OF II SAMUEL

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12/31/2006 AD

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I. BACKGROUND ON THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

Scofield dates the Book of II SAMUEL from 1056 C to 1017 BC, covering a period of 38 years.¹ Saul to the anointing of David over Judah...; II. From the anointing [of David as future King] to the establishment of David over united Israel...; III. From the conquest of Jerusalem to the rebellion of [David's son] Absalom...; IV. From the rebellion of Absalom to the purchase of the Temple-site..."² Harrison reports that I and II SAMUEL were in the original Hebrew texts one Book, being divided when the Greek version of The Old Testament – The LXX or Septuagint – was written.³

Harrison offers this overview of both Books as one unit: I. Samuel as Judge (I SAMUEL 1-7); Samuel and Saul (I SAMUEL 8-15); III. Saul and David (I SAMUEL 16 – II SAMUEL 1); IV. David as King of Judah and Israel (II SAMUEL 2-8); V. Events at the Davidic Court (II SAMUEL 9-20); VI. Appendices (II SAMUEL 21-24).⁴ I SAMUEL ends with the death of Saul, while II SAMUEL focuses mostly on the reign of King David.

II. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

As Samuel's death is recorded in I SAMUEL 25:1, he can not be considered the author of II SAMUEL.⁵ What is the purpose of I and II SAMUEL? Taken together, they give us "...a continuous account of the history of Israel from the end of The Judges to the latter years of King David. [They] ...describe the way in which the [Davidic] monarchy was established, and the part played by the prophet Samuel in its institution."⁶ Dillard and Longman also examine both Books of SAMUEL as one unit: "It is a book about [ancient Israel's] transition... from theocracy to monarchy. Under the theocracy, GOD had provided the periodic leadership needed by the people; now leadership would be institutionalized and hereditary [through the rule of earthly kings]."⁷

III. KING DAVID THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF II SAMUEL

¹ 1, Scofield, II SAMUEL, introduction, page 355, paragraph 3; dates in columns, page 355 and 384.

² 1, Scofield, II SAMUEL, introduction, page 355, paragraph 2.

³ 2, Harrison, Books of SAMUEL, A. Name and Outline, Books of SAMUEL, page 695, paragraph 2.

⁴ 2, Harrison, Books of SAMUEL, A. Name and Outline, overview of Books of SAMUEL, page 695-696.

⁵ 3, KJV, I SAMUEL 25:1.

⁶ 2, Harrison, Books of SAMUEL, A. Name and Outline, Books of SAMUEL, page 695, paragraph 3.

⁷ 4, Dillard and Longman, SAMUEL, introductory comments, page 135.

While both Kings Saul and David committed great sins, Saul died as a man shunned by the Hand of GOD, while David remained “a man after... [GOD’s] own heart.”⁸ Whereas Saul’s heart would not fully repent of his sins, the heart of David did. Dillard and Longman observe that, while The Almighty chose both men to be kings over Israel, only David held to “the central demand of life in covenant with GOD, both from the mouth of Moses and JESUS, [which is] to love Him with the whole heart...”⁹

What was lacking in Saul’s heart, but which was fully present in David’s heart, was “The Shema – The Hear O Israel - of DEUTERONOMY 6:5: “And thou shalt love the LORD Thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”¹⁰ CHRIST JESUS confirms this as The Great Commandment in MARK 12:30, “And thou shalt love The Lord Thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the First Commandment.”¹¹ It was because David’s heart was fully committed to The LORD – while Saul’s was not - that he had the capacity of keeping The Second Great Commandment, which he Lord gives us in MARK 12:31, “...Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself...!”¹² This is why Saul failed as a servant King of both GOD and Israel, while David – in spite of his errors and sins – succeeded.

IV. AN EXAMPLE OF DAVID’S HEART BEFORE THE LORD FROM II SAMUEL

While King David accomplished many good works, it is in his greatest sins while king that show us who he was at his core. David, when he was confronted with his iniquity by the prophet Nathan, did what Saul was not capable of doing: David fell on his face before The LORD and confessed his sins in earnest sorrow! For David beseeched GOD’s forgiveness - not because he was a haughty ruler like Saul who desired to hold on to his earthly power and prestige at any price – but because he felt true conviction in his soul for his iniquity: First, David lamented how his sins had offended GOD. Second, David lamented how his sins would bring suffering upon those whom he loved. It was David’s love for The LORD and for others that set his heart apart from that of Saul.

⁸ 3, KJV, I SAMUEL 13:14.

⁹ 4, Dillard and Longman, SAMUEL, Approaching The New Testament, page 146, paragraph 1.

¹⁰ 3, KJV, DEUTERONOMY 6:5.

¹¹ 3, KJV, MARK 12:30.

¹² 3, KJV, MARK 12:31.

In II SAMUEL 11-12 we read how King David sought after and seduced the married woman Bathsheba, who was the wife of his faithful military servant Urriah. David committed adultery with Urriah's wife and she became pregnant by him. Worse, when David's faithful servant Urriah unknowingly did not cooperate with David's schemes to cover up his fornication with Bathsheba – and the evidence thereof – David next had Urriah murdered and married his wife! Thinking he had hidden his evil deeds from men and even GOD, it took the prophet Nathan's accusatory rebuke, "...Thou art the man!"¹³ Speaking by The Spirit of The Almighty, we read Nathan's words to David, "Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon!"¹⁴

Nathan reveals GOD's judgement upon David: the sword would not depart from his house; evil would arise against him from within his own family; his wives would be taken from him and given to another; he would be disgraced publicly before Israel and all the world; the child between David and Bathsheba would die. But here we may see the inner nature of a man after GOD's own heart in David's response. He did not seek the blood of the prophet Nathan. He did not enter into a demoniac rage. He did not go out to murder the Priests of The LORD. He did not seek divination of his future through the mediation of a witch. Instead, we read in II SAMUEL 12:13, "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD!"¹⁵

And when the child was mortally ill, we read in II SAMUEL 12:16 that "David therefore besought GOD for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth."¹⁶ And when the child did in fact die, David entered into the house of GOD and worshiped Him. Matthew Henry comments, "This was an evidence of the truth of his repentance. For... Hereby it appeared that he was willing to bear the shame of his sin, to have it ever before him, and to be continually upbraided with it."¹⁷

Here David recorded for us the true nature of his heart in PSALM 51. Verse 1 begins with this title, "...A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him,

¹³ 3, KJV, II SAMUEL 12:7.

¹⁴ 3, KJV, II SAMUEL 12:9.

¹⁵ 3, KJV, II SAMUEL 12:13.

¹⁶ 3, KJV, II SAMUEL 12:16.

¹⁷ Matthew Henry, Bible Works 6, II SAMUEL 12:15-25, II. David's humiliation, 1.

after he had gone in to Bathsheba.”¹⁸ David calls out in humble agony before The Almighty for the forgiveness of his sins and purging of his guilt from his soul: “Have mercy upon me, O GOD, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in Thy sight!”¹⁹

V. IN CONCLUSION

King David shows us what a man’s life looks like that loves GOD with all his heart, soul and might. Not that such men are perfect and without sin in this life, but that they confess their sins before GOD and man, repent of them in humility, seek The LORD’s grace upon their souls and strives to live a new life free of future sin. His soul cries out to JESUS CHRIST, “Lord, wash my soul and make me white as snow! Have mercy upon my sinful soul and make me more like You! Erase from Your Book of Life in Heaven my iniquities and preserve me in this life and in the next, even in spite of my sins for the sake of Your lovingkindness! Deliver my loved ones from the consequences of my own sins and keep them safe in Your loving arms!”

This is what Saul lacked, but which David possessed: because He loved GOD completely, he was also able to love other men. If we desire to be used of GOD for His good purposes in this world, we must possess a heart like King David – humble, faithful, not vain, ready to confess and repent of our sins. We must be ever ready to love others as GOD loves us. We must love GOD with all our heart, mind and soul. Does a man seek to have a heart like King David? Let him do as our Lord JESUS CHRIST commands us in JOHN 15:12, “This is My Commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you!”²⁰

¹⁸ 3, KJV, PSALM 51:1a.

¹⁹ 3, KJV, PSALM 51:1b-4a.

²⁰ 3, KJV, JOHN 15:12.

VI. REFERENCE

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