

## WHO TO CHOOSE

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 and it was written in sand.

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

David and Jesus: similar in some ways, but not so similar 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.

David made the fortress city of Jerusalem the capital of the nation and the his religious centre.

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

Jesus.....hmmmm ..... convinced twelve people to change their jobs.

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 capital 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 ..... ..well.... uh.... a Roman instrument for execution..... which was used to kill Jesus.

Let's move on..... Mmmmm..... both were men and lived in the area known as Palestine.

They were related..... .. and they were loved and admired by many.

The biggest similarity is that they were Both COLOSSAL historic figures that altered the course of history. Religious **and** Secular scholars study the impact the two have made on human kind, and continue to make..... long after their time.

David and Jesus.

Let's proceed with some more comparing and contrasting, beginning with today's passages.

Mark 6 has Jesus returning home to Nazareth after a very remarkable walkabout / journey through the Galilee area. Nazareth is in the Western part of Galilee and is the town that Jesus claims as his home.

Jesus comes home with his disciples, and likely a number of hang-a-longs / “groupies”. Which is sort of like an Osler native returning to Osler with an entourage of confident, even boastful, admirers, after a big adventure of speaking and doing other impressive things, across the province.

At first, people would be awestruck, but soon the mumbling would begin, “Hey, I knew him when he got in trouble that one time”.... or... he’s Mary’s son,... He’s just a carpenter. I know his brothers, too.”.... What’s so special about him? .... What’s he really done? ...and so on.

That is exactly what happened to Jesus, and 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 ....**expect** .....in their hometown,... by their own friends and family.”

Jesus was genuinely amazed at 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 to Jesus necessary for Jesus’s power to give and to reach back? ?????*

The passage does say that Jesus continued 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.*

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: Saul’s supporters against David’s. 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 episode looks good on paper. It reads better to have the crown offered instead of claimed by conquest.*

Nevertheless, soon after the coronation, David mobilizes his army, attacks and conquers the city of Jebusite, also known as Jerusalem.

Not being a humble person, David renames 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.

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..... to make the City of David the religious centre. And, he had plans to build a great temple, too.

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 greatest 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 he was famous for his ability to play the lyre and sing.

He was anointed to be the future King, while still young, by Samuel.

We all know about how he killed the Philistine Goliath.

However, all was not rosy, Saul was very jealous of him and so brought David into his court, .... so he could keep an eye on this usurper, and then things got ugly.

Even so, David's fame grew as he managed to avoid Saul's attempts to kill him. David seemed to acquire super-hero status..... so we are told.

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

Hollywood and Comic books are hard pressed to fabricate, a better "realistic" super-hero.

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

To be honest, most indicators mandate that we have already picked David.

Records and research confirm that we humans want "STRONG" leadership. We don't appreciate someone who looks weak or is weak, 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.... in most countries, having a successful military career is very beneficial, too.

More often than not, we want to follow a strong and powerful leader... because.... we want our interests to be protected / secured, and we want our future to be predictable.

Most of all, ..... we want our children to be safe.

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

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

A truthful aside / digression:

*{sometimes we can be very honest in church, but generally we play it safe.}* .... I will present a nugget of honest confession, as I understand it.

We do care about our children and we worry about the future.

And, .... somehow / someway... a segment of Christianity took .....the suffering servant Jesus and gave him a make-over. He was redesigned with many of David's attributes. Jesus became very powerful.... He became as 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.

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

Many people are tempted 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. Kids are pushed to beg for forgiveness and asked 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.

I don't doubt that a seven year old can have a divine encounter with God.

Yet, .....I was seven when I claimed my salvation certificate and was later baptized. I was told that I was IN. I got my pass to heaven.

All, I had to do was wave it at the pearly gates and they had to let me in. ....as if that is all what life is about.... and .... salvation is so simple.

The revivalistic, evangelistic Christians suffer from the same problems that the rest of society suffers from. For example, the divorce rate among conservative Christians is the same as non-believers.

The Mighty, Warrior Jesus is NOT winning the Day..... because..... careful reading of the Gospels reveal that Jesus was more the "suffering servant" type. And, salvation is not about conquest.

The muscle bound, handsome, tall Jesus who violently defeats all things bad..... is really a myth. . Redemptive Violence.... is a lie, and I don't think we can demand that God grant us eternal life because of something we said as a child.

Sorry,..... it is good to want to protect our children, but the "too good to be true" way.... is ....well.....

To be honest..... we generally don't like the truth.

Even so, we must tell ourselves and our friends that we must NOT be deceived... and be conned into laying all our trust at the altar of the super-hero, David like, myth of Jesus.

God is love..... and let our narrative begin and end with that assertion.

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

So,..... back to the compare and contrast, ..... but not really, because I've tilted this message to get you to vote for Jesus.

*I haven't done this compare and contrast thing very fairly, even so, I will add a few more things about David, I think you should know.*

David never got his temple that he wanted.

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

David lusted for the woman “Bathsheba”, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

Not wanting to break the rules that married woman are off limits, but widows are okay, David being the king, sent Uriah on a successful suicide mission.

Bathsheba becomes a widow. David take her and they have a son named Solomon.

Other problems arise, such as with Absalom,... and to top it off, David does NOT deal well with growing old.

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

According to Mark, Jesus' ministry was preceded by John the Baptist – who set the stage for Jesus.

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.*

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

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.

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 weak and humble?  
Where is our trust... in money and power..... or letting go?  
Like I said earlier,..... we really don't like the truth..... when we have to eat it.

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.

I really don't think voting for Jesus is merely saying "Jesus do it. Take my sins away and get me into heaven."

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.

Each day is full of choices..... which direction are we heading?