

16. Great David's Greater Son

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[0 : 00] And our Bible reading this morning is in 2 Samuel chapter 7, and Bob is continuing his series on David, the king.

And here we come to one of the great high points of the scriptures of the Old Testament. We find it on page 259 in our church Bibles, 2 Samuel chapter 7.

As I say, this is one of the great chapters of the Bible.

Now when the king, that is David, lived in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, But see now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.

And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you. 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 live in?

[1 : 12] 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 of Israel whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, Why have you not built me a house of cedar?

Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David, Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel.

And I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you.

And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and 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. 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.

[2 : 31] He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 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.

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.

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? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord.

You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come. And this is instruction for mankind, O Lord God. And what more can David say to you?

[3 : 40] 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.

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 establish for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O Lord, became their God. And now, O Lord, confirm forever the word that you have spoken, conserving your servant and you're concerning your 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 your house.

Therefore, your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. And now, O Lord, you are God and your words are true and you have promised this good thing to your servant.

[5 : 15] Now, therefore, may it please you to bless the house of your servant so that it may continue forever before you. And you, O Lord, God, have spoken. With you, your blessings, shall the house of your servant be blessed forever.

Amen. And may God bless to us this, his word. Now, if we could have our Bibles open, please, at page 259, 2 Samuel 7, and we'll ask the Lord for his help as we pray together.

God, our Father, as we turn from the praising of your name to the preaching of your word, Lord, we pray indeed that this great chapter, this magnificent piece of prophecy spoken so long ago, will come to us now, speaking to us in our day, speaking beyond our day, and leading us to the living word, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen. Amen. And so we're returning today to our series on David, which I've called David flawed, but faithful.

One of my favorite possessions is an hourglass, a wooden hourglass, which I received many years ago as a present, occupies a prominent position in our living room, and it's of great value, including great sentimental value to me.

[6 : 59] This passage we've read is an hourglass passage. Everything before it, the great story of scripture, beginning, indeed, long before David was called, beginning from creation itself, and narrowing down into the story of David himself, and then flowing beyond to the glorious kingdom of great David's greater son, which we have sung about.

So this is an hourglass passage, hugely important passage, where so many things in scripture come together, so many things are gathered up together, and so many things foreshadowed.

But just a word about the place of the story. Chapter 7, verse 1, When the king lived in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies.

Now, if you read on to chapters 8 to 10, you'll discover that these chapters, the next ones we'll look at in a few weeks' time, are in fact all devoted to David battling with the surrounding enemies.

But as we've noticed in Kings and Samuel, the stories are not always arranged strictly in chronological order. Sometimes they're arranged in a kind of topical order, so that a theme can be developed.

[8 : 21] Now, the previous chapter, chapter 6, David had brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and therefore, before we go on to the next stage of the active life of David, we're being told more about the Ark, the Ark of the Covenant.

Let me remind you what the Ark of the Covenant was. The Ark was a golden box, which the Lord had commanded Moses to be built, to be the very heart of the ancient tabernacle, the ancient tent, and to be the symbol of his presence.

It contained three things. The tablets of the law. In other words, it was the place of the Word of God, a place where God would be met in his Word.

Second thing it contained was a pot of manna, reminding the people of the bread of heaven, the way that God had led them through the desert. And the third thing it contained was the rod, the staff of Aaron, which had miraculously budded.

In other words, the God who can bring life from death. The God we meet in his Word. The God who gives us bread from heaven, and the God who brings life out of death.

[9 : 30] I think this is why chapter 7 follows chapter 6. Well, obviously, chapter 7 follows chapter 6. But why the subject of chapter 7 follows chapter 6, before we have further accounts of David's wars.

And it is a story of God's initiative. This story is sometimes called the Davidic Covenant, one of the great covenants of Scripture. Remember, covenant is one of the great truths of Scripture, perhaps the great truth.

When God created heaven and earth, when he created the world, he committed himself in love, not only to continuing that project, but to completing it in the new heaven and the new earth.

Now, the word covenant isn't actually used in the chapter, although it is used in 2 Samuel 23, when David reminisces about this chapter and many other things.

And it's used in Psalm 89, which is a kind of commentary on this chapter, and indeed contains many of the words of the chapter. Let's not get too tied up with this.

[10:39] This is about the covenant God. Not specifically about the covenant, but about the covenant God. The promiser and the house builder.

So let's not focus so much attention on the promise. And no doubt in a few minutes, when I give my first heading, you'll be saying I'm contradicting myself. I'm not. Let's focus on the promiser.

Let's focus on the one whose initiative this is. The one who makes the promise. Now, promises are valuable if they're made by certain people.

Certain people are always making promises and never keeping them, and you know not to trust them. But often promises are made sincerely, with every intention of carrying them out.

And, of course, circumstances beyond our control prevent that happening. With God, there are never any circumstances beyond his control.

[11:38] What he promises, he will carry out. We'll see this as we come to the end of the chapter, because a promise of God is already the beginning of God's activity.

You see, what God is saying to David is, David, in spite of everything, this is going to happen.

It may look unlike it. It may look as if many things, many circumstances, many people are conspiring to prevent it. What he's saying is, Saul's activities, Saul's hostility, Saul's attempt to destroy you and to destroy the promise, they just haven't worked.

And it's not going to work today either. The enemies of the gospel are not going to prevent the gospel being established. They're not going to prevent the kingdom of God being built, the temple of God being built.

So that in mind then, let's look at the chapter in the two obvious parts. Verses 1 to 17, we have a sure promise. Better, perhaps, after what I've said, a sure promiser.

[12:48] And then in verses 18 to 29, a sincere prayer. A sure promise and a sincere prayer. And we begin in verses 1 to 3 with a theme which is prominent in 1 and 2 Samuel, indeed on into Kings, the theme that the Lord's servants don't always get it right.

It seems so obvious to the king and to the prophet that the Lord needs a plush and luxurious house. Verse 2, the king said to Nathan the prophet, But see now, I dwell in the house of Cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.

And Nathan said to the king, Do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you. Neither pray here, neither ask for guidance. This all seems so obvious.

It seems the right thing to do. I want you to notice something else, though. There is no rebuke here, as there is in other places, and we'll see that in future weeks as well.

There is no rebuke here, because David's motive was good. In 1 Kings 8, and in 2 Chronicles 7, Solomon says this, in his prayer, The Lord said to David, My father, When it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart.

[14:20] Most of you have read the Narnia stories. Perhaps not so many have read the science fiction stories of C.S. Lewis, Heral Andra out of the Silent Planet, and so on, where Lewis conjures up the realm of deep heaven, ruled over by Mal-el-Dil, which is his name for God.

And one character there doesn't quite get it right. This is what's said to him. He is depressed, this character, because he feels he's let Mal-el-Dil down.

For it is the courtesy of deep heaven that when we mean well, he takes us to have meant better than we did.

Isn't that wonderful? This is the courtesy of deep heaven that when we mean well, he takes us to have meant better than we did. Take courage, brothers and sisters. God's servants don't always get it right, which is very encouraging.

It also reminds us not to be conceited, not to make gurus out of God's servants, not to involve in the kind of celebrity and adulation which has become so much part of evangelicalism as of everywhere else, exacerbated, of course, by the blog sphere and all the rest of it.

[15:42] No, this tells us that the kingdom is only safe in the Lord's hands, but that it is safe in the Lord's hands. That is the point. You see, essentially what the Lord is saying here is, David, you're not going to build me a house, I'm going to build you a house.

That's the point, surely, of this chapter. And the chapter plays on the different meanings of the word house. David wanted to build a house in the sense of a temple, an edifice, a building.

The Lord is going to build a house in the sense of people, first of all, David's descendants, but beyond David's descendants. And that means right from the beginning, the house is living stones. Peter talks about the living stones in the temple. Now, it's very important that the temple was built. Verse 13, He shall build, Solomon shall build a house for my name, and I will establish his kingdom forever.

The house is the visible symbol of God's presence among his people. That's why after the exile, Haggai insists, get up and build the house.

[17:01] If you don't build the house, you're basically saying, we don't care whether the Lord is among you or not. And until Jesus turns his back on the temple, until he condemns the temple, the temple remains the place where God is seen.

But the real emphasis, right from the beginning, is not on the building, which should be thrown down, and not one stone left on another, but on the human descendants who would sit on the throne.

David's sons would sit on his throne for 400 years. That, of course, is the first meaning of the verses. And 400 years is an awful long time for a dynasty to reign.

If you look at the dynasties, contemporary dynasties in the ancient world, very few of them lasted anything like that time. 70, 80 years was a reasonable length for a dynasty. But clearly, it's going far beyond that.

This isn't ancient history. This is taking us to Luke 1, verse 32. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

[18:12] Who are the house of Jacob? Not just the ethnic descendants of Jacob, you and I, the Jacobs, the Twisters, the Sinners, the Cheeks, whom he's made into Israel, the people for his name.

So right from the beginning, the house is living stones, not just a building. And the other thing, another thing to notice, David's project is rejected, rejected, but David himself is not rejected. That's surely a very important point. He's taken into the Lord's confidence. Verse 4, that same night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan, go and tell my servant David.

My servant David is a hugely important phrase. God doesn't simply call everybody his servants in that sense. In the Old Testament, two particular individuals, more often than anybody else, are called his servants.

These are Moses and David. Both reminding David, that it doesn't depend on him, but also of his privileged status, his importance to the Lord.

[19:22] Verse 14, I will be to my father, he shall be to me a son, and so on. And right at the beginning, the Lord is going to deal with every possible obstacle for this project to be completed.

I will give you rest, verse 11, from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you, the Lord will make you a house.

Remember the psalm, unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. But of course, the mirror image is that, if the Lord builds the house, then that house will stand, that house will be established.

And notice, I notice in these verses, what this promise involves. First of all, death cannot destroy this. Verse 12, when your days are fulfilled, and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

The grim enemy, which in this world, gets us all in the end. The grim frontier post, which draws up all our hopes, all our aspirations.

[20:36] A grim ogre, the last enemy. Even that, cannot prevent the fulfillment, of God's purpose. And the language is very careful.

I will raise up your offspring, after you. Now the immediate offspring, of course, is Solomon, who is going to be, the temple builder. But it doesn't just mean Solomon, it means all those after him. All those who are going to come, who are going to be part, of that temple. As I say, Peter and others, pick up this theme, of the temple, the building, of God, which is never going to be destroyed. Death cannot destroy it. But then again, in verses 14 and 15, sin and failure, cannot spoil it. I will be to him a father, he shall be to me a son.

When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him, with the rod of men, and with the stripes, of the sons of men. But my steadfast love, eseth, the great covenant word, the special love God has, for the people of the covenant, I will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul.

[21 : 50] See, just as human goodness, and human ingenuity, cannot bring it about, so human weakness, and sinfulness, cannot bring it down.

A few weeks time, we're going to be looking at that, these dreadful chapters, later on, 2 Samuel 11 and 12, the Bathsheba Uriah episode, that does not destroy, the kingdom.

That's important. Notice of course, it's not, there is discipline, I will discipline him, with the rod of men, with the stripes, of the sons of men, and we'll see how that develops, in David's history.

Sin will meet with discipline, sin will meet with judgment, but sin cannot destroy, steadfast love. And this is where, believing in grace, is so important.

This is a kingdom, of grace. Unless we believe in grace, we're all finished, after all, aren't we?

Unless we believe in grace, none of us, are going to make it. Unless we believe in grace, we might as well, give up now.

[22 : 58] You see, sin can bring disaster, on the current resident, but it cannot destroy, the house.

And when we, and when you read the stories, it goes on, through kings, there are some miserable, and appalling individuals, not least Manasseh, and Ahaz, the, the, and then of course, there are the great kings, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

And when Hezekiah, comes to the throne, people with great excitement, see the great days of David, being replayed again. It's very interesting.

It's perhaps the only verse, that most people know, from the book of Lamentations. Lamentations, the time of exile, the time of judgment. It's that book, that contains these words, the steadfast love of the Lord, never ceases.

His promises, never come to an end. Never. That's what the book says. So death cannot destroy it, sin and failure, cannot spoil it, and it will never simply, wear out.

God will not simply, get tired of it. Verse 16, your house, and your kingdom, shall be made sure forever. And notice the words, before me.

[24 : 11] That's the important thing. The Lord is committed, to this. How is this, how is this going to happen? After all, let's say, read the story, there is the exile.

Never again, is there a Davidic king, on the throne, in Jerusalem. Never again, is there, is the throne of David, in the city of Jerusalem.

When you come to Ezra, Haggai, Nehemiah, and so on, the place is ruled, by governors. How is this kingdom, going to increase? And, you'll look it up later, interesting, in Romans chapter 15, verse 12, listen to these words, the descendant, of Jesse, will come.

He who arises, to rule the Gentiles, in him, will the Gentiles fall. So you see how the kingdom, every time, someone comes, and crowns Jesus, every one time, someone becomes a member, of that kingdom, that kingdom increases, soul by soul, and silently, its shining bones, increase.

And then beyond that, to the day, when he will reign, we find, in the, the book of Revelation, the throne of David, the lion, of the tribe, of Judah, the descendant, of David, has conquered.

[25 : 37] And because of that, the kingdom, is coming, the kingdom, will come, and the kingdom, will reign, over the whole earth. So that's the first thing, the sure promise.

And secondly, the sincere prayer, verses 18 to 29. The response, of David. Then David went in, and sat, before the Lord.

Probably the temporary, structure, where the ark, was resting, at that time. Now this is both, a specific prayer, of David, in this unique situation.

I've said over, and over again, we are not David. We don't have the place, in salvation history, that he has. Nevertheless, it's a good model, of prayer. So often, our prayers, are stale, and trite, because we rush, immediately, into shopping list, mode.

We begin with our, concerns, rather than, with the Lord. So let's look at, one or two things, in this, in this prayer. Three particular things. First of all, he begins, by praising, God's grace.

[26 : 45] That's how David, that's how David, begins his prayer. Who am I? Verse 18, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me, so far? Not now, Lord, I'm going to do, something for you.

It's going to be, magnificent. But Lord, you are so great, a God. How can you, possibly care, for me? And that needs, to be a feature, of our praying.

Lord, you're so great, you're so wonderful. How can you, possibly care, for me? And you have brought me, thus far, that you have brought me, thus far.

Thus far, meaning all the disappointments, the hardships, the escapes. Grace has brought us safe, thus far. And grace will see us home.

But there's also, future grace. Not just present, and past grace. There is, future grace. I want you to look, particularly, verse 19.

[27 : 46] One of the things, about these stories, not just the general, sweep of the story, but little details. He says, you have spoken also, of your servant's house, for a great while to come.

And this, is instruction, for mankind. This is Torah, the words of Moses, if you like. You see what David, is saying, what's happening, to me now?

What's happening, to my house? What's happening, at this moment, is significant, for the whole of humanity, and for the future, of the world. When God created, the heavens and the earth, when he gave, the first revelation, to Moses, and as he continued, that revelation, through the prophets, through the wisdom writers, through the poets, through the historians, and then, when the word made flesh, came and the apostles, recorded this.

This is instruction, for mankind. This isn't an old, piece of ancient history. This is what history, is about. That's what he's saying. History is about, the building, of the kingdom, of God.

Your kingdom, come. Your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. That's what he's saying, that's what history, is about. The second thing, about the prayer, is it's rooted in scripture, verses 23, to 27.

[29 : 06] As David, reflects, on the joy, on the privilege, of being a member, of the covenant people. He uses, the rich language, of Exodus, and Deuteronomy.

He's drawing, from the deep wells, of scripture. This is, verses 23. Who is like, your people Israel? The one nation, on earth, whom God, went to redeem.

Notice this phrase, went to redeem. A deliberate, and specific, initiative, of God. To be your people, forever. And the sense, of continuity, the word established, repeated, several times.

The sense, of the richness, of this prayer, because it draws, from scripture. I don't know, about you, but I'm continually, appalled, at the sheer, poverty, the banality, the sheer, lack of imagination, in the words, I use, when I pray, to God.

And one of the reasons, for that, is because I don't draw, often enough, on the deep wells, of scripture, on the great hymns, the great prayers, of the universal church, across the world, and throughout the ages.

[30 : 23] Sometimes, we become so stereotyped, in our praying, and in our thinking, the sheer poverty, as I say, so often, of imagination, and the sheer, lack, of being moved, by these great truths.

In verse 24, down to verse 24, you, O Lord, became their God. Echo, echo of Exodus 6, I will take you, for my people, and be your God.

The heart, of the prayer, as the heart, of the promise, is the Lord. And that is why, the kingdom, is going to come. And that is why, its enemies, cannot destroy it.

One time, Martin Luther, wanted to go to Augsburg, and his wife said, you can't possibly, go to Augsburg, because in Augsburg, Satan, is seated.

And Luther replied, and in Augsburg, Jesus reigns, and therefore, I'll go. Now, that's the thing, that's the thing, we're saying, when we're saying, the kingdom of God, is coming, and will come.

[31 : 32] That he reigns, he reigns in Augsburg. Perhaps he even reigns, in the Presbytery of Glasgow, but he reigns. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, whatever the problem, Jesus reigns.

Not just he shall reign, but he reigns now. And the third thing, about the prayer, in verses 27 to 29, the prayer makes God's promises, real and personal.

Now, David is not simply repeating the words, the Lord has spoken to him, in the promise. Rather, he is making these promises, part of his own response.

He turns the promises, into prayers. If you like, look at verse 20. You, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation, to your servant, saying, I will build you a house.

You've said that, Lord, and now I'm going to pray it. I'm going to pray your words, after you. This is not, this is not like that, appalling commercial, a few years ago, Lord, please give me a Mercedes Benz, saying, Lord, you have promised me, a kingdom.

[32 : 42] Lord, because of that, I dare to believe, that you will give me, a kingdom. He grasps, by faith, and imagination.

True faith, always involves imagination. I don't mean, unbridled imagination, where you simply, empty your mind. Rather, I'm talking about, the kind of imagination, as we dwell, on the great truths, of scripture, and make them, our own.

David, dares to pray. He's not posturing. This is, what the old hymn says, standing on the promises, that cannot fail, when the howling storms, of doubt, and fear, assail.

Do what you have promised, he's saying. Now, therefore, verse 29, may it please you, to bless the house, of your servant, that it may continue, forever before you.

Lord, you've promised this. Will you, by your grace, by your spirit, make it a living reality, in my life? For you, O Lord God, have spoken.

[33 : 47] And we, and therefore, although this is specific, to David's prayer, we can still pray it. We can still pray it, because we know, that the kingdom, will come. Jesus, will reign, where the son, does his successive journeys, run.

And that's what we're going to sing, in a moment, for every tribe, and nation, you are calling, people home. That's the work, we're engaged in here. That's the work, which God, has called us to, and these are the promises, he have given.

Promises, of God, and the prayers, of his people. That's what covenant, is about. Amen. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.