



THE Ken Mawr CHRONICLE

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The newsletter of Ken Mawr United Presbyterian Church
“Declaring God’s grace & Demonstrating God’s love”

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In the summer months of 2018 our Sunday morning sermons at Ken Mawr will be based on the Old Testament books of 1 & 2 Samuel. We have something of a tendency to become “New Testament Christians,” focused solely on the four Gospel stories of Jesus, and the letters of Paul and the other Apostles which instruct us in how to live as followers of Christ. Yet, we may be surprised that there is a person about whom more biological biblical details are given than Jesus. That person is of course Israel’s second king, David.

First Samuel begins at a time in which there is no king in Israel, yet we soon hear a godly new mother, Hannah, giving thanks to God for far more than simply answering her prayer for a son (1 Sam. 2:1-10). She speaks of the Lord rescuing the needy and judging the wicked (vv. 3-9), doing so through a future king, God’s anointed (v. 10). Israel’s first king, Saul, is not that king. But soon God proves faithful to his kingly promises through David. God later enlarges his royal promises for an eternal throne occupied by David’s descendants (2 Sam. 7:4-17).

Ryan Kelly, a pastor at Desert Springs Church in Albuquerque, NM, has written a study guide for these two books of the Bible in which he says, “The books of 1 and 2 Samuel were originally compiled as a single book. Modern Hebrew Bibles, in fact, still treat this material as simply “Samuel.” These 55 chapters tell the story of an important transitional period of God’s plan, centering on the judge/prophet Samuel and the two kings he anointed, Saul and David. In fact, 1 and 2 Samuel narrates three overlapping but distinct transitions in the leadership of Israel:

- A transition from failing priests to Samuel—a righteous judge/prophet;
- A transition from no king to Saul—a king of the people’s initiative (1 Sam. 8:5);
- And a rather slow transition from Saul to David—a king of God’s own choosing (1 Sam. 13:14).

Throughout these varied transitions we should certainly observe the negative and positive examples that these leaders provide. However, a more important thing is this: **What each transition teaches us about God.** As we shall see in 1 & 2 Samuel, God shows not only his power, control, patience, salvation, and righteous judgment but also that he often brings about his purposes in surprising, ironic, and seemingly upside-down ways.” I truly hope you will join us every Sunday morning that you are able. God bless!

Pastor Karl