
The Start of the Regency – Final Thoughts

1 Samuel 2:9-10³¹

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“A beginning is the time for taking the most delicate care that the balances are correct.” Frank Herbert, *Dune*.

The Approach¹¹

Sometimes it is important to remind you of our commitment not just to the Bible but to the text itself. There are some core beliefs and commitments that shape how we understand and preach.

The Bible as the Word of God

We believe the Hebrew text and accurate translations of it are the Word of God. We have reliable and trustworthy copies of the inspired and inerrant text.

We believe that the authors used various sources *but what they produced is to be treated as an organic whole*. I have little patience with most modern textual criticism that wants to deconstruct the text and thus dismantle its accuracy and authority.

We believe that what the Bible records is true. It provides the interpretive grid to understand everything. We do not interpret the Bible according to modern science, history, psychology or sociology.

The Historical Narrative as the Word of God

We believe that the literary form of the text should shape our understanding and preaching/teaching of the text. Narrative has its own unique way of carrying the Word of God. Preaching narrative will sound different than preaching Paul.

We believe that the authors organized their material to make an argument, present a theme not merely to record a chronological history in the western form.

We believe that not only can people and things foreshadow Christ, but so can events. Consider 1 Corinthians 10:1-7.

¹ For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

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⁶ Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.”

We believe there is a Christ-centered, gospel-oriented lesson in the Old Testament narratives that are intended to keep us from sin and living in obedience and wisdom.

Let me conclude these thoughts with some startling words from J. Gordon Keddie.

The goal of all Old Testament study ought to be a more perfect discipleship to the Lord. All of God’s Word is directed towards the moulding of heart and mind and the transformation of behaviour, to the end that we might be holy as God is holy. Sad to say, modern biblical scholarship has all but abandoned this calling in favour of a kind of technical exegesis which, while meticulous in its dissection of the text and abounding in ingenious and intricate theories of its origins, is strangely arid and virtually devoid of any contemporary application... [And] here’s the rub: the life-changing power of the Word of God has been relegated to the realm of the non-scholarly, the private and the relatively uninformed! Current studies in the historical books of the Old Testament are particularly blighted with this plague of secular intellectualization. (Keddie, p. p. 12)

I am happy to say that in more recent years the wilderness has some new life giving streams. Our studies in 1 Samuel have been guided and helped much by the commentaries by John Woodhouse and Kent Hughes as well as Alex Motyer and Derek Kidner.

These stories are for us...

Romans 15:4-7

Let us remember that the Old Testament narratives are more than interesting stories of ancient Israel’s history. Paul in Romans 15:4-7 tells us:

⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Paul was using an Old Testament text to point to Christ’s willingness to even take on reproach in order to save Jew and Gentile. The bias and bigotry that separated the Jewish and Gentile believers had been heaped on Christ. In the middle of that Paul reminds them of three important things when taking up an Old Testament text:

They were written for us to teach us. (v. 4)

The stories of Samuel, Saul and David were written for us and in some ways, to us. We are the second intentional recipients of their message and meaning.

They were written so our hope will be based on the Scriptures. (v. 4)

Because so much of the Christian life involves suffering and enduring, of not yet having all that we are promised, the Old Testament encourages us. It so enables our faith that we will do the hard, hard things in the hope, the assurance, of the fulfillment of Christ’s promises.

They were to focus on a Christ-centered obedience (v. 5, 7)

These stories first bring us to Christ, His person, promises and provision. They foreshadow who He is and what He has done and what He will do. We do not moralize these stories by commanding "you must" because "they did." But we see Christ who acts, speaks and commands us.

They were to be applied to our situations. (v. 5-6)

Both 1 Corinthians 10 and Romans 15 make specific, particular applications to the Christian. "The Old Testament told us that Christ would bear our bias and bigotry. Since Christ has dealt with what divides and has welcomed Jew and Gentile, then you welcome one another." Christian liberty then is grounded in the cross reversing the divide of the Old Testament through Jesus' work on the cross so that we live together as a Christian community even when we are very different.

This is how we listened, learned and are living 1 Samuel.

The Melodic Line

Almost any great piece of music has one or more distinctive melodies. Anything that is written to be sung will have a melodic line that is designed to carry the meaning and emotions of the song. Most books of the Bible have a melodic line. This is the main theme of the book.

1 Samuel 1-2 are a unit and 2 Samuel 22-23 are the parallel unit. The book opens and closes with a poem. From these two stanzas of the opening and closing poems we have the melodic line, the theme of the Samuels.

1 Samuel 2:9-10

⁹ "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.
¹⁰ The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed."

2 Samuel 22:47-51

⁴⁷ "The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock,
and exalted be my God, the rock of my salvation,
⁴⁸ the God who gave me vengeance
and brought down peoples under me,
⁴⁹ who brought me out from my enemies;
you exalted me above those who rose against me;
you delivered me from men of violence.

⁵⁰ "For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations,
and sing praises to your name.
⁵¹ Great salvation he brings to his king,
and shows steadfast love to his anointed,
to David and his offspring forever."

The primary theme is that the Lord will establish His King with strength and salvation so as to be glorified in all the nations. This will ultimately point to King Jesus.

The secondary theme is that the Lord will accomplish His purposes through the sin and destruction of some and through the righteousness and deliverance of others. This will ultimately point to the cross.

Redemptive historical themes fill the book. Not the least will be the role of Jesus as the perfect prophet, priest and king. We will see the name of the Lord upheld when His enemies are defeated. We will also will see the purposes of God are not thwarted by the sins of His people or His leaders.

The Story – The Beginning of the Regency

The books' plot are arranged naturally around the three major characters. We have watched as 1 Samuel has acted as a stage. Different characters come into the center of the stage. They still interact. While one fades, one comes to the fore. Yet they continue to interact.

Samuel – “the Word came...”

(1 Samuel 1-7)

His name means “God hears” with the idea of being sent as a result of prayer

His Sending

(Ch. 1-3)

God gives a young barren woman named Hannah the promise of child. That child, named Samuel, is dedicated to God and service in the Temple. He is called by God and as he grows up is established in Israel as God's spokesman, God's prophet.

His Service

(Ch. 4-7)

He receives the Word of God and delivers it to Israel. He predicts the death of Eli and his sons ending their line in the priesthood. He is faithful in his prophetic role. He is respected by the people.

Saul – “like the nations...”

(1 Samuel 8-15)

His name means “asked of God” with the idea of being given as a result of a demand

His Crowning

(Ch. 8-10)

In response to Israel's demand for a king like the nations around them, God raises up Saul. He represents the first, the old, the limitations of the old covenant. He is outwardly imposing but inwardly filled with growing fear of man, and particularly, hatred for David.

His Conquests

(Ch. 11-12)

Initially he consolidates the nation, builds the administration of a regency and leads in defats of the enemies of Israel. He is admired and accepted. But it is the conquests of the flesh and the beginning of a rule like the nations around Israel.

His Condemnation

(Ch. 13-15)

He disobeys the Word of God, attempts to detain God's prophet and will have the kingdom ripped from his hand, Early into his reign, he is already doomed to fail. His life will become a pale foil against the rising brightness of David.

David “man after God’s own heart...”**(1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 24)****The Shepherd****(Ch. 16–17)**

David is a faithful son who serves his father in the field with the sheep. He is anointed in secret by Samuel to become the next king of Israel. Even though he is appointed, there will long years of service, suffering and sacrifice from which will emerge a seasoned warrior and great king.

The Servant**(Ch. 18–19)**

David is called up to serve king Saul who is being afflicted by God. He becomes a regular in Saul’s household and court. He becomes the best friend of the heir apparent to the throne, Jonathan, Saul’s son. David defeats Goliath against all odds and upholds the name of the Lord. David marries one of Saul’s daughters. But he soon becomes the object of Saul’s envy, fear and eventual hatred.

The Sojourner**(Ch. 20–31)**

David flees from Saul’s hatred and murderous intentions. He initially tries to live in peace in Saul’s household, but finally Jonathan sends him away. David begins forming his elite militia and military force. Soon he has gathered over 600 and trained them for battle. They also have their families with them in the camp.

Saul’s pursues David and lays an ambush for him. Saul keeps trying to trap and kill David. David sees Saul in a cave but spares his life. He is able to establish his innocence. He has no intention to overthrow or to kill Saul. As David flees he encounters a wicked man with a beautiful wife. The man curses him but the wife intervenes and appeals to him. Later the man is struck by God with stroke and dies. David takes the lady, Abigail, to be his second wife.

Saul finally thinks he has David trapped. But during the night David enters the camp of Saul’s sleeping army. He takes tokens to establish that he was there. In the morning he challenges Saul and the army that he is being wronged. Saul relents and is drawn away into battle against the Philistines. David meanwhile contracts his militia to the Philistine king and receives a Philistine city to live in along with his family and the families of his military.

Saul, over taken with fear and depression, consults a witch. He is seeking guidance from God who is not answering him. Samuel appears and condemns Saul and predicts his soon death at the hands of Israel’s enemies. He prepares to meet the Philistine army massing on the borders of Israel. David is dismissed from Philistine service. He returns to his town destroyed and all the families taken by the Amalekites. He pursues them, destroys them and rescues fortunes and families. He shows himself to a mighty but merciful warrior as he generously gives an even portion of the spoil even to those who stayed behind.

As 1 Samuel closes, we have the great release of David from Philistine service and rescue of His family from captivity. David destroys the Amalekites while Saul comes to an ignominious end on a blood soaked battle field.

The Sovereign (2 Samuel 1–24)

2nd Samuel will show us the establishment of David as the king of Israel and of Israel as a nation under God.

Reflect and Respond

Samuel points us to Christ as the faithful prophet...

Jesus appointed and approved by God as the prophet.

Jesus is faithful to receive and proclaim the Word of God.

Jesus always executes the will of God for the people of God.

Saul points us to Christ as the one who, unlike Saul, is not like the kings of the pagans...

Unlike Saul, Jesus is not an imposing figure and sought because of his outward appearance.

Unlike Saul, Jesus hears and heeds God's Word. He is obedient to God.

Unlike Saul, Jesus receives the kingdom and rules over God's household forever.

Unlike Saul, Jesus defeats the enemies of God.

Unlike Saul, Jesus is merciful to those who repented and receives them into His graces.

Unlike Saul, Jesus seeks only the Word from His Father and rejects the words, counsel of Satan.

Unlike Saul, Jesus dies a sacrificial, substitutionary death for the sins of His people.

David points us to Christ as the great king after God's own heart.

Jesus is the faithful and loving shepherd who guards his sheep.

Jesus hears and heeds the Word of God.

Jesus does the will of God.

Jesus is the anointed king who waits in obscurity until the day of His crowning.

Jesus is rejected, pursued and persecuted by the religious and royal leaders of His day.

Jesus defeats the enemies of His people and completes the unfinished tasks.

Jesus shows mercy to the weak and vulnerable even when they are undeserving.

Jesus seeks the good of His people even if it means danger to Himself.

Jesus is the perfect king that we long for when David is foolish and sinful

There is your King, King Jesus. He is the faithful prophet, the king not like the world, the great and mighty Sovereign, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All hail the King.

Notes

¹¹ This section is a repeat of a portion of the first sermon.