



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Life of David: Sermon #20

2 Samuel 7:1-11

“The Davidic Covenant – I”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Returning to 2 Samuel chapter 7 and reading for our Scripture reading verse 1 through verse 11. We have, as most of you know, been looking at the life of David and seeking to emphasize some of the themes that are found in this section of the word of God. And this chapter is one of the really important chapters in the Old Testament because it records the promise of the Davidic Covenant and the making of such a covenant with David. And so because it is so important and extremely important for the rest of the Bible, I'm going to take a few more times on 2 Samuel chapter 7.

And so we will look today at something of an introduction to the covenant itself and then next week, we will look at the covenant as it is found here. And then we'll also take at least one study in which we trace the significance of the covenant on beyond David's day down to the present time and on into the future. And I may take two times for that and we'll close the short series within the larger series with a treatment of David's prayer with which this chapter closes. So we'll be talking about the Davidic Covenant for a few Sundays, the Lord willing.

But let's look now at verse 1 through verse 11. And remember the context, David has now become the king of Israel of the Twelve Tribes. His capital has been moved to

Jerusalem itself and he has been so concerned with the bringing of the Ark up that he has now finally brought the Ark to a small tabernacle, which he had constructed for the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of the presence of God and extremely important for the children of Israel in the Old Testament times. And so now, in chapter 7, we move on in the account. And in verse 1 we read.

“Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.’ Then Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.’ But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, ‘Go and tell My servant David, Thus says the Lord, would you build a house for Me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ Now, therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.”

I’d like to make just one interjection here. The term that is used for ruler here is the Hebrew term, *nagiyd*, which means, a prince, rather than a ruler, a king. Now, that is somewhat important, and I’ll make reference to the importance of it later on but “to be prince over My people over Israel” would be accurate rendering.

“And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.”

And let me interject one other thing, you know, when men sit around a table, and this goes all the way back to individuals like Martin Luther, who translated the Latin Bible into the German of his day, one must make decisions in rendering an ancient text. And just like in English, if you read English a whole lot, you know there are statements that are made that can be taken in more than one way. And so, consequently, it's possible to render or translate a particular phrase or clause or sentence in a language often in different ways, depending upon one's understanding of the context. But then, occasionally, there are grammatical and syntactical problems. That is, an individual may or may not understand, or there may be some unusual expressions that even grammarians disagree over. Now, we have just such a case in verse 9, in the clause “and have made you a great name.”

It is possible to render that in the future and translate it instead of “and have made you a great name” to “and will make you a great name.” I am not absolutely certain that “will make” is correct. But there are grammatical reasons for thinking so. And the context is certainly in harmony with it, although the context would be in harmony with the other rendering, too. So we'll take it “and will make you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.”

“Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies.

And then something of a climactic statement which we'll discuss in the message.

“Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, on this beautiful day, we approach Thee through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the access that we have through his name and we recognize that in the Scriptures it is plainly set forth that the access to our great God in heaven is through our mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank Thee that coming through him, we have the ears of our great God in heaven. And Lord, we want to give Thee first of all thanksgiving and praise for all that Jesus Christ has done for us, in coming in his incarnate state, going to the Cross at Calvary and offering himself up as a sacrifice for sin. And then having been accepted as is evidenced by the resurrection and ascending to the right hand of the throne of God, we are so grateful that we have the confidence and assurance that we have forgiveness of our sins as we come to Thee through him.

And we thank Thee Lord, for all that he is accomplishing at the present moment, praying for those who have believed in him and seeking to secure all of the blessings for which he has suffered and died. And we know that he shall be successful, as the word of God has set forth. How blessed we are to have such a High Priest, as the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the God-man, who represents us, and has himself the authority and power, due to his infinite godhood as the Son of God, to save us from our sins.

We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon each one present and for any who may be here who, perhaps, do not have the confidence of the forgiveness of their sins. We pray for them. We ask that through the ministry of the word of God, they may learn their need as

sinners and learn of the sufficiency of redemption in the Lord Jesus. And may, O God, by Thy grace, they flee to him for forgiveness.

We pray for our country. We ask Thy blessing upon us in this great day and we pray especially for our President and for those in authority who have responsibility for the forces of the United States of America and for others as well. Give wisdom and guidance to President Bush. We pray Lord for the protection of the men who are in the services and, particularly, those who are in Saudi Arabia and other places, as well. O God, glorify Thy name in protection and keeping of them.

We pray for the whole Church of Jesus Christ, wherever believers meet in the Name of our Lord. Bless each one of them and may their prayers be answered and may they be fruitful in Christian work. We pray for Believers Chapel and its ministries as well. Lord, may as the word of God goes forth over the radio and through the printed page and through the tapes, may it have the blessing of the convicting and converting power of God, the Holy Spirit.

We pray for each one present in this meeting, for those who are not members of the Chapel but who have come as visitors, we pray for them and ask Thy blessing upon them. We pray for our sick and the suffering, and for some who particularly are suffering, we pray for them and ask, O God, that Thou wilt minister to them in consolation and encouragement, and in strengthening and in supplying of all of the needs that exist. We bring them, particularly, to Thee, those who have requested our prayers, we pray for each one of them.

Be with us in our service as we sing, as we hear the word of God preached.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] We are looking at 2 Samuel chapter 7, verse 1 through verse 11, and this is the first of our special studies on the Davidic Covenant, within our series, “Themes from the Life of David.” How different are the ways of the wise and the foolish in their

leisure time. When one thinks of the parable that Jesus told of the rich man, and remembers the way in which he presented the rich man, and then compares the rich man with David, one can see one of the reasons, one of the minor reasons, perhaps, why David is the man upon whom God’s blessing rests. The rich fool was a very affluent person. His crops were producing so greatly that he didn’t have anywhere to put his possessions. And so he spoke within himself, to his soul. It is evidently true in the parable that he had no place within his heart for God, but he spoke to his soul as if his soul were separate from himself, and suggested that the thing that he would do would be to tear down his present barns, which were insufficient, and build his barns bigger so that he might care for the things that were material blessings to him and which, evidently, were the things that were especially upon his heart. And then the Lord Jesus, in this parable of the rich man, says, “But God said to him, ‘Fool, this night, your soul will be required of you. Then whose will be those things which you have provided. So is he who lays up treasures for himself and is not rich toward God.’”

Then, when we think of King David, a man who had every reason to be proud of the things that God had done for him, and we look at the things that really were of great concern to him. It’s obvious that he did not have his own possessions as preeminent in his life, but the interests of the Lord God.

In one of the great psalms of the Old Testament, the 132, which is a kind of backward glance at David’s life, giving the things that were in his heart, we read.

“Lord, remember David and all his afflictions; how he swore to the Lord, and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, ‘Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, or go up to the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.’”

One could, I'm sure, expound the point made by the comparison of these two for a lengthy period of time, but it is obvious that the rich fool's interests were in himself and in his possessions; whereas, David, who had great possessions, as a matter of fact, later on he will talk about what he has given for the construction of the house that is to be built. He was a man who was wealthy, had lots of money, but the thing that concerned him was the interests of the Lord God.

Now, last week we looked at chapter 6 and there were two themes in that chapter that find a kind of union here in chapter 7. We noticed how that David brought up the Ark and now has brought it and put it within the tabernacle on Zion, in the city of Jerusalem. And then we have also read of the fact, and particularly, in the last verse, that Michal, the daughter of the Lord, had no children till the day of her death. Putting those two things together, it's evident that there are two themes that are now united in what David is going to do: The home for the Ark and the question of the royal heir.

It's rather striking that we read here in verse 11, “Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house,” because it's clear that these two themes of the Ark, now in the city of Jerusalem, the capital, and the question of a royal heir come together in one word.

Now, you may know this or you may not, but in the Hebrew text, the word for a house is the word, *bayith*. Now, this word has more than one sense. It may mean a house, just as you know, but it also may mean a temple. And it expresses an idea that is extremely important, further, when David is told that God is going to make him a house. It's clear that that term has the sense of house in the sense of a place in which one dwells, but it also has the sense of a dynasty. That is, a succession of rulers who come from the same descent.

Now, we are in the part of the year in which we are filled with the National Football League and the men in the congregation spend six hours plus looking at the screen yesterday, and you're looking forward, I thank you for coming here, the game has already started. [Laughter] I thank you for the sacrifice that you have made. But for six

more hours today, and the question that will be in everyone’s mind is, “Do we have a dynasty in the San Francisco 49’ers?” That is a continuation of rulers who come from the same descent.

Now, this term ‘house’ has the sense of dynasty here, for when God says, “He will make David a house,” he does not mean a building. He means he is going to give him a dynasty, a place in a dynasty, which will find its culmination in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, we use the term house in a couple of those senses and we use it in the sense of a dynasty. We say, the House of Windsor. And we mean by that, the family, the Windsor family that has for a lengthy period of time now ruled over England, at least, outwardly, House of Windsor. So we want to keep that in mind. House is not simply a physical building in which one may live or a temple. But it may, also refer to something like a dynasty. Now, that will be prominent later on.

The real context of chapter 7 is much wider than David’s career. It reaches back to God’s covenantal purposes as expressed in the word of God. Now, I want to say to you right at the beginning, without defending this, I think it can be easily defended, but I have to be careful when I do it, because it is possible to be thrown off by the use of terms that might be confusing. If I were to say to you, “I believe in the eternal covenant of redemption,” that might throw you off, because you cannot find in Scripture the term, eternal covenant of redemption.

Now, we know, of course, not all things that are plainly taught in the word of God have a specific term that expresses them like the Trinity, everyone knows that. There’s no thing in the Bible that says that God is a Trinity, but the Bible teaches that. The Bible teaches, in my opinion, that there is an eternal covenant of redemption. That is, that the persons of the Trinity have in the eternity past entered into the relationship in which each carries out his own specific responsibilities with reference to the great purpose of God.

Now, that I think can be easily defended. But we don’t have time to do that in a message of an expository character. I’d like to say that this great arrangement, arranged

by the persons of the Trinity, is expressed historically in a series of covenants. And we have the Abrahamic Covenant, the foundational one; the Davidic Covenant, which we are going to look into over a period of time, provides a further dimension to the Abrahamic; the New Covenant provides a redemptive basis; and then, of course, the New Testament tells us about the ratification of that covenantal system in the saving work of the Lord. And the rest of the New Testament expounds how the great covenantal promises that go all the way back, actually go back to eternity, but go back to Abraham's promises, are filled out in history, and then on into eternity. There are indications of that.

So this chapter then, is wider than David's career and it touches God's covenantal purpose program. And there are suggestions of it, reminiscences of the Abrahamic Covenant here, and the great name, the rest that God has and will provide for the children of Israel. So we're going to look at it with that in the background and we turn now to discuss David's desire of a house for the Ark, which is expressed for us in verse 1 through verse 3.

Now, there was a casual reference to David's house back in chapter 5 in verse 11. “Then Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house.” We pointed out that Hiram was probably interested in this for business reasons, but nevertheless, he did. And David, now, has evidently a lavish personal home, a house of cedar. So that's in the background. That was the custom for Canaanite kings, so we are told, to build rather lavish residences for their kings. And so it would have been thought to be proper for a person like David, who has come to his throne, to build a home for his God in the style of the ancient kings of the area. So we are not surprised then that there should be some reference to this. The thing we are surprised about is the fact that David does it for different reasons.

We read in verse 2, “And the King said to Nathan the prophet.” This, incidentally, gives you some idea of life in the leisure hours of King David. I would like to suggest to you that life in one's leisure hours is an indication of one's character. And in the case of

David, he tells us some of the things that characterized his inner life. For example, in the 16th Psalm, David says concerning the saints, that they are the excellent in whom is all his delight. In other words, David says, the thing that interests me is the saints. So he was extremely concerned for the saints. His interests were in the things of the Lord. In the 119th Psalm, he says something similar to that, which gives us an indication of the kind of man David was in his private life. So here, he speaks to Nathan the prophet. It's always nice to have a prophet as a personal friend. And the fact that he spoke to Nathan is also an indication of the character of David, as well.

And I like to contrast David with some of the other kings of the Old Testament. For example, there was King Nebuchadnezzar, and surely a great king he was. With reference to Nebuchadnezzar, in his leisure hours, we are told by Daniel what he used to think. “All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar,” he says in Daniel chapter 4. “At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. The king spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” That'll give you some idea of what Nebuchadnezzar reflected upon in his private times. God had a little experience for him, however, that would change his mind about things like that and cause him to reflect on eternal things.

And, as a result of the experience in which he was driven from his throne and ate grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. And when he, finally, was delivered from the judgment of God upon him, he makes one of the great statements of the Old Testament about the nature of the God of the Scriptures. He says, “All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing in the dominion of this one, for he has an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’”

So by virtue of his experience, he's come to believe in a non-frustratable deity, who is in heaven. So Nebuchadnezzar's private life is unfolded a bit, and David's is unfolded a bit. And there are lessons to be found in it, my Christian friends, because what we are in private is a revelation of our character. What we do with our leisure time is an evidence of what we really center our attention upon. And so one of the things that we should be very careful about, it seems to me, in this affluent age in which we live and in which most of us in this auditorium have a good deal more than we really need, is that our private and secular prosperity should not wean our hearts away from the Lord God and the concerns that are important so far as He is concerned.

So David says to Nathan, if you look around, I dwell in a house of cedar. But the Ark of God dwells inside tent curtains. There's a great contrast between the, evidently, rather lovely place in which David, the king, had as his palace and what the Lord God was dwelling in, the Ark, in just a tent of curtains. And so that spoke to the heart of David, and it's obvious that he said, I would like to build such a house for the Lord God that would be worthy of what I think about him. And Nathan did something that you're not supposed to do. He answered without asking the Lord about it. And so he tells David, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.” But now, he spoke not as a prophet, but in this case as a prophet who has stepped outside of the will of God for a moment. He thought, surely, God has been with David and it's perfectly all right to do. And so often we do that in our own lives, don't we? We take actions without really committing them to the Lord God. And Nathan, the prophet, a good man, did the same thing then. So he speaks out of his own mind instead of out of the mind of God the Holy Spirit.

Well, at this point, God enters and steps in, and in a very gentle way, refuses David's desire. We read, “But it happened that night” so evidently, the Lord God thought it was so important that He respond to what Nathan has told David to do, that he spoke immediately that night and in a vision in which the prophecy was given, he speaks. And

he tells Nathan what he is to tell David. “So it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, ‘Go and tell My servant David.’” And this, of course, all expects a negative answer. You can see when he says that what he’s been doing. Why should he have such a house, is obviously upon the minds. The question that the Lord asks expects that we should say, he doesn’t need a house to be built for him. “Thus says the Lord, ‘Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’”

So he has not, then, given any indication that he would like to have a house, and so he approaches Nathan in this way at the beginning. In effect, as we know from other passages, he tells Nathan, it’s commendable for David to desire that a house be built for me, but it’s very untimely to do it at the present time. These words expect, I say, a negative answer. But I notice the tender way in which God does this. He says in verse 5, “Go tell My servant David,” and then again in verse 8, “Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David.” That’s a marvelous way for God to speak to David because the fact that he said “My servant” is very comforting. He’s the servant of the Lord God. But that word servant is a very significant term and the fact that it is used of David is very significant in the theology of the Old Testament because the term servant is a term with special significance.

It was used of Moses. He was the servant of the Lord. In other words, it appears that the term often has the connotation of special representatives of the Lord God in heaven. And to be called, “My servant,” in this special sense, would suggest the honorable submission of someone who has unusual representation of the Lord God in his life and ministry. And that, of course, is true. But preeminently, in the Old Testament this

term is the term that is used of the servant of Jehovah. And the servant of Jehovah, we know, I won't argue all of these things. Scholars have spent months and years even on the prophecies of Isaiah 42, 49, 50, 52, 53. But evangelical scholars have agreed, generally, that the term, servant of Jehovah, is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. And with that, I fully concur.

So to be called the servant of Jehovah suggests some very marvelous things and I'm sure that David was very, very comforted to realize that even though God is refusing the suggestion, he, nevertheless, calls him “My servant,” suggesting as I say, the honorable submission of someone who stands as the representative of the Lord Jehovah on the earth.

Now, this term is used of our Lord Jesus Christ because one of those texts is applied to him, in Matthew chapter 12. And even when the voice from heaven at the baptism comes down and says, “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.” That statement is taken from Isaiah 42, the servant passage, verse 1, it's almost a coronation formula of the Lord Jesus, God saying from heaven, “You are the Messiah and this is the work that you will do. You will suffer for the sins of My people.” So you must not think that David thought immediately that his hopes were crushed. His heart sank. What he wanted to do is refused by the Lord God as if it's wrong. It's not that. It's evident that God has more in mind than David has even thought about.

I like that expression, “Have I ever spoken a word?” David may be dissatisfied to think of the Lord God traveling all through the places that Israel has been, in a little tent. But God was not dissatisfied because the men were carrying out his purpose. Those were suitable stages in the divine program of redemptive history. So we learn things forbidden are not always disapproved. God approved of David's desire, but he's planning something else that is more significant.

Oh, if we could just, as we read the word of God, realize that God's hand, the unseen hand of God is in the affairs of men, and if we could remember that in our own

spiritual lives, that the things that happen to us are within the divine program of the Lord God in heaven, to which we do not have access. But, nevertheless, in which we can have confidence and know that the experiences of life are experiences that God has determined that we pass through.

Now, I want you to notice, after he has gently refused David’s desire and request, God explains the grounds of his refusal. He says in effect, David it was a nice motive. I recognize that. It was good that you sought to build a house for me. But what you have said comes from an imperfect knowledge of the will of God. God’s purpose is the golden thread in the rough web of human nature. And we learn this often afterwards. But David is now given a little bit of theological instruction, through the prophet Nathan. Notice what he says, in verse 8 and following, “Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be prince over My people, over Israel.’” David is called to his principedom. We’ll call it that at the moment. Not so much his kingdom but his principedom. In other words, this is the stage within the divine program to which God calls attention first. The unseen hand of God is behind the experiences of David, and it is He who has brought David to the place where, as he says, “He is prince over my people, over Israel.”

Now, my Christian friends, if David was a prince. You might ask the question, who was the king? Because a prince is a prince, because he is the son of a king. Well, who is the king? Well, it’s obvious. The King is the Lord God in heaven. And the very use of the term, *nagiyd*, is indicative of the fact that God is reserving to himself the ultimate authority to lead and guide the sons of men. So David has been called to a principedom; and, furthermore, in the 9th verse he says, “And I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and will make you a great name, [or have made you a great name] like the great men who are on the earth.” Who was the real brilliant general in the military successes of David? Was it David?

You know, you can expound the things that transpire in 1 Samuel, for example, in David’s military career or the things in 2 Samuel, and you might come to the conviction that David was a great and masterful general. Well, I’m not going to deny that. I think he was. But, nevertheless, who’s responsible? It’s the Lord God in heaven who’s responsible for it. And David is great because there is someone who is greater, and that is the King of Heaven. And so the real brilliant general is the Lord God in heaven.

There’s a statement that is made in 1 Chronicles chapter 29 in verse 12, that I think I might cite at this point. In this chapter, 1 Chronicles chapter 29 in verse 12, David is blessing the Lord before all the assembly. And David says, “Both riches and honor come from you. And you reign over all. In your hand is power and might. In your hand it is to make great.” And so David, himself, would agree exactly with what I’ve said. If he was standing here, he would say, “Preach it, Lewis, because that’s exactly it.” The Lord God is the one responsible for the victories that I have won, ultimately. I have been, simply, a servant of the Lord God. So David’s success and his exaltation, the Lord says, are due to him.

Now, the fact that he is promised a great name is further linkage with the Abrahamic Covenant because, you’ll remember, that Abram, one of the promises given to him was that Abram should be great. And the fact that David is great belongs to the family, so to speak, and in the New Testament in the gospel of Luke, when the angel and the annunciation reveals the facts of the coming of our Lord to the Virgin Mary, he says,

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and shall his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob, forever. And of his kingdom there will be no end.”

So the idea of greatness is bound up in the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, the New Covenant, and finds its culmination in the Lord Jesus, “Who is great and shall rule and reign over the house of Jacob forever.” So the statement, then, “And will make you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth, and will appoint a place for My people Israel,” and so on, is a kind of preview of future developments as a result of the covenant.

It’s remarkable, I think, among human individuals that they love glory. “Glory consists in the honorable and widespread reputation of numerous and important services rendered to one’s friends and his country, or the whole human race,” so Cicero said. “That characteristic of man which is at once the most unworthy and the most exalted is his desire for glory. It’s the last passion that becomes extinct in the heart of man. There is such a charm in glory that whatever we connect with it, even death itself, we love it still,” Pascal said.

Have you ever noticed that in the ordinary affairs of life? Now, you’ll see this afternoon, some of you, the football games. And you’ll hear the players, and you’ll hear them saying, “I wanted recognition. I wanted them to understand that I could compete with the others.” Over and over again, we hear that. The same thing is true of business men, the same thing is true of women, the same thing is true of men. Naturally, we want the glory but the glory belongs to the Lord God.

Feltham said, “The desire for glory is the last garment that even wise men lay aside.” And even preachers can be affected with it, as they lay down their Bible for the last time, there’s liable to come the thought in the minds of teachers and preachers. I hope they’ll remember what a good teacher of the word of God I was. How foolish! How foolish! It’s God who works through men and to him belong the glory.

He also promised the gift of the land in verse 10, “Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them,” an expression that’s used often in Jeremiah, and in other places, of the planting of the children of Israel in the land from which they

will not be routed out in the future. “Plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own and move” or tremble, this word *ragaz* may mean that, tremble no more because the enemies have been overcome. “Nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them any more, since the time that I commanded judges to be over the people of Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies.” The security that Israel shall have is the security of ultimate blessing from the Lord God in the future kingdom of God upon the earth.

And, finally, in the last statement of verse 11, “Also the Lord tells you that he will make you a house.” Not only a house, not simply a place in which David was to dwell, he already had a house, Hiram had constructed for him a beautiful home, evidently, which was his palace on Zion. But the house that David is promised here is a dynasty. In other words, playing on the name, God goes on to say, not house, like you are thinking, but dynasty and one, my Christian friend, that ultimately involves the raising up of Emmanuel, the Lord Jesus Christ, God with us. That’s the crowning blessing as the angel announced to the Virgin Mary. Orientals treasure the idea of a posterity and when God gave David this great promise, he was giving something that would be specially meaningful to him, a posterity. And that’s what he had.

But now, I want you to go back, just for a moment and note something that is very important. If I were to ask you the question, “Who takes the initiative in all of this?” I’m sure that most of you would simply say, “Well, I guess, God does.” Well now, let’s turn our guess into certainty. Let’s go back and read some of these verses.

Just with that in mind verse 6 God says, “I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt.” I thought Moses did? No, “I brought them up from Egypt, even to this day, and I have moved about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherefore, I have moved about with all the children of Israel,” and so forth. And then in verse 8, “Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold.”’ I took you, David, from the

sheepfold. “From following the sheep, to be prince over My people, over Israel.” “I have been with you wherever you have gone.”

Well, Nathan recognized that. He said, “The Lord is with you.” “And I have cut off all your enemies from before you, and I have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more.” And verse 11, “Since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel.” No, this goes all the way back, long before David’s time. He brought the children of Israel out. He commanded judges to be over the people. And “I have caused you to rest from all of your enemies.” And, furthermore, David, I who have done all of this, now, will tell you, I’m going to give you a dynasty.

Who has the initiative? It’s the Lord God who has the initiative in the affairs of men. Why is it that you are converted, if you are converted? It’s because God has converted you. It is he who brought you to hear the word of God in whatever way you heard it; from a friend or in the preaching service of the word of God. It is God who brought you there. And when you came to recognize your own condition and that Christ has died for sinners and that you are lost, and you come to him and receive as a free gift eternal life, as it is offered, recognizing it does not come from joining the church or observing the ordinances or praying through or from your education or culture, or anything else, but is due to the sovereign grace of God. Then you recognize that God is the sovereign God who has brought you to the Lord God, and you can say with all of the Christians who understand their salvation, salvation is of the Lord. Never forget that! Salvation is of the Lord.

It’s God who has the initiative; always has the initiative. And any other view of the divine word that takes any of the glory of salvation away from the Lord God is false, to the temper of these sixty-six books of divine revelation.

Our time is about up. Let me make just two or three comments.

The word of Nathan and David's thanksgiving in the latter part of this chapter are, in one sense, the climax of the biblical story of David's history. The reason that that may be so is because doing what God has done for David, to bring him to this point and the giving to him of the Davidic Covenant and the promises that go along with it, is the real climax of the life of David. That will go on long past David's body is placed in the grave and long past the four hundred years in which his descendants sit on the throne and actually comes down to the present time. So that this is the theological climax of the story of David's life, the covenant that God has given to him. His theocratic importance is the important thing. These other things, his innermost heart, his devotional feelings, his patriotic desires, his lofty aspirations, his hopes and the kind of spiritual life that he lived are things that are glimpsed at and are very important and very instructive to us. But the important thing is that God has put his hand upon him as a link in the chain of the coming of Emmanuel. Don't forget it.

In reflecting on this, and I see God's hand in human history in this way, I must say, in the light of the New Testament, that all the steps of the divine purpose, this great eternal purpose, begun in eternity past and spread out all into eternity future, all of the steps of it, tend to the permanent dwelling of God with men. That's the goal of it all. When the Lord Jesus came here and ministered on the earth, you'll remember, that the Lord Jesus, if you read his words very carefully, you will note that he was not so much interested in you coming to fellowship with him. Though he was, very much so. I don't deny that at all. I'm not trying to suggest anything other than what Jesus, himself, says. The thing that he was particularly interested in was that he, by his coming and his ministry, might bring you into fellowship with not simply himself but through himself to the Father and with the Father. That's the aim of our Lord. That was his aim. Not to bring you to him, but to bring you to him that you might be with the Father. That was his concern. Listen to what Paul says, “For through him, the Lord Jesus, we have, we both Jews and Greeks, we both have access in one spirit to the Father.”

So my Christian friend, it is through the Lord Jesus Christ’s ministry, through his suffering and death, through his presence at the right hand of the Father, through the coming of the Holy Spirit that he has sent, that God desires that you and I fellowship with the Father. With the Father! Communion with the Father! That is the goal, the practical goal of the divine program that is set forth here.

And then when we turn to the last book of the Bible, and we see the things that are stated there with reference to this, you can understand why. In verse 3 of chapter 21, we read, “I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself shall be with them and be their God.’” And then in chapter 22, that’s underlined. “The people of God shall see the face of God, through the Lord Jesus Christ.” But it’s the fellowship with God the Father that is the goal of the redemptive program, through the mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is that your fellowship? Do you know what it is to fellowship with the Father? To get down by the side of your bed and offer up petitions to the Lord and discuss the affairs of your life with the Father? Do you as you are working lift your heart to the Lord, the Father, through the Lord Jesus Christ in the Spirit? Is that characteristic of your life? Then you have not fully experienced what God would like for you to experience in your present existence.

Did David understand the greatness of the house that God had promised to him and its vast numbers who will belong to the dynasty? Well, I don’t know. I presume that in the light of the progress of divine revelation, the chances are David did not have an understanding of all that was involved by this.

But I know one thing. In the New Testament, we are told that the Church is the house of the Living God. And I know that the believers in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, have been brought into, we Gentiles, primarily, at the present time, we Gentiles

have been brought into the Church or the People of God. And together with the remnant of Israel, at the present time, we all belong to the Lord God as the House of God.

And we look forward to the day when, as Richard Sibbes has put it, “The Jews are not yet come in under Christ’s banner; but God that hath persuaded Japheth to come into the tents of Shem, will persuade Shem to come into the tents of Japheth.”

Or, as William Perkins puts it, and these are men who wrote many, many years ago, “All nations shall be blessed in Abraham. Hence I gather that the nation of the Jews shall be called, and converted to the participation of this blessing: when and how, God knows, but it shall be done before the end of the world.” So we expect Israel, in the future, the mass, the great mass, to come in to the church composed of Gentiles and the remnant of the Jews today, and thus the church of God or the people of God enter into fuller blessing from the Lord God.

And I know that Paul tells us, in 1 Timothy chapter 3, in verse 15, something about this church of God. He says, in verse 15, “But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” And he said he wrote these things that we might know how to behave ourselves there. And I can gather from this that we may aid, humanly speaking, we may aid in the erection and the development of noble additions to the house of God, the church of God, in the conversion of other Gentiles and in the conversion of Jews, and thus be up one little part of the divine program that God is carrying out.

And, therefore, for you and me, the work of God in what he is doing in the church of Jesus Christ is of the greatest significance. May God so touch your heart that you realize that it is far more important that you give yourself in your private and public life to some specific means by which the church of God may be expanded, developed, and become what God ultimately will bring it pass, to become.

Thomas Goodwin, one of the great Puritans said, “My brethren, when God first began to love you, he gave you all that he ever meant to give you in the lump. An eternity of time is that in which he is retailing it out.” I like that.

We have everything that we ever need. And during the years in between and on into eternity, we are discovering what God has done for us. And in the light of what he has done for us, my Christian friend, how can you fail to keep him and his great saving work and what he says he is doing in the word of God, from being the supreme goal and aim of your own life. May God help you and may God help me, for I need that help too, to have him first in our lives.

Let’s stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the ministry of the Holy Scriptures to us. And as we look at the Scriptures and recognize that Thou art behind them, we express to Thee our gratitude and thanksgiving. Thou art truly great. And we desire, Lord, to be servants for the Living God for the glory of the Triune God.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.