

King David's Near Death Experience

Commentary for February 1, 2008 — The Killer Threatened by Death

The "[February 2008 Newsletter](#)" deals with the subject of King David and death. King David had a very "close call" from a pronouncement of death declared to him by YHWH Himself. The title of my article is "The Tomb of David and Psalm 30." The Tomb of David refers to the sepulcher that God "made" for David. Psalm 30 has a title to it: **"A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David."** That **"house of David"** was the **"Tomb of David."**

King David was familiar with death because he had dealt it out to others so often. He was, to use a modern phrase, a cold-blooded killer. David was a man of blood and he knew full well what it was to kill men (and probably women and children) in battles and in conquests of cities. Such was the way of ancient warfare. His bloodiness was the reason God cited for not allowing David to build the Temple:

"But the word of YHWH came to me, saying, 'You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars: you shall not build an house unto my name, because you have shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.'"

• *1 Chronicles 22:8*

"But God said unto me, 'You shall not build an house for my name, because you have been a man of war, and have shed blood.'"

• *1 Chronicles 28:3*

God would not have made these statements unless David was a very bloody man.

All the people of Israel knew David had a reputation as a mankiller. They knew this because news of an incident was spread abroad throughout Israel. The incident occurred during Absalom's rebellious attempt to usurp the throne of Israel against David. As David and his small escort protecting him were fleeing from his adversaries, a man named Shimei of the house of Saul (king before David) came up to David and his men and taunted them, cursing him:

"... he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

And thus said Shimei when he cursed, 'Come out, come out, you bloody man, and you man of Belial: YHWH has returned upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou have reigned; and YHWH has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son: and, behold, you are taken in your mischief, because you are bloody man.'"

• *2 Samuel 16:5-8*

David Knew Job

Besides David's experience in causing death, David also knew about death from the book of Job.¹ This passage shows Job's thoughts that death would not be such a bad thing considering the pain and trauma and tragic loss Job has suffered (at the hand of God, by the way):

1. The Book of Job was available to the people of Israel during this time. Job may be the oldest book in the Bible. It likely was composed before Genesis. (Genesis was a book compiled from much older documents).

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down: he flees also as a shadow, and continues not. And do you open your eyes upon such an one, and bring me into judgment with you? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with you, you have appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

... But man dies, and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost [spirit], and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up: So man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

O that you would hide me in the grave, that you would keep me secret, until your wrath be past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me!

If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. You shall call, and I will answer you: you will have a desire to the work of your hands.”

• *Job 14:1–5, 10–15*

“For I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

• *Job 19:25–27*

A threat of death to David from a surprising source — YHWH Himself. YHWH was David’s God, Israel’s God. Up to the moment of the declaration of David’s death, YHWH had protected David and nurtured his rise to power as king of Israel. Yet suddenly, as David learned, God wanted him dead, and soon.

This is somewhat ironic because King David of Israel, a man who had taken so many other lives, faced a quick death that was not only sudden, but inevitable because God declared it. It was inescapable.

Fortunately, David did not have to die but lived longer than he thought. In fact David **“died in a good old age, full of days.”** He received a reprieve from God, who extended his life.

The Newsletter and article this month reveal David’s response to his sentence of death, both in 2 Samuel 7:18–29 and in Psalm 30. I wrote the article to expand the knowledge regarding the Tomb of David and examine new aspects of that topic. Eventually David approached death again. That time David fully reconciled himself to his upcoming death, likely from natural causes. He gives final words to Solomon and the assembled leaders of Israel.

“Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, ‘I go the way of all the earth.’”

• *1 Kings 2:1–2*

David narrowly escaped death and accepted God’s will in an extremely threatening situation. David saw death from the recipient’s point of view. He knew what death would bring from the book of Job. Indeed, God being more merciful than David would have been to another man.

We can learn about dying from David’s example. We can learn how to respond to the approach of death by considering Job and David, both David’s early threat of death, and his later oncoming death.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com