

The Davidic covenant * 2 Samuel 7

November 3, 2019 * Langford Community Church * Graham Gladstone

I've got a very important question for you here as we begin – how's your Christmas shopping going? It's only 52 days away! Can you believe it? 52 days. It'll be here before you know it. Gotta get ready.

And passage that we're looking at this morning will actually help us with that. I mean, it's not going to find us the best deals on the year's hottest gifts, but it does go a long way to explaining why David pops up so often in the Christmas story.

Did you ever notice that? Matthew and Luke have the most detailed accounts of Jesus' birth and in about four chapters between them, David's name appears a dozen times. For example -

Matthew 1:20 an angel appears to Joseph and says ~~But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,~~ "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. (Mat 1:20 NIV).

In Luke 1:26 - 26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,
27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. (Luk 1:26-27 NIV).

Luke 2:4 -

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. (Luk 2:4 NIV).

Even the Christmas carols get in on the action –

"To you, in David's town, this day
Is born of David's line
A Savior, who is Christ the Lord,
And this shall be the sign:

What's so big about David that he plays so heavily in Jesus' birth narrative? Why is it so important that Jesus is a part of David's family? 2 Samuel chapter 7 goes a long way to answering that question. So we're going to dig into it today and figure out why it's so important that Jesus is a descendant of David.

Turn with me to 2 Samuel 7 and if you are using your own Bible, put a big star beside it because this is one of the most important chapters in all of the Bible. 2 Samuel, chapter 7.

Now the last time we saw David, he had been anointed king, and he was doing kingly things, but he was not actually the king. Saul was. And Saul was not too happy about David's success. He just really wanted to get rid of David – but in the end, it was Saul who died, killed in battle with the Philistines. Eventually, the people of Israel came to David and agreed that he should be their king. You can find that in 2 Samuel 5 -

NIV 2 Samuel 5:1 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood (so he meets the qualification of being an Israelite set out in Deuteronomy 17).

2 In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.' "

~~3 When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.~~

So they installed God's anointed king as their king, and King David took the throne over a united Israel – north and south, Israel and Judah – they are all one under him. And he ruled well. He continued his policy of taking action wisely and trusting God entirely and God had given him victory over all of his foes. And while Saul chafed under Samuel's guidance, David actively sought out his own Samuel to keep him accountable to God and his name is Nathan. One day, Nathan and David were making plans and then God weighed in on them and chapter 7 is the account of that conversation.

In essence, you can summarize chapter 7 like this.

David says: "I want to build God a house."

God says: "I don't need a house..."

(God says): "...but I will build YOU a house"

And David says: "Praise God for this promise."

Let's unpack that a bit at a time.

Verse 1 - After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him,

2 he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."

These verses tell us something very important about David's reign. In the past, Israel had always been threatened from every side – they were constantly in flux, constantly having to defend themselves from danger. But now that they were united under one king – a king who relied on YHWH – God has given them rest from all their enemies. And because they are at peace, the military budget has been shifted over to building projects and now king David has a very fancy, very elaborate, very expensive cedar palace to live in.

David though is self-aware enough to realize that there's a real discrepancy between his living quarters and those of the LORD. He's got a beautiful palace, while God, represented by the Ark of the Covenant is stuck living in this dingy old tent – the tabernacle. And so he decides that he's going to build a temple for the LORD, a temple that reflects His majesty and grandeur.

And verse 3, Nathan says to him –

3 Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you."

Now that much is true – the LORD WAS with David, but the LORD wasn't really interested in a house. We know that from verse 4 -

4 That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: 5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?"

6 I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling.

7 Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" (2Sa 7:5-7 NIV).

"I don't need a house."

God is quite adamant. He's never needed a temple before. He certainly doesn't need one now. He has always been on the move, travelling with His people wherever they've gone, and He won't be tied down to a single place like a temple.

Dale Ralph Davis points out a pretty significant implication for us – he writes "Do you see what God is saying about Himself? He is the God who travels with his people in all their topsy-turvy, here-and-there journeys and wanderings. Do His people live in tents? So does He. Are they a pilgrim people on their way to the land of promise? [Yes] So He is the pilgrim God, sharing the rigours of the journey with them" (85). Wherever life takes you, God is there, because He is not tied down to a physical 'house.' He is there, wherever we are, so that He can provide whatever we need in any situation.

So God Himself doesn't need a house, but He does decide to play with that word – house - a little bit.

David wants to build a 'house' – a building, a temple, a roof over God's head, as if He needed that – but now God says 'I don't need a 'house', but I'm going to build YOU a house' – but here God means a dynasty, a family, a royal line.

8 "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel.

9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth.

YHWH begins by reminding David of all He has done for him, how He raised him up from obscurity, given him power over all God's people, and given him peace from all his enemies – and now God says – I am going to bless you further.

Notice that this has everything to do with grace. God is not choosing David because he is impressive. God is not choosing him because his family is impressive. God is choosing to bless David because God is gracious. There's no mention of merit or obedience here; God is simply choosing to pour out blessing on David.

And He continues -

10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning

11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "

This promise that God is making is not just for David, but for all of God's people. God's people are to benefit from God's promise to David. Verse 11 continues

'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 fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name (He's talking specifically about Solomon there), and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men.

15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.' "

This is the promise that God is making to David – the promise that's often called the Davidic Covenant. God is promising David that a descendant of his will always rule the people of God. Even when David is dead and gone, his grandchildren will sit on the throne.

And God will essentially adopt each and every one of David's descendants – as king, they will be sons of God and beneficiaries of God's love and favour. God will be with them. God will also discipline them too, like a good parent would, if they go their own way. But, even if one Davidic king were to forfeit the crown by rejecting God, God will never reject David's line, and an heir of David will rule forever. That's a Davidic covenant.

Dale Ralph Davis puts it like this:

"Death does not annul it (v. 12-13); sin cannot destroy it (v. 14-15) and time will not exhaust it (v. 16)" (92).

God is making an unbreakable, unshakeable promise to keep David's descendants on the throne. Any one king may need correction, but the loyal love of God will remain with David's family FOREVER.

Now that's a great promise, especially to a youngest son whose career prospects top out at head shepherd. God had made him king and God was making his descendants king too. And I'll bet that that would have given David incredible peace of mind. Just remember, at this point, David is only the second king of Israel, and he essentially replaced the first king while the first king was still on the throne, so there's no real precedent for passing power from one king to the next. This really took care of an issue that I'm sure David had been thinking about - succession – and this promise of a royal line for David must have been incredibly satisfying.

But lest we miss the point here, let me point out what this promise is all about. God is making this promise to David to keep his descendants on the throne, but not for David's benefit. God is promising this eternal kingdom for the benefit of God's people.

And that's clear not only from what God says, but how He says it. If you look really closely here, you'll see that God's promise to David actually forms a little chiasm. Remember those? Like one half of an X with the most important point in the middle? God here talks about what He's done for David and what He'll do for David. And sandwiched right there in the middle is what God will do for His people. God's blessings for His people are LITERALLY at the centre of His promise to David. Look at it again little closer at what God plans to do for His people – verses 10 and 11 -

Thru David's eternal kingdom, God says,

10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. "

What does God promise His people through David's eternal line? Peace, security, freedom from oppression. God is promising to give His people rest. As long as there is a Davidic king on the throne, there will be peace and God is promising that that will always be so.

God promises to build David a house and that eternal lineage will mean peace for His people.

Well, how do you suppose David responded to all of that?

With pride? With smugness? With disappointment because God told him not to build the temple?

No. He fell on his face in praise. He poured out his heart in gratitude to God. He humbly received the promises as the gracious gift of God. And if you look close, you'll actually see that David's response directly mirrors what YHWH has just said.

Remember our chiasm - God has just said 'this is what I've done for you, this is what I'll do for Israel, this is what I'll do for you' and David says 'thank You for what You've done for me, thank You for what you've done for Israel, thank You for what You'll do for me.' This is the natural pattern for worship – God acts and we respond in light of it. Verse 18 -

18 Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said: "Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?

19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD?

20 "What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD.

21 For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.

David humbly admits that God has done wonderful things for him, beyond his wildest dreams, WAY beyond what he deserves and he says – thank you!

He continues - verse 22 -

22 "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

23 And who is like your people Israel--the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt?

24 You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, O LORD, have become their God.

David praises God for what He has done for Israel. He chose Israel, again, not because they were impressive but because He is gracious – and now they are God’s chosen people. They are not the king’s subjects, to be fleeced for taxes and drafted for war; they are God’s beloved people. And David again says thank you! And then he continues -

25 "And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised,

26 so that your name will be great forever. [Not MY name, but your name. This is what Israel’s king should do – point people to God] Then men will say, 'The LORD Almighty is God over Israel!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you.

27 "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer.

28 O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.

29 Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, O Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever" (2Sa 7:18-29 NIV).

David concludes his prayer by saying essentially – AMEN. Let it be so. God, You have promised me an eternal kingdom, so that your people will enjoy security and prosperity – make it so. Let your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

David started out desiring to build YHWH a house and he ends up the recipient of God’s grace, praising God for building HIM a house. That’s the Davidic covenant – God’s promise to give His people rest through David’s eternal kingdom. (Put in active form?)

Do you see then why it’s so important that Jesus is a descendant of David?

Do you see then why it’s so significant that the angel Gabriel would say of Jesus:

32 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,

33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end" (Luk 1:32-33 NIV).

Jesus is the ultimate Davidic king, born to rule forever and bring the peace that God had promised through his ancestor David. God promised His people peace and security and rest through David’s family, and Jesus was born in David’s line to fulfill that promise. Jesus gives the rest that God promised through David, and we receive it when we follow Him.

Our king Jesus gives us rest from our enemies, relief from our sin and a sense of security that goes beyond anything this world can offer. And unlike his ancestors, who came and went with every generation, our King Jesus will reign forever, providing eternal rest when we trust in Him.

As we come up on the Christmas season, I want you to keep this promise to David in the back of your mind because it’s a promise for you too. God promised David an eternal Kingdom and our Saviour Jesus inherited that throne. Because He is David’s Son, Jesus offers us the rest that God promised in 2 Samul 7 and we receive it when we follow Him. Let’s pray.

Lord's Supper text

As we shift our attention to the Lord's Supper, I want to pick up a thread that I left hanging in my message and that's the kind of king that Jesus is. History has shown that kings often use their power and authority for their own benefit, but that's not the sort of king that Jesus is. In fact, He let go of His privilege and wealth to die for us and win us back for God.

If you think back, God DID say to David that He would discipline the kings if they went their own way. When they ignored God, when they lead the people away from God – which they often did – God would step in and see that justice was done, and a lot of Davidic kings suffered because of it.

But King Jesus did no wrong, and yet He suffered the worst indignity of all – death on a cross. Why's that?

Although He had no sin of His own, Jesus suffered for OUR sins. It was our rebellion that He paid for on the Cross. As J. D. Greear writes:

Jesus [did] not need to be disciplined with the stripes of men. Instead, He would be bruised for our iniquity, and by His stripes we would be healed.

~~Greear, J. D.. Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.~~

Look at this – the Table – this is the kind of King we have. One who would die for His subjects – a king who died for you and for me. When we go down to Florida, we like to go to the Animal Kingdom resort and they have an Ethiopian proverb written on the wall – 'Great kings have been hearts.' Our king has a big heart – big enough to die to rescue His people. That's the kind of king worth following – and when we do, we receive His rest – the rest God promised through His ancestor, ages ago. Let's pray – and since we've been focused on 2 Samuel 7, I'm going to use David's praise as a model for ours. Let's pray.

O Sovereign LORD who are we that you have brought us this far? We were dead in sin, following our evil desires and ignoring you at every turn. We were by nature children of wrath. But then You Lord, because of your great mercy, You reached in and made us alive with Christ. You made us your children, your beloved family. You gave us Your Son, to die in our place, so that whosoever would believe in Him would have everlasting life.

For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to us, your servants. Thank You.

22 "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

23 And who is like your people the Church—the people that you have saved for yourself – a royal priesthood, a holy nation, set apart for you to proclaim how awesome You are.

25 "And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant David and his house. Do as you promised, 26 so that your name will be great forever. Then people will say, 'The LORD Almighty is God over all things!' Jesus, reign forever on Your throne and move us here at Your Table.

28 O Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servants. Thank You for Your gracious blessings.

(2Sa 7:18-1 NIV).