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Bible Review

Deuteronomy - 2 Samuel

Instructions: This is an open Bible, open note review. Do what you can from memory, and the rest with your Bible and notes. Essays that lack substance must be rewritten. Include biblical references. The objective of this review is to create a learning experience.

Agree/Disagree

1.\_A\_\_The book of Deuteronomy is basically a covenant renewal document given in Moab to the second generation of Israelites.

2.\_A\_\_The purpose of Joshua is to record the conquest and occupation of the land and thus demonstrate God's faithfulness in keeping His covenant.

3.\_D\_\_Joshua and the Israelites burned most of the Canaanite cities they conquered.

4.\_A\_\_After the conquest, the land was divided among the tribes by lot and according to need.

5.\_A\_\_The book of Judges was written to demonstrate why Israel was not blessed by God as the nation might have been after the conquest.

6.\_D\_\_The book of Judges illustrates how the Holy Spirit can empower God's people for ministry.

7.\_A\_\_According to Judges, the degree of occupation demanded by God was not carried out, since many Canaanites remained in the land.

8.\_D\_\_The last chapters of Judges (17-21) are best titled, “The Accompaniments to Apostasy.”

9.\_A\_\_\_Joshua broke the Canaanite resistance in the conquest, but pockets of enemy resistance remained scattered throughout the land.

10.\_A\_\_\_The book of Ruth points to the place of the spirit of the law over the letter of the law, illustrating the priority the intention of the heart in God's law.

11.\_A\_\_\_ According to law of levirite marriage (Deut. 25), a widow without children would marry the brother of her late husband to preserve his name and inheritance.

12.\_A\_\_\_Theologically, the books of Samuel show the sovereignty of Yahweh over the theocratic kingdom.

13.\_A\_\_A theocracy is a rule by God through His chosen representatives‑‑judges, kings, prophets and priests.

14.\_D\_\_\_ The anointing of a king was a secular act of dedication to rule over the people of Israel.

15. \_D\_\_ In spite of his other failings, Saul took responsibility for his actions and acknowledged his sin.

16. \_A\_\_ The central focus of the book of Samuel is the blessing of obedience and the cursings of disobedience.

State and provide brief evidence of the theological themes of the books:

**Deuteronomy**: Restatement of the law which shows the love of Yahweh for Israel: The Greek word “deuter” means “two” or “second” and “nomion” means “law”. So it is reasonable to see the theme of the book as “restatement” or “renewal document” of the law. It stresses that obedience to the law should be the response to God’s love. The word “love” is used 22 times in this book.

**Joshua:** The venture and victory of faith:

In Chapter 1 the Lord promised that no man would be able to stand before Joshua and the Lord commanded him 4 times to be strong and courageous from verse 6-18. The word of faith was also recorded in 2:24: "Truly the LORD has given all the land into our hands; and moreover all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of us."  
 **Judges**: Apostasy and idolatry are followed by judgment from the Lord

Judges 3-16: Every time they did evil (forgot Yahweh and practiced Canaanite worship), God would allow them to be oppressed by another nation. When they cried to Yahweh for deliverance, God would raised up a deliverer to deliver them from the oppressors and bring them back to Yahweh worship and then they would enjoy rest for a while until they had a relapse again. (Judges 3: 8-12, 4:1-3, 6:1, 13:1) We can see there were 6 cycles of apostasy recorded: the Mesopotamian oppression, the Moabite oppression, the Canaanite oppression, the Midianite oppression, the Ammonite oppression and the Philistine oppression.

**Ruth:** Redemption requires a kinsman-redeemer

Ruth 1 and 2 tells the story of the family of Naomi who lost their property and was then facing the “curse” of losing their name (1:11-13) Ruth 4: 4-6 presents that the nearest kinsman could redeem possessions sold by his brother (Lev 25: 25), provided he was able to do so and he was willing to do so. Ruth 3-4 shows that if one’s brother died without an heir, his closest kinsman has the responsibility of marrying the widow and rearing a son to hand down his name. Ruth 3:12 and 4:1 states that the right of redemption belonged to the nearest kinsman.

**1 & 2 Samuel**: Establishment of Kingdom of Israel

1 Sam. 8:19-22 God allowed the request of Israelites to appoint a king in order to establish a kingdom. 1 Sam. 10 Saul was anointed. 1 Sam. 15 Saul failed to do the job well and was rejected by God. 1 Sam. 16 David was anointed king. 2 Sam. 2 and 5 David was anointed the second and the third time for the kingship. 2 Sam. 7 God made a Covenant with David promising him that he would have descendants sitting on his throne ruling over Israel forever.

Short Essays:

1. What is a "Dynastic Defense"? How does this shed light on the purpose of 1 Samuel 15 ‑ 2 Samuel 8.

Dynastic Defense is a 13th century (B.C.) document, titled Hittite “Apology of Hattusilis”. The purpose of this document is to outline the reasons why a king of a new dynasty is legitimate so as to avoid being charged with usurping the throne. Herbert Wolf discovers that 1 Samuel 15 -2 Samuel 8 displays an outline that bears striking similarities with the Dynastic Defense. It makes sense because both David and Hattusilis founded new dynasties.

Let us take a quick look at the outline of a Dynastic Defense and see how 1 Samuel 15 – 2 Samuel 8 fits into the pattern:

1. Describing how the preceding ruler is disqualified: 1 Samuel 15 clearly records how Saul was rejected by God. “…… you (Saul) have rejected the word of the Lord and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.” (1 Sam. 15:26)
2. Recording the heroic events before the king’s accession: From 1 Sam. 16 to 2 Sam.5, we can see how David was anointed 3 times for kingship (16:12-13 anointed by Samuel in his home town; 2: 4 anointed by the men of Judah in Hebron, anointed by the elders of Israel in Hebron)and we can also see how his exploits (e.g. 17:49 killing Goliath, 18:5 well adorned by all the people and Saul’s servants, 23:2 attacking the Philistines and delivering Keilah)prepared him for rule.
3. Demonstrating ability to lead and rule as demonstrated by military achievements: 1 Sam. 17 clearly illustrates David’s faith and military ability through the narrative of his killing of Goliath.
4. Displaying lenience on political enemies: 1 Sam. 24 and 26 clearly shows that David was not a usurper because he refused two times to kill Saul even when it was easy for him to do so and he also prohibited his men from killing Saul.
5. Showing the new king is a religious person: 2 Sam 6 and 7 describes David as an enthusiastic worshipper of the Lord (e.g. his joy in receiving the ark of God and his dream of building a house for the Lord).
6. Demonstrating the presence of divine blessing on his rule as evidenced through expansion and the establishment of peace with the surrounding nations: “the Lord helped David wherever he went” (8: 6, 14); “Arameans became servants to David” (8:6); “all the nations which he had subdued” (8:11); “Edomites became servants to David” (8:14)

Therefore, as the outline for 1 Sam. 15 – 2 Sam. 8 conforms to the layout of a dynastic defense, it shows that Israel’s culture was also influenced by foreign cultures and when trying to establish the legitimacy of David’s rule, the author made sure the text could successfully establish the legitimacy of the new dynasty founded by King David.

1. Discuss Canaanite worship. What was the impact of this factor on the cycles of Judges?

Fertility cults were popular religious practices in the Ancient Near East and Canaanite worship was a vibrant form of fertility cult worship. As the worshippers believed that fertility (all living things) was the result of sexual activities of gods, their priests and priestesses practiced “imitative magic” to encourage the gods to have sexual activities in order to bring fertility to the people. “Imitative magic” was done by sacred prostitution done in the shelter of a grove of trees to cause the gods to desire sexual activities. Asherah (meaning “grove”) was the chief consort of El (the supreme god according to Canaanite theology) and thus was the mother goddess. Her name was often associated with Baal, the son and successor of El, who had displaced El and become the most prominent god in Canaanite worship. His name Baal simply meant “lord”. The name “Baal” was at times qualified by a place-name to refer to a local manifestation. The sky was believed to be his territory and he was referred to as “the rider of the clouds”. He was believed to have control over rain, wind, cloud and lightning (fire), thus fertility. His sexual activity with Anath (sister-cohort of Baal) was thought to bring rain and fertility of the soil. Ashtaroth was a goddess of both fertility and war. However, the names of Anath, Asherah and Ashtaroth were so often interchanged that they were no longer differentiated.

Since the Israelites had not removed Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites from their land (Judges 3:5), they were exposed to such fertility cults. The book of Judges shows clearly that the Israelites were continuously tempted to practice Canaanite worship. There were times they were able to resist the temptation, but unfortunately there were also times they failed to resist the temptation. I believe there were four big reasons why they fell prey to the temptation: (1) Canaanite worship was believed to be bringing physical blessings to the land and it seemed to be plausible because the land was over-flowing with milk and honey even before they moved in; (2) the “imitative magic” appealed to all men’s sinful nature; (3) the parents failed to pass on to the children the knowledge of Yahweh worship, the Mosaic Covenant and the relationship between Yahweh and Israelites. (4) they allowed their children to marry Canaanites and then serve their gods. (Judges 3:6-7)

We can clearly see the impact of Canaanite worship on the cycles of apostasy in Judges 3-16. Every time they did evil (forgot Yahweh and practiced Canaanite worship), God would allow them to be oppressed by another nation. When they cried to Yahweh for deliverance, God would raised up a deliverer to deliver them from the oppressors and bring them back to Yahweh worship and then they would enjoy rest for a while until they had a relapse again. (Judges 3: 8-12, 4:1-3, 6:1, 13:1) We can see there were 6 cycles of apostasy recorded: the Mesopotamian oppression, the Moabite oppression, the Canaanite oppression, the Midianite oppression, the Ammonite oppression and the Philistine oppression.

1. Describe the provisions of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16). How does this covenant relate to the promise God gave Abraham in Gen. 12:1‑3? With whom will God's promises to David be fulfilled?

The core provisions (not including his son, Solomon, would succeed him and build a temple) of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-16) are as follows:

1. David’s house: A Permanent Dynasty: God promised that David's physical line of descent would not stop and would always be the royal line forever (verse 16).
2. David’s throne: A Right to Rule: God promised that David would have descendants sitting on his throne exercising the authority to rule (V. 12).
3. David’s Kingdom: A Royal Dominion: God promised that David’s posterity would have the right to a literal kingdom forever though there would be times when his descendants would be punished by God for their disobedience. (vv. 15-16)

In the Abraham’s Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3), God promised Abraham (1) his descendants would be given a land; (2) his descendants would become a great nation; and (3) the whole world would be blessed through his descendants. In light of this, we can see that the Davidic Covenant amplifies and confirms the promise of a great nation included in the provisions of the Abraham’s Covenant. When God announced the Davidic Covenant, the Israelites had already occupied a land and established a nation. The question is: Will this nation last forever? Through the provisions of this covenant, we can see that the nation will last forever and David’s posterity will sit on the throne and rule over this nation forever. However, through verses 14-15, we can sense that there would be times of temporary interruption to the fulfillment of this promise due to individual disobedience.

Fortunately, in verses 15-16, it is clear that God’s faithfulness and love will make sure that God’s promise to David will be realized eventually. (also Psalm 89: 20-37) Now we know that the promise is being realized in a royal person, a descendant of David, Jesus. Angel Gabriel told Mary that Jesus would be given “the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” (Luke 1:31-33) Through Jesus Christ, even the “blessing” promise to Abraham is being fulfilled right now. (Jeremiah 31: 31-34)

4. David is described as “a man after His [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). How do you see that description reflected in his life and actions.

David is described as “a man after God’s own heart” when Saul disappointed God and was then rejected. If we look into the elements of Saul’s behavior which disappointed God, it is not difficult to see why David is called a man after His own heart. Firstly, Saul had little faith in God especially when he saw the circumstances were not favorable (1 Sam. 13:11-12: “people were scattering from him” and 1 Sam. 15: 24: “Saul feared the people and listened to their voice”); (2) Saul didn’t respect God’s authority (1 Sam. 9: “Saul offered the burnt offering” and 1 Sam. 15:9: “Saul was not willing to destroy the them utterly”); (3) Saul didn’t see sin as sin, only putting the blame on others and trying to escape the punishment (1 Sam. 13:11: “Samuel was late” and 1 Sam. 15:21 “the people did it”)

With reference to the above, we can see that David did demonstrate qualities in his character that were pleasing God:

David had great faith in God. 1 Sam. 17 clearly records a story telling us David’s heroic faith in God. When no one in the Israelite armies was bold enough to fight with Goliath who cursed the Israelites by his gods, David said to Goliath, “… I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, … This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands” (17:45)

David also demonstrated his absolute respect for the authority of Yahweh. He refused to kill Saul two times (1 Sam. 24 and 26) even when it was easy for him to do so because he respected God’s anointed one. He showed obedience to and respect for God’s authority and agenda.

David saw sin as sin and accepted total responsibility. When he was found guilty of taking Uriah’s wife and having Uriah killed, he admitted wrong doing right away without putting the blame on anybody else or any circumstantial factor. (2 Sam. 12:13) He knew “true repentance” was what God valued. (Psalm 51;17)

From the above analysis, we can see that David was the “man after God’s own heart”.