

A Tale of Three Kings Reading Report
Brooke Witterman

In the dedication of the book, *A Tale of Three Kings*, written by Gene Edwards, he explains his main premise and the primary audience for his book. He says, “to the brokenhearted Christians coming out of authoritarian groups, seeking solace, healing, and hope. May you somehow recover and go on with him who is liberty. And to all the brokenhearted Christians: May you be so utterly healed that you can still answer the call of him who asks for all because he is all.¹” Edward’s heart for those who have been hurt by leaders and who have been treated poorly is so deep, The healing he desires and the steps for how to deal with the pain is radical compared to what the world would say as ways to cope and deal.

Edwards says that when he wrote this book so long ago he really had no idea the number of believers that have been so devastated by what he calls “Christian to Christian” clashes. He was surprised by the response and the number of leaders who have used this book as a resource to give to hurting people. He realized even more after the responses to his book that “there is a great deal of pain and hurt out there in Christendom that is rarely addressed or ministered to.²” Edwards also said that this book is a reflection of his concern for so many “ confused, brokenhearted and often bitter Christians who now find their spiritual lives in shambles and who are groping about for even the slightest word of hope and comfort.”

This book shows the lives of three kings found in the Old Testament: King Saul, King David and David’s son, Absalom. This is a portrait of submission and authority within the Kingdom of God. The story is divided into two parts. Part 1 begins by talking about the older King Saul and David as a young shepherd boy. Then, in part 2, we find that David is now the older king and the young man is Absalom, his son.

We begin by looking at David as a young boy and the role he played as he the youngest of 8 boys. The older 7 worked on the family farm, but David was the one taking care of the family’s small flock of sheep and leading them to the mountains. This is where David engaged in battles alone as well as learning to love the Lord through singing and abandoned praise. Here David learned to fight the enemies around him like bears who were trying to hurt his little lambs. It was during this time that an old man, Samuel, came to their home to find the future leader of Israel. Here was where God found a “purer heart than anyone else on all the sacred soil of Isreal.³” That day Samuel anointed David to be the future king of Israel. This event did not lead David to the throne, but rather to a decade of hellish agony and suffering.

¹ Gene Edwards, *A Tale of Three Kings*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1980), i books 4-5

² Edwards, *A Tale of Three Kings*, i books 11

³ Edwards, *A Tale of Three Kings*, i books 30

This led David to the palace of Saul, the mad king, which was where David learned many invaluable lessons for his life. Saul was jealous of David and tortured David both mentally and physically. He even threw spears and tried to kill David. God wanted David to be a broken vessel that would be ready to serve him. God has a school of submission and brokenness, but very few students enroll in this school. David placed himself under this mad king and allowed himself to learn these lessons well. David never got hit with the spears and he never threw the spears back. We know this because “when someone has been hit by a spear, he turns a deep shade of bitter.”⁴ But David never became bitter.

God alone knows who His anointed are, and God never tells us who they are. King Saul was God’s anointed, but he was also mad. We can blame the King Saul’s in our own lives for our present hell, but we really need to look at the King Saul in ourselves. God cut the King Saul out of David’s heart. If He hadn’t, David would have been King Saul II. This operation was brutal and almost killed David. It cut so deep, but David became a new man who was hardly even recognizable. Through being forced to run away from Saul and hide in caves, everything was being crushed out of David. But through this David “became the greatest comforter of broken hearts this world shall every know.”⁵ Here, suffering gave birth to humility.

Out of this suffering and humility came the tools David would need when he was the older King and his son Absalom had dreams of taking his position. Absalom does not follow the path of his father, but rather follows the line and example of Saul. Absalom wanted to lead from rebellion to take the throne, but rebellion only leads to becoming a tyrant. God never honors division in his kingdom, and David feels called to do absolutely nothing to defend himself. People around David saw that when he was dealing with Saul and was treated so wrongly but responded with only respect and private agony. David risked his life for unity and sealed his lips and eyes to injustices. His advisors saw that he never mistreated Saul and was never unfair to Absalom.

In the end, David states that it is better to be defeated than to act like Saul or Absalom. For David, God was bigger than anything, even the kingdoms of this world. After everything, he ultimately realized that it’s God’s kingdom. We learn for ourselves that submission and surrender are the ways to lead, and that God himself can allow pain and suffering to do the operations on our hearts if we will allow him so we end up like King David, a man after God’s own heart.

Bibliography

Edwards, Gene. *A Tale of Three Kings*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1980.

⁴ Edwards, *A Tale of Three Kings*, i books 40

⁵ Edwards, *A Tale of Three Kings*, i books 51

With integrity, I have read this book (circle one):

Thoroughly and Entirely__100__%

Quickly but Completely____%

Thoroughly but NOT Entirely____%

Quickly and NOT Completely____%

Not at all

Signed: _____Brooke Witterman_____