

Devotional and Reading Plan for 2022, Week Sixteen

Week 16 — April 16th-22nd, 1 Samuel 22-31; 2 Samuel 1:1-6:11; 23:8-39; 1 Chronicles 3:1-4; 9:40-14:17; Psalm 52,54,56,57,142

The passages this week deal with David's introduction as king. Although David had been anointed by Samuel sometime earlier to be Israel's next king, he never rushed God's timing. From David's youth he knew God had a plan and purpose for everything. David respected and protected God's anointed—King Saul (although some had hoped he would take the matter into his own hands and rush it).

David led well in spite of some very difficult times. Knowing God had a plan helped David through the rough times, and it can do the same for us.

April 16th

1 Samuel 22; 23:1-12; 1 Chronicles 12:8-18; Psalm 52, 57, 142. "Rough Start"

Consider everything that has transpired up to this point: David has been anointed king. He has battled giants and Philistines. He has been the object of King Saul's jealousy. He has been pursued by King Saul seeking to kill him. His friends and family have all been threatened by Saul, yet Saul is God's leader for the time. Now, 85 priests, their families, and their livestock have all been murdered because of Saul's hatred toward David.

If it were me, I think I would be asking for time to rethink that whole "anointing" incident.

The Psalms David wrote were the songs he penned as he journaled the thoughts of his heart. David "cried out" the LORD. David "poured out" his concerns to God. David was "overwhelmed." David asked for "help." David felt the pressures of this new position God had placed him in.

These Psalms also express the fact that David knew God had a plan, and it's evident in his comments like; "God will fulfill His purpose for me"; "He will send help from Heaven"; "My heart is confident in you, O LORD."

April 17th

1 Samuel 23:13-29; 24:1-25:44; Psalm 54. "Providential Conclusions"

The passage today describes three unfortunate encounters that had providential conclusions.

In the first situation the men of Ziph turned David and his men's location over to Saul, yet God providentially sent Saul on another urgent task, which provided the opportunity for David and his men to escape.

In the second incident, Saul and an army of 3,000 searched the hills of En Gedi for David, and were so close that Saul actually went into the cave the men were hiding in. However, because David spared Saul's life, Saul in turn spared his and stopped his pursuit.

On the third occasion, David and his men needed sustenance and they asked Nabal for it. Although Nabal owed it to them (customary and protection) he refused to give anything to David. However, Nabal's wife, Abigail, intervened and provided for David's army.

We have a great advantage here in being able to read the endings, but often we find ourselves in a difficult spot and wonder how it could ever turn out for good. Be confident in God's plan as David was.

April 18th

1 Samuel 26-29; 1 Chronicles 12:1-7,19; Psalm 56. "Battle Lines"

The Philistines, David, and Saul, had all geared up for war. David was fighting guerrilla warfare style with the brutal tribes of Geshurites, Girzites and Amalekites. The Philistines entered battle fiercely with enormous numbers (28:5). Saul seemed uncertain and consulted a medium from Endor to offer consultation concerning the war.

The history of war describes numerous strategies and techniques: Frontal assaults, ambushes, offensive, defensive, short range, long range, etc.

The word "battle" occurs several hundred times in Scripture. In contrast to the more common physical encounters, many times the word is descriptive of spiritual battles.

How do you enter your battles? Are you geared up and ready, or doubtful and uncertain? What are your tactics? How prepared are you for the battles the world and Satan will throw your way?

The Apostle Paul gives us a few tactical tips to prepare us. He tells us to be armed with the armor of God—truth, righteousness, sharing Good News, faith, salvation, and the Word of God (Eph. 6:13), and with the instruction of the Word and godly direction (1 Tim. 1:18).

April 19th

1 Samuel 30-31; 2 Samuel 1:1-27; 4:4; 1 Chronicles 9:40-44; 10:1-14; 12:20-22. "Painful Experiences"

Years have passed since David was anointed king by Samuel. Those years have been spent running from King Saul, the very one he would succeed. So, when David gets the news Saul has died, is his response joy, excitement and relief? No. Quite the contrary.

David mourned Saul's death. His sorrow was genuine and intense. So much so that all of his men mourned with him over the death of Saul and Jonathan.

David, who was a master of the sword, was also a master of the pen. The man who wrote so many psalms now composed a funeral song for Saul and Jonathan.

David could have responded with a critical self-righteous attitude thinking Saul got what he deserved, but he did not. And instead of joy he lamented deeply. David knew God was the true judge. He also knew that Saul was God's anointed. David respected authority. He felt compassion. He knew pain and loss.

Although he is not yet officially king, David is maturing rapidly through experiences. God takes us through experiences with the intent of maturing and growing us into something great and genuine.

April 20th

2 Samuel 2:1-3:5; 23:8-39; 1 Chronicles 3:1-4a; 11:10-47. "Mighty Men"

Young Billy earned his blue belt in judo. One day Billy gave the class bully a bloody nose. When asked which judo technique Billy had used, he replied, "I stuck out my foot and tripped him." That's probably more my style, and it would most definitely NOT earn me a spot with "David's 30 mighty men." The weakest of these guys could take on 100 by himself and the strongest could take on 1,000.

These men fought valiantly. Some of the exploits include; single-handedly defeating 800 warriors, holding back an entire army, destroying giants, and chasing a lion into a pit and killing it on the snowy ground.

You would have to feel pretty secure being surrounded by men like these. Yet, what I find most impressive is not their strength but their loyalty. They literally stood by David's side through anything (2 Sam. 23:9-10 says Eleazar stood by David's side defeating the Philistines after the Israelite army ran away).

One of the men on the list was so loyal to David it cost him his life (Uriah).

April 21st

2 Samuel 3:6-4:12. "Vindicate Vindictiveness"

Instead of David being able to rely on Joab to pave the way to a unified kingdom he has to prevent a civil war due to Joab's actions.

King David had found himself in a unique position. Multiple times now he has had men—in the name of loyalty—murder the innocent. Had loyalty merely become an excuse for revenge and murder?

David was dealing with some strong-willed people. David had to remain true and rule with discipline. These men illustrated well the human tendency to justify our actions.

I have to confess, I am guilty of the same response often. I find myself doing something out-of-line, questionable, or not-by-the-book, and then later I will find myself justifying why I did it. How pathetic!

Does the end justify the means or are the means as judged as the end? Truly the bottom line engages the entire process. Your character is defined by your consistent actions. "Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence."

April 22nd

2 Samuel 5:1-13,17-25; 6:1-11; 1 Chronicles 3:4b; 11:1-9; 12:23-40; 13:1-14; 14:1-2,8-17.
"Resolute Leader"

Four hundred years earlier the Israelites had been told to absolutely subjugate the Promised Land, yet it was never completely accomplished. David has been working to remedy that fault.

David knew God had a reason for asking the Israelites to carry out this task and he had seen the results of it not taking place. He knew the land had to be "cleaned-up" from the enemies influence and presence for several reasons. One would be the constant threat of the nearby enemy. Another benefit to a land their own was the unity which could be much easier to achieve. Furthermore, the land of mixed religion only hindered the Israelites walk with God. The presence of false gods made an enormous negative impact on the commitment of Israel toward God.

David took his responsibilities of leadership very seriously and in turn made a tremendous impact on the positive history of Israel. President Harry Truman said, "Men make history and not the other way round. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still."

What kind of leader are you?