

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
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**Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 20, 2009**

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Hymns: 62, 59:1, 339, 645, 55:4.

Lessons: Psalm 32, Acts 2: 25 – 39, Matthew 22: 41-46.

Text: Psalms 78:70-72 and Romans 4: 6-8.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We have been looking at shepherds this Advent season, comparing them to Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, who gave up his life so that his sheep might live eternally. In this last Advent worship service, we look at David: shepherd, warrior, king and servant of God as well as a sinner redeemed by his descendant, Jesus Christ. When the angel appeared to Mary we hear of one connection between David and Christ: *"But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.'"* Luke 1:30-33. Even of her betrothed husband, before they came together, we read that *"an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'"* Matthew 1:20. Today, let's look at

**DAVID – A SHEPHERD WHO BELIEVED IN GOD**

- 1. David the shepherd who became David the king**
- 2. Parallels between Jesus, the one who sits on the throne of David forever and David.**

David is probably one of the most significant human shepherds in scripture. Although I haven't researched every name used in the scriptures, the name David has to be one of the most frequently used human names in the scriptures, except for the names of our Savior, used about 1100 times in our more familiar translations. For comparison, when I looked at the names of some of the other shepherds we have talked about in Advent, I discovered that the name Moses is used about 850 times, and the name Abraham in its different forms, about 300 times.

What is it about David that his name is used so frequently? He was a sinner just like us, and was involved in some very public offense and scandals which led to the death of his newborn son and trouble for his household as we read of him in 2 Samuel 12:10: *"Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own."*

But in David we also see God's grace in taking a humble shepherd boy and leading him to become the king of Israel, one who ruled a kingdom that showed the physical territory of the nation of God's chosen people at its largest. In David we see the ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ. In David's ruling as a king, we see the picture of our Lord Jesus Christ ruling as a king. And, as I mentioned, in David we see our own sinfulness, including the sins we commit in our hearts and those we want to cover up, just like David wanted to cover up his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah.

When we look at the immediate ancestry of David, we see that he was born to a man named Jesse, son of Obed, who was the son of Boaz and Ruth. Ruth was a woman of Moab, who was the daughter-in-law of Naomi, and we read in Matthew 1:17 *"there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David,*

*fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Christ.*" Isn't it interesting that in 14 generations the promise given to Abraham was in the process of being fulfilled in David, and at David's time the earthly kingdom of Abraham's descendants was at its largest? Then in the same number of generations it was reduced to a slave nation in Babylon! Then 14 generations later the Savior was born of that nation.

David was the eighth, the youngest, son of Jesse. The prophet Samuel went to Bethlehem in the land of Judah because the Lord had said to Samuel: ***"I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."*** 1 Samuel 16:1. This was after God told Samuel that Saul would no longer be king. David wasn't even present when his father presented his seven older brothers to Samuel, but he was out tending sheep, being a shepherd! After Samuel realized that none of the older brothers was the one and David was called in from the flock, ***"Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah."*** 1 Samuel 16:13.

He was gifted with the ability to play the harp and he later, by the inspiration of God, wrote and/or composed many psalms. 73 of the 150 Psalms in the Bible are attributed to David. He played music for king Saul to comfort him, and at that time often ***"went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem."*** 1 Samuel 17:15. He did not despise his humble calling as a shepherd after being told God wanted him to be king of Israel. This was not a public matter yet because of King Saul's jealousy. Yet as long as Saul lived, even when Saul lost his faith, David still honored him as God's appointed king.

The young David is remembered most because of his encounter with Goliath, a giant of a Philistine who mocked Israel and Israel's God. David's father sent him to see how his three older brothers were doing in the army, and David ended up killing Goliath with just a simple slingshot and one smooth stone, despite Goliath's mighty weapons and armor. When David wanted to kill this pagan who taunted God's people and despised their God, we read in 1 Samuel 17:34-37 ***"But David said to Saul, 'Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.'"*** Saul said to David, ***"Go, and the LORD be with you."*** Well, David killed Goliath and his popularity with the people grew.

King Saul's jealousy grew at the same time, and he eventually tried to kill David a number of times. After the death of Saul, David was made king over Judah, at age 30, and ruled as a king for 40 years. He was later also made king of all Israel. He was a great military leader, too, fighting the enemies of Israel, conquering many cities including Jerusalem, which became the capital, and in the time of David's son Solomon, the location of God's temple. At the time David was made king over the tribe of Judah, the Israelites said ***"In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"*** 2 Samuel 5:2.

David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem, and wanted to build a temple, commenting that he lived in a palace while the ark of God was in a tent. But building a temple was not to be David's calling. That was reserved for his son Solomon.

There are quite a number of parallels between David and Jesus. Jesus' humble birth in Bethlehem was similar to David's humble life, and we must assume, somewhat humble birth, though surely not as humiliating as the birth of Jesus. Jesus, after all was born in a stable or a barn and laid in a manger, a feeding box for livestock. Both were kings. David ruled Israel and Judah at about the greatest time of the nation of Israel. It was actually under David's son Solomon that the kingdom of Israel had its largest amount of land. Jesus is a king,

too. His kingdom is even greater. He sits at the right hand of God ruling all things. His kingdom, he said, is not of this world. It is a spiritual kingdom, not an earthly kingdom. He rules all, and in eternity will rule all believers in love, kindness, and perfection forever. Jesus was constantly giving all glory to God, his Father. David was repeatedly giving glory and praise – usually – to God who did all things for and through him.

And, of course, they are both shepherds. We read in 2 Samuel 7:8-13 *"Now then, tell my servant David, This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."* In that prophecy to David we also see references to Christ.

In Ezekiel 34:23-24 we read this prophecy: *"I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken."* Now this was after David was dead and gone, and there was reference to another "David" who is surely Jesus Christ. Jeremiah gives a similar prophecy: *"Instead, they will serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them."* Jeremiah 30:9. And Hosea writes: *"Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days."* Hosea 3:5.

There are many psalms, also some written by David, which plainly point forward to Jesus Christ. Such psalms we call "Messianic Psalms" because they point forward to or talk about Jesus the Messiah.

David was anointed in his 30<sup>th</sup> year – in his case, anointed to be an earthly king. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in about his 30<sup>th</sup> year. David and Jesus both had many enemies, some openly, some secretly. Both judged uprightly, honestly, fairly, and righteously. David killed Goliath, the great evil giant. Jesus crushes the head of Satan, the great leader of all evil in the world.

Many called Jesus "son of David" and when he arrived in Jerusalem on the day we call Palm Sunday, they welcomed him in this way: *"Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, 'Hosanna!' 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!' 'Hosanna in the highest!'"* Mark 11:9-10.

I'd like to close by reading Psalm 23 from the New International Version. You usually hear it in the King James Version. It is *"A psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."*

So in David we see another shepherd who looked forward to the birth of Jesus Christ. Oh, and did I forget one other group of shepherds – not even named – that are mentioned in scripture? *"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."* Luke 2:8-17. But wait. When you celebrate Christmas, I hope you read again that familiar history of those familiar shepherds! Amen.