

Message #22

Kurt Hedlund

Life of David

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## APPRECIATING GOD'S KINGDOM PROGRAM

### 2 SAMUEL 7

#### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

In 1 Corinthians #2 vv. 9 & 10 (PROJECTOR ON--- 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9-10a) the Bible says, **“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’--- these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.”** The Apostle Paul says that we who have come to believe in Jesus can barely imagine the wonderful things that God has prepared for us. But God has revealed something of them to us by the Holy Spirit.

There is both a present and a future aspect to these wonderful things. Ephesians #1 v. 3 tells us about the present aspect of these wonderful things. (EPHESIANS 1:3) The author there writes, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...”** The Apostle Paul goes on to describe these blessings. He explains that every Christian has become an adopted child of God. We have all received forgiveness of sins, knowledge of God’s plan, a heavenly inheritance, and possession of the Holy Spirit. (PROJECTOR OFF)

The future aspect of these wonderful things includes life with God in heaven after death. According to the Book of Revelation it also means ruling with Christ in a coming earthly kingdom. Eventually it means eternal life in what #21 of that book describes as a new heaven and a new earth. The Apostle Paul acknowledges that life in this present world can be difficult, but he assures us that **“the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”** (Romans 8:18)

The present life that we have in this world means for us Christians involvement in God’s kingdom program. Simply defined, God’s kingdom program means “the establishment of God’s rule upon the earth.” This kingdom program involves covenants between God and man. These are agreements, or arrangements, that God has established with us human beings. They involve divine promises and human responsibilities.

In the Garden of Eden God told Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth and rule and subdue it. Their one negative rule was to not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. They blew it, so that original agreement was modified. Now mankind would have to deal with thorns and thistles and difficult work. Women would have to deal with painful childbirth.

In Genesis #12 God picked Abraham and his descendants to be the objects of His special blessing so that they might show the true God to the world. This Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional. God promised that he would make Abraham's name great. He would make of him a great nation which would occupy a specific territory. God would bless their friends and curse their enemies. Through Abraham all the nations would be blessed.

Centuries later God met with Moses and the children of Israel who had fled from slavery in Egypt. At Mt. Sinai He established a covenant with them that became known as the Mosaic Covenant. It was primarily conditional in nature. There were many rules that they were to follow. If they followed these rules they were promised great prosperity as a nation.

Now in #7 of 2 Samuel we come to what is called the Davidic Covenant. In our study of the life of David we have seen that David has finally become king over the entire country of Israel. Jerusalem has become Israel's capital. David in #6 moved the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Now he sets out to build a proper building to house this holy object.

I.

In the first seven verses of 2 Samuel 7 we are confronted with **DAVID AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE SOURCE OF GOD'S COVENANT PROGRAM.** (PROJECTOR ON--- I. DAVID AND THE RECOGNITION...) Verse 1 begins a sentence with these words, **"Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies..."**

We saw earlier that David's palace was built well along into his forty year reign. We will see next week in #8 that there is a description of David's victories over a number of foreign enemies. So chronologically #7 happens after #8. This chapter fits thematically with what happened in #6. For in #6 the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem. To complete the worship center, there needs to be an appropriate building to house it, so it would seem. But it was only later, after foreign wars were finished, when the time and money were available to do something about it.

According to v. 2, **“...the king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.’”** David recognizes an imbalance in the building situation. Hiram of Tyre used the famous cedar trees of Lebanon near to him to assist David in building a palace. The worship center with the Ark of the Covenant seems bare by comparison.

First Chronicles #16 says that the priests and the Levites organized their service for the worship center with the ark sometime after it was brought to Jerusalem. Once there was a time of peace and safety it just seemed appropriate to make a building to house the ark that shows a love for the true God. Pagan countries around Israel had beautiful temples for their gods. Shouldn't YHWH, the true God, have something at least as fitting?

Verse 2 is our first introduction to Nathan. We are told nothing about his background. But he is to be a key advisor for David during his reign, and he will be used of the Lord to keep the king on track.

Verse 3: **“And Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.’”** If you have a prophet around the palace, it makes good sense to run your ideas by him. The plan makes good sense to Nathan. It sounds like a good way to honor God. The motives are clearly good. Centuries later Jesus told a parable about a rich man who reflected upon all his possessions and decided to build bigger barns to house all of his stuff. David is now a rich man, but his focus is not on himself, it is on honoring God. What could be wrong with that?

Verses 4 & 5 tell us, **“But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, ‘Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in?’”** That sounds like a “no,” or at least a “not yet.” Also David is not the one whom God wants to do the job.

According to 1 Chronicles #6 vv.7-9 (2 CHRONICLES 6:7), King Solomon says this about his father: **“Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. (2 CHRONICLES 6:8) But the Lord said to David my father, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. (2 CHRONICLES 6:9) Nevertheless, it is not you who shall build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name.’”**

This is sometimes how God answers our prayers. We are sincere and have good motives. Our view of this situation makes sense. But our timing is not always His. Also, as his true here, we may not be the one who should accomplish the mission at hand. We don't always get a divine explanation for God's "no" or "not yet," or "you are not the one," but somewhere along the line, David does get an explanation.

This is what we are told in 1 Chronicles #22 vv. 7-10 (1 CHRONICLES 22:7), **"David said to Solomon, 'My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the Lord my God. (1 CHRONICLES 22:8) But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth. (1 CHRONICLES 22:9) Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. (1 CHRONICLES 22:10) He shall build a house for my name. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever.'"**

So there was really nothing wrong with David's request. The Lord said that it was good that the concern was on his heart. It was just not according to God's timing, and he was not the one whom the Lord wanted to do it. Just because God says no to our request, or does not answer our prayer according to our timing, does not mean that we have been wrong to ask it or that we have a lack of faith or that we have wrong motives. (PROJECTOR OFF)

There is additional respect shown to David in the Lord's response to Nathan in v. 5 of our text. God calls David "My servant." That term is repeated a number of times in this chapter. It might seem to us that there is nothing special about that kind of a title. But it is actually a title of great honor. There is only one other person in the Old Testament before David who is given that title. That is Moses. David is in distinguished company.

The Lord says in 6 & 7, **"I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges [The exact meaning of the word seems to be uncertain. The reference seems to be to the leaders of the tribes] of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'"** God comes along with His people in a tent. In reality, He is the one who is carrying His people, who live in tents.

This is the kind of God who identifies with His people. In the incarnation the Son of God hangs out with tax collectors and sinners. Yet He is also the God of all creation. He is omnipresent--- present everywhere. He does not really need any kind of dwelling.

In Act #7 vv. 48-50 (ACTS 7:48) Stephen describes God in this way: **“Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by hands, as the prophet says, (ACTS 7:49) ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? (ACTS 7:50) Did not my hand make all these things?’”**

Such is the God to whom we have access through prayer. He does not always respond in the way we would have Him to respond. But He always has the best perspective. (PROJECTOR OFF) He sees the future as well as the present. As we shall see with David, He often has better things in store than we can even imagine. He is in charge. We have to recognize Him as the source of the kingdom program for the world. This program involves covenants with mankind.

II.

In vv. 8-17 we learn about DAVID AND THE PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S COVENANT PROGRAM. (PROJECTOR ON--- II. DAVID AND THE PROPER...) According to v. 8, **“Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel.’”**

The Lord begins His explanation of this covenant deal with a reminder of His sovereign and gracious calling. David has come into his prominent role as a result of God’s initiative. He was a lowly shepherd. He was the youngest son in a family of no special significance in a village of no outward importance. The Lord has likewise brought us into His kingdom as a result of His initiative in our individual lives. It is not because we are deserving or smart or religious.

The Lord continues to speak in the first part of v. 9: **“And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you.”** David has been through some very trying times. Yet God has been present with Him and has brought him through these challenges. It is the Lord who has been responsible for doing in his enemies.

Now come the great promises in this new covenant. In the second part of v. 10 God tells David through Nathan, **“And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.”** This has echoes of the covenant that God made with Abraham. One of the promises to Abraham was that the Lord would make of him a great name. Still today we are talking about David as well as Abraham. Of even greater significance is that Jesus Christ was often referred to as the Son of David.

In the first part of v. 10 comes the second promise: **“And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place...”** This promise was given earlier to Abraham in regard to his descendants. David was seeing part of that promise fulfilled as his kingdom grew in size.

A third promise is contained in the rest of v. 10 and the first part of v. 11: **“...[so that they may] be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies.”** This is the promise of peace and rest from enemies. Like many of the promises which God makes to His people in the Old Testament, there is a certain fulfillment in their day, and there is a complete fulfillment much later. David was famous in his day. His greatest fame, perhaps, came when the Messiah was called the Son of David. David had a certain rest from his enemies, as we shall see next week in #8. But Israel has continued to have enemies throughout its history.

People in much of the Muslim world celebrated Al-Quds Day a little over a week ago. Al-Quds is the Arabic name for Jerusalem. Muslims regard the Temple Mount in Jerusalem as the third holiest site in their religion. On Al-Quds Day the Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei proclaimed that Israel is **“a cancerous tumor”** which **“will undoubtedly be uprooted and destroyed.”** Israel has yet to know the final fulfillment of that promise of rest from all of its enemies. That fulfillment will come in the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

The fourth promise to David comes in the second part of v. 11 through v. 13. The Lord speaks through Nathan to David: **“Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”**

God promises David a house. The irony is that David set out to build the Lord a house. But now the Lord is promising David a house. The house in v. 11 is a dynasty. This house, according to v. 12, will involve a

descendant. This descendant will come to power after David lies down with his fathers. This description of death has a soft tone about it. It is implied, perhaps, that David will have fellowship with his ancestors.

The literal term for “offspring” here is “seed.” As we have already seen with promises made to David, there is both a near term fulfillment and a long term fulfillment. After David dies, Solomon will come into power and will expand the kingdom of Israel beyond what David accomplished. But the seed and the eternal throne will find eventual fulfillment in Christ. In the New Testament Book of Galatians (GALATIANS 3:16) the Apostle Paul writes in #3 v. 16, **“Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring [which includes David]. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is Christ.”** Jesus Christ, on his human side, is a descendant of David.

Verse 13 in our text says that the offspring of David will build a house for his name. This usage of “house” seems to refer to a temple. (PROJECTOR OFF) In the near term fulfillment of that promise Solomon would finally build the temple which David intended to make.

According to vv. 14 & 15, **“I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.”**

Who is in view here? It cannot be Jesus, because He was without sin. Solomon is the near term fulfillment, and probably his descendants later. For the history of Israel’s kings reveals a very mixed bag. Many of these kings will stray away from the Lord and will be subject to God’s discipline. Yet God’s steadfast love, His *chesed*, will not be removed from them. The promises of the Davidic Covenant will continue to pass down, and through, them. This covenant clearly has an unconditional nature. It is not dependent upon the obedience of any one descendant for the promises to be fulfilled.

Verses 16 & 17: **“And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’ In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.”** The promise is that the Davidic line and throne and kingdom will last forever. There is general recognition among Christians that the promise of a dynasty and an eternal throne finds its fulfillment in Christ, who is described in the New Testament as the Son of David. But there are some Christians who argue that the promises made concerning a permanent Jewish territory ruled by a Jewish king no longer apply. Because of Israel’s persistent disobedience, God has turned away

from Israel and these promises find a spiritual fulfillment in the church. There will be no Jewish kingdom upon the earth ruled by a descendant of David.

That interpretation misses the unconditional nature of this covenant. The Lord promises that He will never take away His covenant love from David and His descendants. The possibility of an eternal throne and a permanent Jewish territory and kingdom has often seemed in doubt. Four hundred years after the time of David, Judah was overrun by the Babylonians who took the royal descendants into captivity. Except for a brief time in the second century BC, the land of Israel remained under the control of Gentiles.

Hope was rekindled when Jesus appeared on the scene and claimed to be the Messiah. Matthew and Luke trace His genealogy back to David. But He was killed by His own people. He rose from the dead, but ascended into heaven shortly after that. Thirty years later Israel was overrun and Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple was burned to the ground. For the next two thousand years Israel did not exist as a nation. But against all odds and against much opposition, Israel is back as a nation, and Jerusalem is its capital. A normal, literal interpretation of the Book of Revelation contains the repetition of that promise that there will be an earthly kingdom centered upon Jerusalem over which the Messiah will rule. We can be assured that God always, always keeps His promises.

III.

In vv. 18-29 of 2 Samuel #7 we come to DAVID AND THE APPRECIATION OF GOD'S COVENANT PROGRAM. (PROJECTOR ON--- III. DAVID AND THE APPRECIATION...) The word "covenant" does not appear in this chapter, but it is an accurate description of the promises and arrangement that the Lord makes with David and his descendants. Other Scriptures call this agreement a covenant. For example, in Psalm 89 vv. 3 & 4 (PSALM 89:3) we read, **"You [i.e. God] have said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant (PSALM 89:4): 'I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"**

Now back in our passage notice v. 18: **"Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, 'Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?'"** Apparently David goes in before the ark. (PROJECTOR OFF) This is the only time in the Bible when someone is said to sit before the Lord in prayer. It was done probably with David sitting on his heels and kneeling on the ground.



The key thing to notice here is David's humility. His attitude is not that he is finally getting what he deserves. After all that I have gone through, it is about time that I enjoy prominence and recognition. No, David has a godly perspective. He recognizes that there was nothing auspicious about his background. He was the youngest son in a family of shepherds from a small town of no particular distinction. Yet God chose to bless him and bring him to prominence.

This is the way that the Lord tends to act. He chooses to bless Abraham and his descendants, though the Lord describes them as the least of all the nations. He chooses to bless younger sons like Isaac and Jacob. He picks the shepherd boy David. He chooses the humble Galilean teenagers Joseph and Mary to be the parents of Jesus. He picks us. Our understanding of the grace and the sovereign working of God should prompt us to humility, which is reflected in prayers of thanksgiving.

Verse 19: **"And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord God!"** David understands that the Lord is talking about the distant future, but his understanding of that is necessarily limited.

The last clause of v. 19 is difficult to translate. An Old Testament scholar by the name of Walt Kaiser gives what is perhaps the right sense of it: **"This is the plan and prescription for God's kingdom whereby the whole world will be blessed."**

According to vv. 20-22, **"And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears."** Notice the attributes of God which David recognizes in these verses. The true God is omniscient--- all-knowing; He is transcendent; He is unchangeable; He is faithful to His promises; He is gracious.

The Muslims declare that their God is great--- Allahu Aqbar. But Allah has never humbled Himself to become a human being and live among us. He has never provided a Redeemer to pay the sins of the world and to satisfy the righteous demands of a holy God. The Koran calls upon Muslims to fight those who do not believe in Allah. (Surah 9:29) It also instructs Muslims, **"Do not take the Jews nor the Christians as your friends."** (Surah 5:51) Jesus tells us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. The true God is indeed great.

Our humility and our attitude of thanksgiving arise from an appreciation of what God has done for us. For David, it produced Psalms of praise.

Verses 23 & 24: **“And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O Lord, became their God.”** Here is the recognition of the special place that Israel has in God’s kingdom program and His covenant program. Could the Lord permanently turn away from His people? I don’t think so.

How do we Gentiles relate to Israel and to God’s covenant program? In Romans #11 the Apostle Paul compares Israel and its covenant promises to an olive tree. In vv. 17 & 18 (ROMANS 17-18A) he writes, **“But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches.”** In other words, we Gentile Christians have been grafted in to God’s covenant program. A few verses later Paul adds that **“a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”** (v. 25) So Israel will yet return to a place of prominence in God’s kingdom program. (PROJECTOR OFF)

David concludes his prayer in vv. 25-29: **“And now, O Lord God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. And your name will be magnified forever, saying, ‘The Lord of hosts is God over Israel,’ and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For you, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever.”** David asserts in v. 28 that God’s words are truth. Foundational to our entire belief system is the notion that God’s promises and His claims are true. The Son of David would eventually claim, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by Me.”** (John 14:6)

David in these verses has provided us with a model for effective prayer. He prays on the basis of God’s promises. Lord, you have graciously provided me with tremendous promises. May you bring them to

pass, not so that I will be glorified, but that you may be glorified. So it is that Jesus taught us to pray, **“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** He promised that He would build His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. So Lord, build your church. Use me in whatever small way that you would to promote that kingdom program.

What then is God doing in the world? He is building His kingdom. He is establishing His rule upon the earth. The descendants of Abraham were given a special prominence in that program so that other nations of the world might recognize His working in them. Now through David God is establishing a kingdom in which the descendants of David will rule over His people.

Jesus would eventually be one of those descendants. He would fulfill in His person many of the promises made to David. His death on the cross gave us Gentiles access to some of God’s covenant promises. We are grafted into His kingdom when and if we put our trust in this Jesus. Our responsibility then is to promote that kingdom. Thy kingdom come. As we do that, we are to have an attitude of humility, appreciating what God has done for us.