

Part 6: 3 Kings and a Lady



Michelangelo's David



Background Notes

PURPOSE: Tells the story of the first king, Saul, the ideal king, David, and the wise king, Solomon. God allows the monarchy with the stipulation that the kings follow God's will through the prophets.

AUTHOR: Largely the work of the deuteronomist, recognizable by the emphasis on centralized worship in stories revolving around the ark of the covenant (centralized worship did not really happen until the deuteronomic reform of King Josiah).

DATE: Saul becomes king around 1030 BC. David becomes king around 1010 and captures Jerusalem around 1000. Solomon becomes king around 970 and has the Temple built during his reign.

STYLE: Legendary stories drawing from historical records of Israelite wars, prophetic writings, and books of poetry, such as the referenced "Book of the Just".



Opening Quotes

“Is Yahweh pleased by burnt offerings and sacrifices or by obedience to his voice? Truly obedience is better than sacrifice, submissiveness than the fat of rams.” 1S 15:22

“Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart.” 1 S 16:7

“David retorted to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with sword, spear, and scimitar, but I come to you in the name of Lord of Hosts... The Lord does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and he will give you into our hand.’” 1 S 17:45

“David was playing the harp, as he did every day, and Saul was holding a spear...” 1 S 18:10

“Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever.” 2 S 7:16

“Nathan said to David, ‘You are the man!’” 2 S 12:7

“Perhaps Yahweh will look on my wretchedness and will repay me with good for this man’s curses today.” 2 S 16:12

“The king said, divide the living boy in two; then give half to the one, and half to the other.” 1 K 3:23

the BIG PICTURE		← : LAW, History, Writings, Prophets		← : key covenants in our Father's plan	
12 Periods	Plot	Other books related to period		stories in each period	
BC	☉ THE BEGINNINGS	GN 1-11	Ps 8, 104	Creation, Adam & Eve, Cain & Abel, Noah's ark, Tower of Babel	
1850	♠ THE PATRIARCHS	GN 12-50		Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), Joseph, Melchizedek	
1250	⚠ EXODUS FROM EGYPT	EX		Moses, the burning bush, the plagues, passover, exodus	
1200	♣ JOURNEY TO CANAAN	NM, Jos	LV, DT	Sinai desert, 10 commandments, Levites, Law, Joshua	
1100	☠ THE JUDGE CYCLE	Jg	Ruth	12 tribes, Gideon, Samson, Ruth, Samuel	
1030	☆ KINGS & PROPHETS	1 & 2 S	1 Ch, Ps, Prov	Saul, David, Solomon, Jerusalem, the Temple	
1000	■ THE DIVIDED KINGDOM	1 Kg	2 Ch, Prov, Ecc, Songs	Israel (N), Judah (S), Elijah & Elisha, Isaiah, Assyrian exile	
721 587	☹ BABYLONIAN EXILE	2 Kg	2 Ch, Tob, Hos, Am, Hab, Is, Jer, Lam, Jl, Mic, Zp, Jon, Nah, Ob, Ez, Dan, Bar	Babylonians, "major" prophets, Isaiah (to Israel), Jeremiah (to Jerusalem), Ezekiel (to Exiles)	
538	⚙ THE RESTORATION	Ezr, Neh	Est, Judith, Hag, Zech, Mal, Job	Cyrus, 2nd temple, 2nd Law, "minor" prophets, new writings	
163 63	🕯 THE REPURIFICATION	1 Mac	Dn, 2Mac, Sirach, Wisdom	Greeks, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean Dynasty, Romans, Jewish sects (Pharisees, Saducees, Zealots, Essenes)	
AD	♣+ JESUS CHRIST	LK	MT, MK, JN	Incarnation, Good News, New Law, Cross & Resurrection	
33 70	🕯 APOSTOLIC CHURCH	Acts	Rm, 1&2Co, Ga, Ep, Phil, Col, 1&2Th, 1&2 Tm, Ti, Phm, Hb, Ja, 1P, 2P, 1,2&3J, Jd, Rv	Pentecost, council, journeys, epistles, Body/Bride of Christ	



The Story of Part 6: 3 Kings and a Lady



One day, during the time of the Judges, God answered the prayers of a barren woman, Hannah, and gave her a son, **Samuel**. One night Samuel kept waking up the priest he served, Eli, thinking Eli had called him. Realizing that it was God calling him, Eli told Samuel to ask God what he wanted. It wasn't good news: Eli's sons had kept stolen some of the temple treasury, and God was going to punish them for it. Sure enough, the Philistines launched a major attack on the Israelites and defeated them, killed Eli's sons, and took the ark of the covenant which held the Ten Commandments. This was devastating, for the presence of the ark on the battlefield often brought Israel victory. Samuel made a call to all of Israel to turn back to Yahweh and give up the foreign gods, and led the Israelites as a judge. But the Philistines were so strong that the Israelites wanted a king like the other nations had. Samuel, now chosen by God to speak on his behalf as a prophet, told the people it was a bad idea because kings were considered like gods. But the people insisted, and Yahweh told Samuel to give them their king, warning them to follow God's will, as spoken through the prophets.

The first king was Saul. Already there was trouble when Samuel told Saul that God wanted him to pronounce the curse of destruction on the Amalekites. Saul kept the riches and spared the Amalekite king to please the Israelites. When rebuked by Samuel for not fully carrying out the curse, Saul appealed to Samuel saying "Let us offer sacrifices to your God", as if Yahweh wasn't Saul's God. Samuel told Saul that he lost God's favor and a new king would be anointed. Saul began losing his mind. To calm his nerves, he called on the young harp player **David**, the shepherd boy who was the one anointed to be the next king!

One day the Philistines were attacking Israel, and the largest Philistine, Goliath, challenged any Israelite to fight him to decide which nation would serve the other. Young David volunteered. Goliath laughed and taunted the boy. David then nailed Goliath right in the forehead with a stone, killing him. He took Goliath's sword and cut his head off, causing the Philistines to run in panic.

David soon established himself as a great warrior, and people started saying, "Saul has killed thousands, but David tens of thousands." Saul's fondness for David turned into jealousy, and he tried killing him. David fled to the caves, and composed many of the psalms. In them he conveyed his trust in God during troubled times, as well as attributing all of his military victories to God, not the sword.

On two occasions David got close enough to Saul's camp to kill the king. Both times David yelled from a distance to the king, showing him that he could have killed him, but did not. (David refused to kill a king anointed by God!). Saul cried out, admitting that David was more upright than he and would be the next king.

After the prophet Samuel died, David knew that Saul would still kill him if given the chance, so he took refuge with the enemy Philistines and even fought some foreigners for them! Inevitably a time came when the Philistines would fight the Israelites again. The Philistines, of course, did not allow David to fight with them for he might betray them and rejoin his people. The Philistines defeated the Israelites, and Saul and his sons were killed. The people from the House of Saul who wanted the son of Saul to be the next king were so impressed with David's loyalty to Saul, that even they sided with David. He became king, and all of Israel rallied behind him. They destroyed the Philistines, captured the city of Jerusalem and made it their capitol. Singing and dancing, they rejoiced when they brought the ark of the covenant to this new resting place. Because of his great trust in God, the prophet Nathan told David that God would rule Israel forever in his line!

Then it was time for David's mistake. David took Bathsheba, the wife of a soldier, got her pregnant, and then arranged for the soldier to be killed in battle! When the prophet Nathan rebuked David, the new king did not try to justify himself as Saul had done before, but acknowledged that Yahweh as his God and repented. Nathan informed David that God forgave him but that his sin would not go unpunished. The baby they conceived would die, and the loyalty of Israel to David would be threatened when one of his beloved sons, Absalom, turned on him. David told his army not to kill Absalom, but they did anyway, and David mourned greatly.

David was the greatest king of Israel. Combining might with humility, he won the heart of Yahweh and Israel. His great grandmother was a Moabite woman, **Ruth**, who pledged loyalty to Yahweh during the time of the judges. In spite of his warning to Israel not to marry the foreign women, God chose her to be the ancestress of David's (and therefore of Christ himself).

David and Bathsheba had another son, **Solomon**, who would be the next king of Israel. God appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked him what he would like to have. Instead of asking for riches, Solomon simply asked for the wisdom to rule God's people. God was so pleased with his answer that He made Solomon wise enough to attract visitors from distant nations seeking his wisdom. God also gave him more riches than any king would ever have. Solomon took Israel to the height of its glory, building the great Temple in Jerusalem, the City of David, where they could finally worship God in a central location. The people of God had finally settled into their promised land, with a capitol and a central Temple, led by the wise king Solomon, son of the great king David. It was Israel's finest hour. 



Defending the Faith: Immorality in the Bible

“The Patriarchs practiced incest, Moses killed an Egyptian, Joshua took the Promised Land by slaughter, David spread his kingdom through warfare, Solomon had seven hundred wives, and slavery was allowed in the New Testament. How can you believe that God is the God of the Bible with so much immorality allowed?”

Let’s look at the four instances of questionable morality in the Bible. Firstly, there was incest. Obviously, if there were people trying to kill Cain after he murdered his brother Abel, those people must have been the offspring of Adam and Eve’s other children through incest. This was only necessary for the initial propagation of the human race. As humanity gradually filled the earth, God revealed that this was no longer to be done.

Secondly, there was killing. But it is a misconception that warfare is glorified in the Bible. In fact just the opposite is true. Often forgotten in all of the episodes where the Israelites are directed by God to wage war are the miraculous intercessions that made military force unnecessary (Exodus 14, 2 Kings 6), punishments for having exceeded reasonable force (Amos 1, Hosea 1), and rules for assuring the humane treatment of enemies (Deut 20, 21). As with incest, the curse of destruction was a special exception necessary to establish God’s people in a land replete with abominable practices like child sacrifice. Once established in the Promised Land, the curse of destruction was no longer sanctioned.

Thirdly, there was polygamy, a perfectly acceptable practice in the Old Testament. Like divorce, this was a practice which was done away when Jesus fulfilled, not abolished, the Law.

Fourth was slavery. Slavery in the New Testament was not like the brutal slavery we are familiar with. Nonetheless, it was not in God’s plan to abolish slavery during biblical times, but certainly after. The dignity of man and woman as God’s image has made slavery impossible in Judeo-Christian society, and remains a recognized institution only in other religions.

Does morality change? Not quite. The *application* of moral principles is what changes. It is to be expected that

we read these stories with uneasiness because we are reading them from a more enlightened point of view: we are people with the advantage of Christ’s teachings and the teachings of his Church which still grows.

But how can we say that we should listen to the Pope on moral issues, but that a Nazi shouldn’t have listened to the Fuhrer? The answer is faith. Faith in the fact that God revealed his will publicly through the prophets in the Old Testament, that he publicly revealed himself completely in Jesus Christ, and that Christ still speaks to us both individually *and* publicly in his Church (Mt 28:20). But without faith in God’s *public* revelation, we become individual arbiters of what’s right and what’s wrong. This was precisely the temptation of the original sin – to be like God, knowing good from evil. But with faith in God, and more specifically, with faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, we come to know God as our Father. And just as a father allows a child to get away with something only until he or she is old enough to know better, so has God the Father allowed the morality of Israel and the Church to develop *gradually*.

This process can still be seen today in the Church. The catechism as recently as 1997 modified the official teaching on capital punishment, calling the cases for its necessity “very rare, if not practically non-existent,” (CCC, 2267) and the Church continues to promote a moratorium on the death penalty altogether. These changes should not lead us to question God or his Church any more than the morality of the Bible should lead us to question his Word. They should instead serve to remind us that, in spite of our apparent moral progress compared to our biblical ancestors, we are still just children being led by the hand by our heavenly Father.



Expressing the Faith: The King of Glory

Traditional Israeli folk song praising the Son of David, the King of the whole universe.

***The King of glory come, the nation rejoices.
Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.***

*Who is the King of glory? How shall we call him?
He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages.*

*In all of Galilee, in city or village,
He goes among his people curing their illness.*

*Sing then of David’s Son, our Savior and brother;
In all of Galilee was never another.*

*He gave his life for us, the pledge of salvation.
He took upon himself the sins of the nation.*

*He conquered sin and death; he truly has risen.
And he will share with us his heavenly vision.*

➡ **Next time: “The Un-United Kingdom”** ↩