

New Testament:

Mark 2v23-28 ²³ One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" ²⁵ He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need?" ²⁶ In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." ²⁷ Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.

Acts 13v21-23 Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. ²² After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' ²³ "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.

Old Testament:

1 Samuel 16 v11-13a ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives." ¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." ¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on *the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David*.

1 Samuel 21v1-6 David went to Nob, to Ahimelek the priest. Ahimelek trembled when he met him, and asked, "Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?" ² David answered Ahimelek the priest, "The king sent me on a mission and said to me, 'No one is to know anything about the mission I am sending you on.' As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place. ³ Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find." ⁴ But the priest answered David, "I don't have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here—provided the men have kept themselves from women." ⁵ David replied, "Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever ^[b] I set out. The men's bodies are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!" ⁶ *So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the LORD and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.*

2 Samuel 7v11b-14a. The words of the prophet Nathan to David: - "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will *establish a house for you*: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up *your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom*. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and *I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*. ¹⁴ *I will be his father, and he will be my son.*

Daniel 7:13-14 "As my vision continued that night, I saw someone like a *son of man* coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, honour, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language worshiped him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed."

Parallel Gospel passages: **Matthew 12v1-8** ¹ At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ² When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." ³ He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵ Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? ⁶ I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' ^[a] you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Luke 6v1-5 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. ² Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" ³ Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." ⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus, King David and the Sabbath [Jesus claims I am..... The Lord of the Sabbath']

Ancestors:

Are you related to anyone famous? Or even know anyone famous?. If so, the chances are that you like to talk about it. If you were related to the great English monarch Queen Victoria you might happen to mention at a party, that you are of royal blood. This year a little girl called Courtney Knight is 7, she is a great (5 times) grand-daughter of Victoria who was her age in 1826, nearly 200 years ago. – 8 generations. Despite these generations, no doubt she will grow up proud of her Royal ancestor.

King David lived 1000 years before Jesus so perhaps over 40 generations had passed but the bible is keen to put Jesus in the House of David

The writer Dr. Luke tells us that the carpenter Joseph (the stand-in father to Jesus) was a descendant of King David, and Matthew gives us an abridged family tree linking David to Joseph. Some people claim that Mary too was related to David, but the line is always traced via the Father. Mary had relations in the priestly line, so would have probably herself been house of Levi, not Davids line in the tribe of Judah. It appears to me that Jesus was not a blood descendant of King David, as Joseph was not his biological Father.

But throughout the Old Testament right up to three mentions in Revelations, the bible is full of references to David. **Rev 22v16 "I, Jesus... am the root of Jesse, the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."**

When Jesus lived on Earth he regularly had people shouting out Lord, Son of David, Have Mercy on us, and also when he entered Jerusalem on a donkey they were shouting Hosanna to the Son of David.

So I am thinking, if the Father of Jesus, his Abba, was God, not Joseph the carpenter or David the King. then why was there such a big deal about him being the Son of David, and why would he even claim this link for himself if it's not true. I am English, but I don't make claim to be descendant of Queen Victoria, because I'm not. And even if he was a blood descendant, say through his mother Mary, then why select David from his ancestry, why not just the Son of Joseph, or perhaps another ancestor, Son of Solomon, or Son of Hezekiah. Why pick out David? What's so important about Jesus being the offspring of David, or in the House of David.

Jewish History & the cost of Kings

To find out why, we need to take a look back at when Samuel the prophet anointed David as King. The Jews got by in their early years of establishing Israel in the Promised land, by having Judges to rule them and prophets to guide them. However the time came when the people wanted to have a King like other nations. What troubled the prophets about this, was that God himself was king, so then they should have had no need for another. Human Kings were costly, they still are. (About £50m a year for the UK royal family, but noting that Prince Charles Duchy alone is valued at over £700 million). But the people persisted in their requests, so God gave them a King, and Samuel anointed Gods chosen man, Saul to be King. His most important job was to protect the Israelites from their number 1 enemy the Philistines, which he did quite well, but then he disobeyed God and the Spirit of Yahweh left him. Whilst Saul was still King, Samuel anoints David as the King in waiting. Why David? He was even the youngest of eight sons.

A Man after my own heart.

In Acts Luke recalls this anointing of David with God saying 'I have found David son of Jesse, a **man after my own heart**; he will do everything I want him to do '.

The key is that God has found some-one after his own heart, one that would obey God and not go his own way. There is a real sense that with David as King it would be as if God himself was king – a theocracy – God rule.

David proved himself worthy of the king role by killing the Philistine champion, and he stayed faithful to Saul who was still Gods anointed King whilst he was alive. David became a popular warrior and people sang Saul has killed

thousands, but David tens of thousands. Saul got jealous and wanted to kill David, so for several years David was on the run from Saul, always moving around to avoid capture. The day would come when David's kingdom would be established, but for now he was still rejected by the King and his authorities.

David did however become the greatest King that Israel ever had, and I mean ever. He was originally just King of Judah (based in Hebron) but united all the tribes of Israel and set up his capital in Jerusalem. It was their golden era.

David & Jesus

So lets compare the lives of David and Jesus and draw out 6 links.

David had Gods own heart; He was given a full portion of Gods spirit when he was anointed by Samuel. He spent some years on the move avoiding King Saul and his authorities; In that time he did good things and wrote great poetry and psalms; he built up a following; then on the death of some-one- Saul – he took up his throne on Earth.

Jesus by definition as God Incarnate also had Gods own heart; He was given a full portion of Gods spirit when he was baptised by John. He spent 3 years on the move avoiding King Herod, the Temple Guards and the Roman authorities; In that time he did great miracles and spoke great poetry and teachings; he built up a following; then on the death of some-one- himself – he took up his throne in Heaven where he reign over us forever.

The Nathan Prophecy

David wanted to build the temple in his new capital Jerusalem, but his court prophet Nathan said that was the job for his son. However he also said that God would make a 'House' for David, sort of like a family that will last forever! He predicts another one that would follow long after David dies, who will be his **offspring** who will also build this House, this family, and whose kingdom would last forever. Nathan goes on to quote God as saying 'I will be his Father, and he will be my Son'. What an incredible prophecy from Nathan. The prophecy of one to come who will be a God-King. If the previous links weren't strong enough then this prophecy of Davids offspring cries out Jesus.

A God King

At the time Jesus was both there was a belief that God himself alone would establish himself as King of the Jews. They were fed up with their Kings. They had had a hundred years of the Hasmonean dynasty of Kings and after Roman Invasion having to put up with Herod the Great (even though he rebuilt the temple) and his unpopular sons inc Herod Antipas. These were not recognised as true Kings over the Jews because none of them were from the House of David. The Jews could see no human ruler rising up from their ranks to do what had to be done – defeat the pagan oppressor Rome, to cleanse the temple and restore the long-awaited rule of justice and peace. Only a God king could do that. That God King would be the offspring of David.

God had promised to come back to his people in Power and Glory, to establish his Kingdom on earth. The Jews believed this would happen, but that it would simply underpin their own aspirations of being a powerful nation under God. But it was to be a very different Power and Glory that would fulfil their prophecies.

Fulfilling Nathans prophecy

David was a King after Gods own Heart, so I believe Jesus can claim ancestry in the sense that he is the new King after Gods own heart. So now we can see that if Jesus is claiming to be the in the House of David, and the Offspring of David, he is claiming fulfilment of Nathans prophecy. God is HIS Father, HE is Gods Son, The throne of his kingdom will be established forever. That's what Jesus is claiming.

There are many references linking Jesus to David in the New Testament. The last in is Revelations (22v16) where Jesus is speaking to an elderly John exiled on Patmos, long before the bars and night-clubs arrived on the Greek island. Jesus says 'I am the root of Jesse, the Offspring of David and the morning star.

He's where it started, he is the God King, and like seeing the morning star at the start of a new day, the first one you will see in the new Heaven will be Jesus.

Jesus makes it clear he is the offspring of David, he is the fulfilment of Nathans prophecy. He is the God-King, the Messiah, the Son of God. If we still weren't convinced of the link to being the Son of David, then this seals the deal.

Going back to Nathans prophecy there is a dilemma, if this King to come is the Son of God then how is also to be blood and flesh of David. He can not actually be any mans blood descendant. But we see the blood and flesh of David, as figurative for the Heart and Spirit of Him (and as that of Gods also) then we can accept Jesus as the Son of David, but also one who is Lord of all, including what is written in the Scriptures.

So as we finally get to our Gospel passage, we can use this revelation to understand the actions and words of Jesus.

The passage (Mk 2 v23-28)

i) Disciples accused

Jesus was walking through the grain fields. He was journeying, an itinerant ministry, but also avoiding Roman outposts and Herod guards (until the right time to die). Like David (before Saul's death) he had followers but he was keeping out the way of the countries ruler, at least for now.

A nice day, strolling, from one town to the next, they are on a stony path through a wheat-field. His disciples started picking off the heads of the wheat, rubbing them and eating the kernels. They must have been very hungry. I don't think Jesus kept to strict meal times!

It reminds me of when the hobbits had linked up with Strider and were following him from Bree to Rivendell. They set off on horses.

Strider: Gentlemen we do not stop til nightfall.

Pippin: What about breakfast?

Strider: You've already had it.

Pippin: We've had one yes, but what about second breakfast?

Merry: Don't think he knows about second breakfast Pip.

Pippin (desperate now): What about elevenses, luncheon, afternoon tea, dinner and supper? He know about them doesn't he?

Merry: I wouldn't count on it.

Then strider throws Pippin an apple.

The Jewish law allowed you to pick off some-one else wheat by hand but not to take a scythe to it. But this was the Sabbath, they were hungry but the Pharisees saw this act of picking and rubbing as preparing the food, which they taught was not allowed on the Sabbath. Some Pharisees in the crowd challenged him pointing out that the disciples were breaking their Sabbath laws by doing this. Their Rabbi was responsible for their behaviour. The Pharisees would not normally be out in a grain field on the Sabbath. They were not allowed to walk more than 8000 cubits (2.2 miles) on the Sabbath, so would have been within a mile of their own homes and no doubt had full bellies themselves.. So they would not have been journeying with Jesus, more likely they had heard reports of Jesus and come out for the day to listen to him themselves. In their minds, if the disciples were close to a village, then the disciples could have gone to the village to get food which would have been properly prepared the day before. The Pharisees recognised Jesus as a Rabbi but he was a bit of a wild card because he had not trained under one of the big Rabbi names. His disciples had not been through the normal route of Rabbinical schools, and seemed to be just a rag-tag bunch of followers. The Pharisees didn't like them.

ii) Jesus claims precedence in King David

Many Rabbis like Jesus regarded it necessary to defend the honour of their disciples .Jesus did his trick where he turns the tables on these religious know-alls and implies that they don't even know their scriptures? "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need?² He entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat, and shared it with his companions"

As a Rabbi he is claiming biblical precedent for the actions on himself and his disciples. In doing so, you make yourself exempt from any punishment.

The Pharisees said that Jesus questions the Bible's authority, but Jesus demands a different way to understand and apply it. He is full of the Spirit which helps interpret the Scriptures for how to live his life right with God. The Pharisees did not have the Spirit in them, they just had the Scriptures, and another rule book 'The Talmud', seen as equal to the Torah (Old Testament laws). The Talmud gave them extra safety margins from braking the commandments. Lots of Sabbath rules i.e. Most activities were banned, from gardening, cooking, sewing, even writing. You weren't allowed to do any building even put up a tent, but to show how restrictive the laws were, building included putting a plank on two crates to make a bench (that's building'). Putting up your umbrella, that would be classed as building a tent. You were not allowed to carry a needle around on the Sabbath, in case you had a sudden urge to do some cross-stitch!!

David had the Fathers heart for his men and God would not want David or his men to starve, even if it meant taking back food that had been consecrated to him. David was not wilfully disrespectful of Gods words, he was led by his Spirit to see that in this particular case with Gods approval his men could eat from the Priests table. The Pharisees had the Fathers book, and then their own book which added in all the extra rules, but they did not have the Fathers heart. They had the Scriptures but not the Spirit.

iii) Son of Man - Lord of the Sabbath

Jesus goes on to say that the 'Son of Man' is Lord even of the Sabbath. The standard Aramaic phrase 'Son of Man' can mean just a Human Being, and the Pharisees probably thought he was referring to himself as a normal person who was claiming to flout the Law based on some story of David. But Jesus is referring to himself as the 'Son of Man coming on the clouds of Heaven' as described in Daniel as the one who will come in Glory, the Messiah figure, whose reign and authority is eternal. As the authoritative 'Son of Man' he had the right to interpret the Sabbath Laws as he saw fit.

Because the Pharisees could only see the written words, Jesus explains something of the Father Heart to them. The Sabbath was made for man, out of Gods love for them – a rest day to enjoy and recuperate. It is for our benefit not Gods. So if we work or study 7 days a week, it is ourselves we are wronging not God. As a boy I wanted to join a football team, but was not allowed because they played on a Sunday afternoon. In by-gone eras we have been very strict on what we could not do on a Sunday. In Victorian households, Children could only play with Religious toys like a Noahs Ark.

But Jesus says the Sabbath (a day of rest) is for our benefit, not the other way around. We serve God not Sundays. Yes it is nice to keep Sundays special, such was the campaign against Sunday trading. But we must remember that we respect having a day of rest because it is for us. At University. I chose not to do any studying on a Sunday, and it was a great decision as I studied hard for 6 days and loved strolling around on a Sunny day when everyone else was working. It didn't harm my results, as I came out with the top degree. But if a distraught friend came with me and asked for help with his studies, I would not turn him away because it was Sunday, I would help him. David and Jesus were not going to stop their men eating on the Sabbath, even if they would be interpreted by others as breaking a law.

A King of Hearts and Minds

We've determined that Jesus is in the House of David, because like David when Jesus rules it is the same as God ruling. God saw the potential with David, and the bible says that the Spirit of the Lord came greatly upon him. In a sense at the moment he was born again of the Spirit of God. The same Spirit birthed Jesus. So if I think of the same Spirit coming over David and coming over Jesus, then you can see how he is in the House of David, regardless of any ancestral links via Joseph or Mary. David, yes he made mistakes, but for the most part, he ruled in the way that God would rule if he had come down as a person, - In Jesus' case he was God come down as a person.

God is back in charge when Jesus is on the throne. This is true for a nation when politicians takes serious the 'social justice' teachings of Jesus. It is true for individuals who invite Jesus in and allow the truths of God to being written on their hearts. They have a heart out of Jesus, and in some individuals you can see the change, as they take up a cause or a service with new passion. Whether it be a campaign against child trafficking, working amongst young people, helping the elderly or homeless, their love for others comes from the ' heart of God '. They now see with their Father eyes.

Amy Grant sung a song with these lyrics 'When people look inside my life, I want to hear them say She's got her Fathers eyes. That should be our prayer too, that we see with our Fathers eyes. We ask the Holy Spirit, to illuminate the words in the Bible to us so that we can find the true meaning of them for our own lives and understand what he wants for us. Then we need to pray that the Holy Spirit will embed in us the Fathers heart, so that we have the passion driving us from within to do his Will. If can see and understand without actually doing anything. With both our Fathers eyes and our Fathers heart then we carry out what we know is right.

Adopted into his Royal family.

What if a girl from your local estate was adopted into Queen Victoria's family, perhaps as an adopted sister to Courtney Knight. Suddenly she would enjoy the privileges of being in the Royal blood line and have all the prestige that goes with it. The bibles says that we are adopted into Gods family. We are co-heirs with Christ.

Just as David was a man after Gods own heart, a God-king, so of course was Jesus. But there is a sense if which we are also get the heart of God. When it is breaking for the oppressed, modern slavery, for elderly in our community etc., it is Gods heart we are sharing with them, his emotions we feel.

We have a book to help us, the Bible, it's a great book, an inspired book, and I love it. The Pharisees had their books, their Old Testament Scriptures and the Talmud to keep them at a distance from breaking Gods laws, and no doubt they loved their books to. But God did not choose David because of anything scholarly, though he ended up writing wonderful Psalms and poetry, he was chosen because he had the **heart** after God. The prophet Jeremiah talked about Gods truths being written on our hearts.

The Future – Theocracy within

I do not know what the future holds for Courtney Knight , the 7 year old descendant of Queen Victoria, it may be a very privileged one, or she may work in McDonalds, but she will always be a descendant of the Queen, you can not take away her Royal blood.

If you have accepted Jesus into your life, you have been adopted into his family. Paul says we are co-heirs with Christ, who is described as the King of Kings, so in his eyes we are now Royalty. We are part of his Royal family, and he said he will never leave us or forsake us.

In one sense we too could be called a Son of David, not because we are directly descended from him (even if you are), but because when we see with the Fathers eyes, and we act with the Fathers heart , we have put God on the throne in our own lives. Inside me, it's a theocracy, its God ruling. That's what they said of David, that's what was true in Jesus too. He was the God King that the Jews had been hoping and waiting for, but they were **expecting a King over structures and powers, but Jesus is a King over hearts and minds**. He still is available to be that King today, over my heart and mind, and over your heart and mind.

As we live as Christians, we should use the Bible to help us, but we need to interpret it with our renewed Hearts and minds hat come from God, so we do not become ruled by a book, but ruled by God, and do great things for him whether it's a Sunday or not.

Amen
