

Book Review : Gene Edwards, A Tale of Three Kings

Student: Yumi Cha E-mail: liy@nyack.edu

Program: Masters of Divinity

Alliance Theological Seminary

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### **Book Review**

This book is a story about David, who is still the most respected figure among Jews today. In the Old Testament, David was at the center of the Golden Age and the greatest king of Israel. The star on the flag of Israel symbolizes the "Star of David". What made him such a great king? The author compares Saul, David, and Absalom in this book. Absalom was David's son and tried to seize his father's throne. David was caught in the middle of the relationship between Saul and Absalom. And he shows Christians how to live and deal with hardships.

In this book, "Saul" appears as the past, and "Absalom" as the future. The qualities of Saul and Absalom are not only found in the characters of Saul and Absalom, but also in David himself or within us. The most frightening thing to a person is another person. How much good and evil exists in the human heart? This literary framework of the author is quite innovative. It is shocking yet relatable to see Saul the king and Absalom the son coexisting with David, the king whom we admire and love.

David is the one who realized this fact. This is what sets David apart from other kings. Unlike Saul who was impatient, David believed that God who had anointed him would faithfully give him his kingdom without fighting against Saul. Even during a time when David was struck by Absalom, who was his future Saul, he did not act impatiently like Saul but waited patiently. David did not cling to the throne. He knew that he was chosen as a king not by himself but by God. Therefore, he thought that God could reject him and choose Absalom instead. David was not a king who followed the strategy of holding onto the throne like most authoritative kings. What made David truly David-like during this time was that he looked back at himself. Hobbes said, "The war of all against all". People in the world fight for everything to make it their own. Therefore, we must be careful when we have power or wealth. Because power always has an unsatisfactory and bitter aftermath. If those who were at the peak of power had true humility, self-reflection, and self-control, history may have been different.

The second author continuously questions the issue of choice and recognizing whose authority to follow. Life before God can be seen as a lifelong process of answering this question and making choices. Just as Saul and Absalom packaged their selfish choices as though they were God's, even evildoers cannot see their own evil because they live according to their own perceived standard of goodness. God chose David long before he was anointed with oil, through Saul's failures. However, it was only after David's shattered life in the wilderness and his recognition of God's authority that he truly became king. Through this process, David became who he was meant to be and grew into a person pleasing to God.

This year has been a difficult time for me. My third child turned three in March and was diagnosed with ASD. Since he was one year old, I had doubts and wondered if there was some delay. However, the pediatrician in charge repeatedly assured me that there was nothing to worry about. Feeling frustrated, I eventually contacted the NYC early intervention team in January and after several evaluations, my child was diagnosed with a severe level of delay and ASD. Additionally, in April, my first child, who is now ten, announced to her friends at school that she identifies as a lesbian. I am currently a full-time student, the full-time mom and full-time pastor at church. And my church is about to move into a new chapel building. In the midst of my busy schedule, I have lost something important. When I reflect on this question, I realize that I can only turn to God.

What use is it to achieve something valuable outside my home if I lose something important within my own family? *“O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!”*<sup>1</sup> The voice of David, crying out for his son Absalom, echoes in my ear. David lived as a true person of God, so why did this happen to him? Was it because he failed in every moment of choice? God clearly commanded the king not to have many wives, but did the problem start when he used politics to have many wives?

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Samuel 18:33

Because David repented and returned, he ended his wrongdoing without it ending him. However, there are cases where one wrongdoing cannot be turned back even if one repents, and that is life. In such a case, the fault must be carried to the end. How am I doing with the life God has entrusted to me? Am I ignoring them because there are so many things in front of me? The hardships I face in my life right now is that God has given me the opportunity to change my way of life before it is too late. This is God's means of dealing with me, and I believe it will ultimately be a blessing to me. I believe it will be grace to me just as the suffering of Apostle Paul was useful to him in learning the Lord's law. This is the attitude I think I should have.

This is unmanageable and very difficult in my view, but I couldn't look at these events emotionally because there was a lot of homework to do and results to be produced right away. There was no time to grieve and weep. Therefore, I need to first focus on improving my relationship with my children. I am making an effort to increase the time I spend talking with my eldest child. She is a smart child who doesn't need many words to understand things, but I used to release my stress on her by yelling at her about various things without showing gratitude for the most precious gift that God has given me. I stopped expressing my bad emotions in front of my child without refining them first. I made sure that our home became a more comfortable place. She is still young and may be confused about her sexual identity. To naturally teach her biblical sexual identity, I need to talk to her more. I am approaching my child and, most importantly, I am spending more time praying for my child.

Secondly, I am grateful to God for seeing the hearts of believers who do not grow in faith even over time. God must have felt so hurt seeing me living like worldly people and not being able to put aside my desires even when I claimed to be devoted to Him. While receiving speech therapy, special instruction, and occupational therapy, my third child has noticeably improved. I also need to spend more time with God, focusing on Him, so that I can draw closer

to Him. I need to increase the time I spend praying and focusing solely on God, not reading books or doing anything else. I need to hear God's voice, not just pour out my story. There have been many reports and sermons I have had to write, but often the information is all that is conveyed through my lips and it does not remain in my heart. Now, I want it to be transmitted through me first, and then through my preaching. I want to be a person who is truly called by God.

In the end, faith is a matter of authority. 'Is it God or is it me?' From my perspective, it was a very difficult question, but among the many things that needed to be resolved, I found it easy to entrust this issue to God. With so much to do, I didn't have time to be emotionally drained. And when I entrusted everything to God, everything felt much lighter. *"For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*<sup>2</sup> Just as God dealt with me, He will deal with these children. So I felt confident that I could wait for Him to work and follow His timing from behind.

David met God through the wilderness and served Him as the true God. His life did not become stable just because he passed through the wilderness once. He faced ongoing hardships, but he spent all that time with God. And finally became David who is true David. I also want to be with God. So I want to become someone who says that the hardships ultimately made me a person of God.

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 11:30