



*Our Christ, the King, In
The Second Book of Samuel*

Prepared by:
FR. TADROS Y. MALATY

Translated by
Mary Hany Dawood

Queen Mary & Prince Tadros
Goptic Orthodox church

Our Christ, the King, In The Second Book of Samuel

*The Key of the Royal Life:
Feeling the Divine Presence*

FR. TADROS Y. MALATY

Translated by
Mary Hany Dawood

Edited by
Salwa Wahba

Introduction

The First Book of Samuel was concerned with the effectiveness of the prayer, while the Second Book of Samuel focused on "Standing before God", as David never used to move before asking God first [2:1; 5:19; 5:23; 21:1]. He became ruler of all Israel "before the LORD" [5:3]. "And David danced before the LORD with all his might" [6:14]. When Michal, Saul's daughter, reprimanded him on doing that, he did not retreat, but rather declared that he is vile in his own eyes before the LORD, who appointed him as a ruler of His people; and when he trespassed, he told Prophet Nathan: "I have sinned against the LORD" [12:13]. In every victory he used to sing unto the LORD, his Rock, Fortress and Deliverer [22:2].

King David's feeling of God's presence had its effect in his heart, his worshipping, as well as in his behavior and relationship with others. The statement "before the LORD" was repeated 10 times.

David's age is considered the Golden Age of Israel, for there were no traces of heathen worshipping among them. Furthermore, no earthly matter used to occupy the heart of the king, his men or the people, as the sweet Psalmist of Israel has turned the entire people into a choir praising God.

The Key to King David's Victory: Feeling the Divine Presence (Chap. 1-10)

1. David didn't crave to be king, but God longs to make a king out of every believer to be victorious over the powers of Satan, which can only occur through enjoying the divine presence. At the same time, what occupies the heart of the believer is that God reigns.

2. When Amalekite man told him about Saul's death, he didn't rejoice that the path was open before him to the throne, but grieved over God's messiah [1]. The key to his victory was that he defeated himself, and thus asked for what is for God and not for himself.

3. As he was enjoying the divine presence, he always asked God first in all his movements, like when he went to Judah [Chap. 2].

4. When he took over Jerusalem from the hands of the Jebusites and made it his new capital, it was called "the city of David" [2 Samuel 5:9; 1 Chronicles 11:7], but he was preparing it to become "the city of God" [Tobia 13:11] and "the city of the LORD" [Psalms 101:8] that is connected with the Priest King Malchisedek, King of Salem (which was previously mentioned in the commentary of the Book of Genesis). The Jebusites wanted to mock him and said: "Except you take away the blind and the lame, you shall not come in hither" [5:6]; meaning that even if the people of Jebus were blind and lame, King David and his entire army cannot take over their city. But when he took it over, he said: There are no more blind or lame in the city. This is what the Son of David has accomplished, for He came to the world and took away the blindness and lameness, so that the true believers would see and walk speedily towards heaven.

5. David made a huge and fortified capital out of Jerusalem, but what is even greater is that he made the divine presence its center.

6. When David became king, he cared first to return the Ark of the Testimony and desired to build a house for the LORD [Chap. 6-7]. He danced before the Ark reflecting the joyful trembling of his inner depths before the LORD. Michal saw it as some kind of foolishness that he put off his royal garment and his dancing before the Ark. David's entire inner being was drawn to behold the incarnation of the Word through the Ark and His dwelling amongst his people to offer them His work of salvation, while Michal's heart was caught up with

the royal garment that David has put off, and thus found him foolish and naked as she told him!

7. David reigned over Judah [Chap. 1-4] for seven and a half years, and then over Israel [Chap. 5-24] for 33 years, which was a symbol of God's reigning over Israel in the Old Testament and afterwards over the entire humanity in the New Testament. "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise" [Psalms 98:4].

8. David was sincere [Chap. 9], for he didn't forget his promise to Jonathan even after 15 years of Saul's and Jonathan's death [1 Samuel 20:14-17]. When he heard of the lame Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, he called for him to restore to him all the land of his grandfather, Saul, and gave him to become his permanent guest and to eat at his table as a family member. He had a kind heart, and as he looked up to the human-loving Messiah, he searched for everyone's comfort.

9. David was strong in his fights, but his heart was drawn towards peace and his entire being was occupied with the divine presence.

David's taking up from Feeling the Divine Presence and His Fall (Chap. 10-19)

Through his permanent feeling of the divine presence David was able to kill a lion and a bear to save a lamb, and to kill the mighty Goliath that was blaspheming God with a small rock. He was able to meet king Saul's resistance with a heart filled with forgiveness and wisdom. He accepted God's promise with patience and reason and did not long for taking over the kingdom. He was a noble man that does not know to rejoice over another's misfortune, rather he felt sorry for king Saul as a beloved man.

How much would we want for the wondrous life of David to end after Chapter 10, but if that had happened, we would've considered him an angel from heaven or a man that is the son of another Adam than ours. We would've thought that he did not need the Son of David, the Deliverer of the world.

After he became king over all the tribes and his kingdom was settled and the Ark was returned, in a moment of weakness, as he forgot the divine presence, he slacked and fell reflecting the human nature with all its weaknesses in the life of the great David.

He gave in to slackness and took a walk over the roof, allowing his eyes look upon the woman of Uriah the Hittite; and thus he fell gradually until he committed awful sins. He thought that he was able to hide this weakness, but he was disclosed before us all throughout the generations after he received bitter punishments. The most important of these punishments were:

- (a) The death of the fruit of the lust [Chap. 12]: Prophet David lived an entire year with his sin, and his conscience didn't reprimand him on it despite his previous spiritual experiences, his awareness of the Law, and his work as a fair judge of the people. He was in need of Nathan to reprimand him on what he did and to urge him to confess what he has committed. Only then he heard: "The LORD also has put away your sin" [12:13]. God allowed for the death of the son who came as a fruit of the sin [19], not because of a fault of the baby, but so that no one –especially the heathen- would think that God has partiality.
- (b) Amnon (his son)'s assault on his sister Tamar [Chap. 13]: David had secretly sinned with Bathsheba and the matter remained secret for a while so that the deadly scent of corruption spread publicly in the house of David. Amnon fell in the lust, with all his will, and loved his sister from his father; he loved her exceedingly for her beauty and felt sick for her. When he forced her and humbled her, he then put her out for he hated her exceedingly and couldn't bear to see her! Imagine what was the situation of David among his men and the heads of the people when they heard about this!
- (c) The sword never left his house [Chap. 13]: Absalom waited for 2 years without revenging his sister until both David and Amnon thought that the matter was forgotten. But when it was time for sheep-shearing in Baalhazor, which is a joyful time [1 Samuel 25:7-36], Absalom planned to murder his brother.

- (d) His son, Absalom, turning against him [Chap. 15]: Absalom prepared chariots, horses and 50 men to run before him. He followed the lead of the heathen kings in their greatness, while his father used to ride a mule in meekness and simplicity. These outer looks along with Absalom's physical beauty found pleasure by many people, which stimulated his popularity as some came to consider him more worthy of the throne. Absalom sought after the void glories not realizing that he was seeking his spiritual and physical death as he lost his eternity as well as his worldly life. What made king David's grief even worse was to learn that Ahithophel, his best friend, had betrayed him and went after Absalom. Thus, he cried out to the LORD to defeat his counsel, for he was known for his wisdom and dispositions. David realized the danger early and remembered his sin and God's words unto him: "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised me... Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house" [12:10-11].
- (e) Cursing David [Chap.16]: Shimei, son of Gera of the house of Saul, came forth in Bahurim -and there was valley between him and David and his men- and started to cast stones at them, which probably didn't reach them, but they were a sign of his anger and despise, yet his words were hearable. In jealousy, Abishai wanted to cross over the valley to kill this man considering him a dead dog, but David stopped him considering this insult a punishment from God for his sin, and said: "Let him curse, because the LORD has said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore has you done so? Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeks my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD has bidden him. It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day" [10-12].

David accepted the cursing with joy as a cure for his inner depths, yet he was angry with Abishai, and talked to him firmly, for he wanted to avenge him from the man who was cursing him.

God allows for harsh punishments, but He never forgets his children; He [17:7] defeated the counsel of Ahithophel and allowed for the murder of Absalom [Chap. 18-19]. Let us fall now into the hand of

the LORD, for His mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man [24:14].

The Divine Presence and Leaning on the Absolute Human Thought (Chap. 20-24)

First: God's Plan:

1. God defeated the conspiracy of [Chap. 20] Sheba, son of Bichri: David hadn't had rest from the sedition of his son, Absalom, when Sheba started to do the same, gathering ten tribes around him; as if God didn't want David to rest from the distress so that the sin he fell in would remain bitter in his mouth. The sword ought not to leave the kingdom of David as a punishment for him killing Uriah the Hittite. Thus, without a good reason, Sheba, son of Bichri the Benjamite, opposed him and quickly provoked Israel against him. God revealed His mighty hand and victory came unto David in a much unexpected way, without any blood shed except for beheading Sheba. Thus, God allowed David to go through this temptation to educate him, but He also gave him the way out. David didn't exert much effort to defeat this conspiracy although many had gone against him.

2. The hanging of seven men of the sons of Saul as he betrayed the covenant with the Gibeonites [Chap. 21]: Saul has faulted when he slayed the Gibeonites, unto whom Joshua son of Noon had sworn never to kill; and the people harvested the fruit of his actions in the days of king David, as there was a famine for a period of three years. When David asked the LORD, He revealed the reason unto him, and there was no other solution but to deliver seven men of the sons of Saul to the Gibeonites, who hanged them as a symbol of crucifying every fruit of the sin.

3. God granted David the spirit of joy that he might provide the song of victory [Chap. 22-23]: We expected him to provide us with the 51st Psalm of repentance and confession, but the divine spirit wanted to assure us that the life of praising and the feeling of victory continued throughout the last breath of David's life. He fell, but through repentance and confession he remained singing the Psalm of Victory.

In the interpretation of St. Augustine regarding Psalm 18, which is the song of victory, he mentioned: [This psalm is about Christ, the LORD Himself, as it speaks in His name and in the name of the

church as He is its head and it is His body; and that the victory He owns was for its sake]. We can say that it is the song of the victorious church in Christ, the Leader of its conquering parade, as it sees in God the key to its salvation, its light and its strength, with whom it draws all the nation to the faith so that they would experience the joy of salvation.

With every victory, Prophet David felt that God's mercies are new every morning and realized the wondrous power of God that works in his weakness, granting him the sacred life, the victory over evil, and opens up his heart with love towards everyone. Thus, he felt that he owes Him thankful sacrifices of joy as a normal reaction of his joyful spirit and his body that shakes with all its emotions as if it was a the harp of the spirit.

St. Ogestine presented us with a symbolic interpretation of this song, as he saw in the earth that shook and trembled, the trespassers who became an earth, and as the Son of man was glorified on the cross, they trembled. The cross of our LORD, Jesus Christ, is the granter of victory as it shakes our entire body with all its feelings and emotions, not to destroy it, but to sanctify it, and it touches our inner soul to renew its nature. This is what the Psalmist David meant by the earth (the body) and the sky (the soul).

The psalmist ended the song of victory with an invitation to the heathen to enjoy the salvation: "Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto your name". This is what made David's heart rejoice, that his fight against Satan didn't just deliver him alone, but it also delivered the heathen so that people would come to the Messiah; people who did not know Him, nor did they enjoy having the Law, talking to the prophets or knowing the divine promises. This group of people came from the heathen to worship God; they only heard about Him from the word of preaching, but did not see Him like the Jews did, from whom the Deliverer came, before whom He has done countless wonders, and with whom He talked mouth to mouth, yet they rejected Him instead of believing in Him.

David's Mighty Heroes:

If in several occasions David referred to Christ the LORD, then his mighty heroes would also refer to the men of faith of Christ the LORD. He, who draws close unto Jesus our LORD as a true soldier

and fights lawfully, will enjoy this honor: having his name being recorded in the Book of Life.

Regarding the list of those heroes, one would note the following:

- a) They came from different tribes, like from Judah, Benjamin, Get, Ammon... In the same way the great men of faith came from several nations and from different people; amongst them were men, women, children, young people, elders... etc.
- b) Those heroes were divided into three levels or ranks:
 - ❖ The first three: Joshib, Eleazar and Shammah, who refer to the fathers, the prophets, and the people of the Old Testament.
 - ❖ The following three: Abishai and Benaiah –the name of the third was not mentioned- refer to the apostles, the disciples, and the people of the New Testament.
 - ❖ Thirty men, who refer to the rest of the believers.

Water of Bethlehem's well:

It was obvious that David liked Bethlehem, his place of birth, for he longed to drink from the water of Bethlehem's well when he was at war with the Palestinians as he said: "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" [23:15; 1 Chronicles 11:17]. St. Jacob the Serogian said: [What did David desire by the water he requested but the Son that is the Water of Life for the one who seeks Him? Christ was called the Water, because he was thirsty for Him and knew that He will come to earth in Bethlehem... the den is the Virgin, for the drink descended unto him from above rather than ascending from a water source from the ground] (Mimar 80).

Second: The Absolute Human Thought:

David counted the number of the people, counting on their number rather than on God's hands [Chap. 24]. The Book ended with a fatal mistake that king David committed by counting the people, causing a harsh punishment to come unto the people, which trembled David's soul; but he knew how to win God's mercies.

God raged over David not because he counted the people, for Moses has counted them before three times or more [Exodus 38:26; Numbers 1:2-3; 26], as our God is a God of order and not a God of

turmoil; rather God raged due to the following reasons, or at least some of them:

(a) David didn't consult God as he used to.

(b) David started to count on the number of his men and his capabilities, although if he gazed upon his entire life ever since his youth, he would've found that he has turned from watching over the few sheep of his father to taking over the entire kingdom with the power of God, and not with his own power or the power of another man. In many occasions, whether in case of the resistance of his enemies or of those who turned against him, God interfered in a wondrous manner; and David himself has conveyed many times about these long experiences.

(c) Perhaps David wanted with this counting to start new wars to enlarge his kingdom and increase his glory.

(d) Maybe he wanted to enslave the people by enacting a heavy tribute tax for his own account or for the account of the treasury, and not for the account of the Tabernacle of Testimony.

(e) It seems that the main motive was to announce his greatness, abilities and capabilities, as the heathen kings used to do to frighten the neighboring nations; and the people participated in that spirit. Thus, the sin was unto everyone and not just David. In his love to the people, David tried to relate it to himself and to his father's house so that the punishment would come unto him alone and not unto the people! In the midst of the bitter harsh punishment, the Holy Book revealed David's exceeding love to his people, for as he saw his people under distress, he cried out asking for the distress to come unto him and his father's house and not unto the people. He was prepared (as his Master, Jesus Christ) to take up the dangers for his subjects rather than to hide amongst them seeking their care.

(f) The people needed education, as God sometimes allows for the shepherd to do wrong in order to educate the subjects, for they deserve to be punished; as the Book says: "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say: Go, number..."

(g) Some people think that David's fault was to order Joab to count the people including those below 20 years as long as they can fight, which is something against the Law [1 Chronicles 27:23-24].

(h) He was also wrong not to demand the half a shekel, which was supposed to be paid as a ransom for the people unto the Tabernacle whenever they were numbered [Exodus 30:12].

Joab realized David's fault and tried to warn him, but David insisted. Joab told him: "Now the LORD your God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"; notwithstanding, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the host that they obeyed his order.

Why was Christ the LORD called the Son of David?

1. Because David is the real founder of the kingdom and not Saul; he was the first king of the people after God's own heart [1 Samuel 13], and his royal family reigned till the captivity (for about 540 years).

2. He is in the middle of the descendents from Abraham to Christ the LORD.

3. He knew how to become one of the greatest saints, yet he had his own weaknesses and the sin brought him killing fruits... as if there is no one that can be justified before God, even His own great men!

4. He kept the people from the heathen worshipping, and he kept himself with true repentance.

5. He was much into worshipping and praising, as he organized the service of worshipping, wrote most of the psalms, and prepared everything for the construction of the temple.

6. He prophesied about Christ the LORD, the Desire of the nations, who came from his bodily seed.

David's Weaknesses:

He had his own weaknesses, but he also knew repentance:

1. He turned to the Palestinians to protect him [1 Samuel 27].

2. He counted the people [2 Samuel 24].

3. He fell into adultery with Bathsheba [11].

Jerusalem, the Religious Center:

Unlike Saul, David wouldn't accept to have a capital city with no temple, for the Ark of Testimony remained in the house of Abinadab in the village of Kirjathjearim for almost 20 years [1 Samuel 7:1-2], but David insisted on bringing it and putting it in his own new castle.

However, David refused for the Ark of the LORD to dwell in a tent, and thus wanted to build a permanent house for the LORD. At the beginning, prophet Nathan encouraged him [2 Samuel 7:1-3], but afterwards God gave him a different order, so Nathan told David -at the end- that he will not build a house for the LORD; rather God will "make you a house"; i.e. He will establish his kingdom and will provide him with seeds and a kingdom that will reach its full perfection in the "Messiah", as it will become a permanent eternal kingdom [2 Samuel 7:13].