

The Story: Chapter 11 - From Shepherd to King

Major Events:

- Samuel goes to Bethlehem to the Jesse family to find a King and YHWH says to look at the heart and chooses David, the youngest brother.
- The Philistines giant Goliath (6 cubits=9ft.) killed by David's slingshot
- David part of Saul's army and becomes a close friend to Jonathan, Saul's son, who becomes a spy for David.
- "Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands"
- Saul tries to kill David and Jonathan is killed in battle against the Philistines.
- Saul falls on his own sword and dies at Mt. Giboa.
- David's tribe of Judah anoints him King but not accepted by Saul's followers in the north for 7 years.
- David makes Jerusalem his capital and brings the ark of the covenant to his new capital.

Major Themes:

- The end of the tribal confederacy and the ambivalence of taking on Kings to be like other nations, i.e. theocratic tradition and monarchy.
- David defeating the Philistines and driving them to the coastal plains ie. Gaza
- Israel becoming like other nations with Kings who exercised power over Israel's social life.
- David bringing the religious traditions of the tribal confederacy to Jerusalem (the Ark) with great pomp and circumstance.
- This is the beginning of the royal theology that YHWH is now making a promise –covenant with David and his lineage.

Details to be aware of and questions:

- 12th BCE, the Philistines held the secrets to smelting iron and thus able to keep Israel at their political mercy.
- The Philistines aggression gave the final blow to the tribal confederacy.
- The 12th and 11th BCE of David and Solomon was the golden age of Israel's power as the powerful nations of Babylonia, the Hittites, Egyptians, and Assyrians were either too weak or not yet powerful enough.
- The traditions of the monarchy were preserved and edited by the Jerusalem circle under David and Solomon. How different would history be if Saul's circle wrote this history?
- Saul was a great military leader but a tragic figure, why?
- The Goliath story is a legendary story from the oral tradition. What purpose does it serve for faithful Jews or for us? What can legend or saga tell us that modern history can't?
- David was a shrewd and brilliant politician; making the neutral city of Jerusalem the new capital, bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and marrying Saul's daughter.
- Is Nathan a counter-point to David's ambition to build a temple or was he just an old fuddy-duddy?