

THIRD ADVENT MIDWEEK SERVICE

Luke 20:41-44

“The LORD sits as king forever.”

Before He was ever born, Jesus was the Son of God, even though He was not yet Jesus. What do I mean? Before He was born and named by Joseph according to God’s command, before He was Jesus, He was already the Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. He had always existed, even as He will always exist, although at the time He existed only as God, as spirit without flesh. When He was conceived and born, Jesus became Jesus. He was now true God and true man, spirit and flesh. He was not only God’s Son, but David’s Son as well, that is, David’s blood ran through His veins through the lineage of His blessed Mother. Whose Son is He, God’s or David’s? Yes. Got it? Don’t feel bad if you don’t yet. It’s all right to be confused a bit, because this is a wonderful mystery worthy of a little awe.

Many of you may be familiar with David’s story, but a quick overview can’t hurt. David was born at a turbulent time in Israel’s history. For generations, Israel had been ruled by judges, men raised up by God to call them back to faithfulness and to deliver them from their enemies. During the time of Samuel, a prophet, priest, and judge, Israel asked for a king. They wanted to be like the other nations. Samuel warned them of the dangers of a king, that he would tax them, take their men to serve in his armies and labor at his projects, restrict their freedom, and impose various other burdens upon them. Up until this time, God had been their only king, and Samuel rightly thought it should remain that way, but Israel persisted, and God told Samuel that they had not rejected the prophet, but God Himself, and God gave the Israelites their king.

Saul was anointed. He looked the part, a head taller than the rest and from a respected family. Unfortunately, Saul was not a devout Christian. He used the Faith when convenient, but for the most part was uninterested in the details. Samuel rebuked Saul numerous times, and yet Saul never learned the lesson. He was consistently quicker to speak than to listen to the Word, to act rather than to obey. Israel had gotten their king, precisely the king they deserved.

While Saul ruled, God chose the next king. Saul’s line would be cut off. The LORD sent Samuel to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem to pick one of Jesse’s sons to reign next. Jesse had eight sons. He had them pass before Samuel according to their age. When Samuel saw Eliab, the oldest, he thought for sure he had his king. But the LORD warned him, *“Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”*

When Samuel had seen seven of Jesse’s son, he asked if these were all of them. Jesse told Samuel about David. He hadn’t even bothered to have David show up. Surely David wasn’t king material. No, David was out tending the sheep while the more regal sons

strutted for Samuel. *“Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here,”* Samuel said.

David finally arrived, the runt of the litter, though *ruddy and handsome*. *“He is the one,”* the LORD told Samuel. David was *a man after the LORD’s own heart*. David was what Saul was not: a faithful servant of the LORD, a devout Christian.

What came next is too much to cover here in detail—although, as a quick advertisement, we will be covering just this in Bible class in the coming months. David defeated Goliath as Saul trembled in fear. David became best friends with Saul’s son, Jonathan, also a faithful servant of the LORD, who recognized that the LORD had chosen David and was not jealous in the least, but rather protected and prayed for David. David fled from Saul, who repeatedly tried to kill him, even though David dutifully served him and even prevented others from taking Saul’s life. Finally, after waiting years for Saul to die according to the LORD’s timing and not his own, David came to the throne. He was a great king. Israel’s borders expanded and its reputation grew. Its enemies feared her, for they had a mighty king who devoted himself to an even mightier LORD. The LORD rejoiced in David and promised one of his sons would sit on the throne of God’s people forever.

Yet David was not perfect. As his power increased, so did his temptations. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, a faithful soldier in David’s army. When she became pregnant, David tried to cover up his sin by arranging for Uriah to be moved to the front lines in a way that he was sure to be killed. He then married Bathsheba, thinking that he’d married his sin away. But, although he had hidden his wrongdoing from the eyes of men, the LORD, who, you might remember, looks at the heart, was not blind. God sent the prophet Nathan to convict David of his sin, which he did. Guilt overcame him. He grieved over his transgression day and night, with tears and groans and sighs of repentance. It was at this time that David wrote one of his most famous Psalms, the Psalm we sing every time we celebrate the Common Service, Psalm 51. He begged, *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!”* And he was forgiven, but the son he had conceived in iniquity died.

Some of you might wonder why I spoke of David as a Christian before. There weren’t Christians then, you might think. But there were most certainly Christians. Ever since that first promise of a Savior in the Garden of Eden, there have been Christians. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and, yes, David—all Christians. All who took God at His word looked forward to the coming of the Christ, that is, they were Christians. They prayed, *“Come, Lord Jesus, come,”* even when they did not yet know His name would be Jesus, because they knew the Son of God to come would be their Savior, the Son of David who would take their flesh to redeem their bodies and souls held in captivity by sin.

Jesus is David’s Son, even as He is Abraham’s son. He is the offspring of Eve, one of us to save all of us. It was David who wrote long before Good Friday in Psalm 22, *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me,”* as he by faith witnessed the crucifixion through his own Son’s eyes, adding, *“They have pierced My hands and My feet. I can count all my*

bones,” as he foretold the agony of Him who would pay for his own adultery and murder, who would pay for our own disobediences, even those we’ve hidden from human eyes.

Jesus is David’s Son, and promised from the beginning, born on Christmas, obedient in every way, crucified on Good Friday, risen on Easter Sunday, and ascended to the right hand of God the Father, He now sits on the throne of God’s people forever. He may not be the King many expected, but neither was David. Like David, however, He was the Father’s choice, and for good reason: He is the Father’s Son. Rejoice in Your King, O Israel. Your enemies tremble. Your lot is secure. Your future is money in the bank. For, as David says, *“The LORD sits as king forever.”* Amen.