

Reign of King David During the United Kingdom Period (c. 1000 B.C.)

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Praise and Worship

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Review of David's Steps to the Throne

- He served in Saul's court
- He continually viewed Saul's anointing as sacred
- He is chosen/anointed from among the House of Jesse of Judah
- Friendship with Jonathan
- Marriage to Michal (in line for the throne)
- Gathers warriors and fights bravely
- Becomes a mercenary with Achish the Philistine and learned Philistine battle tactics

Early Reign

- David is initially the King of Judah in the South
- Saul's son Ishbosheth (later referred to as Ishbaal to demonize him) is King of Israel
- Mahanaim is the capital of the North, Hebron is the capital of the South
- Abner is Ishbosheth's uncle and is the real power (commonly referred to as a general)



David's Early Reign con't

- Abner sees David's military strength in battle and will ultimately offer the North to David
- Saul had given Michal to another in marriage (in the North), so David demands her back (important to prevent a legitimate heir to Saul, which would compromise his throne)
- Joab was David's primary general and sees Abner as a threat, kills him
- Ishbosheth is then murdered, David spares Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 21:7), kills all other children and grandchildren of Saul
- David then has the entire North and the South creating the truly "united Kingdom" of Israel
- David moves the capital to Jerusalem (central, easily fortified, accessible)

Jerusalem the Capital

- 3 sharp hillsides around Jerusalem
- Along many trade routes
- Easy to access, but also easy to defend
- By the time of Solomon, walls have been built to fortify the location
- In the South, but close to the border of the North (important for future temple worship)



David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem

- This will focus Jerusalem as a religious center
- Previously it had no religious significance as it had been inhabited by Jebusites (pagan)
- The Ark is to be put in the temple and will thus lose its religious significance forever as the temple will become significant (last mentioned under King Josiah of Judah)
- The temple becomes a holy place, sacred ground (not during David's reign though)
- Revelation 11:19 mentions the Ark is in heaven



Contrast between Kings and Chronicles

- Chronicles begins with the narrative of Adam and ends with the reign of Persian King Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C.
- Ezra often credited with collecting the writings in the 5th century B.C.
- Gives a flattering portrayal of the Kings of Judah, very negative of the Kings of Israel (pro-Judah bias is obvious)
- Written very much like other ancient narratives, very positive and usually only the good deeds/accomplishments of the kings are included
- The “what did we do right” narrative (i.e., Bathsheba only mentioned as the mother of Solomon and her lineage –Jewish)

Contrast between Kings and Chronicles

- Tradition attributes the writing of the books of Kings to Jeremiah (c. 650-570 B.C.)
- Gives a very unflattering view of the various kings, including David and Solomon!
- It is very unique among ancient writings, very seldom do we see a “negative” history of any people
- It is a continuation of the narrative of 2 Samuel (Samuel died and Nathan is typically credited with finishing the writings in Samuel)
- Kings is the theological and historical explanation of the Jews exile and loss of Judah
- The “where did we go wrong” narrative dominated Kings (Bathsheba narrative)

Bathsheba, victim or cunning manipulator...or both?



- Why is the Bathsheba story told?
- Of course, it is told in Samuel/Kings, not Chronicles
- Scholars are divided on the roof bathing scene
 - Kenneth E. Bailey says that David's Jerusalem was tightly packed, and her house may have been a few feet away, Jewish women and most women in the region were exceptionally modest with their bodies and he thus suggests Bathsheba displayed herself deliberately and it was she who seduced David to rid herself of Uriah and become a queen
 - Lawrence O. Richards says that the text supports the innocence of Bathsheba and David too the initiative to summon her here and she could not refuse the king. David J. Zucker writes "she is a victim of 'power rape'". Andrew Schmutzer stated that "David's 'taking' Bathsheba makes him responsible for her coming to him.
 - Is she "Eve" or "Mary" type, or is she "Jezebel" type? Perhaps something in between?

Is David more of an ancient king or messiah/Jesus type figure?

- He had numerous wives and “only” 8 are named: Michal, Ahinoam, Abigail, Maakah, Haggith, Avital, Eglah and Bathsheba
- He has numerous children (1 Chronicles 3:9)
 - Amnon (son of Ahinoam-killed by Absalom)
 - Chileab (son of Abigail-dies early)
 - Absalom (son of Maakah-campaigns for king, runs away after the rape of his sister Tamar by Amnon, killed in battle, David is heartbroken)
 - Adonijah (son of Haggith-wanted Abishag as a wife, executed by Benaiah, Solomon’s hit man)
 - Shephatiah (son of Abigail-nothing known)
 - Ithream (son of Eglah-nothing known)
 - Shimea (son of Bathsheba-nothing known)
 - Shobab (son of Bathsheba-nothing known)
 - Nathan (son of Bathsheba-nothing known)
 - Solomon (son of Bathsheba-King of Israel, why???)
 - Other children include Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, Hogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, Eliphelet, Tamar (daughter of Maakah raped by half brother Amnon), Jerimoth-son of a concubine, and likely more that are not recorded in scripture

David ancient king or savior?

- Had Uriah killed (although some see it as a justifiable death sentence for treason)
- Kills most descendants of Saul
- Kills many of his rivals
- Reigns for “40 years” (aka a generation)
- Described as good looking
- Prowess on the battlefield as a warrior
- Not permitted to build the temple
- Not like Donatello’s interpretation?



Conspiracy?

- 1 Kings 1-4: “¹When King David was very old, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him. ²So his attendants said to him, "Let us look for a young virgin to serve the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that our LORD the king may keep warm." ³Then they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful young woman and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. ⁴The woman was very beautiful; she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no sexual relations with her.”
- Note the location of the story, to begin the “where did we go wrong narrative,” perspective is very important, none of this is in Chronicles which makes it sound like a smooth transfer of power!

Conspiracy?

- Adonijah, son of Haggith, was politicking for king
- “¹¹ Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother: “Have you not heard that Adonijah, son of Haggith, has become king, and our lord David does not know? ¹² Come now, let me advise you so that you may save your life and the life of your son Solomon. ¹³ Go, visit King David, and say to him, ‘Did you not, my lord king, swear to your handmaid: Your son Solomon shall be king after me; it is he who shall sit upon my throne? Why, then, has Adonijah become king?’ ¹⁴ And while you are still there speaking to the king, I will come in after you and confirm your words.” ¹⁵ So Bathsheba visited the king in his room. The king was very old, and Abishag the Shunamite was caring for the king.^[a] ¹⁶ Bathsheba bowed in homage to the king. The king said to her, “What do you wish?”^[b] ¹⁷ She answered him: “My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD, your God, ‘Solomon your son will be king after me; it is he who shall sit upon my throne.’ ¹⁸ But now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord king, do not know it.^[c] ¹⁹ He has sacrificed bulls, fatlings, and sheep in great numbers; he has invited all the king’s sons, Abiathar the priest, and Joab, the commander of the army, but not your servant Solomon. ²⁰ ^[d] Now, my lord king, all Israel is looking to you to declare to them who is to sit upon the throne of my lord the king after him. ²¹ If this is not done, when my lord the king rests with his ancestors, I and my son Solomon will be considered criminals.” (1 Kings 1:11-21)
- Nathan follows with a speech in support of Solomon (and Bathsheba)

Conspiracy?

- ²⁸ King David answered, “Call Bathsheba here.” When she entered the king’s presence and stood before him, ²⁹ the king swore, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress, ³⁰ this very day I will fulfill the oath I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Your son Solomon shall be king after me and shall sit upon my throne in my place.’” ³¹ Bowing to the floor in homage to the king, Bathsheba said, “May my lord, King David, live forever!”
- ³² Then King David said, “Call Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, son of Jehoiada.” When they had entered the king’s presence, ³³ he said to them: “Take with you the royal officials. Mount my son Solomon upon my own mule and escort him down to Gihon. ³⁴ There Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet shall anoint him king over Israel, and you shall blow the ram’s horn and cry, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ (I Kings 1:28-34)

Lessons from King David: A very complex character

1.Acknowledge and confess our sins

David had a repentant heart. He realized that he had only sinned against man but also God. The Bible in Psalms 51:1-2 says, *have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. We need to put away our pride, repent our sin, and plead for God's mercy.*

2.Admit our longing and hunger for fellowship with God

While he was separated from God David withered and he longed for the joy of the Lord once again. We live in a world where we long for many things including wealth, education, knowledge, power, success, etc. We learn from David that true satisfaction comes from having a relationship with God. Our desire should be to deepen our relationship with God.

3.Pray for restoration

David prayed for a pure heart and a willing spirit. Can we be pure again once we have been corrupted? The answer is Yes. Jesus died for our sins and he desires to forgive us, no matter what we have done. David prayed that God will "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10).

4.True Repentance

God forgives our sins when we honestly repent. However, God's forgiveness does not save us from the consequences of our conduct, but if we have abandoned our wayward behavior and are willing to accept the consequences, God will still use us. When the son David and Bathsheba bore got sick and died, even after David praying, fasting, and mourning, David accepted the outcome as God's judgment. We should always remember that sin has consequences.

5.Watch your words and heart

David prayed in Psalm 19:14, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. We need to be careful with what we harbour in our hearts as words and thoughts will influence our character.