

# DAVID RULES A NATION

**TEXT: 1 SAMUEL 16:1-13**

Introduction:

1. David's name is found over 1,100 times in the Bible in more than 965 verses.
2. His life is important spiritually because of God's promise that the Messiah would descend from his bloodline (2 Samuel 7:12-14; Psalm 132:11; Isaiah 11:10; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:29-32).
3. His life is also important historically because he was the greatest king to reign over the nation of Israel.
4. By studying the life of David, one can learn what God desires in a leader.
5. By observing the nation of Israel under his rule, one can learn what it means to be a blessed nation.

I. David: The Reign of a Leader

- A. God intended to rule over the nation of Israel as their only rightful King (Exodus 19:5-6).
  1. His presence would be with them at the Tabernacle.
  2. He would give them His Law to govern them.
  3. They were to be a kingdom of priests – who would instruct the people in the Law of the Lord.
- B. But, as Israel became more like the nations around them, they desired a king like all the nations around them – something God had already anticipated (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).
- C. Thus, Israel rejected God as their King and sought for a man to rule over them (1 Samuel 8:4-7).
  1. Sadly, this was not the last time Israel would reject God as their King.
  2. Speaking of Jesus, Pilate said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" (John 19:14).
  3. He asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" (John 19:15).
  4. They replied, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).
  5. But the truth was written on a title placed upon the cross – "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:19).
- D. Saul was chosen by God to be the first king over Israel (1 Samuel 9:15-17; 10:1).
  1. Saul was a king that fit the desires of men (1 Samuel 9:1-2; 10:23-24).
  2. Though he was physically strong, he was spiritually weak and soon rebelled against God (1 Samuel 15).
  3. Consequently, God rejected Saul as King of Israel (1 Samuel 15:22-23).
- E. Following Saul, David was chosen by God to be king over Israel (1 Samuel 16).
  1. God sent Samuel to the house of Jesse in the town of Bethlehem.
  2. When he saw the sons of Jesse, Samuel thought that Eliab, the firstborn, would be chosen as the new king.
  3. However, God warned him against judging a man by his outward appearance.
  4. Like Saul, he had the outward stature of a king but lacked the inward strength of character.

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5. God judges a man by looking at his heart.
  - a. Literally, God said, “Man looks at the eyes, but God looks on the heart,” or “Man looks for the eyes, but God looks for the heart.”
  - b. In fact, God was already preparing David for the throne, possibly by his life among the sheep (cf. 17:34-37).
6. Thus, God had already sought out a man “after his own heart” (13:14; 15:28; Acts 13:22).
7. This refers to “a man who is, throughout, one with God’s own heart.”
- F. The fact that David was a man after God’s own heart was the key to his success as a leader of Israel and to his faithfulness in his own life.
  1. Note that this does not mean that David was perfect or never sinned.
  2. His sins, their terrible nature, and sever consequences are recorded in Scripture (2 Samuel 11 – 12; etc.).
  3. However, when David stumbled and committed sins (which certainly were not “after God’s own heart”) he always found his way back to God – by godly sorrow, repentance, and prayer (cf. 2 Sam. 24:17).
- G. David lived as though God were King of Israel and he was merely the Lord’s servant.
- H. Thus, he labored to make sure that God’s will for the nation was carried out – even desiring to build a Temple for the Lord.
- I. David’s great faith in the Lord is demonstrated in the confrontation with Goliath (1 Samuel 17).
  1. The Philistines had been defeated by Saul, but the victory was not complete (14:46, 52).
  2. Now, they were gathered at Shochoh, about 17 miles southwest of Jerusalem.
  3. This battle would be different from previous conflicts.
    - a. Instead of the two armies engaging one another, each would select one warrior to fight on behalf of the nation.
    - b. The nation whose warrior won would be considered victorious in the battle (vs. 8-10).
  4. The Philistines chose Goliath as their representative in battle.
    - a. Thus, this would be a battle between David and Goliath.
    - b. Representatively, it was a battle between Israel and the Philistines.
    - c. Ultimately, it was a battle between God and Satan.
      - i. Goliath did not represent the nation alone, but also their false gods and pagan practices.
      - ii. His challenge was against Israel’s God (vs. 10, 25-26, 36, 37, 43, 45-47).
    - d. One man’s battle may have eternal consequences.
  5. Goliath was a giant man and a mighty warrior.
    - a. Twice in this passage, He is called a champion.
    - b. He was very tall – six cubits and a span was his height (anywhere from 9 feet, six inches to 11 feet, 10 inches).
    - c. He was from Gath, apparently descended from the sons of Anak (Joshua 11:22; Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 1:28).
    - d. His helmet was made of bronze, and his coat of mail weighed about 157 pounds.
    - e. He carried a sword and a spear – the head of which weighed about 18 pounds – and another man went before him carrying his shield.

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6. Sadly, Saul and the army of Israel were overcome with fear of this imposing figure and refused to fight.
7. It is disheartening to learn that Goliath went unchallenged by the Israelites for 40 days.
8. However, things would change when Jesse sent David to take a “care package” of food to his brothers and their captain.
9. Leaving early in the morning (after making sure the sheep had a keeper), David arrived in the valley of Elah as the armies arrayed themselves against one another.
10. When David found his brothers among the soldiers, Goliath came forth and spoke strongly against Israel.
11. To David’s dismay, Israel’s army fled from the face of the giant.
12. David stood up in faith and spoke out against Goliath.
  - a. Notice that his motive was not selfish.
  - b. He was upset that Goliath was a reproach to Israel – causing them shame and disgrace.
  - c. His was distraught that Israel was being defamed and, therefore, God was being blasphemed.
  - d. David understood that if God were with him then there was nothing to fear.
13. David approached Saul with great faith and courage, stating that no one should be afraid of Goliath – David would fight him.
14. Saul tried to discourage David, claiming he was too young and unable to defeat such a man as Goliath.
15. But David replied that his trust was in God Who had prepared him for this occasion.
  - a. David had been tried before, and God had delivered him.
  - b. Thus, David’s courage did not come from his age, size, or weapon, but from his trust in Almighty God.
16. Saul was persuaded and commanded David to go.
17. David carried his staff, his sling and five smooth stones to face the giant (cf. 2 Samuel 21:16-22).
18. As Goliath and his shield-bearer approached David, the giant mocked God’s servant.
19. Even worse, he cursed David by his false gods.
20. Again, David emphasized that his courage to fight came from his faith in God.
  - a. He understood that the battle was the Lord’s.
  - b. His motivation was to prove that there is a God in Israel.
21. David acted with no fear or hesitation – he ran to meet Goliath on the battlefield.
22. David used his sling and with the first stone, Goliath was struck in the forehead and fell to the ground.
  - a. Verse 50 seems to indicate that the blow from the stone killed Goliath.
  - b. But, to make sure and to prove God’s victory, David took the giant’s own sword and cut off his head.
23. Upon seeing their champion fall, the Philistines fled.
24. Notice that David was seeking to defend the name and honor of God; thus, he was a man after God’s own heart.

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- J. David's great humility is shown in his sparing the life of King Saul.
1. As Saul grew increasingly jealous of David, he began to threaten the young man's life.
  2. Thus, David was forced to flee and to go into hiding.
  3. When he came to the cave at Adullam, his family came to him, probably because their lives were also in danger (1 Samuel 22:1-5).
  4. It was here that those who were discontented with the tyranny of Saul began to gather under the leadership of David.
    - a. It is worth noting that David had the opportunity to lead a rebellion against the throne of Saul.
    - b. However, he waited patiently for God to prepare the circumstances by which he would finally be made king.
  5. Later, David fled to region around Engedi and, once again, Saul pursued him (1 Samuel 24).
  6. As Saul's men searched, Saul went into a cave to "cover his feet" – likely, to take a nap.
  7. Unbeknownst to Saul, David and his men were hiding in the same cave.
    - a. Imagine the temptation that was placed before David.
    - b. With one act, he could end his life of running and hiding.
    - c. He could become King of Israel and lead the nation to follow God.
    - d. The opportunity came upon him suddenly, with little time for planning ahead or considering his actions.
    - e. His men were pressuring him to kill Saul – even saying that God's providence was at work (cf. 23:7).
  8. Yet, David understood that it is never right to do wrong – even if something good may come from it.
  9. So, instead of killing Saul, David cut off a piece of Saul's robe.
    - a. Even then, his heart "smote him" because he had acted against the Lord's anointed.
    - b. It was David's reverence for God that kept him from yielding to temptation and taking Saul's life.
    - c. Because he respected God, David also respected Saul's position as King – even though he was a failure and rejected of God.
  10. David spoke to his men and taught them a powerful lesson in humility and submission to God – and proved himself a worthy captain and King.
  11. After Saul exited the cave, David appeared before the cave and called out to Saul.
  12. David made it known to Saul that his fate was in God's hands – God would judge between Saul and David (cf. Romans 12:17-21).
  13. Although David did not kill Saul, the wicked king continued to pursue David and seek his life.
  14. As David hid in the wilderness of Ziph, Saul took 3,000 men to try to capture and kill him (1 Samuel 26).
  15. When David saw that Saul was pursuing him, he sent out spies to make certain of the fact.
  16. David learned where Saul's army camped and where in the camp Saul made his bed.
  17. Saul's place in the camp was easily identified by his spear being stuck in the ground at his head.

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18. Abishai, who had accompanied David when they secretly infiltrated the king's camp, requested permission to kill Saul as he lay sleeping.
  19. David refused, reminding him that Saul was still the Lord's anointed.
    - a. David understood that he would be guilty of sin if he killed Saul.
    - b. Yet, he also trusted in the Lord to work things out in His own time and in His own way.
    - c. David waited patiently for the Lord to make him King of Israel.
      - i. He prepared himself instead of asserting himself.
      - ii. He proved himself instead of promoting himself.
      - iii. He respected God's will instead of imposing his own will.
      - iv. He followed God instead of running ahead of him.
  20. Instead, David took Saul's spear (the symbol of his authority) and his canteen and crept out of the camp.
  21. After David had removed some distance from Saul's camp, he stood on top of a hill and cried back to the camp.
  22. When the king called out to David, David rebuked Saul.
    - a. He asked why Saul continued to pursue him when David posed no threat to his life.
    - b. He encouraged Saul to repent and make an offering to God for his sins.
    - c. He warned Saul not to listen to the lies of men.
    - d. David humbly pointed out the folly of Saul's continual pursuit of him.
  23. Again, David proved himself to be a man after God's own heart.
- K. The faith and humility of David allowed him to become a humble servant of God and, with God's help and guidance, the greatest king in the history of Israel.

### II. Israel: The Role of Liberty

- A. In time, Saul died in battle – he killed himself out of fear of the Philistines – and David became King of Israel (1 Samuel 31:1-6; 2 Samuel 2:1-7).
  1. It had been 16 years since Samuel first anointed David (1 Samuel 16:13).
  2. Yet, David still waited for God to tell him when it was time to act.
- B. One of the first things David did as king was to finally take the city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:6-11; 1 Chronicles 11:4-9).
  1. This demonstrates David's attitude and where his heart lay.
  2. He desired for the nation to obey the commands of God, even those that had been neglected for years.
  3. He understood that Israel would not be a blessed nation unless they kept the Word of God.
- C. Soon after, David sought to bring the Ark of the Covenant to the city of Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 13).
  1. Again, David was leading the people in obedience to the will of God.
  2. He wanted them to do this as one nation in order to right the wrongs of the past.
  3. The Ark symbolized God's presence with His people.
  4. In order for God to be with them, they had to submit to His Word.
  5. Thus, when they sinned and Uzzah was killed, David went back to the Scriptures and led the nation in obedience.
- D. As David continued to put God first in his reign over Israel, God continued to bless him with victory in battle (2 Samuel 8, 10, 21:15-22; 1 Chronicles 18 – 20).

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- E. Yet, more than anything, David wanted to build a house for the Lord (2 Samuel 7:2-11; 1 Chronicles 17:1-15).
    - 1. This shows further why David was a man after God's own heart.
    - 2. David wanted to do something extravagant for the Lord.
    - 3. Though he was denied his desire to build a house for God, David did not become angry or bitter (2 Samuel 24:18-21; 1 Chronicles 22).
    - 4. Instead, he trusted in God and helped to prepare for the work to begin.
  - F. One of the final acts of David as King was to step aside and allow his son Solomon to take the throne (1 Kings 1).
    - 1. Solomon had already been chosen by God (2 Samuel 7).
    - 2. David had stated that Solomon would be his heir (1 Chronicles 23:1).
    - 3. David's abdication of the throne for God's chosen successor is another demonstration that David was a man after God's own heart.
  - G. In his service as King, David always sought to lead the people according to the law of God.
  - H. He continually called the people to be obedient to God and to place His Word as the priority for their lives and for the nation.
  - I. Because of this, the nation of Israel enjoyed great liberty during the reign of David – resulting in prosperity and hope.
    - 1. There is an important contrast between the reigns of Saul and David.
    - 2. The longer he served as king, Saul drifted farther away from God and became more tyrannical.
    - 3. His desire for power and his attempts to keep the throne for himself and his descendants cause him to become more oppressive and violent.
    - 4. On the other hand, David's submission to God's law provided freedom, security, and success for Israel.
  - J. The only way truly to be free is to live in obedience to the Word of God (John 8:30-36; 1 Peter 2:11-17).
  - K. David's final words demonstrated his love for and devotion to God.
    - 1. To Solomon he said: "*I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself*" (1 Kings 2:2-3).
    - 2. To the nation he said: "*The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God*" (2 Samuel 23:3).
  - L. David ruled the nation in liberty and the love of the Lord (Psalm 101).
- III. America: The Rule of Law
- A. The founders of this country believed in the concept of Natural Law.
  - B. This means that since God is the Creator of man, His law is the standard for man's morality, ethics, and conduct.
  - C. The concept of Natural Law is summed up in the Greatest Commands:
    - 1. Love God with all the heart (Matthew 22:35-38).
    - 2. Love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39-40).
  - D. Any law that violates the law of God is sinful against Heaven and detrimental to humanity (cf. Romans 13:1ff).

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- E. John Adams stated: *"The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God."*
- F. George Washington wrote: *"While we are zealously performing the duties of good citizens and soldiers, we certainly ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of Patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian."*
- G. Thus, the Founding Fathers believed in the rule of law.
- H. Thomas Paine wrote: *"I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy."*
  - 1. This principle was stated in Scripture: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).
  - 2. "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12).
- I. John Jay declared: *"Justice is indiscriminately due to all, without regard to numbers, wealth, or rank."*
- J. James Madison wrote: *"Equal laws protecting equal rights ...the best guarantee of loyalty and love of country."*
- K. Thomas Jefferson stated: *"All too will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression."*
- L. Thus, John Adams declared that America would be "A government of laws, and not of men."
- M. When a nation's laws are patterned after the Word of God, it will be a blessed nation indeed.

#### Conclusion:

- 1. David demonstrates what a true leader of a nation should be.
- 2. A leader must have a proper respect for God.
- 3. A leader must have a proper love for his fellowman.
- 4. Only then will he rule over a blessed nation.

**"A GOVERNMENT OF LAWS, AND NOT OF MEN."**

**JOHN ADAMS**