

United Monarchy

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[0 : 00] So let's start with the opening verses of Psalm 89, which I've printed on the page.

I will sing of the steadfast love of the Lord forever. With my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations. For I said, steadfast love will be built up forever.

In the heavens you will establish your faithfulness. You have said, I have made a covenant with my chosen one. I have sworn to David my servant.

I will establish your offspring forever and build your throne for all generations. So this morning we're going to be talking about David.

We're going to be talking about his immediate predecessor and his son as well. We're going to be talking about the period in Israel's history when they are a single united monarchy under a king.

[1 : 04] Where we left off last time in the book of Judges. Sorry, the book of Joshua. Israel entered the land that God had promised Abraham.

And after Joshua, Israel is led by a series of chieftains who are traditionally called judges. But they did a lot more than judging.

They're not like a judge if you go to a court today. In fact, most of what we're told they did is military stuff. They went to battle. So some people say, well, it's better to call them chieftains really than judges.

And the book of Judges, which we're sort of skipping over. But the whole book can really be summed up in chapter 2 of the book. I've put a little bit of it here on the handout. And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals.

So other gods. So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. And he gave them over to plunderers. Then the Lord raised up judges or chieftains who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.

[2 : 12] Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge. But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers going after other gods. And the whole book of Judges is a cycle over and over and over of disobedience and then oppression by these plunderers who come into the land.

Then Israel cries out to the Lord. God saves them. And then there's renewed disobedience until the whole cycle repeats over and over and over.

And it continues until 1 Samuel 8 when Israel asks Samuel, prophet of God, for a king.

So let's turn to 1 Samuel 8 in your Bibles. So this is this chapter in 1 Samuel.

And we're going to be spending a lot of time in 1 and 2 Samuel today. These are really just one book, but we separate them into two for historical reasons. And it's the story of Samuel, but it's even more the story of David, who we will meet shortly.

[3 : 39] So 1 Samuel 8 is a case study in idolatry, in replacing God with something not God. So let's keep that in mind as we read.

When Samuel, prophet of God, became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah. They were judges in Beersheba.

Yet his sons did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, Behold, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways.

Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord said to Samuel, Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.

According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice.

[4 : 58] Only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them. So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him.

He said, These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. He will appoint for himself commanders over thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest.

And to make implements of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants.

He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and your female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys and put them to his work.

He will take the tenth of your flocks and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourself. But the Lord will not answer you in that day.

[6 : 04] But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, No, but there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.

And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, Obey their voice and make them a king. So, at the beginning of this story, it's reasonable for Israel to ask for a king.

At the beginning we're told that the judges of Israel at the time were corrupt. They accepted bribes, they perverted justice. But nevertheless, this asking for a king, which might make sense, is nevertheless depicted as an act of idolatry.

It's replacing God from being king. God says to Samuel, They've not rejected you, but they've rejected me from being king over them. Israel wants a king to be like all the other nations, we're told a few times here.

But as God's people, Israel is supposed to be distinct from all the other nations. Israel wants a king to go fight their battles for them. But in the Exodus, in the book of Joshua, which we talked about last week, God goes before them and fights their battles.

[7 : 30] And then Israel is amazingly obstinate. There's this, you know, from verse 10 all the way to 18, Samuel goes on and on and on about how awful this king is going to be.

And they said, no, there shall be a king over us so that we can be like all the other nations. You know, the kings of all the other nations are wicked and oppressive.

Well, we want to be just like them. It's really stunning. I imagine perhaps, I'm not a father, but I imagine perhaps parents can relate.

And then as in Numbers 13 and 14, which we talked about a couple of weeks ago now, when Israel says, you know, if only we had died in the wilderness, and then God lets them die in the wilderness. God ultimately gives Israel what they want here. He gives them a king. So, looking at this chapter, and then thinking about what you know of the rest of the Bible, is the kingship a good thing?

[8 : 39] That's not rhetorical. Let's think about that. I would say not. Hmm. Why not?

Because God's God of all things. Yeah. The way it should be. Right. Right. And they should have known that, if they were a true child of God.

People of God. Right. That's certainly what's going on here, in this story that we just read. Yeah. Yeah. You know, a time when there was a king who came under God's authority, and called the people back to the word?

Israel didn't do badly. And to that king, he called me a king. Right. Um, was a character. Did he call me a king? I worshiped other gods that the whole nation suffered.

Right. So there are good kings in the history of Israel. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. When God appointed them. Yeah. And then, one might recall that Jesus is the preeminent, the climactic king of Israel.

[9 : 53] Um, so we might ask ourselves, you know, what's going on in the mind of God?

I don't actually have an answer for this. But, uh, you know, because in, in, here in first Samuel eight, the king is, it's, it's depicted as a really bad thing for Israel to have asked for a king. And yet, Jesus comes from, like, if you take this chapter, this asking for a king, and then draw that line out through

the rest of the Bible, it ends with Jesus, uh, who is king over Israel.

So, uh, I, I think this is an example of, of God taking, uh, taking something really not good and working with it, uh, and, and bringing about something gloriously, wondrously beautiful, uh, out of, out of something really not good.

And he's the main to be able to do that. Yeah. And he's the only one that can. Amen. Yeah, Lord. It also shows that, I mean, God wasn't surprised by this demand.

He knew that this was coming, and he knew how it would work out. Um, so, yeah, there's both the, there's both the sovereignty of God in this, and the, and the will of the people who at this moment are rebelling against God, but he knows what he's going to do with it.

[11:18] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And he's very soon with, with David. Mm-hmm. And he says, I'm going to establish you as king. So, you know, then you have this sense of the kingship that's really good.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, David, yeah, we'll, we'll get there in a moment. But then, first, actually, but, yeah, yeah, quick. I just wonder, what would have happened if his sons had walked in his way?

Ah. Because that was their major complaint. Uh-huh. Of course, their complaints. So, I'm just curious if you have a, oh. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah, that's a good question. You know, one, one might say, you know, what if these sons, uh, who were judges, had actually been upright, and then Israel didn't ask for a king, because they wouldn't have no reason to, because their, their current political leadership was, you know, good. And then, uh, what, what about Messiah? What about Jesus, who is a king, right? What if, you can't have King Jesus if there's no kingship. Uh, so, oftentimes, I think we can run into these kinds of questions about, like, counterfactuals with respect to God's plan.

[12:27] Like, what if, uh, things had gone differently? What if, uh, the Romans didn't crucify Jesus? Would our sins still be blotted away? Okay. I don't have an answer.

I, I think this is, you know, some deep mysteries in, in, um, the plan of God. That, yeah. It's been a half, three years. Yeah. Decades.

Centuries. Yeah. Yeah. Two things that I'm thinking, as, in fact, Laura said, you know, that you wasn't surprised and actually, Moses said, when you ask for a king.

And, and I can't remember exactly where it went. Someone kind of did it. Yeah. But he does predict, you know, you're going to ask for a king. Right. And the other thing is, I don't think the problem was that they asked for a king.

The problem was why they asked for a king. Mm. To be like all the other nations. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. That's, that is a good observation. You know, the, their heart posture in asking for a king is to be like all the other nations around them.

[13:32] And, and there's something good for us to ask ourselves here, too. Uh, will we, like Israel, obstinately choose to be like our peers, whether that's, you know, uh, if you're a student, fellow students, um, if you're working, you know, co-workers, uh, people, people around you.

Even though God has called us as the church to be distinct from the rest of the world, um, in, in following the Lord Jesus. What do we pursue along with our peers, which we believe will give, you know, full life, joy, flourishing, call it what you will, the good life.

Um, what are our God replacements? For Israel here in 1 Samuel 8, their God replacement is a king. Uh, we have all sorts of God replacements in our lives.

Uh, things that, uh, we imagine will, will bring us, you know, lasting satisfaction that can only ultimately come from God. Um, regularly asking ourselves these sorts of questions, uh, that I think emerge out of 1 Samuel 8, uh, can be, can be a really powerful engine for spiritual growth in, in our own lives.

Um, so, uh, Samuel is totally right. And the first king of Israel, Saul, ends up being a disaster of a king, just like Samuel warns.

[15:00] Um, he starts out great, but we're going to skip the great stuff, and look at his decisive act of, his final decisive act of disobedience in, uh, chapter 15.

Um. Um. Uh, Sam is not with us this morning.

Sam had asked about this last week, uh, this passage here. So, um, Saul is commanded to go up and battle the Amalekites, um, and to devote them to destruction.

Uh, thinking back to last week, what we talked about with what all that means, um, within the book of Joshua, uh, he is to, he's commanded to kill King Agag, uh, the king of the Amalekites, but he doesn't.

Um. So, let's, let's start reading, uh, from 1 Samuel 15, let's start reading from verse 17. Um.

[16:05] Um. Samuel speaking to Saul, King Saul here, the first king of Israel. Samuel said, though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel.

And the Lord sent you on a mission and said, go devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight them until they are consumed. Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil, uh, and keep the spoil for yourself, that is, and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord?

And Saul said to Samuel, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord. I have gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me. I have brought Agag, the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction.

But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal. Um. Then Samuel confronts him poetically and says, no, uh, you're actually going to do what actually disobeying.

Uh, in verse 24, let's pick up. Saul said to Samuel, uh, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.

[17:19] He still blames shifting. Now, therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the Lord. And Samuel said to Saul, I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.

Um. This is, this is a, a, a great case study in how, how to actually, or how not to repent, how not to apologize. Uh, when Saul is first confronted about his sin, he actually insists that he's not doing anything wrong.

Um. He, he insists that he is, in fact, not sinning, which is ridiculous. Uh, and he, and he knows better, because, uh, he's been told what he's supposed to do. Um.

And then even when he's confronted the second time, he still shifts the blame onto the people. So, well, I've obeyed their voice. Uh, I, I'm thinking back now to Genesis chapter three, where, uh, Adam and Eve both shift the blame.

Uh, Adam shifts the blame onto Eve. Uh, the woman which you gave me gave me this fruit. And then Eve shifts the blame onto the serpent. Um, this happens all the time. And, and we don't need to think very hard to, to see this in our own world.

[18:30] Um, we see public apologies, if we can even call them that, uh, like this all the time. Um, as God's people, do we acknowledge our own sin, uh, frankly, and not try to self-justify?

Um. And then, at the end here, uh, Saul's sin is summed up. In verse, uh, 26, as you have rejected the word of the Lord.

Um. Saul does a bunch of bad stuff. Uh, he treats the people pretty badly. Um, the people of Israel. Sort of, just like Samuel says he would.

But then this is ultimately what it comes down to, is you have rejected the word of the Lord. Uh. Uh. Acknowledging and submitting to the authority of God's words in scripture is a really big deal.

Um. It's critical. Uh. For us to be God's people. Um. And, and, and Saul doesn't, and that's, and that's a picture of, of, you know, God rejecting Saul, uh, when, when he rejects God's words.

[19:40] Uh. There are, uh, this might be preaching to myself more than anyone else, but, uh, there, there are sometimes, I think for a lot of us, parts of the Bible we don't very much like.

But, uh, if they're all God's words, then they're all, they're all important. Um. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It seems most good is to go into leadership.

Hmm. I mean, like, whatever God tells the students, whatever level we're on, of course, that's important in our lives, but God seems to, especially, tell the people who, who are leaders, who want to listen to him.

Like, um, if you're a teacher, you'll be judged more harshly than, you know, so. Yeah. It's a really big deal that he was a king. Yeah. Yeah. Opposed the guidance that he had.

Yeah. Yeah. That's a good observation. Yeah. Uh, and we see this pattern throughout the rest of the Old Testament of, of, um, kings being, uh, when, when kings do wrong and, and worship other gods, it's, it's a really, really big deal.

[20 : 44] Yeah. Um, yeah. So, uh, instead of Saul, God chooses David to be king. Um, um, I, I put the, the passage there.

We won't read it. Um, where, where David is anointed king. Uh, and this David is described as a man after God's own heart. Um, and the rest of first Samuel, uh, is, is, uh, an exciting and, and kind of a story, uh, of, of the messy regime change between King Saul transitioning to King David.

Um, if, if, uh, in chapters of my life when I've found Bible reading to be difficult and tiresome, uh, these are some great places to go because it's just an exciting story anyway.

Um, and it's still God's words. Um, but then at the beginning of second Samuel, uh, the, the messiness of the regime change that we're just sort of skirting past, uh, is over.

Um, and David is secure in his kingship. Uh, and there is this, uh, wonderful climactic moment that I think has already been alluded to a couple of times already this morning by some of your comments in second Samuel chapter seven.

[22 : 03] Uh, once David is secure and we will read this once David is secure in his kingship, uh, he has this encounter with God, uh, and God makes covenant with him, um, which is so important.

We need to read it. Um, so starting in verse one. Now, when the King David, that is, lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the King said to Nathan, the prophet, see now I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.

Uh, and Nathan said to the King, go do all that is in your heart for the Lord is with you. Um, but that same night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan, go and tell my servant, David, thus says the Lord, would you build me a house to dwell in?

I've not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling in all places.

Why have I moved with the people of Israel? Did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel whom I commanded to shepherd my people, Israel saying, why have you not build me a house of cedar? Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant, David, thus says the Lord of hosts.

[23 : 23] I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep that you should be prince over my people of Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you.

And I will make of you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more.

And violent men shall afflict them no more as formerly from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you who shall come from your body. And I will establish his kingdom and he shall build a house for my name.

And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men. But my steadfast love will not depart from him as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.

[24 : 32] And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. In accordance with all these words and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

So this passage turns on a pun. And I used to wonder, is this just a pun in English or is it in Hebrew as well? And it is. It works in Hebrew.

In Hebrew, it's a pun. David says, you know, I'm living in a house. God's living in a tent. And Nick's sermon is going to be all about that tent, the tabernacle.

So David reasonably thinks, I'm going to build God a house because I shouldn't live in a nicer place than God does. And that's a nice thought. But God says, actually, you're not going to build me a house.

I'm going to build you a house. Not a house like a physical building, but a house like a dynasty, a family line. I always thought that was really cute.

[25 : 38] It turns out. The Bible is funny sometimes, at any rate. And God also promises peace for David and for all of Israel.

Keep that in mind. That will come up again this morning. And David's offspring will build God's house and will have an eternal dynasty.

He will be God's son. I will be to him a father and he shall be to me a son. And though God will punish this offspring's sin, he won't reject him completely.

Now, don't look at your sheet. Who is this offspring? Yeah, that is this, you know, what is it?

It's a trope that, you know, whenever someone asks a question in Sunday school, the answer is always Jesus. That is what is often taught and ultimately it's right.

[26 : 42] I do want to establish that. I'm not trying to say that this isn't about Jesus. Nevertheless, let's think about this for a moment. God says, when he sins, I will punish him.

Did Jesus sin? Great. Amen. Jesus didn't sin.

So, one might be wondering, how could this be about Jesus? But then, also, he will build a house for my name.

Now, if you know the rest of the story here, Solomon, David's son, his immediate descendant, builds God a house. He builds the temple.

And yet, New Testament authors, like, for instance, I put Hebrews chapter 1, verse 5.

[27 : 46] New Testament authors cite this very chapter for 2 Samuel 7 and say, this is about Jesus.

Were they wrong? Did the inspired New Testament authors not know their Bible as well as we do?

No. No. No. I really want to make sure. I'm not suggesting that this is not about Jesus the Messiah.

And yet, I think this can be a really good case study in how do we read and understand texts in the Old Testament that New Testament authors say are messianic, say they refer to Jesus.

Because oftentimes, if you look at those texts in their own context, on the face of it, they don't really seem to be about Jesus.

Another great example, which I won't talk about this morning because it would take, you know, an hour, is, behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. Well, we read that every, and they shall call his name Emmanuel.

[28 : 51] We read that every Christmas. And yet, if you look at it in Isaiah chapter 7, it doesn't really seem to be about Jesus because it's given as a sort of sign for King Ahaz to reassure him.

Well, Jesus being born long after Ahaz is dead and buried, you know, food for worms. Well, that's not really a good sign for him, right? Maybe I shouldn't have brought that up.

I don't mean to introduce turmoil. I do think that is ultimately about Jesus. But oftentimes, we find ourselves thinking, well, these Old Testament texts that we say are about Jesus, in their own context, don't really seem to be necessarily.

So, I think we cannot read these as just isolated verses, as a kind of, like, a single verse that operates as a kind of a proof. This verse proves that Jesus is Messiah.

This isn't how New Testament authors read their Bibles. It's not wise for us to either. We should look at it in the broader context of the entire book of the Bible.

[30 : 02] In this case, the book of 1 and 2 Samuel, which we'll do as we continue this morning. It's also, in God's kindness towards us, God has given us not just, you know, individual passages like this, but in the Bible, just within the Old Testament even, God has given us inspired authoritative commentary on earlier texts in the Bible.

So, yeah, later texts in the Old Testament refer to earlier texts in the Old Testament and interpret them for us. And that interpretation is divinely inspired because it's in the Bible.

So, that could be really helpful for us. I put a text here from Jeremiah 23. You know, when Babylon comes and smashes up Jerusalem and it seems that the monarchy is completely dissolved, Israelites are looking back on 2 Samuel 7 and reading the same text in light of their current circumstances.

They think, hold on, God. You said that David would have an eternal dynasty. But Jerusalem has just been destroyed and we're all in exile and there's no king in Jerusalem.

It seems that David's eternal dynasty is over. What gives? And then in light of that, the Israelites realize, well, that must mean that there will be a new David coming who will restore the Davidic line, will restore the monarchy, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

[32 : 09] And then in light of those changing circumstances, Israelite authors realize this is actually on one level about Solomon, but on a deeper level about this coming deliverer who will restore this eternal dynasty.

Does that make sense? Any questions there? I don't know how clear I speak sometimes. Just an observation.

I think it's fascinating. I do agree with you. Like, these threads, you see them as you put them together, and they make these connections where you think, in any isolated text, you might go, ah, the evidence isn't, like, overwhelmingly convincing that this is a messianic text.

Then you start to read these and you put them together and you think, there's actually a progression of thought and a connection here that's really powerful. I think it's also interesting in 2 Samuel that, and I think you see this often in some of the most key texts, where it almost seems like when God is promising things to his people, he's promising some things that are going to be fulfilled more immediately, and some things that there's just no way.

You know, the promise that they're going to have rest from all their enemies, does that ever happen in the history of Israel? So you see, even embedded in this, that God is saying, yes, there's going to be a son, Solomon, who will build a house, and he will be disciplined by me.

[33 : 34] But then there are other parts of it. You just think, this is pointing to a further horizon. And God embeds some of that, even in the text itself. It makes you think, gosh, I wonder what this is pointing to.

And then those threads start to give answers in richer ways. And this is something that happened. And this isn't just a phenomenon unique to the Bible.

This actually happens in all sorts of completely secular literature. If you read Orwell's novel 1984 today, when we have social media and Amazon Alexa speaker listening to you in your home and serving you advertisements, if you, I saw this YouTube video, never mind.

That's a rabbit trail. So 1984 takes on a kind of a, with its surveillance state, takes on a new kind of depth of meaning in light of the changing circumstances.

Or Margaret Atwood wrote this novel, A Handmaid's Tale, decades ago. Well, I think they made a Hulu TV series out of it.

[34 : 45] My mother watches. She told me about it. Well, reading that today, in light of the hashtag Me Too movement, feels, I imagine, I haven't, I read it in college.

I imagine it feels rather different reading it today in light of Me Too than it did when it was first written, you know, decades ago, I think in the 80s. So I bring those up as examples.

Or Captain America. Here's my hip, Marvel makes billions of dollars. Here's my hip pop culture reference. You know, Captain America was invented in 1940 as like this super nationalistic, you know, figure.

But then later on, decades later, Watergate happens, the Vietnam War happens, comic book writers sort of creatively re-understand, re-appropriate this figure of Captain America to be kind of a conflicted figure in light of, you know, how can some, in light of the changing circumstances in the political realities of the United States.

I bring those up as examples. This isn't just something that happens in the Bible, but in all sorts of literature. And so when we, all that to say, when we see a text in the Bible, whether it's about Messiah or not, actually, it can help to look at how the rest of the Old Testament sort of interprets that passage to see how their understanding of it develops.

[36 : 26] And it even continues to develop after the Old Testament was all written. I have a text here from the Dead Sea Scrolls that cites 2 Samuel 7 and said, this refers to the branch of David who will arise in the last days.

It doesn't get any more explicit than that. This was understood very explicit to me. This is about Messiah, the branch of David. There is a fantastic, very worshipful book that I read recently, all about finding Messiah in, finding Jesus in the Old Testament that I'd be happy to point you to if this is a topic of some interest to you.

But then after this high point of, well, before I move on, any thoughts, questions? Yeah, Tyler. Just briefly, I think the way you interpret the Old Testament is so critical for us.

I'm just thinking of the way Jesus, after he rose again, he started with Moses and the prophets and interpreted all things concerning himself. So the first thing you do with the apostles is to teach them to read the Bible in this way.

And it just underlines how important it for us is to understand the Old Testament and understand what Jesus came to do. So when you separate the two, you kind of lose the meaning of all that Jesus was accomplishing when he died.

[37 : 59] Yeah, yeah. This is in like Luke 24, the road to Emmaus, where Jesus teaches the apostles how to read the Bible, everything referring to himself.

Yeah. So after this high point of 2 Samuel 7, the rest of David's life fails to realize this vision in this covenant.

Beginning with this atrocious sin in 2 Samuel 11, this David and Bathsheba incident. So usually in the ancient world, kings are depicted as the idealized almost semi-divine kind of figures.

Not so in the Bible. All people, including and especially the powerful, are subject to divine justice in the biblical worldview.

Let's read 2 Samuel 11. And I might skip bits of it for the sake of time.

[39 : 18] Now, in the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, his servants, with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah.

But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened one late afternoon when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house that he saw from the roof a woman bathing.

And the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? So David sent messengers and took her.

And she came to him and he lay with her. Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness. Then she returned to her house. And the woman conceived and she sent and told David, I am pregnant.

So David sent word to Joab, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. And then for a while here, David tries to get Uriah to go down to his house to sleep with his wife.

[40 : 21] But he refuses. So then picking up in verse 14, In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting and then draw back from him that he may be struck down and die.

And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died.

Then Joab sent word of this back to David. Then picking up in verse 26, When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband.

And when the morning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. So we're told that it's the time of year when kings go out to battle.

But the king of Israel is chilling out in Jerusalem, apparently bored out of his crotch because he's not using his time diligently.

[41 : 34] He's not doing what he should be doing. So he's pacing up on the roof. And from there, he sees this woman Bathsheba who is unfortunately abused and misrepresented sometimes in church teaching.

So I translated this chapter in my Hebrew class this past year at seminary. And so I talked with a bunch of my fellow students about how they've heard this text taught. And sometimes it's taught that Bathsheba is bathing on the roof, thereby trying to seduce David.

That is not what's going on here. I don't know where that idea comes from, but the cynical part of me has some guesses.

But verse two is unambiguous, especially in Hebrew. David's on the roof. We're not told where Bathsheba is bathing, presumably not on the roof because that's a rather odd place to bathe. We're given no hint that she's trying to seduce David. She is not culpable here. Sometimes this incident is depicted as a wholly consensual affair.

[42 : 42] Frankly, I think particularly in light of this Me Too thing that I had already mentioned, we ought to recognize that the power differential between King David, the king, and this woman Bathsheba is so great that it makes any consent fraught.

We're given no hint that Bathsheba's culpable for this. David isn't the wrong. Full stop. And if you find this, reading this narrative troubling, you're not, I think that's understandable, particularly because Bathsheba is denied a voice by the narrator, which actually sort of makes sense because this isn't about her.

She's not the one doing the wrong. It's about David sinning. Nevertheless, she's given only two words. I'm pregnant in the whole story. She's even denied a name instead being called the woman

or she's referred to repeatedly by her relation to men in her life, like the wife of Uriah the Hittite. So if you find this, reading this troubling, you're not alone. A number of women in my Hebrew class actually found this really troubling. So I just wanted to mention that. But this is a story about David messing up, ultimately. It's made clear in verse four, so just to get the flow of the narrative straight, it's made clear in verse four that Bathsheba is not pregnant to begin with.

[44 : 09] But then she gets pregnant, which presents a problem for David because he has to cover up his adultery and I think it's not wrong to say rape, frankly. So first, he brings Uriah back and tries to get Uriah to sleep with her because then if they spend the night together and then she's pregnant, then David's off the hook.

But Uriah is more righteous than David and he refuses because he says, well, I should be off at battle anyway. What am I doing here? So then he gets Uriah killed. It's very crafty. It's very clever. Our cover-ups of our sin can often be more sinful even than the sin to begin with. And that's in covering up his sin.

David multiplies his sin. And we're told that God, in no uncertain terms, that God is displeased with this state of affairs. Nathan the prophet confronts David about this in chapter 12. And we're told that the consequence for this will be that in chapter 12, verse 10, therefore the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised me.

[45 : 23] God says. So, recall that peace had been promised for Israel. Now the sword is never departing from David's house.

David in his sin disqualifies himself from the promises of God on one level. But then notice the difference in David's repentance compared to Saul's that we read before.

David simply says, chapter 12, verse 13, I have sinned against the Lord. In Hebrew, that's just two words. He doesn't try to justify himself.

He just acknowledges I've sinned. He doesn't try to shift blame. It's only I that have sinned. Unlike Saul, David rapidly recognizes his sin and quickly repents.

In this sense, he can be called a man after God's own heart. Not that he's any less sinful. In fact, David is not a great guy, right?

[46 : 29] But he recognizes quickly his sin and turns away from it. In that sense, he can be called a man after God's own heart. This is a model for our own apologies, our own repentance, our own confession of sin to God.

Simply, I have sinned against the Lord. Full stop. And this sword never departing from his house is exactly what happens. His sons die.

His last son, generations later, Jesus, is crucified. And much like Israel in Numbers 13 and 14, like we talked about a couple weeks ago, David disqualifies himself from a promise of God, that promise for peace.

But then what about the rest of the promises? For the eternal dynasty? You know, is that also jeopardized? Well, later on, I give some references, David seems to think maybe that is the case. And even at the end of David's life, I give a verse there, we're reminded of Uriah the Hittite in a listing of David's mighty men. Uriah the Hittite is put very last, reminding the reader.

[47 : 39] David screwed up big time. All of David's life, and Solomon's as well, which we unfortunately can't get into, fails to realize the vision of 2 Samuel 7.

And so, 1 and 2 Samuel present us with a question at the end of it. If David and Solomon, two of the greatest kings in Israel's history in the Old Testament, fail to fulfill this vision of God's covenant with David, who will?

And that is the Sunday school answer of Jesus. Right. So, we have like two minutes.

I tried to crunch more into this this morning than we really had time for. Forgive me. But any parting thoughts or questions? Yes. So, I have heard several times the kings go out to war and David's not going out to war and so that's the beginning of the problem.

However, if you read the things that first came in the sequence, you find that shortly before this, his leadership says, you can't go out to battle, you might get killed.

[48 : 58] And so, it's his leadership that's actually kept him home. He obviously just used the time. But, it's not that he shirked his responsibility. It's that the leaders under him that said, we can't afford to take you out of battle.

That might be so. Yeah. That might be so. In which case, forgive me for misteaching. Yeah. Alright, it's 9.50.

So, let me pray briefly. Lord, thank you that you instruct us in your word on how to respond to our sin.

May we be like David in quickly recognizing and turning away and not shifting blame. And Lord, as we go upstairs to worship that great son of David, Jesus, thank you.

that you have given us a great king who fulfills that vision of your covenant with David. Give us, I pray, hearts of worship to him in whose name we pray.

[50 : 09] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.