1 Chronicles 11:1 - 9 Royal David and his city – not just for Christmas
(31.10.10am)

This morning I want us to look at King David and the City of David as they're introduced in the Old Testament, before seeing their significance down the years right down to today and into the future.

Turn with me, if you would, to the first book of Chronicles in the Old Testament [Blue Bibles Page 414], It would have been easier to find for the Jews because it was actually positioned at the **end** of the Hebrew scriptures. Chapter 11.
[Read 1 Chronicles 11:1-9]

What's in a name? Romeo said in Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' 'A rose by any other name would smell just as sweet.' But if Robert Burns' poem started 'My love is like a red red Soapwort', it wouldn't sound quite right, would it?

I think Wendy's a lovely name (and I'm not just saying that so my wife cooks me a nice dinner!) – it's a lovely name. But would I be less in love with my wife if she was called Edeltraud? No – the **person** would be the same. And can I quickly say for my German listeners, I did know an Edeltraud once and she was a lovely lady too – in fact the name itself means noble and loyal, so there's nothing wrong with the name.

But names have connotations for us don't they? When we hear certain names, we immediately think of certain **attributes**, or things they did. For example, Arthur – perhaps we think of King Arthur and his round table; Diana – we think of Princess Diana and all she did representing the country; or surnames like Mandela, or Luther – names which have inspired in one way or another. It's not the names **themselves**, but the person who **bore** that name, remembered for something that seems important to us.

For the people of God, the name **David** has special meaning. But before we go on to look at that let's put our passage into context, and see where it fits into the history of God's people.

You'll know if you've read the 2 books of Chronicles (originally only one book), if you've read them you'll know that the first nine chapters are full of uninspiring lists of names and genealogies. Uninspiring to **us**, maybe, but certainly **not** to the first readers of the book. In fact that's why Chronicles was written.

As the name implies, the books of Chronicles were a summary of the history of the people of Israel. When it was written in the fourth century BC, the people of Israel had been in exile away from their own country, so when they returned, they needed something to focus their minds on their identity and purpose. Chronicles was written to remind them of their heritage, who they are. They were the people of God in the past, but they need to be reminded that they're **still** the people of God, that God hasn't changed – they're still his people.

And the thing we learn straight away as we come to Chronicles, is that we need to keep reminding ourselves **who we are** as Christians – we're the latest in a long line of people who've followed God and been in relationship with him as his people. When we go through tough experiences, when we feel down, when we feel alone, we have to remind ourselves that we're descendants of great men and women of God that have gone before.

The Bible encourages us to do this in Chronicles in the Old Testament; it does the **same** in Hebrews 11, where we read about people of God who've lived a life of faith. And we need to see that our spiritual ancestors are those who've gone before throughout history, people like Luther and the Wesleys, John Newton and others. This should encourage Christians, remind us that we're all members of God's **continuing** family.

So the Chronicler starts with Adam and gives lists of people from the history of those listening, they would all know these names. Their ancestors, and **our** ancestors, if we have become children of God. He reminds them of their identity, the people of Israel, the people of God.

In our chapter, chapter 11, the writer comes to David. And as soon as the listener heard that name – **David** – great interest would have been aroused – King David, Israel's greatest king. Now they were listening very closely. The name David stirred emotions – he was the greatest king of Israel. By the time of writing, David has been dead over 500 years, but his memory and the impact he had on his people lives on. And this will **unite** God's people, remind them of their common identity. By focusing on David, king of the people of Israel, this will enable them to feel unity again.

The first great message of this passage ,then, is that God's people are **one**, here we see them united under the kingship of David.

Before David came Saul, and in verse 13 of chapter 10 we read, *'Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord, and even consulted a medium for guidance and did not enquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.'* 1 Chron. 10:13,14

So by these very words we can tell that David is going to be a **contrast** to Saul – David **will** be faithful, he **will** seek the Lord and be obedient, and so he'll be a true leader of **all** God's people, because he will want the same things as God. In Acts 13:22 Paul says, *'After removing Saul, he* [God] *made David their king. He 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."'* Where God and the king work together, in step with each other, of one mind, then God's people will prosper. God's people are **united** under the kingship of David, a man after God's own heart.

But this didn't happen overnight. In politics and the leadership of countries **nowadays**, we often see leaders rise from obscurity very quickly – three years ago nobody'd heard of Nick Clegg, even on the campaign trail for the General Election lots of people **still** hadn't heard of him. Yet for 2 weeks in August he was in charge of the **country**! Scary!

David was chosen by God and anointed by Samuel in his late teens; he was first anointed king of Judah and had other battles to win before becoming king of **all** Israel when he was 37. He waited 20 years. God's promises are worth waiting for. The fruit of the Spirit spoken of in Paul's letter to the Galatians, the characteristics of a person who's become a Christian, includes 'patience' – how patient are we in today's 'must have now society'? God doesn't always give us what he's promised straight away – David waited 20 years. **God** is in control, he controls events and works his purposes in them.

Verse 1 of our passage begins, *'All Israel came together to David at Hebron ..'* . On this occasion **all** Israel gathered together. David had been chosen by God and had proved his military credentials, and this brought all Israel together. As well as God's chosen king, he was to be the **people's** king. He brought all Israel together, a people under **one king**.

Let's look at David's uniting features – there are four of them:

To begin with, we read in verse 1, *'We are your own flesh and blood.'* All Israel recognises that David is one of **them**, one of the family, one of their people, of their flesh and blood.

He was chosen by God, but chosen from among **them**. They're united – he's one of them.

Then the people recognise that David had led his people in battle: in verse 2 they go on to say, *'even while Saul was king, **you** were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns.'* God's people had already fought together under the leadership of David. They were united in **battle**, and in chapter 12:38 we see that the fighting men and *'All the rest of the Israelites were also of one mind to make David king.'* They're united behind him as leader.

The second half of verse 2 tells us that the people acknowledge that God had made a promise to David; God said to him, *'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'* They agree that God has given David this task of shepherding and ruling his people. *'... as the Lord had promised through Samuel',* verse 3 says. Israel will all know how God chose the youngest son of Jesse to be king – we read about it in 1 Samuel 16. So David and the people are united in accepting this promise of God, it's in God's plan for his people.

Verse 3 also tells us finally that all the elders of Israel made a compact with David. They discussed the terms of the king's reign, they agreed on rights and responsibilities of all sides, and they entered into a compact, a covenant, an agreement with each other. And following this we read that they anointed David king over Israel. So David united his people through this compact that they made with each other.

God's people united in four ways – David is one of them, he's their leader in battle, his kingship is within God's plan, and the king and the people make a covenant which binds them together.

Let's remind ourselves what the Chronicler is doing here: he's writing of the history of God's people Israel, and here in particular about the time of their greatest king, to remind them of their identity, so that they can start to rebuild their nation after many years in exile.

The Chronicler was writing for his people in the 4th century BC, but what does this have to say to **us**, two and a half thousand years later?

At the time that Chronicles was written, the people looked back to their greatest king, David. But he was already **long** gone. The New Testament tells us of one who is a **greater** king than David, a descendant of David but **more** a king of his people, the one who came 'Once in royal David's city' – Jesus Christ.

Whereas the people of God in the Old Testament were united under the kingship of David, Christians now are united under the kingship of Jesus. In the New Testament king-making takes on a much **higher** meaning.

Isaiah speaks of the coming king in chapter 16, where he says, '*In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it – one from the house of David – one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.'* So David is important to the people of God because they know that there is one coming, the Messiah, the Saviour, one from the house of David.

Jesus is often called 'Son of David' in the New Testament, isn't he? Humanly speaking he **was** a descendant of David. But when people call him Son of David they are recognising who he really is – the **promised** King and Saviour. So when the two blind men in Matthew 9:27 call out, *'Have mercy on us, Son of David!'* they know **exactly** who he is. When the Canaanite woman with a demon-possessed daughter in Matthew 15:22 comes to Jesus and cries out *'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!'* she knows **exactly** who Jesus is – King, Saviour, **God**.

James Montgomery in his hymn 'Hail to the Lord's anointed' refers to Jesus as 'great David's greater son', and he writes 'Kings shall bow before him and gold and incense bring; all nations shall adore him, his praise all people sing.' Jesus, the King of kings. There's only one King and he unites his people under his kingship.

Remember the four uniting features of David's kingship? We saw that 1. David is one of them; 2. his achievements are great; 3. his kingship is within God's plan; and 4. the king and the people agree a covenant which binds them together.

It's clear in the Bible that David is a foreshadowing of what Jesus will be, so let's look at these four things in relation to **Jesus**:

David was one of them: Hebrews chapter 2 tells us that only through becoming a man could Jesus pay the price for man's sins on the cross: we read in Hebrews 2:14, *'Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is the devil,'* and in verse 17, '*For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might ... make atonement for the sins of the people.'* Jesus became a man, one of us, although still fully God, so he could bring us into his kingdom.

David achieved great things for his people: and Jesus? 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4 says, *'For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,'* – Hebrews 12:2 calls Jesus *'the author and perfector of our faith'* – Hebrews 2:10 calls him the *'author of salvation'*. Through Jesus' death and resurrection he has achieved **salvation** for those who will believe in him. **No-one** could achieve anything greater than this, forgiveness of sins, victory over death, salvation. **Only he** could achieve this.

David's kingship was in God's plan: in Luke's gospel 1:30, you'll remember the angel Gabriel appears to Mary, and he says these words to her, '*You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, his kingdom will never end.'* You can't get any clearer than that, can you? It's God's plan and purpose that Jesus will reign over his kingdom forever.

David makes a covenant with his people: Jesus brings a **new** covenant, Jesus takes the initiative, he sets down the terms – he says in John 5:24, *'I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.'* That's it. The new covenant. Those are the terms – 'believe that I am the Son of God,' Jesus says, 'I've died to take the punishment for your sins, I've set you free from the guilt of your sins by my death on the cross, I've saved you from death, and the proof of that is that I rose again,' he says. All you have to do is believe and accept Jesus as king. These are the terms of Jesus' kingship. We just need to respond to his grace.

David foreshadows Jesus, but Jesus is king like no other king has ever been or will ever be. **God's one king**.

Coming back to our passage in 1 Chronicles 11, verse 4 we read about David conquering Jerusalem. God's people are firstly united by one king, and secondly they are united by the City.

Again, just as people's names have connotations for us, so do town names - ask Wendy afterwards what Grimsby conjures up in her mind – grim by name and grim by nature! Whereas Worthing of course is at the **opposite** end of the spectrum!

David's been made king, and he and all Israel march to Jerusalem. In verses 4 to 7, we find three other names for Jerusalem, the future capital of David's kingdom, each with a different overtone. Let's look at them quickly.

Jebus, where the Jebusites lived. This tells of the historical city of this Canaanite tribe the Jebusites. This reminds us that all of Biblical truth is firmly rooted in **historical reality**, real places, real events. It also reminds us of God's promise of land for his people: in Exodus 23:23 God speaks to Moses after leading them out of Egypt, *'My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out.'* So David's conquest of Jebus, that is Jerusalem, will fulfil this promise.
God's people united in the fulfilment of God's promise.

'David captured the fortress of Zion', verse 5. The Psalms use this name a lot, and there is a spiritual overtone here – Psalm 2:6, for example, says *'I have installed my King on Zion, my **holy** hill.'* Psalm 48 begins, *'Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the great King.'* It's where **God** is, where his greatness, love and praise are made known. And Psalm 87:6 speaks of God's people, those who belong to him, when it says, *'The Lord will write in the register of the peoples: This one was born in Zion.'* God's holy hill. *'The Lord dwells in Zion.'* Joel 3:21.
God's people united by God's presence.

The City of David. This city was the **new** capital of the **new** king giving a new **start** for the people of God, for **all** Israel. It symbolises strength and power, because David, the great king, has his throne there.
God's people united in the strength of their king, and surrounded by the walls of his city.

The City symbolises God's promise, God's presence, God's strength.

What does this have to say to us today, then?

Well, we saw earlier that Christians are people of the King of kings, Jesus. But Jerusalem also speaks to us. 'Jesus said*, 'For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life,'* John 6:40. God's people are the fulfilment of God's promise, that whoever believes in Jesus as Lord and Saviour has eternal life.

Christians are people who know God's presence with them. Jesus said, *'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.'* John 14:23. There's no greater thing than to know the assurance that God is with us.

We all know that in this world there is very little security – the slightest thing can take everything away. Look at Haiti with its earthquake, Pakistan with its floods, a man in Cumbria takes the lives of whoever he meets one morning, and more recently, a man takes his own life, and those of his wife and two children because of looming bankruptcy. So sad. But real. No security.

The only **true** security is a relationship with God. Knowing that he will keep you forever. He'll be with you in every experience, good or bad – Romans 8:28 reminds us, *'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.'* Christians know that **all** things are working out for our good, although we may not see it at the time. And he'll make sure that we enjoy eternal life with him forever in heaven. Revelation speaks of the kingdom of God as the new Jerusalem.

And so the names of David's city symbolise this security; the writer of Hebrews says of the Christian, *'But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. ... You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant.'* Hebrews 12:22,24.

Vaughan Roberts writes in his book 'God's Big Picture' – very easy to read and helpful overview of the Bible – he writes that 'God's people are in God's place, under God's rule, enjoying God's blessing.' (repeat)

In 1 Chronicles chapter 11 we find God's people Israel, in God's city Jerusalem, under God's rule through his chosen king David, enjoying God's promises, presence and strength.

Today if we have Jesus as King at the centre of our lives, we have a place in God's eternal Jerusalem, and we will grow experiencing all the blessings of God's promises, presence and strength.

Is Jesus King of your life? Are you in his city? Are you secure in him?