

WHO TO CHOOSE
[written in oral form]

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Mark 6:1-13
Proper 9, Year B

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David and Jesus..... fascinating!

Today's passages present two of the more prominent characters in the Bible. Moses, Abraham, Elijah and Paul should be included at the top of the list, too. The credits to Moses, David and Paul make them all prolific writers. We know of only one time that Jesus wrote something, but we don't know what he wrote because it was written in sand.

So, Jesus was not actually a contributing author to the Bible, even though others wrote about him. David was the focus of many stories and he was a writer.

David and Jesus are similar in some ways, but dissimilar in many other ways. They were both born in Bethlehem.

David was thirty years old when he became king.

Jesus was thirty when he started his public ministry.

Looking at their resume:

David was a creative writer and a musician.

David made the fortress city of Jerusalem the capital of the nation and the his religious centre,..... and he united a nation.

David was a mighty warrior, a sly ruler and a great administrator.

Jesus.....was insightful, wise, kind, a healer and...hmmmmm convinced twelve people to change their vocation.

After three thousand years, children are still told stories about David

After two thousand years, children learn about the stories that Jesus told.

A large extended tribe of people, scattered all over the world, claim connections to David, and their symbol is called the star of David. They now have their own nation, and once again the centre is in David's city.

There is a much larger group of people who have adopted the name that connects them to a title that Jesus never claimed—Christ.

The Christian symbol is a Roman instrument for execution..... which was used to kill Jesus.

Let's move on..... Both were men and lived in the area known as Palestine. They were related..... and they were loved and despised by many.

The biggest similarity is that they were Both COLOSSAL historic figures that altered the course of history.

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David and Jesus.

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Let's proceed with some more comparing and contrasting, using today's texts.

Mark 6 has Jesus returning to his hometown of Nazareth after a very remarkable walkabout / journey through the Galilee area.

Jesus came home with his disciples, and likely a number of hang-a-longs / "groupies".

At first, people were awestruck, but it didn't take long for the mumbling to begin. The resentment started with, "Who does he think he is?" and expanded to:

"Hey, I knew him when he got in trouble that one time".... or... he's Mary's son,.... He's just a carpenter. He never went to AMBS. I know his brothers and sisters, too.".... What's so special about him? What's he really done? ...and so on.

The rejection got to Jesus.

He snapped back at them, "Ya, Ya, Ya,.... I hear you. And, I know that prophets are honoured and respected Everywhere**except**in their hometown,... by their own friends and family."

Jesus was genuinely disturbed by their disbelief.

And most interestingly, Jesus was rather powerless in his hometown.

I wonder why that was? Was his power a two way street?

Is giving and reaching necessary for Jesus's power to give and to reach back? ????? We call it faith.

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The passage does say that Jesus continued, in his hometown, to minister and serve others, in a diminished fashion. He did lay hands on some and a few sick people were cured.

*I believe we can safely conclude that this was NOT a high point in Jesus' ministry. This was a rather disappointing experience.*

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In contrast, the story from Second Samuel about David is radically different in nature and feel.

Chapter five of second Samuel begins with ALL the tribes of Israel coming to David—in other words: All his family and extended family.

They came to him with respect, admiration..... and a touch of desperation. They wanted David to be KING. Their nation was in a state of Civil War. They believed David would be the best King. They also added that they felt that God had ordained David to be King, so why wait? Saul was dead; they wanted David king.

The elders of Israel decided. They all made promises to each other and to God, and then anointed David the King of Israel.

Not mentioned in this passage is the fact that David had already killed off most of King Saul's allies. This narrative is for the optics. It's better to have the crown offered instead of claimed by conquest.

Nevertheless, soon after the coronation, David mobilized his army, attacked and conquered the city of Jebusite, also known as Jerusalem.

Not being a humble person, David renamed Jerusalem the CITY of DAVID.

The location was ideal for a new capital of a great nation. The City could be nicely fortified and it was between the two Hebrew nations of Israel and Judah.... which David was able to unite.

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David proved to be a shrewd leader and a competent administrator. He expanded the kingdom, grew in power and influence, and even brought the ark to Jerusalem in order to make the City of David the religious centre. And, he had plans to build a great temple, too.

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David was a very impressive person, and..... I bet he was also good looking. We know about his poetry writing abilities. So, I imagine he wrote a few romantic poems, on the side, too,.... to impress the ladies,.... but who knows????

He truly was one of History's great leaders. His name means "Beloved." Even at a young age, he was famous for his skills with the slingshot (there are stories about him killing a lion and a bear). And, we all know about how he killed the Philistine Goliath.

David seemed to acquire super-hero status, even before he was king,..... and that greatly irritated King Saul.

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David was strong. He was a great military commander. He was a very impressive political leader. He was artistic and a prolific writer and an inspirer of poetry, too.

He is much like a classic Hollywood and Comic book superhero. ~~~~~

So,..... at this point, who would you pick to be a leader?  
Jesus or David? ????

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To be honest, most indicators would show that David would be favoured to be chosen leader.

History and research confirm that most humans want "STRONG" leadership. We don't appreciate someone who looks weak or is meak, who is NOT respected / who dithers / who can't speak clearly or who is short. People want leaders to look good and be tall, and.... quite often, having a successful military career is very beneficial, too.

Most people want to follow a strong and powerful leader.

We want our interests to be protected / secured, and we want a good future to be predictable, and we believe a strong leader will do that.

Most of all, we want our children to be safe..... safe from the invading hordes of ruthless illegal immigrants....

So,..... Who will protect our children the best.

The mighty and powerful David.... or the suffering servant Jesus?

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I am Not suggesting an evaluation or choice in religions, not at all.  
This is a choice in character archetypes  
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Before you decide,.....realize that a Visceral reaction is very strong, yet we dare not deny Jesus.

So, a segment of Christianity tookthe suffering servant Jesus and gave him a make-over. He was redesigned with many of David's attributes. For them, Jesus became very powerful.... He was a lion in one novel.

I've seen pictures of Jesus holding a mighty sword.

I've seen a painting of Jesus marching with soldiers and carrying an American flag.

"Onward Christian Soldiers...."

This new super-hero "saviour" Jesus..... can be very appealing.

Many people choose to follow this image of Jesus, in part, because they want to protect their children.... They want their children SAVED.

Thus, Salvation is simplified and presented as all taken care of by the mighty warrior and conqueror Jesus.

Children are pushed to beg for forgiveness and to ask to be saved by Jesus.

I know for a fact, the main drive of the Southern Baptist Convention is to get their children saved and baptized, hopefully before they are ten years old,... before the church loses control over them.

Once baptized, then they are in the camp--protected.

Moreover, to confirm/ validate the conquering Jesus, all things must showcase the Christian stamp, schools, courts, music... all things. ... because that is what conquering is about.

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Yet, it's an illusion.

The revivalistic, evangelistic Christians suffer from the same problems that the rest of society suffers from. For example, according to a Baylor University study, the divorce rate among conservative Christians is *higher* than for non-believers. [2014]

The Mighty, Warrior Jesus is NOT winning the Day..... because..... careful reading of the Gospels reveal that Jesus was more like the "suffering servant" type. And, salvation is not about conquest. The muscle bound, handsome, tall Jesus who aggressively / violently defeats all things bad..... is a myth.

Redemptive Violence.... doesn't make the world better or safer.

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We must tell ourselves and our friends that we dare NOT be deceived... and be conned into laying all our trust at the altar of the super-hero, David like, myth of Jesus..or any haughty leader.
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God is love..... and let our narrative begin and end with that assertion.

YET,..... in the living time.... we are presented with models to admire and follow.

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I admit, I have Not fairly represented David.

Yes, he had many virtues, yet he was a huge disappointment, too.

Like many powerful leaders, He couldn't control his lust very well. David apparently believed the lore about his own power.

And, his arrogance caused the death of innocent people.

Poor conflicted David, he never got his temple that he dearly wanted.

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On the other hand,..... there is Jesus the servant.

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God..... **the God**.... attended Jesus' baptism and blessed Jesus.

Jesus was personally tempted by Satan, and did not yield, and angels waited on Jesus.

Jesus did NOT command a whole army, but he did have a group of twelve committed followers,well... all except one.

But more importantly, Jesus was committed to God. His ministry strived to present God / to point people to God and God's way,.... even if that meant breaking the cultural rules along the way.

Jesus modelled God's way of living.

Jesus did and taught justice and peace, all the while radiating love and compassion.

He healed people. Fed people, even calmed a storm and restored a little girl back to life.....AND,.... all this before Mark chapter 6.

Read the rest of Mark if you want the whole story about Jesus, and if you do read on, I don't think you'll discover any battle victories or conquests credited to Jesus.

A vote for Jesus is actually..... choosing God.

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David and Jesus: two people with some similarities, but mostly radically different.

In today's texts, we are presented with .....the strong and mighty David..... and the servant Jesus who can't get any respect at home.

Who will we pick to follow? ????

*I'd give you a hint,..... but it really won't matter..... BECAUSE most of us have already voted.*

We've voted with our values and our life choices.

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Consider:

What kind of movies do you watch? Who is the hero?

What is she like? Does he conquer the bad guys?

What do we value?..... giving or taking..... power or serving?
Who do we admire... the big and the strong.... or the gentle and humble?
Where is our trust... in money and power..... or letting go?

How are we voting through our actions,.....and ...are we being honest to ourselves when we claim Jesus?
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WELL..... I do have some good news.

We can change our vote.      We can change our vote.  
**We can change.**

Thanks be to God and God's Spirit **and** the discipline of intellect and sound reasoning,.... we can change.

Moreover, I don't think voting for Jesus is merely saying, "Jesus do it."

I have a sneaky suspicion..... that following Jesus means..... well.... heading in a similar direction.

And again, a reminder, Jesus constantly pointed to God.

Life / our hope.... the safety of our children.... is all about the Love of God..... and Jesus helps show us how to fully discover that love.

Let's call that journey to God – Salvation, for that way truly is our hope.  
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Each day is full of choices..... which direction are we heading?