

The Books of Samuel Rise of David

Interpreting the Text:

1. How much of our understanding of David's character is contingent on the first two chapters of his story? What are some key traits that are presented to support his ascension to king?
2. How do you understand Jonathan in this story? Do you see him as a close friend of David's, or something more? How does this relationship feature in David's becoming king?
3. Dr. Collins suggests that the narrative about David feels at times like an apology, explaining why he became king as if to convince someone, or make a clearer case for a series of events. How does this change the way you see David? Why do you think an apologetic text would be written about him?

Applying the Text:

1. Which of the three introductions to David were you most familiar with (David the warrior defeating Goliath, David the musician, or David the shepherd)? How might you help someone reconcile the different narratives about how David came to be king?
2. A figure like David was larger than life, which explains why we have so many anecdotes about his life, some of them contradicting each other. How do we as readers navigate this kind of mythology? Is it more important that we are telling a good story, or pursuing historical accuracy?
3. For Christians, David becomes an important part of Jesus' lineage. How do we read the story of David knowing that his life is important for the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus as the Messiah?