

The Books of Samuel Character of David

Interpreting the Text:

1. To what extent is David's character explained by situating him in the context of the real-world ancient Near East? How can we position his story in the context of the history of the Israelites so far?
2. How important is it to understand the bias of the biblical authors, beyond the simple retelling of the story, in reading the Bible, here and everywhere? What can we assume about the author's bias towards David in the books of Samuel?
3. There are not one, but two instances of the author providing clear evidence that David will not kill the sitting king, despite his own anointing. Why is this so important? How does the repetition of this story underscore this point?

Applying the Text:

1. What aspect of David's life is most important: what he accomplished, or who he was as a person? How is the answer to this related to the Christian tradition that David was an ancestor of and model for Jesus?
2. How do you feel about the shift in David from patient, respectful anointed one to ambitious ruler after Saul dies? How might you behave if you were in David's position?