

A KING'S HEART

"Servant of the Lord" – Psalm 18:1

FIT FOR A KING

Michelangelo, the legendary High Renaissance artist who, among other endeavors, painted the *Scenes from Genesis* on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, worked for two years, between 1501 and 1504 A.D., carving his statue of King David of Israel out of a massive block of marble. When completed, it stood, and stands, 17 feet tall and weighs 8.5 tons. Initially designated for placement on top of the Florence Cathedral, its size precluded that outcome. It stands today in the Galleria dell' Accademia in Florence, Italy, where untold numbers have viewed and appreciated it and do not dispute its description as fit for a king.

DAVID'S BEGINNINGS

It's not only the statue that is legendary, but its subject is also. David, an unknown teenager toiling away on the hills surrounding Bethlehem, Judah in Israel looking after his father's sheep, is the quintessential rags to riches story. While his musical ability had brought him to court to play for his increasingly troubled predecessor, King Saul, periodically, how he burst into his nation's consciousness after being singled out by the prophet Samuel was extraordinary. Young but filled with faith honed on the dark Judean hills in life-or-death encounters with wild animals, he challenged and slew an enemy giant, the fear of whom had paralyzed the Israeli army to a man.

DAVID'S ASCENSION AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This courageous act brought him into Saul's service, not as a musician, but as a military leader. His battlefield prowess caused his fame to spread rapidly as the victories multiplied. Soon, women were lining the roads as he marched by singing, "*Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands*" (I Samuel 18:7). Jealousy raged in Saul's backslidden heart, and with fits and starts, he set out on a ten-year quest to kill David. David endured much suffering during that time, but Saul's efforts failed. David became king when he was thirty (II Samuel 5:4). While his many accomplishments as king are too numerous to mention here, the headlines are: David unified the twelve tribes of Israel and reigned for forty years, conquering all his regional enemies. He left his son and heir Solomon a stable and prospering kingdom. By any measure, David had come a long way from the sheep pen.

HOW DAVID SAW HIMSELF

Despite his position on the throne and how others viewed him, how did David see himself? In his writings, primarily in the Book of Psalms, he repeatedly refers to himself as God's servant (Psalms 19, 27, 31, 35, 37, and many more). Whether tending sheep or occupying Israel's throne, he knew the most critical part of his identity was seeing himself as God's servant and serving the Almighty's purpose. This heart attitude ultimately led to David's legendary status. Lord, though I am your child, help me serve you today with a servant's heart. I ask this in the name of the ultimate servant, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ. Amen.