

The Story of the Bible Week 7: The Life of David

Questions:

1. Has looking at the Bible as a narrative, in its own context, helped you understand the Bible better? What parts of the Bible, if any, that we haven't covered yet are made clearer to you understanding the origin story?
2. Do you see Jesus (or things pointing to Jesus) in the story we covered this week?
3. David sought the Presence of the Lord and desired to build Him a house, because of this God made a covenant with David. How do you think this can be applied to our lives?
4. David had several failures to do what God wanted, God forgave David, but sin still has consequences. Are you aware of the consequences of sin and does it cause you to seek Jesus more or does shame keep you from relationship with Him?
5. How can we remind ourselves to lean on Him and trust in Him during our failing?

Recap

- God's name is Yahweh, which means HE IS.
- Yahweh created everything.
- Man lived in the Garden of Eden, where God dwelled with man face-to-face.
- Mankind and the angels rebelled a total of 3 times each.
- God made a nation for Himself through a man named Abraham who became known as the Israelites.
- God's people leave Egypt for the promised land where God seeks to partially restore the Edenic principle of God dwelling with man face-to-face.
- He has Israel make a Tent for His Presence to dwell in.
- He gives the Israelites the Torah (Law) which is what the Israelite life should look like if they having "loving-loyalty" to Him. It is not a means of earning salvation.
- This lifestyle is also to set apart Israel from the other nations, which would hopefully lead to other people coming to put their "loving loyalty" in Yahweh as well.
- When Israel got to the promised land, they refused to enter the land because of the Nephilim/Giants and wander for 40 years.
- In the promised land (after the 40 years), the Israelites war against the Nephilim/Giants, wiping them out except for a few places where the remnant of the giants remained.
- The land of Israel is to be viewed as belonging to Yahweh, it as a whole is the place where He has chosen to dwell
- Israel began has a long period of ups and down where they would worship Yahweh or they would worship the gods of the surrounding nations.
- Israel will ask for a king and a man named Saul becomes the first King of Israel.
- Saul was more concerned with how he looked in the eyes of the people than obeying Yahweh.
- David is anointed the second King of Israel.
- Saul becomes jealous of David and seeks to kill David. David is forced to leave Israel and live with the Philistines.
- Spiritual Warfare is portrayed as territorial in the Bible.
 - The land is lent to the Israelites, the Land of Israel belongs to Him (Leviticus 25:23).
 - Israelites sacrificing to "territorial spirits" (Deuteronomy 32:17).
 - Princes of Persia and Greece (Daniel 10).
 - Pagan priests avoiding land where Yahweh had defeated their god (1 Samuel 5).
 - Gentiles (non-Israelites) asking for dirt when they turn their allegiance to Yahweh (2 Kings 5).

- The powers of darkness have their authority stripped away by Jesus by His death and resurrection. The powers of darkness are still territorial, trying to control people under their influence to stall the Great Commission from being completed.

We are now the “sacred space” where God dwells. We carry His presence wherever we go and are called preach the Gospel, have relationship with God (prayer, worship, reading your Bible), and live holy lives.

John 4:19–24 (ESV)

19 The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” 21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Saul dies, and David is made King.

David lived many years running from King Saul. Some suggest as many as 15. During this time, David still fought against the Philistines, defeating many of them. While David is away, Samuel dies. The Philistines gather their forces for war against Israel. Saul became very afraid of the army. Because of his fear, Saul would seek out a witch. Saul made the witch bring up Samuel from the grave, something explicitly forbidden in the Law (Leviticus 19:31).

1 Samuel 28:15–19 (LEB)

15 Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” And Saul said, “I am in distress! For the Philistines are about to make war against me, but God has turned away from me, and he does not answer me any more, not by the prophets or by the dreams. So I called to you to let me know what I should do.” 16 Then Samuel said, “Why do you ask me, since Yahweh has turned away from you and has become your enemy? 17 Yahweh has done to you just as he spoke by my hand! Yahweh has torn the kingdom from your hand and has given it to your neighbor, to David. 18 Because you did not obey Yahweh and did not carry out the fierce anger of his wrath against Amalek, therefore Yahweh has done this thing to you today. 19 And Yahweh will also give Israel with you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me, and Yahweh will also give the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”

Just as the spirit of Samuel had prophesied, Saul died the next day in battle. Time and time again, Saul sought Yahweh only for his selfish purposes; when that didn’t work, he called on witchcraft (witchcraft, by definition, is seeking the supernatural apart from the Lord). Saul’s life is a warning for all of God’s people: selfishness brings compromises into our lives, these compromises lead to further areas of disobedience, and continued disobedience can lead to rejecting Yahweh in our lives.

After Saul dies, David is made King. David’s rule is far from perfect, but David rules as a man after God’s heart, and Israel follows. After David was anointed King, He set his sights on the Jebusites (one of those clans mentioned containing giants); David defeated them and took the city of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

The Tent of David

The Ark of the Covenant had not been in the Tabernacle for the entire reign of Saul. One of David's first acts as King was to bring the Ark back to the people. Initially, David tried to carry the Ark on a cart. However, the Ark was supposed to be carried by the priests using poles. When the cart hit a threshold, one of the priests touched the Ark to support it and died. As God had warned Israel, sinful man dies when in contact with the Presence of Yahweh. This is why there are all sorts of rules for when the High Priest goes into the Most Holy Place and why the Ark is supposed to be carried by poles. Because of the death of the priest, David drops off the Ark at the house of a Gentile (who served Yahweh) named Obed (which means servant). David quickly learns his lesson when he searches the scriptures. After three months, David saw how blessed the Obed was because of the Ark and carried the Ark into Jerusalem. There, David pitched a tent and set up 24/7 worship around the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark would remain here until the building of the First Temple by David's son Solomon.

The Covenant of David

David desired to build a temple for Yahweh. This moved the heart of God; it was not something that Yahweh had ever asked for. Because of this, God made a covenant with David:

2 Samuel 7:8–13 (LEB)

8 ...'Thus says Yahweh of hosts, "I took you from the pasture from following the sheep to be a leader over my people, over Israel, 9 and I have been with you everywhere you went. I have cut off all of your enemies from in front of you, and I will make a great name for you, as the name of the great ones who are on the earth. 10 I will make a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them so that they can dwell in their own place. They will not tremble any longer, and the children of wickedness will not afflict them again, as in the former days. 11 In the manner that I appointed judges over my people Israel, I will give you rest from all your enemies. And Yahweh declares to you that Yahweh will build a house for you. 12 When your days are full and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you who will go out from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

David's desire to enthrone Yahweh so pleased Him that the future Messiah would be born from the line of David.

David's military victories

David would go on to defeat many of Israel's enemies. Starting with David and ending with his son, Solomon, Israel would control every inch of land God had promised Abraham more than 600 years earlier. Under David's leadership, Israel would bring an end to every one of the Nephilim lineage, ending with four of Goliath's relatives.

1 Chronicles 20:4–8 (ESV) [See also 2 Samuel 21:15–22]

4 And after this there arose war with the Philistines at Gezer. Then Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Sippai, who was one of the descendants of the giants (Rephaim), and the Philistines were subdued. 5 And there was again war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of Jair struck down Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. 6 And there was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number, and he also was descended from the giants (Repha). 7 And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea, David's brother, struck him down. 8 These were descended from the giants (Repha) in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

David's prayer reveals just how spiritual this battle was:

2 Samuel 22:1–7 (ESV)

1 And David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. 2 He said, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, 3 my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence. 4 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. 5 "For the waves of death encompassed me, the torrents of destruction assailed me; 6 the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. 7 "In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I called. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry came to his ears.

David's moral failure.

While the Bible's narrative focuses on who David was as the first righteous king, setting up a template for what a king of Israel should look like, the Bible doesn't shy away from David's failures. The biggest moral failure occurs one spring when David sends the army to battle without him. David was responsible for being on the battlefield leading the army, but for some reason decided to stay home. One day, David is walking on the roof of his palace. His palace is the highest point in the area, and he can see everything from his roof. From his rooftop, he sees a woman named Bathsheba (wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of David's mighty men) performing a ritual cleansing to remove her uncleanness due to monthly female biology. Often, this story is portrayed that Bathsheba was on her rooftop and that she was seducing David. However, there is not a hint of this in the text. Instead, the text goes out of its way to present Bathsheba as innocent and David as the offender; for example, when the prophet Nathan confronts David at the Lord's command, Bathsheba is spoken of as a helpless and innocent lamb.

David took Bathsheba and slept with her. As a result, Bathsheba became pregnant. David panicked, after all, this was another man's wife. David plots to have Uriah come back from the battle, sleep with his wife, and cover up David's sin. So that's what David does; he sends a messenger to bring Uriah home. When Uriah gets home, he asks Uriah for a report on how the battle is going and how Joab, the commander, is doing and suggests that Uriah "go home and wash his feet." There is some cultural context needed here. "Feet" is a Hebrew euphemism for male and female private parts. David, in reality, says, "Go home and sleep with your wife." Had Uriah gone home, David's plan would have worked; however, Uriah followed God's commands. The Bible commands men who are about to go to battle to abstain from sleeping with their wives before battle as a consecration to the Lord (Deut. 23:9–10; 1 Sam. 21:5; 2 Sam. 11:8–11). Uriah instead slept in the king's house with David's servants. David tried the next day and again failed.

2 Samuel 11:14–18 (ESV)

14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 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." 16 And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. 17 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. 18 Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting.

After allowing Bathsheba to mourn, David brought her into his house. There would be consequences for David's sin. Nathan, a prophet of Yahweh, was sent to David by the Lord. Nathan tells David a parable that reveals and convicts David of his sin. Because of David's repentance, the Lord forgives his sin and tells David he shall not die. However, because of his sin, there would be many consequences on David's house.

There are a lot of lessons to learn from this single chapter in the Bible. The most important of which is understanding the consequences of sin. This is a passage where we can struggle with the outcome. David would undergo awful things in his family due to this sin. The Lord does or allows many uncomfortable things to happen in humanity. This is not always a direct result of our sin like it was for David (especially in the New Covenant), but it is a result of living in a world where sin has been introduced. We, like David, can get too comfortable around the potential of sin. David was not where he should have been; he shouldn't have been watching the public bathhouses (or looking into Bathsheba's windows if she was cleansing at home); he shouldn't have used his power to coerce Bathsheba to sleep with him; he shouldn't have covered up the pregnancy, and he shouldn't have murdered Uriah—the snowball effect of a minor, minimal compromise led to so much death and destruction. We must fight in our lives to not live with the same ignorance of the consequence of sin, nor how quickly a tiny sin can lead to greater depravity. Our place is with the Lord, fighting to love Him, laying our past life down, fighting to live in His presence, led by His spirit, led into holiness.

Let me be clear: Not everything you face (sickness, pain, etc.) is due to your sin. But it can happen. We often like to side with two extremes. One side thinks every sniffle, headache, or backache is due to sin in the person's life. The other side says sin never causes these things. The Bible is somewhere in the middle, supporting things happening because we live in a fallen world (Romans 8:20). While also supporting sickness due to living in sin (1 Corinthians 11:30). In the end, Jesus is the one who forgives our sins and heals us. Seek Him fully, allow Him to speak to you, reveal things in your life, and change you. He is always waiting for us to reach out to Him.

Bathsheba's Recompense (making things right).

As for Bathsheba, the Lord honored her. David put her in a terrible place, and many terrible things happened. The Lord prospered Bathsheba; she gave birth to a son from David and named him Solomon (which means 'peace'). It would be Solomon who would become the next (legitimate) King of Israel. After Solomon, she had another son whom they named Nathan (which means 'to give'). Solomon and Nathan would be the line from which Jesus' family comes. Matthew 1, the genealogy of Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph, goes through Solomon. Luke 3, the genealogy of Mary, goes through Nathan.

Absalom usurps David's throne.

Next, the narrative introduces us to one of David's sons, Absalom. Absalom would be an illegitimate King of Israel. No prophet of Yahweh anointed him, but rather men whom Absalom would sway into making him king. Absalom's name means "father of peace," ironic being that Absalom would cause the most chaos in David's reign. The trouble Absalom would cause is a result of the consequences of David's sins. Absalom's story starts with his sister being violated. This would cause Absalom to plot to murder him, which he did. Absalom would flee from Israel for three years. After three years, Joab, the commander of David's army, was sent to Absalom; long story short, Absalom returned to David and was forgiven.

However, Absalom didn't return in peace; rather, Absalom began plotting against David, gathering men for battle and swaying the people's opinion. It would get so bad that a messenger would come to David, saying:

2 Samuel 15:13–14 (ESV)

13 "The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom." 14 Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

We don't know how long Absalom would remain king, though it seems short-lived. Before long, Absalom's army would go out to fight against David, and Joab's armor-bearers would strike Absalom down. The followers of Absalom would flee, and David would regain his kingship.

Yahweh judges Israel.

One thing we must understand about the Bible is that the Bible interprets the Bible. At the end of David's life, both the writers of the book(s) of Samuel and Chronicles record Yahweh judging the people of Israel. It starts with the Lord standing as an "adversary of Israel" with His "anger kindled against Israel." For whatever reason this is happening, David tells Joab to number the the people (specifically those who could "draw that sword"). We aren't told directly what the sin of the people was, but what we do know is David's response was improper. The Lord rebukes David for numbering the people because the Law (Exodus 30:12) restricts how a census can be done. As a result of David's sin, Yahweh lets David choose the punishment for Israel for their sin. The options were: 1) 7 years of famine in Israel. 2) his enemies would chase David for three months. 3) The Lord would send a plague on Israel. David chooses the third option, and 70,000 men of Israel die.

The context of scripture tells us what happens. The "Anger of Yahweh being kindled against Israel" is always in connection with idolatry. Idolatry, the worship of other gods, makes one an adversary of Yahweh. Over and over again, He gave the Israelites time to repent of their ways; only after they didn't repent would He put the idolaters to death. The same is certainly the case here. Yahweh is just. David knew this, and it's why he made this choice.

1 Chronicles 21:13–14 (ESV)

13 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man." 14 So the Lord sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell.

David knew only the wicked would receive judgment for the sins of Israel. As we discussed before, we need to understand the reality of the consequences of sin. Sin leads to death. It may not be instant, but all sin will lead to death in some way. Jesus wants not only to save us from eternal death but also to save us from the death sin can create in our lives, our witnesses, our relationships, our hearts, and our minds.

What set David apart?

Both Saul and David had moral failures. You could even argue that David's were worse. Saul isn't recorded committing adultery and then murdering someone to cover it up. Saul didn't number the people against God's Law. How can David be a man after God's own heart? How can David be remembered as a righteous king while Saul is remembered as a failure? It's because of how David dealt with his sin. When David committed adultery and murder, he admitted his wrongdoing, accepted whatever consequences came his way, prayed, and fasted. Psalm 51 is David's cry due to his sin.

Psalm 51 (ESV)

TITLE To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. 16 For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. 18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; build up the walls of Jerusalem; 19 then will you delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

When David numbered the people and the Lord came as a plague upon the people, he did the same thing.

1 Chronicles 21:15–19 (ESV)

15 And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the Lord saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, “It is enough; now stay your hand.” And the angel of the Lord was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 16 And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. 17 And David said to God, “Was it not I who gave command to number the people? It is I who have sinned and done great evil. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand, O Lord my God, be against me and against my father’s house. But do not let the plague be on your people.” 18 Now the angel of the Lord had commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and raise an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19 So David went up at Gad’s word, which he had spoken in the name of the Lord.

This threshing floor where David built an altar to Yahweh would be the very place that David’s son Solomon would build the temple.

The Lesson.

This isn't a map of how to sin freely. We can't just sin, saying, “I can just repent and seek the Lord, and He will forgive me.” At the same time, there is no end to His forgiveness. David understood that our sin should lead us to His feet to receive His forgiveness, His heart, His mind, and His love. It is in His presence that we are genuinely changed (2 Corinthians 3:15-18). However, what seems to happen is when we sin, we feel the shame of our sin. That shame keeps us from seeking Him; it keeps us from worship, keeps us from prayer, and will keep us from going to church and being around other believers. We can often believe we must “change before Jesus will receive us,” but this isn't the case. Jesus wants us as we are, dirty and filthy. He will clean us, He will wash our feet.