



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Lessons from the Life of David: Sermon #24

2 Samuel 7:18-29

“An Incomparable Prayer to an Incomparable God”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Today, we are turning to the last of our short series within the Life of David. We have taken a little time out to talk about the Davidic Covenant, its significance, its place in the Old Testament, its place in the New Testament. And now, we have one of the great sections of the Old Testament, in my opinion, David's responsive prayer to the revelation of the Davidic Covenant by the Lord God to him. There are so many remarkable and truly wonderful things in this prayer that I consider it a privilege to read the Scripture to you, which contains David's prayer. It's truly remarkable.

Now, for those of you who have not been here, a few of you have not who are visiting, Nathan has just given to David the Davidic Covenant, pointing out to him that he will have an eternal house, an eternal kingdom, and from him will come an eternal seed who shall rule forever. The Scriptures make it plain as they are unfolded that this is a reference to the greater son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we have made the point because the adverb “forever” is emphasized so much in the section that the promise to David that from him would come a seed who would rule and reign forever. That promise finally runs out in the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater son of David, who lives forever and

who had no seed. And so the king has already come in his first coming and we look forward to his coming a second time.

Now, the prayer follows, and no wonder David is so buoyed up by what has been told to him. Listen to what he says. We begin at verse 18 of 2 Samuel 7 and read through verse 29.

“Then King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said: “Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? [What he is saying, essentially, is that I’m an insignificant person and my family is an insignificant family.] And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord God; and You have also spoken of Your servant’s house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?”

Now, I’d like to modify that, because that sentence, literally, is “And this is the law of man, O Lord God.” And I suggest to you in the light of the fact that this covenant is an expansion of the Abrahamic Covenant, and in the light of the conditions and portions of it, that this should be rendered something like this: “This is the charter by which humanity will be directed.” In other words, we’re taking this as a statement and not as a question. And this is the charter by which humanity will be directed. In other words, the promises that have just been given will govern the unfolding of the divine history. Now then, verse 20.

“Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord God, know Your servant. For Your word’s sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them. Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name, and to

do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land, before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.”

I'd like to stop at that point and make a comment, this morning I almost passed by entirely in the exposition and I don't want to pass by it, again, in a similar way. If you have read the Abrahamic Covenant and if you have read Moses' five books of the Bible, and if you've read other portions of the word of God, even as far as the Book of Revelation in the New Testament, you will recognize those terms of verse 24, “For you have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, Lord, have become their God,” as covenantal terms. In other words, when Abram was given his covenant, these terms were used. “You will have me as your God and you will be My people.” That is repeated in the five books of Moses. It is found in the Old Testament in a number of places but, significantly, in the New Covenant of Jeremiah chapter 31. The Apostle Paul mentions it in 2 Corinthians chapter 6. And then in the Book of Revelation, when everything has reached its climactic future, again these terms are set forth.

In other words, this is the fundamental covenantal promise. “You will be My people; I will be your God.” What a magnificent statement that is, to realize that we who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are His people, because He is our God. So verse 25.

“Now, O Lord God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said. So let Your name be magnified forever, saying, ‘The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel.’ And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. For You, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You. “And now, O Lord God,

[Incidentally, that term, Adonai Yahweh, is the term that was used in the Abrahamic Covenant of the Lord God in Genesis chapter 15, more than once. So he, even in his language is using language used of the Lord God in covenantal arrangements as they were made. So] “And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, [The Hebrew text says “Your words are truth” but “true” is a legitimate translation. Your text may have trustworthy because the sense includes that, as well.] And Your words are true and You have promised this goodness [What’s goodness? Well, the goodness is the goodness of the covenantal blessings.] This goodness to Your servant. Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord GOD, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.”

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

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we confess the amazement that we feel as we read these remarkable words that the king of Israel spoke to Thee on that historic day, when he went down and sat before Thee, in the little tent on Mount Zion. We thank Thee for the remarkable promises to which he appealed, and we thank Thee that the Scriptures make it plain that Thou hast opened the door to Gentiles, as well, to share in the blessings that are set forth in this covenant. We sense, Lord, something of the amazement and astonishment, as we reckon on the fact that we are dealing with the God who knows all of the past into eternity, who knows all of the future into eternity, and has been willing to go out on the limb to tell us every thing that will come to pass in the future.

And as we look at the past and see how things have unfolded, precisely as Thou hast said, we look into the future with great confidence and know that, ultimately, we shall be able to look back and say that Thou hast done, Lord, Our Lord God, exactly as

Thou hast said. We thank Thee for the promises that are ours and we bring them before Thee, Lord, and ask Thee as David, Do as Thou hast said.

We pray for this country. We ask Thy blessing upon it, upon our President, upon Mr. Cheney, upon the generals, the Chief of Staff, upon our soldiers who are in the Persian Gulf, especially, O God, wilt Thou do for them as is pleasing to Thee according to Thy will. And we pray that if it should please Thee and be in accordance with Thy will, that Thou wilt preserve those men and give them a speedy victory and return them safely home. We pray for the whole coalition and ask Thy blessing upon them.

We pray for the whole Church of Jesus Christ in these days, battered as the church is by the unbelief of the hour and by the unbelief within the professing Church. We ask, Lord, that Thou wilt give us perseverance and give us the faith to believe the word of God and to seek in the midst of these chaotic days, both politically and religiously, to live in a way that will be pleasing to Thee, and to be fruitful as witnesses of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray, particularly, for each one in this auditorium and ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon them and upon their families. For those who have requested our prayers, we especially remember them and ask that Thou wilt give them answers to their petitions that are pleasing to them as well as to Thee.

And, Lord, for Believers Chapel, we bring the elders and the deacons, the members and the friends before Thee and ask Thy blessing upon them, and for our visitors who are here today, especially, minister to them Lord and strengthen them in the things of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Be with us as we sing, as we have fellowship around the word of God and with one another.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today, as we continue our exposition entitled, “Themes from the Life of David,” is “An Incomparable Prayer to an Incomparable God.” The Davidic Covenant, as we have been saying, begins an important new phase in God’s

purpose: Israel’s salvation and ultimately our salvation, too, of course, is now linked forever to the dynastic house of David.

In the 12th verse of the chapter, we read “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.” In verse 26, we read, “So let Your name be magnified forever, saying ‘The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel.’ And let the house of Your servant David be established before You.” Never, to this point, had God spoken so distinctly and emphatically to anyone of the personal honor that he would bestow upon them. Now, he did say to Abraham that he would be great. But the description that is given of David is even more significant, more flowery, and more real, I might suggest.

Spiritually, this beautiful prayer displays the transforming and, you might say, the educative power of God’s sovereign love. God has said to David, in effect, you are the center of the plans and purposes that I have for the ages to come, and in the 18th and 19th verses, David goes in, sits before the Lord and says, “Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?” The remainder of the petition is a remarkable statement of how David felt God’s love had been transforming his life and you can see it in his language.

I do not think of any thing that rivals it, except some of the things that are found in the New Testament when, for example, in the first chapter of the Book of Revelation, and the 5th and 6th verses of the first chapter, John, who is writing to the seven churches that are in Asia, states, “Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.” And then, he adds, “To Him who loveth us and has loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

I don't have time to turn to the 5th chapter, but the same thing is true when the elders and the living creatures explain the significance of the fact that the lion of the tribe of Judah is the Lamb of God, who has offered the atoning sacrifice, all Heaven, literally, breaks forth in magnificent praise, just like a Roman candle in its crescendo, to speak of what God has done in the redemptive activity of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thomas Watson, one of the Puritans, once said, “Praise is the soul in flower.” “Praise is the soul in flower.” Well, if that's true, and I don't see any reason why it should not be true, then what we read in this magnificent prayer is the soul of King David in flower, over the magnificent promises that have been given to him.

Now, I want to look at it, we have limited time, but I want to look at it in this way. We'll look first of all at the sovereign blessings that have been bestowed upon this lowly servant of the Lord, and I mean lowly in the sense of David, he calls himself that, and the, that will consume verses 18 through 21. And then, we'll talk about the greatness of Yahweh and the greatness of his people in verse 22 through 24. And, finally, in the last verses of the chapter, in which we will talk about his prayer for his house's continuance. So, we look first at verses 18 through 21 and say a few words about the sovereign blessings upon the lowly servant, expressed by David.

I think I feel exactly how David felt. O, the inadequacy of human language to fully express the deepest longings and feelings and thoughts of a godly soul who has been given some insight into what God has promised him. I do not call myself that godly soul, except in so far as I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. But I can understand how he felt when he said, “Who am I, O Lord God? What is my house that You have brought me this far?” And yet it's a small thing with You, “O Lord God, and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come.”

And this is the charter by which humanity or mankind, will be directed. I can understand all of that because, in a small way, every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has a part in that. As I look at myself, who am I, O Lord God, that I should be the object of

Your grace? What is my house? What is my insignificant house, that You have brought me to this place? But, it's a small things with our God. It's a very small thing that He should do with me what he has done, because he is the God who controls the past, he controls the future, he's the God of the ages, he's the Lord God of his people Israel.

And, I can understand as I read this, that he is unfolding his purposes in his own order, through the centuries, to make the point, of course, that the whole of human history is designed, ultimately, to bring glory to his marvelous name. And, throughout the ages of eternity, after time has been rolled up in the sense in which we know time, has been rolled up and eternal time begins, we'll be looking back upon this phase of human history as the time in which God laid the foundation for his eternal magnification and glorification through his saints and through his activities in the past as well as the future. So, O, the inadequacy of language to fully express the deepest feelings and thoughts of a soul redeemed by the Lord who understands this.

Thomas Brooks, another one of the Puritans said, “Cold prayers always freeze before they reach heaven.” And I believe that that is true. “Cold prayers always freeze before they reach heaven.” But I will guarantee you that if you will read and ponder what he has said here, and if your heart has been brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, your prayers will not be frozen prayers, they will not be cold prayers, they will be warm with the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So the astonishment over his unworthiness in the light of these promises, first grips David in his prayer. It's a proud moment for the king and a proud moment for Israel, that God has just given him this great promise that from him will come the king, that his house will be an eternal house, that his kingdom will be a kingdom over the whole of the earth. He might, to use language of the New Testament; he might have whereof to glorify God, or to glory, not glorify God, he might, whereof, have that which might bring glory to himself. Paul talks about Abraham, he might whereof to glory, but not before God. And David would have expressed the same point. “Not before God.”

I think of Jacob, who had something of the same feelings when, in chapter 32 in verse 10 of the Book of Genesis, we read, “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies.” God had blessed Jacob so richly, by what he had done, under the guidance of the Lord God.

“What is my house?” David, obviously, speaks of his house as being a shepherd’s home and it was an insignificant house. It was a humble place to begin and he humbly contemplates the past and is impressed by the fact that God has brought him this far. Everything, David recognizes really comes from the Lord God.

I think of the text, which was the enlightening text for Augustine, when he came to understand that we are saved by the sovereign grace of the Lord God, and we are not saved by the activity of our free will, but rather our will is and the activities of our will are influenced by the sovereign working of God, the Holy Spirit. And Augustine said, as he looked back to the change that came over him, to this text in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, “For who makes you to differ? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” And he recognized, if that were true, then every thing that he had that reflected, ultimately, God’s glory in his life, was something that was given to him. And, if, in his will, he had made a decision that was favorable or positive toward the Lord Jesus Christ, it was because God had first worked in his heart. And that’s what he’s saying here.

He’s astonished. “What is my house?” And then, “Is this the manner of man?” I put this in the positive as a declarative sentence. “And this is the charter by which humanity shall be directed.”

Now, he states in verse 21, as he’s still talking about sovereign blessings, he states the real cause of everything. He states, “For Your word’s sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them.” Isn’t that marvelous? You see, what David is saying, if you look carefully, he’s saying, “It was

the spontaneous, sovereign, unmerited favor of the Lord God.” Just notice little, the chain, first of all, things begin in the heart. You’ll notice how he puts it. For Your word’s sake, and according to Your own heart,” everything begins there. Then, the heart came to understand the promise, and the acts that flowed as a result of the promise, and finally, God caused him to understand.

“For Your word’s sake, according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things to make Your servant know them.” To put it in simple language, what David is saying is, fundamentally, you moved in my heart. You caused me to see the promise that you had given to me and to my house. You caused me to know it. And, as a result of it, I’ve entered into the experience of it.

It’s one of the remarkable statements of this section. It’s almost as if David is living in the time that we are living, and he looks back into the past and says, “I belong to those who believe in the sovereign grace of God as the beginning of all of the work of God in the heart of men.” And, as a matter of fact, that statement, “To make Your servant know them,” in the Hebrew text that’s the [indistinct] of the verb, *yada*, which means, “to know.” And that stem is causative. So “You have caused Your servant to know,” to know the promises, the promises that come from your heart. So everything begins with God and he works in our hearts so that we come to know them. No wonder David is astonished at the goodness of God to him. Anyone who understands that, to my mind, will be astonished because this is the fundamental place where we come to understand God’s great goodness to us.

Now, if you think about his works, his word, and his heart, and try to sum them up, you could say something like this, “God does great things on behalf of his people. There are the works of creation. There are the works of providence. But, fundamentally, the greatest work of all is the work of redemption.” And these works are on the scale of grandeur, worthy of God. Think of them. Think of the method by which God carries out his promises; the incarnation, the union of God and man in one person, the display of the

glory of God in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, in his death, in his resurrection, in his ascension, his exaltation to be Lord of all, the descent of the Holy Spirit and the operations of the Holy Spirit by which you and I come to know the things concerning the work of the Lord God.

Then the atonement, which is fundamentally at the heart of all that he does, the conquest over sin, the conquest over Satan and the conquest over death, death, itself. The work toward men is remarkable and great in respect of each believer individually. He illuminates us, he regenerates us, gives us new life, he pardons our sins, he gives us peace with God, he brings us into an experience of holiness, not complete, never complete as long as we are in the flesh, but he introduces us to what holiness means. He will bring us, ultimately, to perfection and to glory, everlasting. These are some of the works of the Lord God. And he does these things according to his own heart, spontaneously, of his own free grace and will or his own “good pleasure” as Paul puts it.

Not at the promptings of others, none other could have ever conceived of this, not at the promptings from within your own heart not brought about by the work of God the Holy Spirit. They are things that befit his heart, they bear the stamp of the divine nature, they are worthy of his infinite wisdom, his righteousness, his benevolence and power, the grandest display of the glory of God in our salvation. It became him. It became him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. What a magnificent thing is the work of our great God. “All thy ways,” someone has written, “are worthy of Thy self, divine. But the bright glories of Thy grace, beyond Thine other wonders shine.”

I think that is absolutely true. I think this remarkable statement is also true. And individual speaking about this prayer said, “To my eye, the workings of a heart oppressed and overflowing with gratitude are painted stronger in this prayer than I ever observed them in any other instance. It is easy to see that his heart was wholly possessed with a subject which he did not know how to quit,” or leave, “because he did not know how to

do justice to the inestimable blessings poured down upon himself and promised to his posterity, much less to the infinite bounty of his benefactor.” David is simply overcome with God’s blessing to him.

But, he doesn’t stop here. He goes on to speak of the greatness of Yahweh and of his people. He states in verse 22, “Therefore You are great.” No wonder, as he looks, that he should say, “Therefore,” inferring from this that God is great. The thing that makes him great is his atoning work.

I must confess, if I may give just a few moments of an aside, I, within my spirit, am disturbed when I hear someone in the Near East, who doesn’t know anything about the grace of God in Jesus Christ, begin his statements with, “God is great.” “God is great.” “Allah is great.”

O, I want to say, “O if you only knew how great this person is! This great God in heaven! If you only knew, if you only knew the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, it wouldn’t be just something with which you being a sentence. ‘God is great.’ ‘God is great. We’ll shoot down the coalition. God is great. Etcetera.’”

When David says this, I understand what he means. He’s talking about how God has worked in his heart and he’s given him these great Davidic promises. “Therefore you are great, O Lord GOD. There is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.” His goodness, in his redemptive work, as well as his other works, makes him an incomparable God, and it’s proof of his greatness in his nature and in his perfections. I wish it were possible to stop at this moment and just talk about the greatness of God, because there are so many ways we might develop it. Goodness and greatness in his nature, infinite in all of his perfections, his greatness the Psalmist says is “unsearchable” in his operations, his greatness is exercised and displayed in his works of creation, preservation, redemption and government. In all of these, we see how great he is.

David saw it in his dealings toward himself and his posterity, in the nature of his plans and his purposes, and his ability to rule the world through its successive ages, just to give one insignificant incidental, so as to effect the accomplishment of all that he intends to do and to set it out in his word, this grand scheme of justice and love that stretches from the beginning of time, as we understand it, to the end of time.

What a magnificent thing that is!

And, David goes on to say, “He’s great beyond all others,” too. There’s none like him. No creature. All creatures, while even men may be said to be created in the image of God, they are an infinite distance from the Lord God, even then. He’s made some of creatures to resemble him, as you and I, who have intelligence and have qualities that belong to the character of God. But who can measure our intelligence with his? Who can measure our character with his? Who can measure the capacities in which we resemble his, with his capacities?

And “Our resemblance,” someone has said, “Is like that of an image of the sun in a dewdrop to the sun itself.” He’s the sun, itself, and we are the image of the sun in a dewdrop.

He is underived and he is independent. We are derived beings. We are dependent beings. We are creatures! We cannot create! We cannot give life! But, yet, Scripture tells us that he’s the fountain of life. How great he is. How insignificant in relation to him we are. We are mortal; he only has immortality. No God could compare with him, Allah, Baal, all the other gods of the heathen, they are non-entities, according to the writers of the New Testament and the Old Testament. They are, to use the term of the Old Testament, used by the saints of the Old Testament for the gods of the heathen, “They are vanities.” They are not gods. They are vanities. You may call them gods, providing you don’t capitalize the G. They are gods in that sense. But they are not “The God.” They are not the great God of the Bible.

So David might have stopped right here and we'd call it a great prayer. But, you notice what he does in verse 23 and 24? He not only talks about the incomparable God, but he talks about the unique people of God. Now, this is something that I'm afraid we Gentiles in 1991 often do not comprehend. And listen to what he says, “And who is like Your people, like Israel.” “Like Israel,” the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem for himself as a people. Would you let me read that again? “And who is like Your people, like Israel,” the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for himself as a people. I'd like to suggest to you that that's the fundamental cause of the problem of the Near East. That's the fundamental cause of the problem of the Near East: The election of Israel. But there it is. David is speaking, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for himself as a people, to make for himself a name.

The prophets understood that. I'm not giving you anything new. I'm telling you just what the prophets would. If Amos were here, he would say, “You only have I known,” giving the words of God, “You only,” God speaking through the prophet to the people Israel. If I were speaking to you as the people of Israel, and I were Amos, I would say, “You only have I known of all the nations upon the earth.” “You only have I known.” “To know” the term of intimate choice. “You only have I known.” He knew all the other nations, of course. But “You only have I known,” in the sense of having elected you and caused you to be the instrumentality by which my glory might be known. So, they are to be his own very people forever, covenant terminology. “You will be My people, I will be your God.”

If I may be allowed a little freedom, David might well have said, “God has just said ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against Yahweh's believing Israel.’ ‘The gates of hell shall not prevail against Yahweh's believing Israel.’” I don't included unbelieving Israelites here, but I include believing Israel. That's the one nation, the one nation, believing Israel.

What hope is there for Gentiles? I'm a Gentile. What hope is there for me? Why did the Lord Jesus tell them not to go to the Gentiles, but to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Why did he, for example, when he spoke to the Syrophenician Woman say to her, as we find recorded in both the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew, that when she asks for mercy, he doesn't answer a bit. She cries again. His disciples say, send her away, she's bothering us. He says, I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Why is he called the minister of circumcision, to confirm the promises made to the fathers? Because, this great truth that David speaks about is still the fundamental truth of the word of God, one nation chosen by God.

I am so thankful that in the Scriptures we are told how we, Gentiles, may inherit with them. It's by, what Paul to use a figure, and he uses the figure of horticulture, it's by being grafted into them, into the vine. Read Romans 11. Adopted, we might use. But, grafted into them! In fact, in the beginning, it was intended because when God gave the promises to Abram, he said, “Abram, I'm going to make your name great.” The Lord Jesus will come from him. “I'm going to give you the land. But, Abraham, in Thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” And so, the Abrahamic promises were in their beginning comprehensive of the salvation of Gentiles.

It's too big a story to go into now but when we say “The gates of hell shall not prevail against Yahweh's believing Israel,” we can also add, “against also believing Gentiles, who by God's marvelous grace, at the present time, when Israel is set aside,” as Paul says in Romans 11, “For a time, we too enter into these blessings. And he is our God and we are His people, because we form with them one people of God.” One people of God!

What a magnificent program the word of God sets forth for us! And, in fact, here, as someone has said, “This passage emphasizes the unbreakable togetherness of the eternal triangle, Yahweh, Israel, the house of David,” and we could also add a fourth part, believing Gentiles.

Now, David, in the last few verses of the chapter, prays for his house's continuance. He's very simple. He says, “Now, O Lord God,” verse 25, “the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said.”

Promises, my Christian friend, promises do not cancel the necessity of prayer. Let me illustrate it simply. Back, in the beginning of this century when I was living, some people say I'm still living back there, that's alright [Laughter] that's all right, there were some good things then. Back then, if you had a dollar bill in your hand, it might have something on it to the effect that you could, if you wished, get its value in gold from our government. And so if you had those certificates, though you had the paper money, you could get the reality behind them. In other words, it would be necessary, however, for you to go and say, “I would like to have the gold that backs up my paper money.” So, it would be a way by which it could become yours, but you had to actually go and ask for it. Now, I don't want to say that that's the way we are to do things in the word of God, but it's something like that. I don't have time to turn to Ezekiel 36, verse 37, but that's precisely what's stated there. That God has promised and now God wants to be asked about those things.

So, and you might ask, why does God desire to be asked? Because, of course, he wants the glory that is due his name. Now, some people want to say, “Well, that's pretty selfish, isn't it, of God wanting to be glorified?” Wait just a minute. That's not selfish. That's truth. If you glorify anyone other than God, you have sinned. And so truth demands the glorification of God. It's not selfishness. It's what he is, what he fundamentally is. He's the only one who can be praised and glorified. That's why it's right, not selfish, right for him to be glorified! He's not the kind of individual who wants to be patted on the back. He's not like one of our guys who has just scored a touchdown and is leaping up in the air, and everybody comes around and leaps up in the air and gives him high-fives, and things like that. That's human. God doesn't want the angels

standing around him leaping up and patting him. This is truth! Truth! Only he can be glorified, because he's the only person who deserves glorification by virtue of what he is, his being and his attributes.

So David, here, has been given these marvelous promises and so, what does he do? He prays that they may be realized in his life. So the promises don't cancel the necessity of prayer. They make prayer a glorious thing in which we receive his word and we remind him of the things that he has said that he would do, and ask him to do as he has said.

Now, all of you know this, you've all had children, at least, most of you in this room, you've had children. And you've probably have given them some promises. You say, “It's the fair on Saturday. I'm going to take you out.” Now, do you think, if you know children, do you think that child will not mention that until on Saturday morning you say to that child, “Now, today, as I said, I'm going to take you to the fair.” I would guarantee, at least in my family, I would guarantee that if you made that promise on Monday, every day since then, morning afternoon and night, if they were in your presence, might be an occasion in which they will remind you of the fact that you said you're going to take them to the fair. So that's what David is doing. “Do as you have said.” So, he prays for the continuance of his house.

And, finally, in the last two verses, I know you think I'm not going to finish today [Laughter] he gives the ground of his prayer confidence. “And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this goodness,” this covenantal goodness, “to Your servant.” Oh, I wish that it were possible to say something about this. The reason that he says, “Your words are true,” is because you've just said, “You are God.” So, your words are true.

Now, that says a lot about the troubles of evangelicalism today. We have a crisis of the Bible in evangelical, the evangelical world, the crisis of the Bible in our churches and in our denominations. But it's quite clear on what side of this David would have

stood. As far as sovereign grace is concerned, if David were here, he would say, “Believers Chapel is where I feel at home. They talk about sovereign grace. That’s what I believe.” And he’d be interested in what we think about his word, too. And when we read here, “Your words are true,” we say, “David, you’re right! Your words are true. And they are true because you, who have uttered them, you are God! And you have promised.”

Now, we have troubles. You read them in the newspapers; the Southern Baptist Convention, the Presbyterian Church, the Anglicans, I guess, and the Episcopalians. The Episcopalians have some interesting clerics. Bishop John Spong, of the dioceses of Newark, he’s just written a new book. He calls it, “Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism.” Now, I want to say there are some things that should be rescued from fundamentalism. I don’t agree with every thing that fundamentalists say. But, I don’t agree with this man. Listen to what he says about the Apostle Paul. He says, Paul was, “a self-loathing and repressed gay male.” Even some of his defenders are astonished at that. He says, with reference to the apostle that when Paul said, “O, wretched man that I am,” he was expressing that fact, showing that he does not understand Romans chapter 7, at all. He says that the fact that the apostle said, “Wives be in submission to your husband,” underlines the fact that he was a repressed gay male. But the Scriptures, nevertheless, are Scriptures that say these things. Furthermore, even his own people... Incidentally, Bishop Spong says, one of his own people has said, “He’s trying to create a church without any morals.”

I come back to this. “You are God, Your words are true.” And so when we read the Bible, which is a reliable communication of the words of God, we are not talking about the Authorized Version, we are not talking about the New American Standard Version, we are not talking about the Revised Standard Version or the New Revised Standard Version, we are talking about the fundamental word of God spoken by the apostles and the prophets, which contain the message of the prophets of Moses and of

the prophets and of our Lord, and what they said, is what David is speaking about. “You are God. Your words are true.” And so we accept the words as we have them, as being an expression of the truth of God.

The last verse says, “Now, therefore, let it please You,” the Hebrew says, “to begin and do.” “Let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord God, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.”

Oh, the greatness of God’s promises to the believer, to David and to Israel and to the believer today, as they pertain to our redemption and the future kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. And these promises confirm, my Christian friend, the duty of prayer, because they indicate God’s will for us. And they also authorize us to pray in accordance with the words of God. In fact, David says in verse 27, he says, “For You, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.”

So because he has revealed these truths, David says, “Therefore I’ve found it in my heart to pray to you” with regard to them. To put in the simplest language that every one of us can understand, it’s this: Know God’s promises. Know God’s promises and pray them. Know God’s promises and pray them or use them. Bring them to the Lord and say, “Do, Lord, as you have said, in your word.”

We have the confidence that if it is his will that they be answered at that moment, they will be. But, they will be answered in his own time. When the Syrophenician Woman came to him and she blurted out her need, Jesus did not even answer her a word.

Samuel Rutherford once said, “You will notice, however, it does not say he did not hear the word. But he did not answer her a word. It was not the time.” In a moment, he will, as she comes the right way, acknowledging the primacy of the nation and her place,

as one of the little doggies under the table, having the crumbs that fall off the table, so that our Lord is astonished by the greatness of her faith.

One last point that can take just fifteen seconds, verse 21, David says, “For Your word’s sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things.” Wait a minute David, “You will do.” David says, “You have done” all of these great things.

Verse 28, “And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant.” David, it would seem, regards the great things as if they are already accomplished, because the God who is true has made the promises and given them.

What a magnificent God we have. We do have an incomparable God. And there is an incomparable people of God, to which you can become a member, as you believe in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the greater son of David, who has come and ratified the covenants in the blood that was shed on Calvary’s Cross and made it possible for the forgiveness of sins to be preached worldwide.

Come to Christ! Believe in Him! Trust in Him! And receive eternal life!

Thank you for bearing with me for five minutes longer but that’s normal.

Let’s stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent chapters on the life of David. Increasingly, Lord, we understand how important this man was, with all of his failures, in the unfolding of the purpose of the ages. We give Thee thanks for his great pray and ask, Lord, that we may be able by Thy grace to pray similarly and in the time that Thou dost give us upon this earth, enable us to be an instrumentality for the glorification of our incomparable God.

We pray through Jesus Christ, our incomparable Lord. Amen.

“An Incomparable Prayer to an Incomparable God” by S. Lewis Johnson
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