

God's Providence in God's People

Contra Costa Gospel Church
Adult Sunday School

DAVID

We said in a previous lesson that the Book of Judges was written to develop in Israel a longing for the Messiah – one who would save Israel from her enemies and not have the myriad character flaws displayed by the judges of that day. Thus, the author purposely wrote about the judges in unflattering tones to foster a feeling of dissatisfaction in his readers.

As we unpack this biblical “saga” further, we find that there is more nuance to the story that we have yet to point out. We know from history that Israel does not go from the judges to the Messiah immediately. Rather, there is an intermediary step, which is the Davidic dynasty. This we find in the Book of Samuel. If the Book of Judges has a purpose to instill Messianic loyalty and longing, then the Book of Samuel has a purpose to instill Davidic loyalty and longing (which will then ultimately morph into a hope for the Messiah). This is why, for the most part, David is written about in such positive light, particularly in comparison with the failure that was his predecessor.

- 1) In 1 Samuel 16 we read about the introduction of the “real” king of Israel – David, son of Jesse. Read 1 Samuel 16:1-5. How does this short passage inform our understanding of 1 Samuel 15:22?
- 2) Why do you think Samuel thought Eliab was going to be next king, in 1 Samuel 16:6? What about Eliab impressed Samuel (Hint: see 1 Samuel 16:7)?

How do we, nowadays, make the same kind of error in our judgment of people?

- 3) In the same chapter that we read about the anointing of David by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1-13), we also read about David playing the harp for Saul to soothe him of his torment. Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23. Observation: the second half of this chapter has absolutely NO CONNECTION to the first half. Why are these written in the same chapter then? Why does that author put these two episodes together? There are probably several reasons.

- 4) In 1 Samuel 17, we read about *the* defining moment for David, the story that essentially “put him on the map.” The author first introduces the antagonist to the reader in vv. 1-7. For today’s readers who do not have a good mental picture of a “shekel” and “weaver’s rod,” (both in v. 7), are we able to still understand these descriptions? And what is the point of them?
- 5) Time and again, the Lord brings into the same frame (as in “camera frame”) David and Saul, when it would seem unnecessary. The episode of Saul’s torments is an example of that. Now we see it again here in 1 Samuel 17. It would seem providential (that is, God ordained) that David would even go to the battle lines. Why is that? Who, more than likely, should have gone instead of him?
- 6) Of course we know that David must go down to the battle lines in order for the rest of the story to take place. And yet, there are still many details prior to his fighting Goliath that required God’s intervention. In other words, had God not caused these unexpected and unusual circumstances to occur, we would never get “David v. Goliath.” See the verses below and indicate what about them show God’s intervention and divine providence. The first one is done for you.

Passages	Divine Providence
1 Samuel 17:12-14	David was the youngest son, which is mentioned several times. The number of sons is mentioned several times. The oldest three went to fight. It would seem likely that they would send Son #4 to deliver the snacks to the brothers, instead of the youngest.
1 Samuel 17:8	
1 Samuel 17:10, 23, 26	
1 Samuel 17:31	
1 Samuel 17:34-37	

The account of David defeating Goliath is a beloved one in the annals of Christianity’s history. However, as you understand the purpose of the author in writing the book, you find out very quickly that the main characters in this story are not David and Goliath, but David and SAUL. This story represents the beginning of Israel transferring their loyalty to the dynasty to come, and rejecting the king that failed them.