King David Lecture

SAUL: 1 Sam 9 – 15

DAVID: With Saul and By Himself:

(1) HDR - 1 Sam 16 – 2 Sam 5 (HDR – History of David’s Rise)
1 Sam 17-31; 2 Sam – 24 – 1 King 2.

HISTORY OF DAVID’S RISE:

Reads like a novel, but attempts to justify the Kingship of David? Collins: “It shows that David was not an outlaw, a deserter, or Philistine mercenary, and that he was not implicated in Saul’s death or in the deaths of some of Saul’s family and followers” (237)

(2) Succession Narrative: 2 Sam 9 – 1 Kings 2 (David to Solomon)

2 Sam. 9–20 and 1 Kings 1-2. A historical document centered on the court of King David. The narrative has non-historical elements when the author includes lively personal dialogues, but his main interest is political. He demonstrates the legitimacy of David's regime, defends its politics, and is exercised about who should succeed him.

- Ends: “So the Kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon…” 1 Kings 2:46b

(3) Solomon 1 Kings 1 – 11

DAVID IS IN 40 CHAPTERS – SOLOMON in 11

DIVIDED KINGDOM 1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings 25

EARLY: 9:1-10:16, 11, 13-14 PRO MONARCHY
LATE: 7-8, 10:17-27, 12, 15 ANTI-MONARCHY
WHY IS THIS DAVID MATERIAL IMPORTANT?

(1) ZION THEOLOGY AND KINGSHIP MAY HAVE BEEN CRUCIAL AT ONE STAGE

NRS Psalm 2:1 Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying, 3 "Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the LORD has them in derision. 5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 6 "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill." 7 I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my son; today I have begotten you. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." 10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned. O rulers of the earth. 11 Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling 12 kiss his feet, or he will be angry, and you will perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Happy are all who take refuge in him.

ZION PSALMS

e numerated again recently by Matthew Lynch:

(1) Zion is where God defeat’s enemies and builds his house (Ps. 78:66 then 67)
(2) Zion is a symbol of Yhwh’s world-ordering justice
(3) The convergence of the nations to Zion in response
(4) Zion, a place of refuge for the disenfranchised

(Lynch, 248-249, Cf. Ollenburger’s similar summary, 13-22)

There is universal agreement on three Psalms almost always cited as central Zion Theology Psalms, namely 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122.

(2) BUT THERE IS ALSO EVIDENCE OF PROPAGANDA IN SUPPORT OF DAVID

How is David Chosen?
1 Sam 16:1-13 – Anointing young David
1 Sam 16:14-23 – Musician
1 Sam 17 – reintroduced again in Goliath story.

(3) TWO GOLIATH STORIES?

BUT WHY GOLIATH STORIES IN THE FIRST PLACE?

David with his Philistine buddies
The TWO Stories of David and Goliath (Story TWO IS MISSING from Old Greek Version!!)

**STORY ONE:**

1 Samuel 17:1-58 were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. Saul and the Israelites gathered and encamped in the valley of Elah, and formed ranks against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. He had greaves of bronze on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and his spear’s head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-bearer went before him. He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." And the Philistine said, "Today I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man, that we may fight together." When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

32 David said to Saul, "Let no one’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." 33 Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are just a boy, and he has been a warrior from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and whenever a lion or a bear came, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after it and struck it down, rescuing the lamb from its mouth; and if it turned against me, I would catch it by the jaw, strike it down, and kill it. Your servant has killed both lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 David said, "The LORD, who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, will save me from the hand of this Philistine." So Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you!" 38 Saul clothed David with his armor; he put a bronze helmet on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail. David strapped Saul’s sword over the armor, and he tried in vain to walk, for he was not used to them.
Then David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these; for I am not used to them." So David removed them. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, and chose five smooth stones from the wadi, and put them in his shepherd's bag, in the pouch; his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine.

42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43 The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the field." 45 But David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This very day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head; and I will give the dead bodies of the Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air and to the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not save by sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's and he will give you into our hand." 48 When the Philistine drew nearer to meet David,... 49 David put his hand in his bag, took out a stone, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead; the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

51 Then David ran and stood over the Philistine; he grasped his sword, drew it out of its sheath, and killed him; then he cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. 52 The troops of Israel and Judah rose up with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. 53 The Israelites came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. 54 David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent.
STORY TWO

12 Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. 13 The three eldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle; the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. 14 David was the youngest; the three eldest followed Saul, 15 but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. 16 For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening. 17 Jesse said to his son David, "Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers; 18 also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See how your brothers fare, and bring some token from them." 19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 20 David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, took the provisions, and went as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the encampment as the army was going forth to the battle line, shouting the war cry. 21 Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. 22 David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage, ran to the ranks, and went and greeted his brothers. 23 As he talked with them, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him. 24 All the Israelites, when they saw the man, fled from him and were very much afraid. 25 The Israelites said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel. The king will greatly enrich the man who kills him, and will give him his daughter and make his family free in Israel." 26 David said to the men who stood by him, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" 27 The people answered him in the same way, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him." 28 His eldest brother Eliab heard him talking to the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David. He said, "Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart; for you have come down just to see the battle." 29 David said, "What have I done now? It was only a question." 30 He turned away from him toward another and spoke in the same way; and the people answered him again as before. 31 When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul; and he sent for him.
41 The Philistine came on and drew near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him.

48B... David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, striking down the Philistine and killing him; there was no sword in David's hand.

55 When Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know." 56 The king said, "Inquire whose son the stripling is." 57 On David's return from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58 Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

1 Samuel 18:1-30  

1 Samuel 18:1 When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. 5 David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him; as a result, Saul set him over the army. And all the people, even the servants of Saul, approved.

10 The next day an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand; 11 and Saul threw the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.

17 Then Saul said to David, "Here is my elder daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife; only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, "I will not raise a hand against him; let the Philistines deal with him." 18 David said to Saul, "Who am I and who are my kinsfolk, my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" 19 But at the time when Saul's daughter Merab should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

So, Saul was David's enemy from that time forward. 30 Then the commanders of the Philistines came out to battle; and as often as they came out, David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his fame became very great.
A Few More Problems:

1 Sam 17:4, 7

And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. . . . The shaft of his spear was like a weaver’s beam...

2 Samuel 21:19 19 Then there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob; and Elhanan son of Jaare-oregim, the Bethlehemite, killed Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver’s beam.

1 Chronicles 20:5 5 Again there was war with the Philistines; and Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver’s beam.

DO WE NEED TO EXONERATE DAVID? FROM WHAT?

1 Samuel 27:1-2 NRS 1 Samuel 27:1 David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than to escape to the land of the Philistines; then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand." 2 So David set out and went over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to King Achish son of Maoch of Gath.

Pretty close buddies:

1 Samuel 28:1-2 NRS 1 Samuel 28:1 In those days the Philistines gathered their forces for war, to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "You know, of course, that you and your men are to go out with me in the army." 2 David said to Achish, "Very well, then you shall know what your servant can do." Achish said to David, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."

1 Samuel 29:1-3 NRS 1 Samuel 29:1 Now the Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek, while the Israelites were encamped by the fountain that is in Jezreel. 2 As the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing on in the rear with Achish, 3 the commanders of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of King Saul of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years? Since he deserted to me I have found no fault in him to this day."
DAVID THE SOCIAL BANDIT DURING EXILE?

Hobsbawm’s famous concept of the “Social Bandit” however, begins to become clearer when we consider Hobsbawm’s “criteria” for identifying a case of social banditry:

1. The social bandit begins his/her career as victim of injustice
2. He/She “rights wrongs”
3. In some sense, he/she takes from the rich to give to the poor
4. They never kill but in self-defence, or just revenge
5. If he/she survives, they return to their people as an honourable citizen
6. He/She is admired, helped, and supported by his people
7. If he/she dies, it is invariably and only through treason, since no decent member of the community would help authorities against him.
8. At least in theory the social bandit is invisible and invulnerable
9. The social bandit is not the enemy of the king or emperor, who is the fount of justice, but only of the local gentry, clergy, or other oppressors (For David, the Philistines?)

David the “Social Bandit”?

At the outset, the reader may find it helpful to be reminded of a rough outline of David’s pre-monarchical stories, and also specifically the “outlaw years” in 1 Samuel:

1 Samuel 16 – Introduces David the Musician, plays for Saul

1 Samuel 17 – David vs. Goliath (but David reintroduced in vss. 12-16); 17:7; 2 Sam 21:19; 1 Chron 20:5

1 Sam 18 – David successful, “killed his ten thousand”, Saul begins to be jealous

Begin the “Outlaw Years”

1 Sam 19 – David escapes Saul’s rage with wife (Saul’s daughter!?) Michal’s help.

1 Sam 20 – David escapes with Jonathan’s help.

1 Sam 21 – David gets Goliath’s sword by lying about his mission; feigns madness with Achish

1 Sam 22 – David and the Gang (vss 1-2 crucial!); Doeg betrays David; Priests killed for helping David
1 Sam 23 – David fights Philistines and rescues Judean town of Keilah, they are grateful; wanders but God protects him; Jonathan reaffirms friendship; “Rock of Escape” as David eludes Saul again.

1 Sam 24 – David has chance to kill Saul, but doesn’t.

1 Sam 25 – David extorts from Nabal, but wife Abigail prevents David from killing him. Key: “You kept me from Bloodguilt” vs. 33.

1 Sam 26 – Saul after David again in Wilderness of Ziph. Dialogue against Abner (whom Joab kills later)

1 Sam 27 – Fighting with Philistines when he escapes to Gath (Samson’s town!). David given Ziklag.

1 Sam 28 – Saul calls up Samuel’s ghost

1 Sam 29 – Philistines release David before campaigning against Saul – Saul eventually killed

Possible end to “Outlaw Years”?

1 Sam 30 – David defeats Amalekites who harass Ziklag. David distributes booty evenly to all, and this is called an “ordinance” that he follows later – fair giving to all the poor.

SO - WHY IS PSALMS INTERESTED IN DAVID? AND WHEN?

The first superscription reference is in Ps. 3, which refers to Absalom’s revolt. Interestingly, another time of social unrest, although clearly after kingship. The second, Ps. 7, regards David’s concern with “Cush the Benjaminite” in Ps. 7:1, is an event “not attested” in the Bible, so we have no way of knowing if it was before or after David’s crowning as King.

Ps. 60 is also somewhat difficult to be precise about, but it is often thought to come from 2 Sam 8, which does indicate that Joab was over the army at the time of the series of victories that are listed (in a rather perfunctory manner, it must be said) in 2 Sam 8. So, to be safe, I will eliminate these 2 examples from the point I wish to make here, and also Ps. 3 and Ps. 51 (the latter referring to the Bath-sheba affair). Of the remaining 11 (or 10 if we eliminate the “Cush” episode), fully 9 of these 10/11 historical references to David’s narrative are references to “the outlaw years”, e.g. the very traditions we are considering here.

Psalm 18:1 To the leader. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who addressed the words of this song to the LORD on the day when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.

Psalm 34:1 Of David, when he feigned madness before Abimelech, so that he drove him out, and he went away. [The Psalm adds “expulsion” not in 1 S 21, but in 29].
Psalm 52:1 To the leader. A Maskil of David, when Doeg the Edomite came to Saul and said to him, "David has come to the house of Ahimelech." [Johnson writes: "Unbeknown to the priest, David is an outlaw. David cons the priest by acting as if he worked as an agent for Saul. Doeg, Saul's top man, witnesses their encounter in Nob." (Johnson, 59)]

Psalm 54:1 To the leader: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David, when the Ziphites went and told Saul, "David is in hiding among us." [Ziphites as "foreigners"? ]

Psalm 56:1 To the leader: according to The Dove on Far-off Terebinths. Of David. A Miktam, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. [David isn't seized in Gath]

Psalm 57:1 To the leader: Do Not Destroy. Of David. A Miktam, when he fled from Saul, in the cave. [1 S 24, note "cave" and "wing", but Ps. 57 makes David more desperate than in the 1 Sam story]

Psalm 59:1 To the leader: Do Not Destroy. Of David. A Miktam, when Saul ordered his house to be watched in order to kill him. [Psalm emphasizes threat from those all around. Claims innocence here, but not in 1 Sam.]

Psalm 63:1 A Psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah. [Note the number of times David flees from Saul and dwells in the desert; 1 Sam 23: 14,15,24, 25; 24:2; 25:1,4,15; 26: 2,3, and later Absalom.]

Psalm 142:1 A Maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A Prayer. [Word for "prison" in Ps. has same root as "he has shut himself in" in 1 Sam 23:7]

Furthermore, the only reference to the life of David in the Synoptic Gospels is an episode from these same "outlaw" period: Mark 2:25-28 (Cf. Luke 6:3-5; and Matthew 12:3-6).
SERIES OF PROBLEMS

- David faced Two rebellions, popular with wide support.
- One, led by his son Absalom, temporarily drove him out of Jerusalem

2 Samuel 15:2-6 2 Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the road into the gate; and when anyone brought a suit before the king for judgment, Absalom would call out and say, "From what city are you?" When the person said, "Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel," 3 Absalom would say, "See, your claims are good and right; but there is no one deputed by the king to hear you." 4 Absalom said moreover, "If only I were judge in the land! Then all who had a suit or cause might come to me, and I would give them justice." 5 Whenever people came near to do obeisance to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of them, and kiss them. 6 Thus Absalom did to every Israeliite who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

- Other, led by followers of Saul (Abner), who blamed David for Saul’s demise 2 Sam 2-3
- Was a mercenary who fought against Saul’s regime with Philistines (1 Sam 27)
- Endorsed political assassinations to advance his rule
- Imposed himself as King on Israel by force after Saul’s death – Defeat of Abner and Ishbaal.
- Used foreign mercenaries (Hittites and Philistines) to guarantee his control
- Imperialist who waged wars of conquest against neighbors, exposing many Israelis to counter-attacks that led to great casualties
- Legends made HIM the doer of deeds he did not do, like killing Goliath

(2 Sam 21:19; corrected in 1 Chron. 20:5)

Also, in Judah

- Affair with Bathsheba and killing Uriah
- Did not punish Amnon for raping Tamar
- Lack of justice from David’s court
- Murder of Absalom and Amasa by Joab, his trusted aid
- The Census (Chronicler called this sin from Satan)
- Support for Solomon over Adonijah
What is actually proven in the Bible?
- David fought with Philistines
- David friendly with Ammonites against Saul
- David’s possession of Saul’s bracelet and crown immediately after Saul is killed
- Full account of Bathsheba incident
- Rape of Tamar
- Murders of Abner, Amasa, and Absalom by Joab
- Eshbaal’s assassination
- Execution of Saul’s children by hanging
- Absalom’s revolt fully documented (David’s failure to provide justice)
- Solomon’s accession to throne.

Deuteronomistic Historian argues:
- God gave throne to David
- Twice David had opportunity to kill Saul but did not
- David joined with enemies only because Saul drove him out
- Joab acted without David’s knowledge
- Saul committed suicide
- David did not authorize Eshbaal’s assassination
- David loved his children so much he could not punish them
- Saul’s children were killed to end a wrongdoing and prevent famine
- God wanted the census in punishment of Israel
- David was taken advantage of by Solomon’s supporters when he was sick and dying

The CHRONICLER – ERASES all negative of David. So the legend begins…
FOR ME:

It is virtually impossible for me to separate the historical materials about David with the uses to which his story has been put over the centuries, particularly defending some of the most reprehensible behavior on the part of Christians in power that can be imagined, all in the name of Davidic "law and order", Davidic "dominance", and Davidic "Empire", beginning with Constantine.

SO WHY INTEREST IN DAVID IN THE FIRST PLACE?

MAYBE NOT THE KING!!!??

David the "Social Bandit"?

Mk. 10:42-45 NRSV

42 So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.
43 But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,
44 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.
45 For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

The Penitential Prayer

A Ezra 9:7 7 From the days of our ancestors until now we have been deeply guilty and, because of our iniquities, we, our kings and our priests, have been handed over to the kings of other countries, to the sword, to captivity, to pillage, to shame, as is the case today.
B Nehemiah 9:34 34 Our kings, our princes, our priests and our ancestors did not keep your law or pay attention to your commandments and obligations which you imposed upon them.
C Daniel 9:8-9 8 To us, our kings, our chief men and our ancestors, belongs the look of shame, O Yahweh, since we have sinned against you. 9 And it is for the Lord our God to have mercy and to pardon, since we have betrayed him,
D Baruch 2:19 19 We do not rely on the merits of our ancestors and of our kings to offer you our humble plea, Lord our God.