**The Lord makes a covenant with David** 30/4/23 dkm

Read: 2Samuel 7, Matthew 11:1-15

Text: 2Samuel 7

Psalms: 89:1-8, 147:14-20, 132:10-18, 72old

‘The Lord had given him [David] rest from his enemies all around’ (7:1). David had had little rest in his life up till now. He spent his early adult years escaping the sword of King Saul. After Saul’s death, leaders in the land vied for power with great treachery. David was confronted by men who murdered out of revenge and personal gain; but in the end the Lord established him on the throne of Israel. David captured Jerusalem and built a house for himself in this fortified city, with the help of Hiram. David stumbled when it came to transporting the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, but he recovered and the ark was set up in the tent he erected for it in Jerusalem. What was next for David? He was the undisputed king of Israel and all his enemies had gone quiet, out of fear for David. David acknowledged that his position and power were the outcome of God’s blessing upon him, ‘because the Lord of hosts was with him’ (5:12).

This chapter of 2Samuel is central to the book, and to the whole OT, and indeed to the NT. In this chapter the Lord promises David that through his ‘seed’ he will establish a ‘forever kingdom’ (7:13). The NT begins with the words, ‘The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham' (Mat 1:1). The apostle Paul writes of the gospel being promised through the prophets, and of Jesus Christ our Lord being born of the seed of David according to the flesh (Rom 1:2, 3). The gospel of Jesus Christ does not start with the birth of Jesus; it started with David, and indeed before this with Abraham, and even way back in Genesis 3:15.

God chose Abraham and made a covenant with him, promising that in him, and through him, Abraham, all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3). God’s covenant with Abraham and its sign of circumcision would continue for generations. The next such covenant was with David, as we see here in this chapter. There was a ‘narrowing down’ of the Abrahamic covenant to David’s family line for the purpose of God sending Messiah, his anointed, into this world. In Jesus Christ a new covenant is declared, a covenant that ‘broadens out’ to include all the nations of the world, just as the Lord promised to Abraham. With this very brief overview of the covenants God made with man, with his chosen people, let us look at this chapter that discloses God’s covenant with David and his house, under three subheadings: ‘A house for the Lord’, ‘A house for David’ and, ‘A house forever’.

**1. A house for the Lord**

The second king of Israel was a man after God’s own heart (1Sam 13:14). He wanted the Lord God to be glorified in the land, and in all the world. He felt guilty that he, as an earthly king, was living in a palace while the throne of the heavenly King was ‘inside a tent of curtains’ (7:2). When he consulted Nathan, his advisor and prophet of God, he was told to go ahead and fulfil the desire of his heart because the Lord was with him (7:3). Another prophet called Haggai would condemn the people of his day for their lack of concern for the house of God when they lived in panelled houses (Haggai 1:4).

David’s concern for the house of God was admirable, as Nathan agreed. But when the Lord spoke to Nathan the answer was different- the initial ‘yes’ became ‘no’. It was in the night, maybe by a divinely sent dream or vision that the word of the Lord came to Nathan (7:4). Notice that there is no, ‘This is the word of the Lord’ formula in his initial advice to David. Prophets did not always speak the word of the Lord; when they did they made it clear with this formula. We do not have prophets like this today because we have the written word of the Lord; so we say as Jesus did, ‘It is written’.

Nathan received a word from the Lord to give to David. That word came in the form of a rhetorical question (7:5). The answer ‘no’ came with an explanation and ended with a twist, with the Lord telling David, ‘No, I will make you a house’ (7:11). There is a play on the word ‘house’ throughout this chapter; sometimes ‘house’ means a building like a palace or temple, and sometimes it means a dynasty, as in ‘royal house’.

So how does the Lord explain this ‘No’ to David who wanted to build a temple in Jerusalem? David later explains how the Lord told him it was because he had shed too much blood (1Chron 22:8), but we do not hear the Lord saying this through Nathan. Rather, the Lord reminds David how a tent had been his home ever since he brought his people, his nation, out of Egypt. The Lord moved with his people wherever they went, never asking them to build him a ‘house of cedar’ (7:6, 7).

The Lord of all the earth does not belong to any particular place. He is with his people wherever he leads them. He did of course, lead them into Canaan to plant them in this land, a land of rest from their enemies (7:10). David was called by the Lord to lead Israel into this rest. The Lord took David from very humble beginnings and made him ruler over his people (7:8). He told David to remember all that the Lord had done for him before thinking about what he could do for the Lord. Some Christians are more concerned about doing things for the Lord than they are about remembering what the Lord has done for them.

**2. A house for David**

‘In a beautiful play on words God says that David is not to build him a house (temple); rather, God will build David a house (royal dynasty) that will last forever’- this is what we find at the end of verse 11 and following. The Lord will do more for David, and through David, than he could even dream of; although, as a man after God’s own heart he did by faith, like Abraham, see the day of Christ (John 8:56). David expected to have a son sit on the throne after him, but what the Lord promises here goes way beyond such an expectation. Note the word ‘forever’ in verse 13 and 16; no earthly kingdom has, or ever will, last forever! Note also the word ‘seed’ which the apostle Paul tells us is singular and refers to Christ (Gal 3:16, Gen 22:18).

The Lord had established David on the throne of Israel and given him rest from his enemies all around (7:1). But David would eventually ‘rest with his fathers’, as in die, and then what? Many think death is the end but the Bible says that after death comes the judgment (Heb 9:27). In the eyes of the Lord death is not the end; his plans and purposes for David’s life went beyond his actual life. David was only a part of God’s plan of salvation. The Lord set up the ‘seed’ of David after him, seed coming from his own body. David would have many ‘sons’ sit on the throne of Israel after him, but one ‘seed’ will be most important because the Lord will establish his kingdom forever, and, ‘He shall build a house for My name’ (7: 12,13). We know that David’s son, Solomon, built the first temple in Jerusalem (1Kings 6), but does the word ‘house’ in verse 13 refer to ‘temple’ or ‘dynasty’.

The Lord goes on to declare, ‘I will be his Father, and he shall be my son’ (7:14) - our translation has a small ‘s’ son, but it could also be a capital ‘S’ referring to Jesus (Mark 1:11). The possibility of this son ‘committing iniquity’ cannot apply to God’s Son, Jesus Christ, so we cannot ignore the earthly descendants of David here, any more than we can ignore his heavenly descendant born of a human, as in David’s flesh (Mat 1:1, Rom 1:3).

The Lord promises under this covenant with David not to take his hand of mercy or grace from David's son, as he did from Saul (7:15). This covenant, like all God’s covenants, is a covenant of grace; God’s grace was shown to Abraham and now to David, and was eventually revealed in all its fullness in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The closing words of the Lord’s covenant with David are unmistakably messianic (cf. 1Chron 17:14). The house or kingdom or throne of David will be established forever because Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, will occupy this throne and rule over the kingdom of God in its fulfilment in Jesus. The kingdom will become a heavenly kingdom, the throne of David a heavenly throne, and the people of Israel the people of God from all nations, tribes and languages, the new Israel of God (Gal 6:16). Wow! David was part of God’s great plan of salvation for Jew as well as Gentile. You may not be a descendant of David in the flesh, but you are part of this great plan if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. By grace through faith you become a child of God and a member of his family, his house, and his kingdom.

**3. A house forever**

The words of the Lord brought to David by Nathan were profound and prophetic, but not beyond comprehension (7:17). ‘King David went in and sat before the Lord’, probably in stunned silence. Who was the king of Israel but a pauper or even a grasshopper (Isa 40:22) in the eyes of *Adonai Yahweh,* the Lord God or Sovereign Lord (7:18)- we find this title seven times in David’s prayer, and we find David referring to himself as a ‘Servant of the Lord’ seven times also. In college I had a lecturer who pronounced the word ‘God’ in a strange way that was somewhat distracting when he prayed. I hope you are not distracted by how I pronounce the word ‘God’ or ‘Lord’ or ‘Father’ because such words are used often in our prayers. How often do we use the words, ‘Your servant O Lord’ in our prayers?

David was humbled by the Lord’s reminder that he had taken him from the sheepfold to make him ruler over Israel (7:8). He prayed, ‘Who am I, O Lord God?’ He was humbled as he listened to the Lord’s promises regarding ‘Your servant’s house’ for ‘a great while to come’ - indeed forever (7:19). David, as we have said, was rendered speechless before the Lord: ‘Now what more can David say to you’ (7:20). The Lord knows our past and he knows our future, and he knows us through and through. Moreover, he knows everything in heaven and on earth- he is truly omniscient. This amazed David, but more than this he was amazed that the Lord God was actually telling him of the future of his house (7:21).

Our God is like no other in that he has made known his ways to us. He has spoken to us in the past by the prophets, and in these last days by his son (Heb 1:1, 2). He has spoken of the past and of the future. David learned of how the Lord God would redeem his people. He had redeem them out of Egypt for himself, but would yet redeem them from sin and death for himself and his glory (7:23). Great and awesome deeds would yet be seen in Israel. Jesus answered the messengers sent by John the Baptist by way of assuring this prophet that Messiah had come: ‘Go tell John the things which you see and hear’ (Mat 11:4).

The covenant God made or cut with Abraham, and with Moses, was, ‘I will be your God, and you will be my people’ (Gen 17:7). According to David’s prayer, the Lord was renewing his covenant of grace with David: ‘You have made your people Israel your very own people forever, and you Lord, have become their God’ (7:24). Jesus said to his disciples, ‘I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you’ (John 15:15). ‘Friends’ and indeed, brothers (Heb 2:11), adopted sons and daughters of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

David finishes his prayer by urging the Lord to do as he promised (7:25). His prayer was that God’s name, not David’s, be magnified and glorified forever. David tells the Lord of hosts that he has understood the promise just made to David and his house, and that he wills the Lord fulfil his promise (7:27, 28). David chooses to confirm the will of the Lord by rehearsing it in his prayer; he makes God’s will his own will. He finds it awesome that the Lord has revealed his good, pleasing and perfect will, and as he prays finds assurance that He will surely fulfil his will for David and his house (cf. Rom 12:2). This is what we must do as ‘new covenant’ people, as people to whom God has revealed his will for us, for our house, and for the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord.