

about Nathan & Gad

1.) Nathan, Gad, and Samuel were the three main prophets who ministered to King David. (Samuel was studied earlier.) Nathan's ministry is mainly found in Second Samuel ch. seven and 12 after David became king and in First Kings ch. one during the transition from David to Solomon.

2.) The prophet Gad is less well known than Nathan, but he appears in the written record before Nathan, in 1 Samuel 22:5. He ministered to the future king as they fled from Saul, whereas perhaps Nathan did not. Moreover, Gad was still with David in Second Samuel ch. 24. So although his ministry is only mentioned twice in Samuel, he served for many years.

3.) A few additional details on what Gad did during those many years with David is found in 1 Chr. 29:29 and 2 Chr. 29:25. Both he and Nathan were apparently involved in official record keeping. Later their written records were very helpful to the author of Chronicles. The two verses above also show that Nathan and Gad were very interested in Jewish worship.

4.) Nathan is best known for confronting David about his sins toward Bathsheba and Uriah. (See Second Samuel chs. 11 and 12.) However, the prophet first appears in ch. seven when David consulted him about plans to build the temple. (This may be another sign that Nathan was deeply involved in the details of public worship.) In the same chapter, God also gave the Davidic covenant through Nathan.

5.) Gad is best known for his prophetic role in David purchasing a special piece of land for the future temple. Second Samuel ends with this story; and as in Nathan's earlier ministry to David in 2 Sam. 12, God turned a bad situation into something gracious and good.

6.) Perhaps Nathan outlived Gad since he played an active role in seeing that Solomon became king in place of David; as far as we know, Gad did not. Earlier God used Nathan to announce that Solomon was to be David's successor (2 Sam. 12:24-25). Interestingly, a younger son of David and Bathsheba was named Nathan (Luke 3:31), perhaps to honor the prophet.

7.) There are many subpoints on the worksheet, but one main question. Were Nathan and Gad the most important people in David's life? In some ways this is impossible to answer, because people are important in different ways. For instance in some ways there is never anyone more important than one's parents. Even so, this is still a good question.

8.) One good way to apply this study to our lives is to list the spiritual advisors (pastors, evangelists, teachers) who have had the greatest spiritual impact on us and thank God for them. If possible, it would be good to thank them in person, as well. How different David's life might have been without the godly ministry of Nathan and Gad! The same could be said about us and our spiritual mentors, as well.

Nathan & Gad were...

1 Sam. 22:5, 2 Sam. 7:1-17, 12: 1-15, 24-25, 24:10-19, 1 Kings 1:8-40, 1 Chr. 29:29, 2 Chr. 29:25

Mark the descriptive terms and phrases below as correct (*), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).

() the most important people in David's life?

() never caused David any trouble?

() never wrong (2 Sam. 7:1-4, 12-13)?

() the only prophets who spoke to David (1 Chr. 25:1, 5)?

() mentioned more than David's other helpers?

() ministering to David as prophets everyday?

() sent to David by God (7:5-6, 12:1, 25, 24:11-12)?

() important scribes / record keepers (1 Chr. 29:29)?

() miracle working prophets like Elijah and Elisha?

() more helpful to David than Joab?

() more helpful to David than Samuel?

() more helpful to David than Bathsheba?

() equally helpful (1 Chr. 29:29, 2 Chr. 29:25)?

() pious like David (2 Chr. 29:25)?

() brave like Jonathan, good warriors?

() like parents to David (1 Sam. 22:3-5)?

() like _____ in my own life?

conclusions & applications

people in the life of David series, study #20

Lessons from Nathan and Gad

It's probably correct to say that Nathan and Gad had a bigger spiritual impact on the life of David than anyone else. At least that is true of what is seen in the written record. Perhaps his parents had an even bigger impact; but that is not recorded. Samuel also was important, of course, but he was not with David for nearly as long as the other two prophets.

Nathan and Gad had a great impact on David despite being imperfect (2 Sam. 7:1-4, 12-14) and despite not being mentioned as often as several other people. So it was not the quantity of time that they spent with the king but the quality of it. They were occasionally sent by God (2 Sam. 7:5-6, 12:1, 25, 24:11-12) with God's message. So it was the Lord, himself, who ministered to the king through them.

The ministry of the prophets in the O.T. was primarily to convey God's word. Some prophets, like Elijah and Elisha, performed miracles; but there was no need for Nathan and Gad to do so. Indeed, had they been miracle workers it would distract from what God was doing through David and his house.

There are two main ways to apply what we learn from Nathan and Gad. The first is to be thankful for those who have ministered to us. David apparently showed his thankfulness for Nathan's ministry by naming one of his sons after him. We also should show our appreciation to and for those who minister to us.

The second way to apply the lessons learned from these two prophets is to pray and labor so that we too may effect others positively for the Lord. Of course, like the prophets, that is only possible as we walk with God and listen to his word. Like Nathan and Gad we have no power to influence others for God unless the Lord, himself, provides it through his word. On the positive side, however, in this N.T. age it is possible for all of God's children to be used of him in ways that were usually reserved for special individuals like Nathan and Gad in the O.T.

Finally, here are a couple words of caution. First, we should not expect God to minister to us through others in a special way, if we are not walking with the Lord. He may do so; and he may not. (Samuel stopped ministering to Saul.) Second we should not expect God to work in the lives of our children through the church, the Sunday school, or the pastor in a special way if we are not at least trying to minister to them ourselves, as well. As we know, God uses the home as well as the church. Praise God for his special servants; but praise God for Christian parents, as well. As with David's parents, their ministry is often underappreciated.