

Covenant: Promises Made, Part 7 - David

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[0 : 00] 2 Samuel chapter 7. We're going to read right through the chapter. After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, here I am living in a palace of cedar while the ark of God remains in a tent.

Nathan replied to the king, whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it for the Lord is with you. That night the word of the Lord came to Nathan saying, go and tell my servant David, this is what the Lord says, are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?

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. 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?

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.

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 on earth.

[1 : 22] 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 shall not oppress them anymore as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people, Israel.

I will also give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you 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. He is the one who will build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

I will be his father and he shall be my son. When it is wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him as I took it away from Saul whom I removed from before you.

Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

[2 : 38] 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? 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? What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O sovereign Lord. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.

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. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation and 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.

You have established your people Israel as your very own forever and you, O Lord, have become their God. And now, Lord God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house.

Do as you promised so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, The Lord Almighty is God over Israel and the house of your servant David will be established before you.

[4 : 05] The 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.

O sovereign Lord, you are God. Your words are trustworthy and you have promised these good things to your servant. 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.

Amen. And may God add his blessing to the reading of his word. Here we come to David and a covenant that focuses on the king and his kingdom.

We understand a little of the importance of a king within a kingdom. Angus McFadgen, a Scottish actor and director, is about to release a new film telling something of the story of the king Robert the Bruce.

So 13th century Scottish king. It's really interesting. I read an interview with him. He said he wanted the film to premiere in Edinburgh because he believes that when people watch the film Robert the Bruce, it will shape national thinking on issues such as Brexit and feelings about Scottish independence.

[5 : 36] We might well debate the influence that a 700-year-old Scottish king might have on our thinking, but it's certainly true that kings have an important place to play in the life of a nation.

And if it's true that Robert the Bruce might influence our hopes and expectations perhaps for independence, how much more will King David and his family influence national identity and the hopes of Israel when we think about the promises that we just read about here?

So this is God continuing this theme of establishing this covenant with his people. We've noticed the progression if we go back to the beginning, perhaps we think about Abraham.

God established promise of blessing and land and a great name, blessing to the nations of the world through one family. Then we got to Moses and those blessings, life under the rule of God was now extended to a nation.

Well here, now we see that further development where hopes are attached to the king and the kingdom. And that's something we see really clearly as we continue reading our Bibles, the story of Israel becomes the story of Israel's king.

[7 : 01] The rise and the fall of the nation effectively follows the rise and fall of kings and their rise and fall is always in relation to obedience or disobedience to God.

And as you get to the point where their wickedness becomes so bad that they're removed from the land, so we get to the exile, then you read the prophets, you'll discover that their hope for restoration is very much tied up with God sending his king.

And so we're going to see how 2 Samuel 7 connects us to that. And then you think about the time of Jesus and what do we discover as we read the gospels? We find that there, again, are a people who are waiting and who are longing for this promised king to come.

They are hoping for a deliverer. They're hoping that God will have mercy on them and bring them freedom and so they're looking for their king. And one of the sadnesses of the gospels is that the people that were so looking for God's king failed to see Jesus as God's promised Messiah king. He is, as we saw this morning, rejected by many. So our aim this evening is to look at the covenant with David, see the specific, unique sort of elements of that and to see how it points us ultimately to Jesus.

[8 : 25] But the first theme that I want us to think about is one that we've seen in all of the covenants and it's this, what O.P. Robertson calls the Emmanuel principle. One of the names of Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us.

And as we look at God's words to David, we see clearly both that God is with and has been with Israel and also that he has been and will be with David, the king.

So first of all, what does he say about being with Israel? Look again at verse 6 and 7. He says there, I've 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 wherever I have moved with all the Israelites. So here is a God who is near to his people and that's demonstrated in the fact that God condescends to live in a tent.

He says, I have always traveled with my traveling people. That's made clear when you look at how the people of Israel were to camp. God's tent was right in the middle and then the 12 tribes camped all around.

[9 : 31] But God was with his people as they wandered. And that's a great act of humility on God's part.

We were camping this weekend. If you've ever been camping, you'll know it's not the most grand of surroundings. It's a fun thing to do. But you wouldn't say camping is something that's fit for a king. And when we think about our God who lives in the glory of heaven, it's a great act of humility that he would choose to identify with his people by dwelling with them in this tent.

So God has been with Israel but God has also, he makes clear, been with David from the beginning. Look at verse 8 and 9 in particular. 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.

So when he was just that young shepherd boy forgotten by his father, God was with him. It led him on that journey till he eventually became ruler. I have been with you wherever you have gone and I've cut off all your enemies from before you.

[10 : 40] So as king, God has been with him. And we see this in the story of 2 Samuel. 2 Samuel chapter 2, by this point Saul has died.

David is established as king over Judah. Then we get to chapter 5 and then he's established king over the whole nation of Israel. In chapter 5 we also see him conquering Jerusalem, making that the central place for both rule and worship.

We see him conquering the Philistines with God's help. Then in chapter 6, an important moment, God's ark, God's throne as it were, is brought to Jerusalem.

So David the king rules and the ark is also brought to Jerusalem until we get to the start of chapter 7 and we see that the Lord has established peace and rest in the kingdom.

So all of these moments, God is saying, I have been with you and he will continue to be with David.

Verse 9, I will make your name great like the names of the greatest men of the earth.

[11 : 50] Remember that promise to Abraham? Here it is now being extended to David. And I will provide a place for my people and will plant them so they have a home of their own.

There's the promise made to Abraham and to Moses, to Israel, that he would give them the promised land being reestablished here. So all of these ways God is showing that he is with his people, he is with his king for his own purpose.

God's purpose is that his kingdom will come. God's purpose is that through David's family, through the nation of Israel, light will come to the world.

And so here is this great covenant promise being made to David, it's still a relatively new king, and being made to the nation once again to say, I am with you.

And of course we see how that connects to Jesus, the one who is called Emmanuel, the God who is with us. And it's important for us as God's people to see how this promise connects to us today.

[13 : 02] Remember Jesus said, I am with you always to the very end of the age. God is always with his people. He's with us in his son Jesus.

He's with us by his spirit who comes to take up residence in the hearts of those who trust in Jesus. God is with us in his word, the Bible. Whenever we read the Bible, we are encountering the living God.

He is with us in the sacraments. When we share the Lord's Supper, Jesus is the host of his supper, saying to us, I am here with you in order to give you strength for your journey of faith.

Now to say that God is with us is an unbreakable promise, but it does not equal, God is with us equals life will always go well for us.

And we understand that from the story of David. David was promised that he would be God's chosen king, the king after God's own heart, but yet he experienced opposition.

[14 : 14] Saul wanted him killed. He had to spend a lot of time running for his life. He experienced opposition, rejection from among his own countrymen at different times.

We read the Psalms, we discover his story, we discover his laments, we discover his struggles, but we also discover he is a man who knows and has built his life on this reality.

God is a rock, God is a refuge, God is with me and working his purposes out. And just as it was with David, so it is for us as a church now, God is with us.

Jesus is described in the Bible as the bridegroom of his church. And Jesus, the bridegroom, has made promises to his church.

In a couple of weeks, Cailin is a bridegroom, will stand here and make promises to Sarah, promising to be with and for her, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in

health.

[15:16] God does that in Jesus for us, his church. And nothing will ever separate us from that love, not even death itself.

And the Lord's Supper reminds us of God's commitment to us, to be with us and to be for us. And so one of the reasons we gather around the Lord's table is that we might find strength to be encouraged to remember the Lord who is with us.

So that theme, the Emmanuel principle, comes through in this covenant as it has done with all the others. But there's unique features here. A second theme that comes out strongly is that of house building.

So at the beginning of the chapter, we were told here is a nation at peace. God has been kind to Israel, been kind to David, given rest from their enemies. David lives in a very grand palace and he has a wish, he has a desire, he wants to build God a temple.

So he reports to Nathan that plan. But then the Lord speaks to Nathan in verse 5. This is what the Lord says, Are you, David, the one to build me a house to dwell in?

[16:34] The initiative doesn't come from David. A man is not the one who's going to determine where and how God will live. But then God uses this idea of house building and with a really nice play on words establishes covenant commitment to David and his family.

Saying to David, Well, you want to build me a physical house? You want to build me a temple? I, the Lord God, am going to build you, David, a house. Not a physical location, but a family dynasty. Look at verse 11, second part of verse 11. The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you.

And there, when we read house, we think royal dynasty. You know, think of our queen. Our queen comes from the house of Windsor. That's been the royal dynasty since 1917.

So there's this rich covenant promise that God is going to take the initiative in order to establish David and his family on the throne forever.

[17:46] So verse 12, when your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you and I will establish his kingdom. As Solomon, Solomon would sit on the throne and God would establish David's kingdom through Solomon.

Verse 13, he is the one who will build a house for my name. So Solomon will build the temple, will build God's house according to God's timing, God's plan, but God will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

So this is one of those points in the Bible where we see that God is speaking about Solomon but not just about Solomon because as we know Solomon is not still reigning forever.

This is speaking about a son still to come. This isn't talking about any of Israel's kings that we read about in the Old Testament. You think about verse 16, your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me, your throne shall be established forever.

Now David's dynasty lasted for 400 years but eventually exile came, that came to an end. This isn't speaking of an Old Testament reality, only with the coming of Jesus is this rule established, only with Jesus is this king who lasts and reigns forever.

[19:09] Now but what God is doing here, he is connecting these two house building projects in David's future son. There is one who will build the temple, one who will reign for God and Solomon is the beginning of that promise being kept but he's just, to use the image of Hebrews, he's just the shadow, he's not the reality.

Solomon's temple, Solomon's rule both came and fell, great though they were but not Jesus. Jesus' reign is eternal.

Jesus is God's true temple, Jesus is the meeting place with God. If we want to know God, if we want to worship God, we need to do that through Jesus, his son and Jesus is also this true king who comes in the line of David the one whose rule is eternal.

When we think about how to apply this for ourselves, perhaps one way that we can think about this is to pray that God would build our houses and our families, not that we would be great kings and mighty in human terms, but that we would become houses and families marked by faith.

I remember years ago reading of Jonathan Edwards, the Puritan preacher who every day prayed for six generations into the future for his family, that they would be men and women of faith who would follow God, who would love Jesus.

[20 : 49] Great prayer to pray that God would build our families on faith and to work for that, that if we are parents, that we would be reading the Bible with our children, that we'd be praying with and for them, we'd be teaching them songs full of God's truth, that as a church we'd be praying for our covenant children, praying that each one of them would come to faith, that God would build houses and families marked by true faith in the Lord Jesus.

And also as we recognize that God is building the kingdom of Jesus and it's going to be global, we can pray that we would be part of that. As Ian was praying in his prayer, there are many ways in which we can be part of that.

We can pray for the missionaries that we know around the world. We can pray for church plants around Scotland. But we can also be speaking to our family, to our neighbors about Jesus in the way that we live in our workplace, in our universities, our schools, that we would want to love like Jesus, that we'd welcome people the way Jesus did, to pray that God's kingdom would come, that others would come to submit to the good and loving rule of King Jesus.

He's building his kingdom and we have the privilege as the people of God to play our part in that. God's kingdom.

The third theme that we can think about that's unique in this covenant is the idea of the long life of the king. Long live the king.

[22 : 32] when I was younger, I used to enjoy watching things like the Olympics or major sporting events.

It was always one of those interesting things to compare and contrast the different national anthems. I don't know if people have favorite anthems.

I quite like the rousing, the French one is probably up there. There's an amazing variety when you listen to national anthems.

I don't know what you think of our British anthem. It's short and it's to the point. But thinking about this theme, thinking about covenant, thinking about king and kingdom, our national anthem speaks to some of that.

So we sing long live our noble queen or king. We sing God save our queen or king. We think about victory and glory and long reign.

[23 : 34] And you know all of those things Israel would recognize and pray for their king because they understood in a much greater way than it was even for Britain under the empire as it went for the king of Israel so it would go for the people of Israel.

And one of the things that's significant for Israel, ultimately becomes significant for us is that when David established his rule in Jerusalem so God too had his rule established in Jerusalem with the coming of the ark.

There was this coming together of God's rule and the king's rule. And there is this understanding here within the covenant that David's son would also be God's son, ruling for God eternally.

See verse 14. I will be his father and he shall be my son. And so the great hope of the covenant with David is the promise of a king who is God's son who will reign for God forever.

ever. And that's something that goes beyond any of even the great kings of the Old Testament. And when we think about the promise here we can understand why Israel placed so much hope on a restored king which we see at the time of Jesus.

[25 : 11] In the story of Israel's kings we recognize that this enduring rule was never fulfilled because there was never complete obedience.

Notice within this covenant too there is the importance of obedience. In verse 14 I will be his father and he shall be my son. When he does wrong I will punish him with the rod of men with floggings inflicted by men.

So in every covenant there is always this obligation for obedience and the kings were no different. God is saying kings could and would be disciplined. They were not free to ignore God and when you read the story of the kings of Israel and Judah what you see is that pattern of if the kings were disobedient to God then under the covenant the nation would suffer.

But then when there was good kings the nation would prosper under God because of his covenant commitment. For Israel ultimately David's dynasty was ended.

You get to the bad kings you get to the end of kingship and you understand the people are left longing for a better king for a greater king one who would rule for God.

[26 : 39] But even as David's family would be disobedient and would fail there is a promise that David's family line would not be abandoned.

See verse 15 but my love will never be taken away from him as I took it away from Saul. So there is a promise of enduring covenant faithfulness despite the faithlessness of well we can begin with Solomon.

So for example in 1 Kings chapter 11 verses 11 to 13 the Lord is angry with Solomon because his heart is turned away from the Lord and he's following other gods and the Lord said to Solomon since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant which I commanded you I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

So he's been judged for covenant unfaithfulness and disobedience nevertheless for the sake of David your father I will not do it during your lifetime I will tear it out of the hand of your son yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.

The kings are unfaithful yet God remains faithful to his covenant promise. As you look through the Old Testament Israel's kings even the best of them fail but the promise of God remains and that's why after the exile the hopes of the prophets was very much focused on this true king who would come this Messiah king perhaps the most obvious place that we can think about that is in Isaiah 9 words very familiar because it's so important to the story of Christmas chapter 9 verse 6 for to us a child is born to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders and he will be called wonderful counselor mighty God everlasting father prince of peace of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end he will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever

[29 : 08] Isaiah and the prophets were looking for no ordinary king they were looking for God's Messiah king and he came as Jesus Jesus is David's greater son the Bible says Jesus is God's promise kept in the sending of his son as the eternal king Jesus is the only king who has ever perfectly kept all those covenant obligations to rule for God concerned for the glory of God his father and then Jesus for his people dies to redeem and rescue us though we deserve covenant curses Jesus our king he takes the covenant curse for us so that we might enjoy covenant blessing and then he rises and ascends to rule in the glory of heaven where he now sits at the father's right hand and he will return one day to establish God's perfect rule and reign in the new heavens and the new earth until that time we are called to trust and we are called to obey but then as God's people we will live in

God's place under God's good rule knowing his blessing and joy forever with Jesus as our true and our great king now how does this connect to the Lord's Supper in a few moments God's people will share the Lord's Supper what are we doing and saying together at the Lord's table well at one level we are confessing Jesus you are my king we are confessing our trust in Jesus we are remembering with gratitude with thankfulness that Jesus has defeated our great enemies of Satan and sin and death for us at the cross we are remembering with thankfulness that he's brought us into his kingdom that he has established the new covenant in his body and his blood so that we might be part of

God's kingdom so the Lord's Supper is for everyone who confesses Jesus as Lord and king but we're also confessing Jesus you're the king that I need as we come to the Lord's table we don't come with strength but rather we acknowledge that battle that's going on in our hearts the war that goes on where we know the good things that we want to do but we struggle to do them because there is that sin that is present within us we confess our own weakness the fact that we cannot save ourselves that by ourselves we don't have the resources to keep going in this journey of faith and so we come to our king to provide for us we confess with humility that our faith rests absolutely ultimately on Jesus' work Jesus' cross work and not ours and we come because king Jesus invites us to this faith he invites us to his table to come he meets with us in order to give us strength to feed us by faith and he continues to meet with us until that day when we meet with him when we enjoy that feast at the wedding feast of the lamb in glory it reminds us of what Jesus has done for us it reminds us of the promise that's laid up for us let it all fulfill because Jesus comes as a king to establish his kingdom common to come