

teenagers. . . . The change of this one pattern of social activities of our youth would immediately eliminate a majority of the sins of our young folks” (Kimball, 1986, pp. 287–88). Steady dating is further discouraged until youth are ready for courtship.

In the past, LDS youth were basically counseled not to begin dating, especially steady dating, until they were “old enough and mature enough” to consider marriage. During the 1970s the age of sixteen took on special significance in this regard when Spencer W. KIMBALL, as President of the Church, said: “When you get in the teen years, your social associations should still be a general acquaintance with both boys and girls. Any dating or pairing off in social contacts should be postponed until at least the age of 16 or older, and even then there should be much judgment used in the selections and in the seriousness” (Kimball, 1975, p. 4). As a consequence of this teaching, the age of sixteen has become the acceptable age when dating can begin.

Nineteen is an especially pivotal age in the social and religious life of late adolescent LDS youth. The males are expected to leave home for a two-year Church mission. Many young women upon reaching twenty-one will serve missions. Missionaries leave romantic relationships behind and are counseled not to worry about or telephone girlfriends or boyfriends. They are restricted from all dating activities during their missionary service. Although many boyfriend-girlfriend relationships do not last through the mission separation, the mission experience frequently brings a maturity that better prepares young men and women for eventual marriage.

Despite the postponing effect of missions on dating activities, LDS men tend to marry at an age younger than national averages, while LDS women marry at about the norm. Presumably, the value placed on marriage makes LDS youth less likely to postpone marriage for education and career advancement; they are certainly less likely to cohabit instead of marrying, and the customary pattern is to continue courting until the time of marriage (see SINGLE ADULTS). LDS prophets have consistently instructed young Mormon men that it is wrong to delay marriage unnecessarily (Benson; Kimball, 1975).

Because marrying a person of the same faith is important to Latter-day Saints, families that live away from the concentrations of Church popula-

tion often encourage the children to attend BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY or RICKS COLLEGE or to participate in the programs of the INSTITUTES OF RELIGION at other colleges or universities, where they are more likely to find a suitable partner of their own faith. Also, units of the Church specifically for young adults are organized throughout the world, where numbers allow, to facilitate social opportunities. Because of the religious significance of mate selection to Latter-day Saints, a variety of common practices has developed. Couples seriously considering marriage are likely to pray for heavenly confirmation in their marriage decision. The choice of a partner is usually discussed with parents, and young couples planning to marry often go together to seek the advice of their Church leaders.

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## DAVID, KING

David, king of ISRAEL, was the youngest of eight brothers, sons of Jesse (1 Sam. 16:6–12), a descendant of Boaz and RUTH (Ruth 4:21–22) and an ancestor to Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:6–17; Luke 3:23–31). He was born at Bethlehem and died in Jerusalem c. 1015 B.C., after reigning over Judah for seven years and the united kingdom of Israel for an additional thirty-three (1 Kgs. 2:11). He was buried in the ancestral home, in Bethlehem (1 Kgs. 2:10). He was perhaps the greatest king of Israel, once called “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14). Mormon interests in David have

often dwelt on the issues of his plural marriages and his status in the AFTERLIFE.

While the scriptures relate different stories of his introduction at Saul's court (1 Sam. 16:14–23; 17:55–58), David's vault from obscurity to national awareness seems to have come as a result of his courageous defeat of the giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17:49).

David's strength and reliance on the Lord marked him as an exceptional leader and the epitome of Israelite heroism (2 Sam. 5:1–3; 22:2–51). Subsequent rulers were measured against his stature (cf. 1 Kgs. 15:3–5, 11), and his name was linked with that of the awaited MESSIAH (Mark 12:35; Luke 1:32; Rom. 1:3). Scripture indicates that David's blessings, including his wives, were given to him as a result of God's favor (2 Sam. 5:12–13; 12:8; D&C 132:39).

But when David also acquired wives and concubines, apparently under his own authority, he was condemned by God (Jacob 2:23–24). Certainly David lost divine approval as a result of his adulterous union with Bathsheba and the subsequent contrived murder of her husband, Uriah (2 Sam. 12:1–12; D&C 132:38–39).

Because of David's transgressions, his eternal blessings were taken from him (*TPJS*, pp. 188–89). The Lord granted David a continuation of life for another twenty-one years, perhaps because of his immediate and deep remorse (cf. Ps. 51), his acts of repentance, and his continued faithfulness to JEHOVAH (2 Sam. 12:13, 16; cf. *WJS*, p. 335). However, he must await in the SPIRIT PRISON the redemption promised to him (Acts 2:34; *WJS*, p. 74). Even with the assurance of the Lord's ultimate mercy (Ps. 86:13), David lost much that God had given him on earth, he fell "from his exaltation" and his wives were given unto another" (D&C 132:39). Yet his personal integrity appears in his insistence that he be punished in place of his people, whom he saw in vision being destroyed (2 Sam. 24:15–17).

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## DAVID, PROPHETIC FIGURE OF LAST DAYS

King David (c. 1000 B.C.) remains today one of the most renowned Old Testament figures. His personality, spiritual sensitivity, creative abilities, military victories, and leadership carried him to the pinnacle of popularity. He had the potential to become an ideal king, but his kingship deteriorated after his adultery with Bathsheba and his involvement in Uriah's death. However, prophecy states that a model ruler in the last days will be "raised up" from David's lineage.

The Prophet Joseph SMITH taught that "the throne and kingdom of David is to be taken from him and given to another by the name of David in the last days, raised up out of his lineage" (*TPJS*, p. 339). Elder Orson Hyde, in his dedicatory prayer on the Mount of Olives, October 24, 1841, prophesied that the Jews would return to Jerusalem and that in time a leader called David, "even a descendant from the loins of ancient David, [would] be their king" (*HC* 4:457).

This predicted figure corresponds to a promised messianic servant. Hosea, speaking shortly before the loss of northern Israel, foretold that Israelites would return in the latter days "and seek the LORD their God, and David their king" (Hosea 3:5). JEREMIAH prophesied of Israel and Judah's future righteousness, and of "David their king, whom I [the LORD] will raise up unto them" (Jer. 30:9; cf. 23:5; 33:15–22). And in Ezekiel it is written, "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them" (Ezek. 34:23–24; cf. also 44:1–3).

Speaking to Joseph Smith, the angel MORONI<sub>2</sub> cited Old Testament passages telling of significant figures who would be involved with Christ's millennial reign (JS—H 1:40). As prophesied in Isaiah, it appears that two persons are spoken of, a "rod" and a "root" (11:1, 10)—one a leader "on whom there is laid much power," the other a person with special priesthood keys (D&C 113:3–6). These leaders are believed by some to be among the "messianic figures" spoken of in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in rabbinic literature (*Encyclopedia Judaica*, 11: 1409–1411).

Although noble attributes and spiritual pow-