



King David: A Biography

Steven L. McKenzie

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Through a close and critical reading of biblical texts, ancient history, and recent archeological discoveries, Steven L. McKenzie concludes that David was indeed a real person. This David was not the humble shepherd who slew Goliath and became king, however, but was a usurper, adulterer, and murderer—a Middle Eastern despot of a familiar type. McKenzie shows that the story of humble beginnings is utterly misleading: "shepherd" is a metaphor for "king," and David came from a wealthy, upper-class background. Similarly, McKenzie reveals how David's ascent to power, traditionally attributed to popularity and divine blessing, in fact resulted from a campaign of terror and assassination. While instituting a full-blown Middle Eastern monarchy, David was an aggressive leader, a devious politician, and a ruthless war chief. Throughout his scandalous reign, important figures who stood in his way died at convenient times, under questionable circumstances. Even his own sons were not spared. David's story, writes McKenzie, "reads like a modern soap opera, with plenty of sex, violence, and struggles for power."

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