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Looking for a Leader

Studies in Samuel and Kings

Discussion Starter: Very near the beginning of Kevin Rudd's first term as Prime Minister, he led the nation of Australia in saying "Sorry" to our aboriginal communities for their past mistreatment. His first act of parliament was to sign the Kyoto Protocol, a framework to limit the human causes of Climate Change. If you were a newly crowned king, what one thing would you do to mark and establish your reign?

David: the king of God's own choosing

This study covers the next major section of David's life, 2 Samuel 1-6. David has survived Saul's attempts to kill him and has made no attempt to take the throne for himself. He has waited on God's vindication.

At the end of the book of 1 Samuel Saul and his sons are all killed in battle. The way for David to establish his rule in Israel is now open. 2 Samuel 1-6 now tells of David's unification of a fragmented nation, his rise to power and the establishment of his reign as 'the king of God's own choosing'¹.

The crowning affirmation of David's rule in God's kingdom occurs when The Ark of the Covenant is brought to Jerusalem, which he has dubbed 'The City of David' (2 Sam 5:9). This is the initiative that marks and establishes his reign.

David, the dancing king

What does David mean by marking the beginning of his reign with dancing? Let's see if we can find out.

Read 2 Sam 6:1-23

1. What is 'The Ark' that David wants to bring to Jerusalem? How does verse 2 indicate its significance? (for more information see Exodus 25:10-22)
2. The unfortunate incident with Uzzah the priest (v 6-8) indicates the awesome holiness of God—that he demands our reverent fear and careful obedience². How does David show respect and holy fear for God and The Ark in the remainder of this narrative?

¹ Saul was the king the people "asked for". By contrast David is the man "after (literally, *according to*) God's own heart" (1 Sam 13:14). The phrase "according to God's own heart" is not so much a description of David or his heart-- as is commonly thought. The heart of a person (in this case, God) is the place where purposes are formed. Therefore, 'the man according to God's own purpose' refers to *God's* purpose: David is the one who will fulfil God's purpose for the role of King. David is the king of God's own choosing, rather than the kind of king the people 'asked for'.

² Note that Uzzah also did not have The Ark carried by priests on its poles, as suggested by Exodus 25:13-15, 37:1-5 and commanded in Deut 10:8.

3. Much is made of David's dancing in front of The Ark of God during its procession to Jerusalem. How does Michal interpret David's dancing?
4. David explains his own dancing as both 'celebration' (v21) and 'humiliation' (v22).
 - (i) What is he celebrating?
 - (ii) Why do you think he deliberately humiliates himself before the LORD by acting in such an undignified manner?

The contrast between Uzzah's presumption and David's humility is telling.

5. How might we rightly show humility and holy fear before God?
6. In view of this discussion, will anything change for you in the way you relate to God? If so, what?
7. At the end of this great event God and his anointed king are 'resident' together in Jerusalem. How does God's presence living with you change your perspective on daily life?

Prayer Time

Pray for your response to God's presence living with you—humility and awe.
Pray for two people you know (by name!) and their response to God.