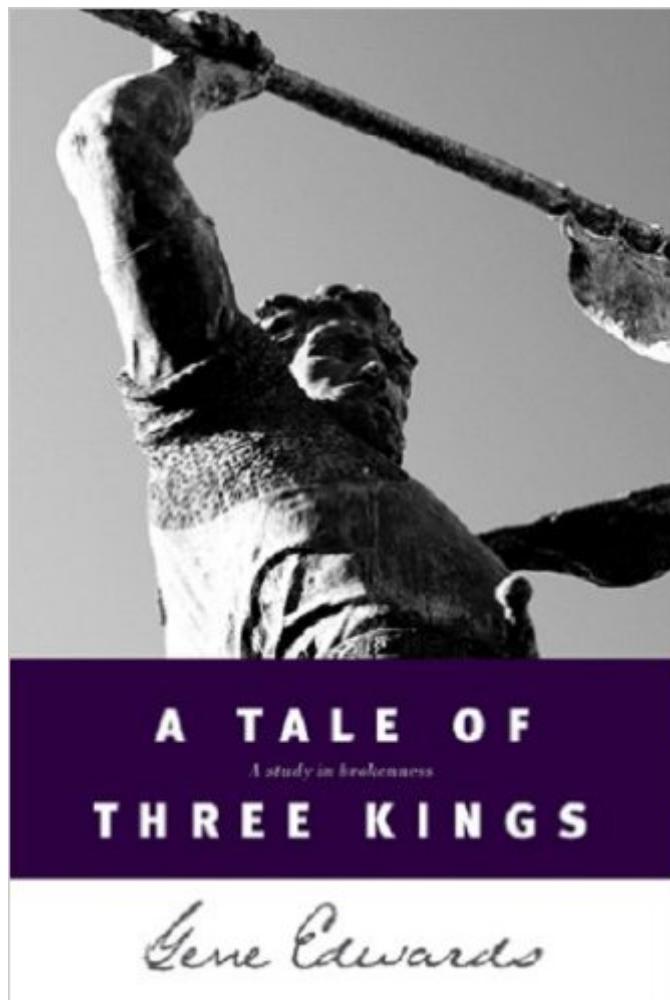


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A Tale Of Three Kings: A Study In Brokenness



Synopsis

This best-selling tale is based on the biblical figures of David, Saul, and Absalom. For the many Christians who have experienced pain, loss, and heartache at the hands of other believers, this compelling story offers comfort, healing, and hope. Christian leaders and directors of religious movements throughout the world have recommended this simple, powerful, and beautiful story to their members and staff. You will want to join the thousands who have been profoundly touched by this incomparable story.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In "A Tale of Three Kings" author Gene Edwards examines two relationships in the life of David - Saul and Absalom - and from them he draws insights that believers can apply to their own authority-related issues. Instead of approaching these Scriptural accounts like a traditional devotional writer, he retells the stories in a semi-fictionalized fashion. This approach yields some beautiful, moving prose that almost reads like poetry in places, but it also leaves the door open to the author inserting his own conjecture into the story. I'm willing to accept a little artistic license, but Edwards goes over the top in my opinion. For example, in the prologue he spins a pure fable in which God tells Gabriel to allow the yet-to-be-born spirits of David and Saul to choose their destinies. This "Mall of Unborn Destinies", as Edwards calls it, sounds more like Mormonism than Biblical Christianity. I doubt that the author meant it that way, but it illustrates the pitfalls of the fictionalizing approach. Aside from style-related problems, Edwards does cull some meaningful

insights from the story of David and Saul in Part 1. David's refusal to rebel against Saul, especially when he had the chance to kill him, is a powerful illustration of how we need to react to our authorities, even those who are abusing their position. The author makes some excellent points about how God used David's suffering to bring him to a point of brokenness, and how David always treated Saul as God's anointed despite his wicked behavior. His observations in Part 2 are less helpful. He makes some good points about David's humble heart and how we need to examine ourselves and trust God when someone is challenging our authority, but he wrongly portrays David's reaction to Absalom's rebellion.

This book is easy to read and memorable. It just isn't true. Despite its lop-sided popularity (you can scan a galaxy of 5-star reviews), *A Tale of Three Kings* represents an inaccurate and, thus, harmful perspective on spiritual authority and those who have been wounded by its abuse. Gene Edwards first published *A Tale of Three Kings* in 1980. It describes three Israelite kings: Saul, David, and Absalom, and how their behaviors supposedly represent Christian responses to authority and rebellion. We should be like David, says Edwards, who refused to touch God's "anointed" in the person of King Saul. Edwards says that we should also be like David when he refused to do anything to stop Absalom's rebellion (a questionable assertion we'll discuss below). Christians who resist abusive leaders or usurpers are acting like Saul and Absalom, says Edwards. Yikes. The book served as Edwards's heart-felt response to spiritually-abused people whom he perceived as leaving the church because they refused to submit to authority (p.ix). Edwards's solution for these abused and broken people, amazingly, was not healing but rather more brokenness. Hence his subtitle: "A Study in Brokenness." Being abused? Great, submit to it and you'll get better. Written in a historical-fiction approach, the book relies on Edwards's interpretation of Old Testament Bible stories, his own conjecture, and his belief in the one-to-one application of these stories to contemporary believers. Before I examine some of the inaccuracies in this book, let me state my motives. Motive 1: As a follower of Jesus who holds firmly to the inspiration of scripture--and as a graduate of a conservative seminary, as was Edwards--I value adherence to the Word of God.

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