



Sermon Transcript December 10, 2017

Advent 2017 Birth Announcements God's King!

1 Samuel 1:19-20 and 2 Samuel 12:24-25

This message from the Bible was addressed originally to the people of Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church on December 10, 2017 at 511 Maple Street, Wethersfield, CT, 06109 by Dr. Scott W. Solberg. This is a transcription that bears the strength and weaknesses of oral delivery. It is not meant to be a polished essay. An audio version of this sermon may be found on the church website at www.wethefc.com.

Sermon Text

1 Samuel 1:19-20

¹⁹ They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. ²⁰ And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the Lord."

2 Samuel 12:24-25

²⁴ Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her, and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the Lord loved him ²⁵ and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.

Introduction

I like what D. A. Carson has to say about kings. He says, "If you are a king, you reign! That's what kings do. You have the authority,"¹ Because of our democratic form of government, royal bloodlines are not part of our common experience. Prince Harry getting engaged to an American is as close as we get in our country to "royalty." But even British royalty is all pomp with no power. After all, at the end of the day, our country was given birth because of "a revolution" against the king.

Abraham Lincoln, in his Gettysburg Address, made famous that phrase that is often used to describe our democratic form of government, "that government of the people, by the people, for the people." It can convey this revolutionary spirit that spurns any sense of a king or any sense of authority ruling over us. Lincoln was exposed to this phrase through a sermon preached by Theodore Parker at Boston's Music Hall given on July 4, 1858. And yet, I discovered this week that this phrase Lincoln uses to close out the Gettysburg Address find's it's origin with John Wycliffe. Wycliffe was an English theologian in the late 1300's, predating Martin Luther by just under 200 years. Through his efforts, the Bible was translated from Latin to English. You have Wycliffe to thank for what you hold in your lap this morning. As he too challenged the authority of the Papacy of his day, he was a precursor to the Reformers. And in the prologue to his English translation of the Bible, he wrote, "The Bible is for the government of the people, by the people and for the people."² In other words, it is the God of Holy Scripture who is our authority. And even Abraham Lincoln said at the end of the Gettysburg Address, "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."³ In other words, even though you may have a democratic form of government, you still need to come under the "authority" of God. "*The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all.*"

When the Psalms acknowledge that God reigns, it is an announcement that comes with the constant call for celebration. Psalm 97 begins by affirming, "*The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad.*" Psalm 47 instructs us, "*Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!*" Why? "*For the LORD the Most High is to be feared, a great king over all the earth.*" We often sing this truth during this Christmas Season. "Joy to the world, the Lord has come. Let earth receive her king!"

When you consider the joyful birth announcement of Jesus, you can't help but hear the overtones of royalty. The angels said to the shepherds in Luke 2:11, "*For unto you is*

born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord.” Why the city of David? It is because Joseph “*was of the house and lineage of David.*” He was of the royal bloodline of King David. Did not the Magi come to the royal city of Jerusalem in Matthew 2 asking, “*Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?*” In Jesus, God’s king has come. With the coming of God’s promised king to earth, the long awaited kingdom of God has come. God’s good rule has come to earth and to the heart of man.

Paul Tripp puts it this way. He says, “The baby in the manger came as a conquering King to dethrone us and then to enthrone himself in our hearts and lives forever and ever.”⁴ What that tells us is that there is a conflict of kingdoms at play here and the conflict is between “the kingdom of self” and “the kingdom of God.” Listen to how Paul Tripp illustrates this point from his Advent Devotional called *Come Let Us Adore Him.*”

He writes, “We’ve all dealt with battles with our young children over what to eat, what to wear, and when to go to bed. That battle over what to eat doesn’t happen because your three-year-old son read a book about the Paleo diet and decided that this is the way he wants to eat. In fact, your son knows nothing about a healthy and nutritious diet; that battle is not about food, it’s about kingdoms. He is fighting not your cuisine but your authority. He is fighting to be king, that is, the only authority he has to follow. That battle your four-year-old daughter is willing to have with you over when to go to bed is not the result of an in-depth sleep study; it too is a battle for kingship (or should I say queenship?).”

He goes on to say, “Let’s get even closer to home. Why do you get angry in traffic or irritated when someone disagrees with you or envious when someone gets something that you would love to have? Because it is not just your children that battle for kingdom authority—you do too. You want to drive on unpopulated roads because few things are as important to you than your own schedule. You want people to agree with you because you want a kingdom filled with people who always recognize the brilliance of your thinking. Why do we all struggle with envy? We struggle with it because our greatest allegiance is to ourselves and our happiness.” He went on to observe that in the Garden, Adam and Eve had everything you could have imagined, but the one thing they didn’t have was “self-rule.” “So they chose to step over the King’s boundaries, taking authority into their own hands, while deluding themselves into thinking that it would be okay.”⁵ But instead, it made a mess of their lives, their society and their world. And fundamentally, it brought death.

I am intrigued by the way the Old Testament book of Judges ends. The book of Judges

finds the nation of Israel finally in the Promised Land. But things aren't going so well. Perhaps a word to describe how things are going is the word "decay." There is a spiritual decay and a moral decay that marks the land. Judges describes this cycle of Israel turning away from God and then God rescuing them from their enemies. But with each turn of the cycle, it seems that there is a downward spiral in the spiritual and moral decay of the land. It is like when you look at our own country and go back to the Sexual Revolution of the 1960's and compare that to where we find ourselves today, both morally and spiritually, you can see the gradual decay set in over the decades.

But I want you to hear the conclusion to the book of Judges. The conclusion is actually five chapters long, starting in Judges 17 and it ends with the last verse in Judges 21. In Judges 17:6 it says, *"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes."* Judges 18:1 says, *"In those days there was no king in Israel."* Judges 19:1 says, *"In those days, when there was no king in Israel."* Then in the very last verse of the book, Judges 21:25, the book comes to a final concluding thought, *"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes."* In his commentary on the book of Judges, K. Lawson Younger concludes, "During the period of the judges there was no physical king, but more importantly there was no spiritual king."⁶ Life is meant to be lived under the good rule and authority of God.

This sets us up for 1 and 2 Samuel. The whole point of these two books is to show us how God establishes his king, David, on the throne of Israel. He provides a king for them and in doing so, he reveals what God is like as a king. It is interesting to note that the little book of Ruth comes right between Judges and 1 Samuel and it is a beautiful story. But take note how the book of Ruth ends. It ends with a brief genealogy that reads like this, *"Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David."* And now through 1 and 2 Samuel, we meet God's anointed king, King David.

This Advent Season we are looking at "birth announcements" throughout the storyline of Scripture and how these birth announcements within the story of the Bible bring us to Jesus. In 1 and 2 Samuel there are two important birth announcements for us to consider. We begin in 1 Samuel with the birth announcement of Samuel. Then, later in 2 Samuel, we read of the birth announcement of David's son, Solomon. Each of these birth announcements, ultimately point us to Jesus, our Savior and our Lord. Our King!

Jesus came to deliver us from the kingdom of darkness, these selfish and self-oriented kingdoms we have established in our hearts that have brought so much hurt and pain into this world. In turn, Jesus has come to bring us into the kingdom of God, the

kingdom of the beloved Son, in whom we have redemption and forgiveness. And as we come under his rule in our lives, he forms within us a love for God and a love for others. Through Samuel and Solomon, I want you to see Jesus our King this morning.

Samuel: The King Maker

The birth announcement of Samuel is found in 1 Samuel 1:19-20. *“They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the Lord.”*”

We discover at the beginning of this story that Hannah had long been barren. She longed for a child and she was deeply distressed over not being able to conceive. She was so distraught over this that when she was praying about it in the temple, Eli, the priest, thought she was intoxicated and he scolded her. But that was far from the truth. In her prayer she made a vow to God. If God gave her a son, she would give him back to God to serve God in the temple. We discover in the verses we just read that in due time she conceived and gave birth to Samuel. When he was old enough, she brought him to the temple and gave him back to the Lord to serve God and his people at the temple.

What is the point of this story? Why do we have such a detailed story about the birth of Samuel and about his upbringing in the temple of God? Well, I’ll tell you what this story is not. This is not a story that tells us that God will always answer our prayers the way we want him to answer our prayers. It is not to say that we can’t take our prayers to God and we know that he does care for us. But this story is much bigger than that. John and Kim Walton identify the purpose of this story this way. “This book begins by establishing Samuel’s credential as a special instrument of God.”⁷ The central feature of these two books of Samuel is that David is established as God’s King in Israel. Clearly, David was not some upstart who overthrew the kingdom of Saul, claiming the throne for himself. This kind of thing happened all the time in the ancient world and from time to time today we hear of military coups that overthrow the government. But as David’s path to the throne unfolds, nothing could be further from the truth. He was the most unlikely of his brothers to be king. While Saul was trying to kill him, David wasn’t trying to overthrow Saul but was honoring Saul as king. Two times, David preserved Saul’s life. And so the story of Samuel’s rather miraculous birth and God’s hand on his life is written for us so that we can clearly see that Samuel was God’s instrument to anoint David as Israel’s king. And so with great certainty, David is identified as God’s

king for his people.

It is fascinating to read through Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving for the birth of her son, Samuel, at the beginning of 1 Samuel 2. At the end of the prayer she prays, "*The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king.*" She prayed this before there was such a king in Israel. And then she concludes, "*and exalt the power of his anointed.*" The word *anointed* is the word for "Messiah" and this is the first time we find this word in the Old Testament. And that is what Samuel does, He anoints David as God's king for Israel.

Now here is where it gets a little confusing. When the people of Israel came to Samuel and asked him to anoint a king for them in 1 Samuel 8, it was portrayed as a negative thing. It was portrayed as a rejection of God as their king. And Samuel was instructed to warn them of the dangers that came with asking for a king. But the problem was not found in the notion of having a king. All the way back in Genesis 17, when God rehearsed his promise to Abraham, he said in Genesis 17:6, "*I will make you into nations and kings shall come from you.*" In Deuteronomy 17, God anticipates a day when they will ask for a king and he says, "*you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose.*" He goes on to say that this king must be humble before God and humble towards his brothers. So the problem is not the notion of a king. Rather, the problem is found in the reason they want a king. They want to be like the nations around them. Their motive for a king is political and not spiritual. They are seeking a political answer to the moral and spiritual decay of their time when a spiritual answer is needed. And so God gave them what they wanted and Samuel anointed Saul to be their first king, one who looked the part but in the end was not the solution for Israel's needs.

I would like to pause here and say that the temptation Israel faced in asking for a king is a temptation we face as evangelicals living in a highly charged political environment. The temptation is to say that the answer for our country is found in politics even if it means compromising principle and character for the sake of political victory and expediency. The argument goes like this, "the stakes are so high that we have to disregard what otherwise might be valid moral objections for the sake of a vote." Greg Forster, who teaches at Trinity International University, which is affiliated with the EFCA, warns us, "The bigger point, however, is where we think our fate lies—with our votes, or with God? Whittaker Chambers, one of the greatest Christian thinkers of our time, said the particular temptation of the modern world is to think that "the destiny of man is in the hands of man." Those who think so, he said, would end up committing greater and greater evils in the name of saving humanity."⁸

After Saul and his throne was rejected by God, Samuel was sent to the house of Jesse to anoint the next king. When Jesse's sons were first presented to Samuel, David wasn't even part of the original line up. While David's brothers were impressive looking young men, God reminded Samuel that while man looks on the outside, God looks on the heart. And so after inquiring as to whether Jesse had any other sons, David was called in from tending the sheep and God made it clear to Samuel that David was God's choice for king. So we read in 1 Samuel 16:13, *"Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward."*

As David's story unfolds, we come to one of the most important chapters in all the Bible, 2 Samuel 7. It is a chapter that tells us about God's promise to David. David wanted to build a house for God, but through the prophet Nathan, God told David that he was going to "build a house for David." He says to David in 2 Samuel 7:12, *"I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."* That means that David will either have son after son after son after son . . . a dynasty that will never come to an end. Or, there is an heir that will come from David and rule over God's people and God's kingdom forever. This would be no normal heir. This would have to be a divine heir.

Living on this side of Jesus and celebrating the birth of the Christ child, the latter idea of a divine son from the line of David does not seem strange or unusual to us. This promise just confirms what we have come to believe in Jesus. Isaiah the prophet said it this way, *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this."*

When Peter gives testimony to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead in Acts 2, he speaks of David. He reminds his Jewish audience that David died and was buried and his tomb still contains his body. Then quoting David from Psalm 110, the most quoted Old Testament chapter in the New Testament, speaks of someone whom David addresses as "my Lord." *"The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool."* This is the seat of authority and it is given to the risen and ascended Jesus. Peter concludes, *"Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."*

The hope for this world is found in a resurrected and ascended king, one whom God calls his son. Carson writes, “We need a king—one who is perfectly righteous, who cannot be corrupted, who is entirely good, in whom there is never any taint of evil.”⁹ Where can such a righteous king be found? Don’t we long for such leaders as this? Do we not need such governance as this? Jesus is that king, that Son of David, who brings the kingdom of God to earth and who restores our lives under God’s good rule. Samuel was God’s instrument to anoint God’s king for God’s people. To David was promised a kingdom and a throne that will last forever.

Solomon: Son of David

The second birth announcement we encounter this morning is the announcement of the birth of Solomon. We read in 2 Samuel 12:24-25, “*Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her, and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the Lord loved him and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.*”

The name that jumps out from this birth announcement is the name of Solomon’s mother. It is Bathsheba. This is the woman through whom David abused his power and committed adultery and then tried to cover his tracks by doing away with her husband. It is as messy of a situation as you can find. And yet, to David and Bathsheba was born the heir who would be the first fulfillment of the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7.

Why Solomon? It is because of God’s grace. It says, “*And the Lord loved him.*” David has other children, but Solomon was the one who inherited the throne of David and rule over Israel during a time of great prosperity and peace. And yet, starting with David’s sin with Bathsheba, we are painfully reminded of our weaknesses and our failings. If you know the story of Solomon, you know that he too starts out rather strong. He was given the opportunity to ask for anything he wanted as he began his rule over God’s people, and he asked for wisdom. God commended him for this. But quickly, he too strayed from God and the kingdom of Israel under the Davidic king quickly begins to spiral out of control. Within two generations, the kingdom of Israel split into two kingdoms. Within several centuries, the southern kingdom, where the descendants of David ruled, had corroded and became corrupt and at the beginning of the sixth century BC, the kingdom and the city were destroyed.

But what about the promise made to David? Where is this king who will rule over God’s people and over God’s kingdom with righteousness and peace? Where is the promised

Son of David? The promise to David still stands. In fact, it is a reminder to us that our hope is found in the promise of God and not in ourselves. And so Matthew begins by introducing us to Jesus, *“the son of Abraham, the son of David.”* This divine Son of God, who took on human flesh, is the king who comes to bring the kingdom of God to us and it is a kingdom of God’s grace. It is a kingdom extended to broken and sinful people like you and me.

It is fascinating to me that right after David is anointed by Samuel as the next king of Israel, you have the story of David and Goliath. This is the story of how God’s anointed one delivers the people of Israel from an enemy they could not defeat. It is a picture of the kind of king we need. We need a king who can deliver us from the enemy we cannot defeat. It says of Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15:25-26, *“For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”* And so Jesus comes with the grace of God to defeat sin and death by going to the cross. Imagine that. The king dies for his subjects! Paul Tripp observes, *“Ordinarily the death of a conquering king is the end of the story. But this King came to conquer by dying for those over whom he would establish his rule. This is grace: The king died to dethrone kings so that he would be their King forever and ever and ever.”*⁹

When we turn to him in faith, repenting of our sins, we are brought under the good rule of the kingdom of God and God begins to change us from the inside. “Self” is removed from the throne and Jesus begins that process of changing us for the good. “He powerfully saves and transforms his people, who come to him and gladly acknowledge his Lordship.”¹⁰

I love how the genealogy of Jesus is filled with stories of grace. When we get to David in the genealogy of Matthew we see, *“And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.”* It is one of those incidents that causes you to wince every time it is brought up and recognized. And yet, like God does with our lives, he redeems it and uses even our sin for good. And that is why we need Jesus to rule in our hearts and our lives. He delivers us from our sin and he then begins to sit on the throne of our hearts, he changes us and transforms our lives to love and serve God.

Conclusion

I close with these words from Revelation 19:6-10. *“Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us*

rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Remember, “If you are a king, you reign! That’s what kings do. You have the authority,” *Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! For the LORD the Most High is to be feared, a great king over all the earth.*” I conclude with these words from Paul Tripp, “The baby wasn’t wearing a crown and had none of the trappings of royalty, but don’t be misled. He came to be King, and his kingship is your salvation.”¹¹

¹D. A. Carson *The God Who Is There* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2010) 72

²Who coined “of the people, for the people, by the people” www.washingtonpost.com - Letters to the editor, March 31, 2017

³Abraham Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address*

⁴Paul Tripp *Come Let Us Adore Him: A Daily Advent Devotional* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017) December 11 Reading, Location 507 Kindle Reader

⁵Ibid

⁶K. Lawson Younger, Jr. *Judges and Ruth: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 31

⁷John and Kim Walton *The Bible Story Handbook* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010) 147

⁸Greg Forster “The Church’s Fate is not Electoral: Our Roy Moore Moment” www.thegospelcoalition.com December 5, 2017

⁹Tripp

¹⁰Carson, 83

¹¹Tripp