

The Special Significance of II Samuel 15:10 – 20:2

Introduction

During my thematic studies of the book of II Samuel, Adonai¹ opened my understanding to one of the most profound presentations of the Gospel I have ever seen. Yes, a presentation of the Gospel in II Samuel, traditionally thought of as an “historical” book! And how is it possible that a presentation of the gospel (the death, burial and resurrection of the Messiah) could be found in one of these books? Well, Yeshua² was very emphatic that the Gospel was clearly described in the Tanakh.³ Note Luke’s account of Yeshua’s words to the two disciples traveling on the road to Emmaus:

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them ***in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself***. . . *44* Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that ***all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me***.” *45* And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures (Luke 24:27, 44-45).

In the above passage, we are told that Yeshua taught them concerning Himself from the Torah (Law of Moses), the prophets (e.g., II Samuel) and the Psalms (writings). Therefore, we can be sure that this information is indeed located in the Tanakh. Yeshua went on to state the following:

46 Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and ***thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name*** to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-47).

In this passage, Yeshua presented the basics of the Gospel: 1) the Messiah would suffer and die, 2) He would rise from the dead and 3) repentance and remission of sins would be preached in His name. Believe it or not, this same Gospel message can actually be found in various places throughout the Tanakh. This book will focus on one particular passage, II Samuel 15:10 through II Samuel 20:2, the story of David’s flight from his rebellious son Absalom.

This book is entitled, *The Scroll of the Gospel of David*, for the following reasons: 1) I chose the phrase, “The Scroll,” because as many of you are aware, books of the Tanakh were written in Hebrew on scrolls of animal skins. In other words, II Samuel 15 – 20 would have been found within the context of a larger scroll containing the entirety of II Samuel. Thus, the passage we are about to study would have been found on a scroll. 2) I chose the phrase, “of the Gospel of David,” because of the four Gospel accounts that have been handed down to us (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). Each Gospel writer penned his own version of the Good News in order that we might believe and be saved. I

am endeavoring to demonstrate that II Samuel 15:10 – 20:2 contains a thematic presentation of the Gospel which chronologically follows the four “New Testament” Gospel accounts. Hence, *The Scroll of the Gospel of David*. For within this passage, we will clearly see a thematic presentation of the Gospel and one of many compelling examples of what Yeshua referred to in Luke 24:46-47.

The Importance of II Samuel 15:10 – 20:2

Why and how is II Samuel 15:10 – 20:2 relevant to a study of the Gospel? First of all, it is very unique in its literary presentation. The flow of events found in this passage is incredibly well ordered. If you have not yet done so, please, take the time to read II Samuel 15:10 – 20:2 using the following outline as a guide so that you will be better equipped to see its thematic flow.

- ◆ II Samuel 15:10-12—Absalom’s rebellion
- ◆ II Samuel 15:13-37—David’s escape from Jerusalem
- ◆ II Samuel 16:1-4—David’s encounter with Ziba, Mephibosheth’s servant
- ◆ II Samuel 16:5-14—David’s encounter with Shimei
- ◆ II Samuel 16:15-23—Absalom violated David’s concubines
- ◆ II Samuel 17:1-14—The advice of Ahithophel and Hushai
- ◆ II Samuel 17:15-29—David’s escape across the Jordan
- ◆ II Samuel 18:1-18—The battle and Absalom’s death
- ◆ II Samuel 18:19-32—David was informed of Absalom’s death
- ◆ II Samuel 19:1-15—David’s return across the Jordan
- ◆ II Samuel 19:16-23—David’s encounter with Shimei
- ◆ II Samuel 19:24-30—David’s encounter with Mephibosheth
- ◆ II Samuel 19:31-39—David’s encounter with Barzillai
- ◆ II Samuel 19:40-43—The men of Judah and Israel’s quarrel over David
- ◆ II Samuel 20:1-2—The rebellion of Sheba

On the surface, this outline may not look too significant. However, have you noticed that certain events seem to have been repeated? For example, the opening verses (II Samuel 15:10-12) convey the story of Absalom’s rebellion against David, whereas the last couple of verses in the outline (II Samuel 20:1-2) concern a rebellion against David by a man named Sheba. Note how David encounters Shimei and someone associated with the house of Saul (Ziba, then Mephibosheth) towards the beginning (II Samuel 16:1-4 and 16:5-14) and end (II Samuel 19:16-23 and 19:24-30) of the outline above. Lastly, note how David crossed the Jordan two times: once as he fled from Jerusalem (II Samuel 17:15-29) and again when he returned (II Samuel 19:1-15). These “double takes” are the subtle clues of one of the Tanakh’s most often-used and fascinating literary constructions—a chiasmic structure! A chiasmic structure is a literary technique wherein a story is divided into two halves and the themes of the first half of the story are repeated in the second half of the story *in reverse order*. Furthermore, the two halves of the chiasmic structure “point” to the most important element of the structure, the central axis. This is illustrated in the diagram below.

Theme 1
Theme 2
Theme 3
Theme 4
Central Axis
Theme 4
Theme 3
Theme 2
Theme 1

A chiastic structure is essentially *thematic method of organizing a narrative*. They are so extensive that you can barely read a chapter without moving into or out of one. They are literally everywhere. Some are as small as a few verses, while others span entire books! Chiastic structures represent one of the Holy One's ways of demonstrating which Scriptures have *thematic relevance* to each other. As we progress through this study, we will see many more chiastic structures and how this literary device can be used as an extraordinary hermeneutic tool. For now, let's gain some basic understanding of chiastic structures by analyzing the one hidden within II Samuel 15:10 – 20:2.

The Chiasitic Structure of II Samuel 15:10 – II Samuel 20:2

- A) II Samuel 15:10-12—Absalom *rebelled against the king*; “When you hear the *sound of the shofar*”; Absalom *stole the hearts of the men of Israel*; “There’s *no one before the king to understand you*”
- B) II Samuel 15:13-24—The king’s servants said, “Whatever my lord the king decides, *your servants are ready*”; Ittai said, “In whatever place my lord the king will be – *whether for death or life – there your servant will be*”; David and his servants *pass through the Kidron valley*
- C) II Samuel 15:32-37—Hushai *came to meet the king*; the king stated “*You will be a burden to me*”; “You will *defeat Ahithophel’s council* for me; *stay behind*”
- D) II Samuel 16:1-4—Ziba *came to meet the king*; the king *asked a question about Mephibosheth*; the king *gave Mephibosheth’s property to Ziba*
- E) II Samuel 16:5-13—*David came to Bahurim*; Shimei *came out to meet David*; Abishai *wanted to kill Shimei*; *David forgave Shimei*
- F) II Samuel 16:15-19—*Hushai won Absalom’s trust*; “Whom shall I serve, is it not *my friend’s son?*”
- G) II Samuel 16:20-23—Ahithophel *advised Absalom how to win the trust of Israel*; consort with *your father’s concubines*; *pitched a tent on the roof for Absalom*
- H) II Samuel 17:1-14—Ahithophel wanted to *chase after David*; Ahithophel stated, “The people will be at *peace*”; Ahithophel really *desired to kill David*; Absalom had to *choose between which two people* he would send against David; *Ahithophel*, who suggested that he kill David *was rejected*; Hushai stated “And if he is brought *into a city*”
- I) II Samuel 17:18-19—Jonathan and Ahimaaz *descend into a well*; a woman *spread a curtain over the well*
- J) II Samuel 17:23—*Ahithophel’s suicide by hanging*
- K) II Samuel 17:24-25—Absalom *appointed Amasa* over his army in place of Joab; *David’s position in Mahanaim*
- L) II Samuel 17:27-29—*Three men brought David and his servants all sorts of provisions because they were hungry, exhausted and thirsty in the desert*
- K’) II Samuel 18:1-5—David *appointed officers* and divided his camp into thirds; *David’s position near the city gate*
- J’) II Samuel 18:9-15—Absalom *hanging in the elm tree*; David’s servant refusing to accept bribery of silver; *Absalom’s death*
- I’) II Samuel 18:17—Joab’s men throw *Absalom’s body into a large pit* and erected a *mound of stones over him*
- H’) II Samuel 18:19-32—Ahimaaz wanted to *run to David*; Ahimaaz called out to the king “*Peace!*”; Ahimaaz really *desired to bring David news*; Joab *chose between sending two people to David*; Ahimaaz, who suggested that he carry the message *was rejected*; David was sitting *between the two gates of the city*
- G’) II Samuel 19:5-11—Joab *advised David how to win the trust of his servants*; “Save the lives of *your concubines*”; David *sat at the city gate*
- F’) II Samuel 19:12-15—*David won the hearts of the men of Judah*; “You are *bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh*”
- E’) II Samuel 19:16-23—*Shimei was from Bahurim*; he *hastened to meet the king*; Abishai *wanted to kill Shimei*; Shimei *begged David for forgiveness*
- D’) II Samuel 19:24-30—Mephibosheth *came to meet the king*; the king *asked Mephibosheth a question*; *Mephibosheth and Ziba must divide the property*
- C’) II Samuel 19:31-39—Barzillai *came to meet the king*; “*I will be a burden to you*”; Barzillai states that he has no discernment; Let me *stay back*
- B’) II Samuel 19:40-43—The men of Israel and Judah argue over who is *more loyal to the king*; David and his servants *pass over the Jordan*

A`) II Samuel 20:1-2—*Sheba rebelled against the king; he sounded the shofars; the men of Israel followed Sheba; “we have no part in David”*

Chiastic structures are extremely valuable because they teach numerous thematic lessons that sometimes are not readily apparent. The important words in each point of the structure are in bold and italicized print so you can easily see how they are thematically connected. Chiastic structures are analyzed by comparing and contrasting the points that are thematically related in the opposite sides of the structure (compare A to A`, B to B`, etc.). Please take the time to study it so that you can appreciate its beauty. As you can see, II Samuel 15:10 - 20:2 was deliberately written so that the themes in the first half of the story were repeated in the second half of the story in reverse order. Isn't it amazing? Note the central axis, point L, where three of David's friends brought food and provisions for him and his servants. The central axis is always a focal point of a chiastic structure; however, it usually functions in one of two ways:

- ◆ Sometimes, the central axis is the most important point in the chiastic structure. In other words, when the Holy One wants to make something stand out and grab your attention He may accomplish this by making it the central axis of a chiastic structure. This is His way of saying, “Hey! This is a very important piece of information!”
- ◆ Other times, it functions as the turning point or point of contrast between the two halves of the chiastic structure. When the central axis functions in this manner, you will usually see contrasts between elements in the two halves of the story. Or, the events that occur in the second half of the story are in reverse of the direction of events that occurred in the first half. This is the case here. Before the central axis, David is on the run, fleeing for his life. Immediately after the central axis, David, seemingly strengthened and encouraged from the provisions of his three friends, began to formulate a battle plan and then went on to defeat his enemy.

This chiastic structure is truly a work of art. Only Adonai could have inspired such beauty. How blessed are our eyes to be able to behold His wisdom in action! Personally, I think chiastic structures are one of the highest forms of prophecy. Why? It's one thing for a person to tell a story and make the themes of the first half match the themes in the second half in reverse order. However, we must remember that these stories are not fanciful make-believe, made up in the minds of the authors. These are real events that happened to real people! It's one thing to tell a story in a thematic pattern equivalent to a chiastic structure. It's quite another to be able to orchestrate this within the context of real people and actual events. Only an all-wise, all-knowing, Almighty God could do such things!

At its most literal level, this story is simply the account of how David successfully thwarted an attempted coup by his own son. However, is that the only significance of this story? David is one of the many people the Tanakh uses to teach about the mission and ministry of Messiah Yeshua. Judaism teaches that both David and Joseph are Messianic figures. They know that when one studies the events in the lives of David and

Joseph that one is actually learning about the promised Messiah. How do they know this? There are many reasons why; however, I'd like to share with you how Adonai taught me to recognize Messianic prophecy. There is more behind the story of II Samuel 15:10 – 20:2 than just a failed coup attempt. But before we uncover this hidden message, let us prove that David truly is a Messianic figure.