



King David

December 26th

The holy king and prophet David came from the tribe of Judah. His father Jesse was one of the elders of the city of Bethlehem and had eight sons, of whom David was the youngest. David was given the task of shepherding his father's sheep. He lived alone among the flock, keeping watch.. When a lion or bear would come and steal one of the sheep from the flock, David would pursue it and rescue the sheep. The Lord kept him safe from harm for he was pious and loved God. David made himself a harp, a musical instrument with strings. While alone he would play it and sing. Plucking the strings, he hymned the wisdom and goodness of his heavenly Father.

At that time Saul was the king of Israel. Several times he was disobedient to the commandments of the Lord, and placed his own desires above the will of God. The Lord was very displeased and announced through the Prophet Samuel that Saul would soon no longer be king.

The Lord sent Samuel to Jesse the Bethlehemite saying, "Among his sons I beheld a king for Myself." Jesse gathered seven of his sons together. Samuel thought that the oldest one must be the chosen one of God, but the Lord said to the prophet, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature; I have rejected him; I behold not as men behold, for men look at the face, but the Lord looks at the heart."

It was revealed to Samuel that none of these seven was to be chosen, Then he asked Jesse if all of his children were there. Jesse replied that there was one more son who was taking care of the sheep. The prophet ordered that the boy be sent for. When David came, the Lord said to Samuel, "Arise, anoint him, for it is he."

The prophet took the horn with oil which he had brought with him and anointed David in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rested on David from that day on.

Having lost God's favor, Saul became possessed by evil spirits which tormented him and often caused him to be irritated and weighed down by dark thoughts. The courtiers advised their sovereign to invite a man to come who played the harp well. They thought that by listening to the sweet music, the king might feel better. At the king's command, David, an eighteen-year old shepherd, was called to the royal court. When Saul was painfully tormented, David would play on his harp and sing praises to the Lord. This made the evil spirits flee and Saul was consoled. The King liked David very much and David became his armor-bearer. He was not always needed at the court and was able to return home for long periods to his native city and continue his work as a shepherd.

Soon the land of Israel was attacked by Philistines. From their ranks stepped out the giant Goliath. He was twelve feet tall, dressed in complete military armor made out of bronze, a very heavy shield, a helmet and knee-guards; in this hands he carried an iron spear of great weight. Goliath challenged the Israelite troops to find a man to fight against him in single combat. He said: "If he kills me, we will be your slaves, but if I conquer him you will be our slaves and serve

The appearance of the giant terrified the sons of Israel, and none of them would fight against Goliath. David's brothers were among the soldiers who were fighting against the Philistines. Once Jesse sent his youngest son David to the troops to visit his brothers and bring them a supply Of bread. There David saw how Goliath threatened and terrified everyone. He was greatly disturbed that the army of the living God would be mocked. Trusting in the help of God, he asked Saul to allow him to fight with Goliath. The king replied, "Go,

and may the Lord be with you."

David refused to accept the use of any military armor, and took only his shepherd's staff, his sling-shot and a pouch in which he put five smooth stones which he had found in a stream. Approaching Goliath he said, "You are coming against me with sword, spear, and shield, while I am going against you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the Israelite army, and the whole earth will know that there is a God in Israel and that the Lord saves not by sword and spear."

David placed his trust in God's help and God was with him. The stone shot from David's sling hit the giant with such force that Goliath fell to the earth dead. David had won and the true God was glorified.

The king and all of the people of Israel were overjoyed and greatly loved David. At first the king was very pleased, but soon he grew jealous of David and feared that David would take over his kingdom. He sent David on dangerous journeys, wishing that he might die, but the Lord kept His chosen one unharmed.

Together with about 400 men who had joined him, David hid himself from the king in mountains and desert places. But wherever he went, Saul followed after him.

Once Saul went into one of the caves in which David was hiding, not knowing that David was there. Without being noticed, David quietly crept up to him and cut off the edge of Saul's cloak. When the king left the cave and had gone a little distance away, David called out to him. Saul turned around and David, bowing to the ground before him, began to beg the king to see his good Will towards him. "Look at the edge of your garment in my hands; I cut off the edge of your garment, but did not kill you. This should convince you that I do not desire to harm you, and that I have not sinned against you." Seeing the noble act of the one he was persecuting, Saul wept and admitted that he was wrong.

This feeling, however, did not last long. Once again Saul became suspicious of David and began to seek to kill him. He went out into the desert with 3000 troops. At night David secretly entered the king's camp. He found Saul sound asleep in his tent. At his head stood a spear stuck in the earth. David's companion tried to persuade him to kill Saul, but he refused to do such evil. He took the spear and a cup of water which was in the tent in order to show Saul that once again he had the chance to kill him, but that he had spared his life knowing that Saul was anointed of God. David even became angry at the guards for so poorly protecting their king. Seeing what had happened, Saul again repented and believed in David's innocence.

David had such a godly heart that he was full of compassion even for his enemies. Hearing later of the king's death, he sincerely wept and mourned over his former persecutor.

All the tribes of Israel gathered together. While the people rejoiced, David was anointed King over all of Israel. He established a new capital which he called Jerusalem which means "city of peace." His main concern was to please God, the heavenly King, Whose representative he was on earth. Just as he had played the harp and sung as a boy among the flocks of sheep, so now with the singing of psalms which he wrote, he led all the people of Israel in praise of God, lifting their hearts together to the Lord. Seeing David's righteousness and obedience, God granted him victory over his enemies and peace to the people of Israel.

Surrounded by earthly glory and riches, David became tempted to follow his own will. In a moment of weakness he gave into a sinful desire and acted unjustly towards others, breaking God's commandments. God was greatly angered with him, and because of this disobedience He allowed troubles and difficulties to come upon David and his family. The land of Israel also endured the misfortunes of a three-year famine and a three-day plague.

With tears King David repented, begging for God's mercy and forgiveness for his own sins and for those of his people. God heard his prayers and forgave him.

King David died in good old age, leaving his son Solomon to reign in his place. He had been king for forty years. Throughout his life he taught the people of Israel, and even today his Psalms teach us to love and obey God, to ask forgiveness for our sins, to trust in God's help and mercy, to love our enemies and to praise God for all of His wondrous works.