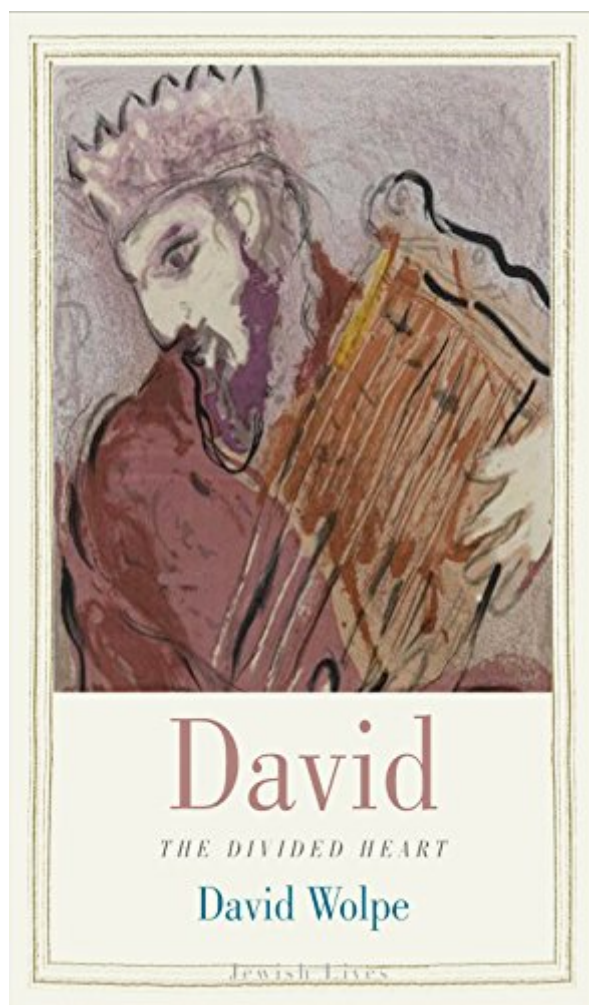


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David: The Divided Heart (Jewish Lives)



Synopsis

Of all the figures in the Bible, David arguably stands out as the most perplexing and enigmatic. He was many things: a warrior who subdued Goliath and the Philistines; a king who united a nation; a poet who created beautiful, sensitive verse; a loyal servant of God who proposed the great Temple and founded the Messianic line; a schemer, deceiver, and adulterer who freely indulged his very human appetites. Â David Wolpe, whom Newsweek called “the most influential rabbi in America,â • takes a fresh look at biblical David in an attempt to find coherence in his seemingly contradictory actions and impulses. The author questions why David holds such an exalted place in history and legend, and then proceeds to unravel his complex character based on information found in the book of Samuel and later literature. What emerges is a fascinating portrait of an exceptional human being who, despite his many flaws, was truly beloved by God.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rabbi David J. Wolpe has undertaken a monumental task in David: A Divided Heart. The book of

Samuel, from which the author draws much of his biography, was painted with the broad strokes of ancient writers, the â œspin doctorsâ • of their day, trying to colour a problematic life in the best light possible. The rabbiâ ™s beautifully nuanced writing, peppered with insightful quotes from the Tanach, enrich this book tremendously; it is thoughtful and thought-provoking, evocative and powerful. But rather than solving any of the riddles of Davidâ ™s enigmatic life, the esteemed author has succeeded in adding more questions to the debate. The vignettes of Davidâ ™s life portrayed in the book are rife with inconsistencies and leave one puzzled about this shepherd turned king. To illustrate: Lover and Husband â “ In order to escape her father Saulâ ™s murderous intents, Michal turns to magic to spirit away her husband. She uses a household idol, generally no more than six inches in height, and places it in Davidâ ™s bed. This stretches the boundaries of anyoneâ ™s reality. Apparently the only sin David did not commit was idol worship, yet his wife has household idols? And how would that idol replace a full-grown man? Perhaps this was added to the David saga to explain his â œcharmedâ • existence. Fugitive â “ On the eve of Saulâ ™s final battle, Saul turns to the Witch of En-ge-di for guidance. Though sorcery is forbidden, Saul also turns to â œmagicalâ • means against David. What are we to make of this? David, though anointed by God, is not divine, he is a mere human being, and can be defeated by traditional methods. The story seems out of place and out of character, even for the melancholic Saul, as if it too were added by a later writer to bolster Davidâ ™s image and add credence to Davidâ ™s ascension to the throne.

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