

We're in the 4rd week of a series of 9 OT lessons this summer that center on the life of King David. And this is the 4<sup>th</sup> of 6 sermons you'll hear from me during that time about David. I'm preaching 6 sermons about David because he is a wonderful example for us, positively, and negatively. He loves God tremendously. And yet he lives a very human life. Sometimes he does everything right. And sometimes he does everything wrong. Yet he sticks with God throughout his life, throughout the ups and downs.

In our continuing saga, three weeks ago, we began with the prophet Samuel anointing David to be the new king to replace King Saul. Two weeks ago, we had the famous story of David and Goliath.

Last week, we had a lament that David sings after learning of the death of King Saul and Prince Jonathan.

And this week, David finally becomes King. It's been decades in coming. He was anointed as a youth to become the new king. And yet he doesn't assume the throne until he's around 30 years of age. And it happens in stages.

Almost immediately after Saul's death, one tribe, the tribe of Judah acclaims David as their king. Now, Judah was one of the largest and most powerful of the Jewish tribes. They were so influential that the word Jewish comes from the name Judah. David was of the tribe of Judah. Later Jesus would be from the tribe of Judah.

BUT, they're still only one tribe of 12. The other tribes all follow one of King Saul's other sons. We won't go through all the ins and outs of the dynastic struggle. But it is a period of civil war.

And it has a bad ending. It ends with the assassination of King Saul's last son. David has nothing to do with it. In fact, when the assassins come to David hoping to be rewarded, he has them executed for doing such dastardly deed.

That's where our Old Testament lesson picks up today. There's no one left with any claim on the throne except David, the king of Judah. So, the leaders of the other tribes of Israel come to David.

They journey to David's capital city of Hebron. Hebron has a long history. 1,000 years before David's time, Abraham bought a cave in Hebron as a family burial plot. That site is sacred to both Jews and Muslims to this day.

Hebron was solidly in the middle of the territory of Judah, and was an appropriate choice for David's capital. So, the leaders of the other 11 tribes journey south to Hebron to see David.

They ask him to be their king as well.

They basically give 3 reasons they now want David to be their king.

1. He's Jewish like they are. They may be from different tribes, but they affirm their larger kinship to David.

2. They remember that when Saul was King, there was a period when David was Saul's most loyal and able General. Things would later fall apart between David and Saul, but the Israelites remember David's heroic past as a warrior and a leader.

And 3. They also remember the fact that Samuel had anointed David to be king decades before. And that they remember that God had said to David, "It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel."

Now, on the surface this all seems wonderful. But if you step back and think about it, it's not as wonderful as it first appears.

Because with each of these reasons, there is an unspoken question, "If each of these things is true, then why did you wait so long to follow David?"

He was your best general and leader. Then why were you following someone else? Why did you wait until you were out of other options to follow David?

And God chose David? Again, if that's the case, why did you wait so long to follow David? Why did you fight against him for 7 years?

What I love about all this, is it shows our common tendency to only turn to God's way when we're out of other options. And it shows our human capacity for rationalization and self-deception.

'David, be our king—you're the best leader we've ever had, even though... we've uh... chosen not to follow your lead these past 7 years.'

'David, be our king—God said you should be the king, though... we've uh... ignored that fact for these past 7 years.'

It goes to show... we human beings have a remarkable capacity for making up our minds, and then deciding that what we're thinking must be right simply because we're thinking it.

And what's more, we often assume that if we come up with an idea, it must be in accordance with God's will. If I think it, God must agree. Right?

Well... sometimes... perhaps. But at other times we can be off track. Yet we possess the remarkable ability to rationalize and think that we're always on track.

And yet, the awesome thing is that God welcomes us to get with his plan. If we're off track, we can get back on track. And even if we only turn to God after we're out of other options, God still welcomes us back.

And that's what I love about this next bit. The Israelites of the other 11 tribes want David to be their king. He's already king of Judah. But they want him to be king over them all.

So, they make a covenant with David, and they anoint David to be their king.

And if you're counting, this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time David is anointed as king.

Three weeks ago, we heard about the Prophet Samuel anointing the boy David to be God's chosen king. That was back in 1Samuel chapter 16. Then it's a couple of decades and 16 Bible chapters later that the tribe of Judah anoints David as their king. Then it's 7 more years and 3 more Bible chapters later that all of the Israelites anoint David as their king.

This is a powerful reminder that we human beings are not always as swift as we should be in following God's lead. God chooses David as king. It takes one tribe 20 or so years to recognize that fact and choose David as their king. And it takes the other 11 tribes an additional 7 years for THEM to recognize that fact and follow David as their king.

And yet, the good news is that all of them are given the opportunity to get on board with God's program. Some are earlier adopters. Some are later. But all have the opportunity to get on board with God. God provides multiple on-ramps for us to get on his interstate. And if we're off on the wrong farm-market road going the wrong direction, we can make a course correction, and enter the ramp and get on the right track. I find this VERY comforting.

So, David is now King of all the Jewish people. The shepherd boy is the now the King who will shepherd all of Israel.

And then our lesson says that David sets up his capital in Jerusalem. He leaves Hebron behind and goes to Jerusalem. But our lesson skips over several verses.

And those verses are about how David captured Jerusalem. Jerusalem was not originally a Jewish city. It belonged to a Canaanite group called the Jebusites. And David ingeniously captures the city by sending his men in through the city's water system. Several important things here.

First off, David is shrewd. He captures the city without a direct attack.

Second, by setting up his capital in a city that had never been Jewish before, David is choosing a neutral site to begin to build his new kingdom.

In fact, Jerusalem happens to be right on the border between the tribe of Judah and the other tribes. In many ways it parallels the selection of the District of Columbia to be our nation's capital. No city was there. DC was sort of midway between the north and the south. It was a neutral site and didn't have a lot of historical baggage. So, they started the fresh city of Washington, DC to be a fresh capital.

Now Jerusalem had been around for at least 1,000 years before this. But it had never been Jewish. And so, David is signaling his wish to make a fresh start, and a desire to begin a new unified kingdom in a new place.

So, we have David as the new undisputed king of all the Jews. And we have a new capital city of Jerusalem. And David will reign as king there for the next 33 years until his death.

Now there are still more chapters to go in David's story. We'll be seeing some of David's struggles and David's mistakes and David's sins. He is not a perfect king. And yet, he is the model for future hopes in Israel. Even 1,000 years later in Jesus' time, the Jewish people were longing for a new David, a Son of David to come and be their shepherd king yet again.

And Jerusalem. Jerusalem has been part of Judaism now for a tad over 3,000 years. It is a Holy City, the 3<sup>rd</sup> most important Holy Site to Muslims, and the most important Holy Place to Christians and Jews.

And like David, Jerusalem is not perfect. It has its struggles and its flaws and its difficulties. It has had its share of violence and conflict and strife over the years. And yet, like David, Jerusalem is a source of future hope.

It's no accident that the last 2 chapters of the Bible center on the coming of a New Jerusalem, a perfect Jerusalem. In Revelation chapters 21 and 22, the New Jerusalem is described as a place where God dwells in the midst of his people. And there will be no more tears, no more death or mourning or crying or pain.

And there is a new anointed one, the Christ, a title that literally means Anointed One. He is the Son of David, the Lamb of God who is our perfect Shepherd King.

And not only is Jerusalem transformed and made new. Not only is the Davidic model of Kingship transformed and made new. We are promised that we also will be transformed and made new.

Like the human King David, we too have human problems and failings and shortcomings. Like the earthly Jerusalem, we have imperfections and difficulties. Like the people of Israel, we have an enormous capacity for rationalization and self-deception. And yet, we too are promised that we will be transformed. We will be perfected. We will become who we were truly created and called to be.

And one of the last things Jesus says in Revelation is, "I, Jesus... am the root and the descendant of David... let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift."<sup>1</sup>

May we ever hail him as our true king. And may we follow him in the way that leads to life.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev 22:16-17

