

## *David's Preparation for the Throne of Israel*

### **I. Introduction**

1. The Old Testament is often treated as a collection of stories that teach moral/spiritual lessons. *Thus Saul is just another Bible character whose life teaches a spiritual and moral lesson – in his case, an example of how not to live in relation to God.*
2. But when viewed as it should be within the larger biblical storyline, it's clear that Saul's personal failure as such is not the Scripture's concern. *Saul's significance lies in his place in the salvation-history as the human point of transition from the theocracy as established by the Sinai Covenant to a theocratic monarchy.*
  - a. God's intent from the beginning was to rule through human lords, and thus He pledged a kingdom to Abraham (royal seed, dominion, and global blessing). The Israelite kingdom was the initial fulfillment of that promise, and it reached its apex through the faithful rule of a chosen son-king. *Yet it was destined to fail, even as Saul had initiated that failure.*
  - b. Thus the Israelite kingdom only prefigured and anticipated another to come – a kingdom that would fully realize the divine intent. *From the Bible's perspective, then, Saul's failed kingship wasn't so much about his personal failings as what his failure as king indicated about the challenge God faced in accomplishing His design for His kingdom and rule.*
3. Saul's reign as Israel's first king reflected God's intent to exercise His lordship through humans, but Saul was a failed image-son, ruling according to the "procedure of the king." *Thus Yahweh's rejection of Saul as Israel's king was ultimately His rejection of Adamic man as unable to fulfill his identity and vocation as image-son.*
4. Saul's reign, then, underscored the need for a different sort of ruler – *a regal son devoted to his divine Father and His rule. **Yahweh's choice of David answered that need.***
  - a. Thus the text introduces David as a "man after God's own heart" even before identifying him by name. *This is the sole criterion for human kingship.* \* 1 Sam. 13:13-14, 16:1-7
  - b. It remained to be seen whether David would fulfill this obligation as regal image-son, but this is what he represented as Yahweh's man suited to rule His people.

### **II. David – The True King of Israel (2 Samuel 16-31)**

#### **A. David's Identification and Anointing**

1. The Lord used a process of elimination to identify David as His chosen king, and by it He underscored the truth that His criteria in judging humans differs from the way they judge.
2. Having thus identified David, God directed Samuel to anoint him before his family, then providing His own anointing by endowing David with His Spirit. \* 16:13
3. The Lord stripped His kingdom from Saul and gave it to David, yet Saul would continue to reign for many years. *Though Yahweh's anointed king, David's ascent to the throne would be slow and agonizing. **Throughout those long years of hardship and unjust suffering, the Lord demanded of David that he believe His word to him rather than his circumstances.***

## B. David's Confirmation as the Lord's Anointed

Yahweh had withdrawn His Spirit from Saul and dispatched instead a different spirit to torment him, driving him further away from Israel's God and even from reality itself.

1. Thus David was called on to relieve Saul's anguish by soothing him with music. Saul recognized that God was with David and grew to love him, eventually making David his personal armor bearer.
2. But his role in Saul's service and reputation in Israel changed dramatically when he distinguished himself in Israel's confrontation with the Philistine champion Goliath. *Saul rewarded David's valor by setting him over his army, and the Israelites commemorated his triumph in song, celebrating him even above Saul, their king, as their great deliverer.*

## C. David's Struggle Toward the Throne

1. Saul ruled Israel in his own self-interest, so that David's distinction in the sight of the people turned his love and admiration for him into resentment that blossomed into murderous zeal.
2. He sought David's death, first through subterfuge and then openly and relentlessly, but Yahweh would see His man prevail. *Far from crushing this threat to his reign, David made his way into Saul's household and began to supplant his dominion, first through his covenant union with Saul's son Jonathan, and then by becoming Saul's son-in-law. \* 18:1-30*
3. Yet David remained loyal to Saul, regarding him as the "Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:1-13, 26:1-25; cf. 2 Sam. 1) and affording him the submission and honor due Israel's king. *Though afforded many opportunities and encouraged by his men to take what was rightly his – Yahweh Himself had anointed him as king, David continued to trust the Lord's purposes and timing. He would set him on the throne at the time He'd ordained.*

## Conclusions: Contrasts in Kingship

1. Saul and David represent the *procedure of the king* versus *rule as God's image-son*. The *shepherd* is a key image associated with the latter. It came to the fore with David (Psa. 78:70-72), and reflected Yahweh's rule as Shepherd of His people (Psa. 23:1, 28:9, 80:1; Isa. 40:1-11). *Israel's king was the shepherd of Yahweh's sheep, and thus he was to rule with Yahweh's concerns and interests in mind, lovingly building His kingdom, not his own. Not surprisingly, then, the shepherd became a prominent descriptor for Yahweh's messianic king who, by covenant oath, would fulfill David's own kingship* (ref. esp. Ezek. 34).
2. So also Saul and David are contrasted in terms of *faith* and *faithfulness*. Saul sought to preserve his rule and kingdom in opposition to Yahweh's determination, whereas David trusted His word and anointing through long years of injustice and hardship. *David would obtain the throne through patient, unjust suffering, a key feature of his typological role.*
3. Indeed, even David's kingship and reign were a matter of patient faith. First, his reign was established in two stages. He was initially crowned king over Judah at Hebron, and for the next seven and a half years David fought a bitter war with Saul's household and his son Ish-bosheth who ruled as king over the other eleven tribes of Israel. And even after all Israel finally embraced him as king, David continued to fight enemies on every side as he struggled to establish the kingdom Yahweh had promised to the patriarchs.