

Tale of Three Kings

BOOK STUDY



PART 1

David *and* Saul

#1

"The Hebrew words were unmistakable. Even children knew them. 'Behold the Lord's anointed.' Quite a day for that young man, wouldn't you say? Then do you find it strange that this remarkable event led the young man not to the throne but to a decade of hellish agony and suffering? On that day, David was enrolled, not into the lineage of royalty but into the school of brokenness" (p. 8).

Research the phrase "the Lord's anointed" in an Old Testament context. What did this signify?

How can difficulties during a season of waiting actually shape us to be ready for what God has promised?

How does God's version of waiting compare to the world's version? (Because the world is like, "NOW, PLEASE." And God is like, "Character development time!")

How does Saul's response challenge us to consider how we react when God's timing or choices don't align with our expectations?

PART 1

David *and* Saul

#2

"In God's sacred school of submission and brokenness, why are there so few students? Because all students in this school must suffer pain.... David was once a student in this school, and Saul was God's chosen way to crush David" (p. 15).

What makes us want to "drop out" of God's school the moment we feel hurt or offended?

Why is it so hard to believe God can use people who annoy us – or even hurt us – to shape us, like He used Saul in David's life?

Why does it sometimes feel like God enrolls us in "Advanced Offence Management 301" when all we thought we signed up for was "Basic Blessings 101"?

When enrolled, how do you keep your heart from becoming bitter and unforgiving towards those who hurt you? (Hint: review David's response to Saul.)

PART 1

David *and* Saul

#3

"You can tell when someone has been hit by a spear. They turn a deep shade of bitter" (p. 19).

Did David ever get hit with a spear according to the above criteria? Explain why.

Bitterness is a choice; it is not a result of circumstance. The same horrible thing could happen to two people, yet one comes out bitter and the other joyful and gracious. How does this challenge your perspective on bitterness?

PART 1

David *and* Saul

#4

"The truth was that when they did see him, they didn't recognize him. He had changed. His personality, his disposition, his total being had been altered. He talked less. He loved God more. He sang differently" (p. 33).

Which do you think unsettled David's crew more: the fact that their leader now lived in caves and smelled like "Eau de Wilderness," or the way God was changing him on the inside?

Which change do you think God was after?

How do you think David's music sounded before vs. after cave life? (Hint: the Psalms = David's ancient Spotify playlist.)

PART 1

David *and* Saul

#5

The author mentions “throwing spears” frequently throughout the book. Delve into its meaning and significance below!

What does “throwing spears” mean in a 21st-century context? Think of a few examples. (Hint: think of it as a personal attack.)

What was David’s response when Saul threw spears at him? What can we learn from this example?

How did David’s response differ from the responses of the other two kings in the book?

PART 1

David *and* Saul

#6

"Many times, he almost speared you to death in his palace...the whole world believes the lies he tells about you...but tonight you had him at the end of his own spear and you did nothing" (pp. 35-36)!

"The whole world believes the lies he tells about you" – what part of a person is this attacking?

How have you reacted when someone has damaged your good name? In what ways have your responses resembled David's?

PART 2

David *and* Absalom

#7

"If I were in responsibility, this is what I would do...and with these words, the rebellion was ignited" (pp. 59-60).

What does the word "ignited" mean? What is required for ignition?

What attitudes do you think led to the ignition of rebellion in Absalom's heart?

Have you ever used the words, "If I were in charge..."? How can we avoid making the same mistake as Absalom?

PART 2

David *and* Absalom

#8

"It is better to be defeated, even killed than to learn the ways of...a Saul or the ways of an Absalom" (p. 74).

What are "the ways of a Saul"? Define them.

What is a real-world example of "the ways of Saul"?

Do Saul's actions remind you of someone fighting way too hard to keep their "throne"? And – being honest – have you ever tried to keep control of something that wasn't yours to hold onto?

PART 2

David *and* Absalom

#9

Both David and Jesus submitted themselves to “crushing.” David allowed God to crush him through the person of Saul, and Jesus was crushed by God for the sins of the world.

How did both Jesus and David respond to being crushed?

Could either of them have completed God’s purpose for their lives if they had decided to drop out of God’s “school of brokenness”?

What might being “crushed by God” look like practically in your life? How do you tend to respond when God allows seasons of crushing?

PART 2

David *and* Absalom

#10

In chapter 22, David is confronted with Absalom's rebellion. David had a choice to fight for his kingdom or allow Absalom to take it. David trusted that God would appoint the rightful king, so he didn't fight Absalom to keep the throne.

What are some other examples of people trying to steal authority from a leader in the Old Testament? Who ended up keeping the "throne"?

Without knowing the end of the story, who do you think will end up with the throne – and why? Afterwards, read 2 Samuel 18:9-15 to see if your answer is right.

What can we learn about the source of true authority from God? Do we need to strive to hold onto it when others challenge it?

Whose kingdom was this rebellion truly about? Who ultimately has the right to decide who is king?
