

Assignment Title: Reading Report – A Tale of Three Kings

A Tale of Three Kings / Gene Edwards

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Summary

Tale of Three Kings, explores the relationships between Saul and David, and David and Absalom through a play like format. It adds a lot of emotion, character, and drama to David that is easy to miss in the original text. While delving into the relationships between Saul and David, as well as David and Absalom, the author gives us a peek into some important main themes. Things that are covered include, but are not limited to, crazy leaders, not throwing spears, how people can divide a kingdom while keeping a facade of wholesomeness, and how pain and suffering are necessary for God's anointed.

The book very quickly introduces the concept of "a king after the order of King Saul."¹ This is a King who throws spears, in this case used both metaphorically and literally. This is a leader who attacks the ones serving him. The book is quick to suggest that these kinds of kings can be defeated, but in conquering one, you are left vulnerable to becoming one. It is also pointed out that even though Saul was a king who was out to get David, he still was "God's chosen authority. Chosen for David"²

In part two the book moves on to the relationship between Absalom and David. We have jumped to a point where David is now king, and Absalom is plotting to take the throne due to his own selfish ambition. David once again refuses to throw spears, even though they could be justified in this instance. In this case David speaks about how easy it would be for him to become like Saul. "He breathes in the lungs and beats in the breast of all of us."³ Even David had some of Saul in him, and as he recognized that, he avoided throwing spears at Absalom. The author says

¹ Gene Edwards, *The Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), Kindle edition, 21.

² *Ibid*, 22.

³ *Ibid*, 26.

that this was the fruit of God cutting out the Saul in David's heart through the painful experiences David had with Saul in his youth.

I have grievances with the format of the text, but I think the arguments and lessons from it are well put. It's important to be on guard against the Saul that lives in all of us. It's important to show restraint when challenged. These are things that I recognize, even if I'm not the best at practicing them all the time. I do wonder though about the concept of doing nothing. Throughout the book we're shown situations where David could act against his opponents, and he chooses to do nothing, "To do absolutely nothing."⁴ In these cases, the book argues that since we can't be sure if the person in charge is God's chosen or not, we should not fight against them, but merely dodge the spears. My question for the author would then be, when is it ok to stand up and fight for the broken and needy? I'm sure that some would say that the Reverend Martin Luther King, was an Absalom, someone who was dividing a kingdom, but from where I stand, he was someone who was used mightily by God. He seems to be a very different person from how David is portrayed in this book, but they both did amazing things on behalf of God.

I guess that my question shows where my head is in the internal struggle between trying to be in line with God's plan versus my own will, or goals. I think that the consolation for me is knowing that even David was human. He becomes more relatable through the emotion portrayed by the text and knowing that he made a lot of mistakes. The biggest take away for me is to guard my heart against becoming a Saul or an Absalom by not dividing or throwing spears, and by never letting my guard down. For as David says so eloquently, "no man knows his own heart. I certainly do not know mine. Only God does."⁵

⁴ Gene Edwards, *The Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), Kindle edition, 53.

⁵ *Ibid*, 57.

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: Henry Williams

Bibliography

Gene Edwards, *The Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), Kindle edition