

## The Better King Arrives: *Comparing David and Jesus at Christmas* Part 1 Various Passages

*“For whatever was written in former days was written **for our instruction**, that through **endurance** and through the **encouragement** of the Scriptures we might have **hope**”*

**Introduction:** One of my favorite Christmas traditions that Erin has brought into our life is the creating and sending out Christmas cards – something I would not do on my own nor did we grow up doing. They take an amount of planning (family picture that includes a color range and scheme of clothing that I rarely possess), effort (creating the labels and lists of people to send it to) and cost (thank you, Postal service for encouraging handing out more face to face!). The payoff is having a pictorial record of so many of our friends and family that we love deeply that we can compare from years past. I especially like looking at Christmas portraits of our family from years past, that went from the classic crying infants to the sweet and awkward elementary years to now having four women in the photo! I was cleaning out files in my office this week and found pictures Erin has given me throughout the years from the time before we had kids to the time when they were young, which brought a tear to my eye and joy to my heart.

Looking back on your life through pictures is a powerful thing. It reminds you of where you’ve come from, how far life has progressed, and gives hope for the future. As much as we’d like to freeze time or go back to certain years with our kids, we are encouraged that life continues to move forward and we can enjoy the growth that has taken place. **We are NOT prisoners of the moment**, since we have a catalog of what has already happened in life and anticipation of what is to come.

Christmastime gives us this kind of opportunity in our own lives, especially as each year we consider the person and work of Jesus Christ, His coming into the world, and the immense meaning behind His incarnation. Sometimes we can get caught in thinking about Jesus only in the moment, keeping him in a manger, as a baby, who gives off the vibe of innocence but also possessing little authority or power. Or we simply let ourselves become inoculated with the story, not seeing the significance and merely feeling sentimental. That is why it is important to see Jesus, especially at Christmas, through lens of God’s **redemptive plan of history**, which originates in the past and spans into the future, so that we can properly comprehend the height and depth of the Father’s love, but also move forward with the proper mindset as a result. **First off this morning**, let us consider a non-Christmas passage that gives us a framework to consider Christ in panorama:

*For whatever was written in **former days** was written for our instruction, that through **endurance** and through the **encouragement** of the Scriptures we might have **hope**. 5 May the God of **endurance** and **encouragement** grant you to live in such **harmony with one another**, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that **together** you may with **one voice** glorify the God and Father of our **Lord Jesus Christ**. 7 Therefore welcome **one another** as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

**Romans 15:4-7**

The context of this passage was Paul dealing with unity in the church, and how the *weaker and stronger* brothers interact. The *strong* were to bear with and bear up the *weak*, and not seek to please or justify themselves. Christ was the example of this, who did not please himself, and his model should be followed. Paul then quoted **Psalms 69:9** to illustrate his point, as Christ was willing to take the reproaches or slanders of men on himself. This then led his statement about **whatever was written in**

**former days**, which refer to the Old Testament, which were written for **our instruction**, which in this case was Paul and the Roman believers. The point he made was this: The Old Testament is valuable and relevant to understanding the New, which allows us to think and function in our modern day. Notice the value of knowing the former writings:

- **Endurance** – This is a recognition that life is hard, that challenges face everyone in every generation, and *perseverance* is high mark of God’s work in our life. In fact, God is a God OF endurance, who both calls us to exercise **patience through trust** AND gives us the ability to bear up under the hard trials of life. We can endure when it is difficult because we KNOW that God has planned it, will be with us, and see us through. This kind of endurance is distinctive from a worldly thought of merely existing because we know our life is culminating toward a specific end, and that is being with our Savior in glory.
- **Encouragement** – This is the idea of “calling alongside” and bringing **comfort** in the midst of hard. Notice that just like endurance, *encouragement* in our life is sourced in **two fundamental placed**: In the *Scripture* and in *God Himself*. When we look outside of these two, we are effected by every whim of life, looking toward *external circumstances and means* for consolation. When life goes according to plan, we are encouraged. When life takes a turn off the path we desire, we lose hope. When we are encouraged by what is **eternal and transcendent**, we can actually look beyond mere circumstances for encouragement.
- **Harmony** – A church that endures and is encouraged through the whole of Scripture and person and character of God has an opportunity to walk together in **unity and harmony**. This does NOT mean we will agree on everything nor does it mean we will be alike in every way. In fact, the context identified the weak and the strong functioning together in this type of togetherness. No, our unity is based on our ability to function with **one mind** (“together” in v. 6) and with **one voice** that glorifies the Lord. In other words, it is our commitment to Christ and focus on bringing him glory that is the **means of our unity**. We choose to love one another, serve, worship with, confront, bear with, forgive, and partner in the gospel with those that are **different than us**, but we do it through the transformational gospel of Jesus Christ, which the world around longs for but cannot exercise apart from Christ.
- **Hope** – Notice that the endurance and encouragement from the **Scriptures**, particularly those written in former days, are given so that we may have **hope!** The gospel seems so simple sometimes that we can often downplay its greatness. But it is the power of the gospel that is “*the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes*” (Rom. 1:16). We have hope, or faith in the future action of God based on his past promises and present work, that everything He said would happen, WILL happen. It is the hope of the gospel that can give our loved ones dying of cancer the encouragement to face death with joy, and the hope of a young family who will bury their 3-week old son this week. The gospel is not some platitude that fits on a key chain, but it is the power of God to give hope and light in the darkness, allowing us the **cling to the truth when the days are darkest**.

*So, what does this have to do with Christmas?* Everything. Our belief is that through the contemplation of Christ this Christmas and beyond, that you will be encouraged to endure, that we will have a renewed love for each other, and that we would function with **hope**, by both living joyfully in a dying world and giving the message TO a dying world. So this morning, we want to consider Christ from the things

written in the OT and NT, particularly through the lens of **King David**, and how the two were both comparable AND vastly different.

The writers of the NT seemingly go out of their way to connect **Jesus** as the **son of David**. Consider a few familiar passages:

**Matthew 1:1** – *“The book of the genealogy of **Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham**”*

The whole of the New Testament starts with Jesus’ human source through Joseph as coming through David. He was prominent throughout, providing the midpoint of the whole that went from Abraham to David (14 generations), David to Babylon (14 generations), and Babylon to Jesus’ birth (14 generations) – Matthew 1:17.

Luke connects Jesus’ birth prominently with David:

**Luke 2:4-5** – *“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called **Bethlehem**, because he was of **the house and lineage of David**, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, **who was with child**”*

Paul continued the connection of Jesus with David to start the book of Romans:

**Romans 1:1-4** *“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning **his Son**, who **was descended from David according to the flesh** 4 and was declared to be the **Son of God** in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, **Jesus Christ our Lord**”*

Matthew connects Jesus as the son of David several other times in his book (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:31-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42). *What does this matter?* Jesus did not come on the scene out of nowhere, and we see the plan of God unfolding all through the OT, with echoes or shadows of what was to come in people like David and institutions like the Kingdom of Israel. So we want to look at a few large ways that David foreshadowed Jesus and his birth and life, knowing that Jesus’ shadow would ultimately eclipse his reign and rule. We will look at how both **came to be unexpectedly, how each played the role of shepherd and ultimately king**. To understand David more is to grow in our appreciation and understanding of Jesus.

### AN UNEXPECTED KING

**Micah 5:2** *“But you, O **Bethlehem Ephrathah**, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.”*

**Matthew 2:1-6** *“Now after Jesus was born in **Bethlehem** of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, “**In Bethlehem of Judea**, for so it is written by the prophet:*

<sup>6</sup> *'And you, **O Bethlehem**, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a **ruler**  
who will **shepherd** my people Israel.'*

We like “rags to riches stories”, those that started from nothing and made something great with their life since it inspires everyone around to strive for something beyond their expectations. But we would also think that God planning out a timeline for the greatest king of His people Israel and the Savior of the world itself would have an opposite path. But both David and Jesus became public figures through the most unexpected ways.

**Unexpected Origin:** David started in a little, seemingly insignificant town that the prophet Micah said was **too little to be among the clans of Judah**. One would have anticipated a city with a little panache, maybe *Jericho* for its significance or God would have waited until Jerusalem was established. But David was chosen out of a nothing town, and even when **Samuel** came on the Lord's charge to choose a son of Jesse, thought that Eliab must be the guy (1 Sam. 16:6-7), since he was the oldest (and we know its typically the youngest children that are, how do I say this, *the best ones*). When it was announced Jesus was born in **Bethlehem**, it only made waves to *shepherds in the fields* and *magi* from foreign lands. Even later in Jesus public ministry there was confusion over his origin story, with people thinking he was from Galilee alone and forgetting his birth in Bethlehem (John 7:27; 41-42). If we were to think of the **least likely town in Southern California** (Avenal, Shafter, Oildale, Harmony?), none of them would compete with Bethlehem's obscurity.

**Unexpected Pathway:** David was left out of the battle with the Philistines since his brothers deemed him too young and glory seeking, even though he proved to be their champion. Even after getting into Saul's court, he started as the minstrel or harp boy, not the military hero he later would become. Jesus was the son of a **carpenter** who grew up in another small, insignificant town of Nazareth, where he would have plied his trade. When He began to do mighty works and teach mightily, the people of the town were astonished, *“Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.*” (Mark 6:2-3)

**Unexpected Following:** For the time of David's sojourn in the wilderness when being chased by Saul, he was surrounded with those in distress, in debt, and those bitter in soul (1 Sam. 22:2). Not only was this a rag-tag group, but also a small one compared to the force he was up against (only 400 men). Jesus also gathered Himself a group of unlikely followers who would turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6). These were men of lowly stature, would never have been chosen to make-up a strong team (fishermen with a tax collector with a zealot!), but Jesus chose to train up **uneducated, common men** (Acts 4:13).

**Unexpected Opposition:** David faced opposition from within his own family (his brothers did not do him any favors), from among his own people (the city of Keilah that he helped sold him out – 1 Sam. 23), and his own king and father-in-law Saul. Most who should have supported him viewed him as a threat, and when those who love power are threatened, they are willing to do anything to keep their authority. Jesus faced opposition from those who should have supported him. When He began to do signs and wonders, his own family though he **“was out of his mind”** (Mark 3:21). The religious leaders of the day should have been the ones to embrace Jesus, as they were the ones who knew the Scripture the best, but they were the ones who sought to kill him – since they were too concerned that the Romans would

take away their place and nation if Jesus stayed alive (see John 11:48). The reality is, Jesus WAS a threat to the establishment, since he came to tear it down so they could be redeemed.

**Why is it significant that both David and Jesus?** God does not intend to operate according to *our* expectations but confounds our presuppositions. His kings come from nowhere villages, born without acclaim, and who are opposed by those who try to exercise worldly authority and wisdom, only to fall short. God's King was born in a manger, was willing to serve, and ultimately chose to die at the hands of those he came to save. Because this is how God operates, it gives us **hope for our present and future.**

### God saves the least likely:

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29** *"For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. <sup>26</sup> For consider your calling, brothers: **not many of you were wise** according to worldly standards, **not many were powerful**, **not many were of noble birth.** <sup>27</sup> But God chose what is **foolish** in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is **weak** in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is **low and despised** in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human being might boast in the presence of God*

God chose the dregs to be his own, those who would have otherwise been deemed worthless, to show the foolishness of men. Mankind thinks we have all the answers, that we do not need God, and He must align with our sentiments and wisdom. But God demands that we **humble ourselves before Him, boasting in Him alone and refusing to point to our own righteousness.** The problem some have with the gospel message is its *simplicity*, but it is that very simplicity that is able to save the weak and powerless, *not the moral and good.* We become the stumbling blocks for salvation by virtue of the fact that we have **too high of a view of our goodness**, which is why we question God and our need of salvation itself.

### Jesus does not promise to make our life easy:

**John 15:18-19** *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you"*

Jesus and David were both opposed and rejected by those that they loved. When Jesus saves and transforms us, it exchanges our loyalty and future reality. We no longer are living for this world, and because we are no longer OF this world, we will be hated, will face trial and persecution. Anyone who is thinking of a **sentimental Jesus** that is a pumped up version of Santa misses the point. Jesus did not call us to an easy life where everything will work out, but a life hidden in Him where we are secure into the future.

### Jesus unexpectedly gives Himself as the greatest gift:

**John 5:39-40** *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, <sup>40</sup> yet **you refuse to come to me that you may have life**"*

The ultimate expression of self-righteously missing Jesus is knowing Scripture, doing good, and being moral WITHOUT ever loving and knowing Jesus. We miss the most important parts of Jesus because we think God expects our good works instead of seeking the only One who is good. Jesus came to offer Himself to His people as a mother hen brings in her chicks, with His arms open wide. He is the answer to

our longing, our angst, our anxiety, our foolishness, our hopelessness, our discouragement, our lack of meaning and purpose.

So this Christmas, we want to see clearly the *unexpected king Jesus*, who did not live up to the norms of mankind but transcended them, who gives us life but also Himself as the greatest gift. Next week we will look at how He came in David like fashion as a Shepherd and Ultimate King.

## **A SHEPHERD KING – Part 2**

### **AN ULTIMATE KING**