

The Davidic Covenant: A Piece of the Tapestry of God's Redemptive Plan – Part 1
2 Samuel 7:1-11

“Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me.”

Introduction: Getting caught in the MIDST of uncertainty is one of the most uneasy places to be, especially when you are not in control of what preceded nor on what is to come. As I write this, I am checking in on our dear friends in Florida as they await the torrential downpour of an unprecedented storm. They have prepared, fled, and wait to see if it will indeed be a once-in-a-lifetime storm or will dissipate enough to cause less than anticipated damage. I've often thought of people living in London during the bombing of Britain, a nearly four month hellish, nightly bombardment that struck as much fear and resolve as it did physical damage. This onslaught began in the beginning WW2, 10 months into what would become a total war of nations. The people who had to huddle in darkness each night had no idea what the outcome would be, whether they would live, die, or that their precious nation would fall to the unscrupulous German regime. Even now many are feeling a sense of unease as we are in the midst of exceptional circumstances. As we talked in our Shepherding Group this week, it is clear that there is a heaviness in people's jobs, careers, futures, families, and our own State. With an election barreling down and incendiary statements being made daily, where do we find a sense of **certainty, a rock solid foundation to weather the storm with joy?** Or to say it another way, *is there surety in this world, or do we simply hang on and wait for the storm to pass or the planes to go away?*

One of the strengths of teaching sequentially through the Bible is that we go through the whole, verse by verse, paragraph by paragraph, chapter by chapter, book by book. In this we do not skip the hard stuff or make artificial calls as to what we think is most important, rather than seeing the whole of Scripture as useful for teaching, instruction, and training (2 Tim. 3:16). However, one of the **unintended weaknesses** is that we can easily miss the BIG PICTURE, the Grand Story, or the Metanarrative of the singular message of redemption that Scripture lays out. One popular way of expressing this singular theme is in these four words:

Creation ----- Fall ----- Redemption ----- Restoration

The advantage of seeing the macro-picture of the Bible is that we now see each story not as book of disparate stories put together like some anthology of poetry. Instead, each part of the Bible plays a part in telling a grand story of **God's interaction with the world, from beginning to end.** *How do we know about WW2, a war that raged for 6 years? We study its parts, particular battles, what led to the breakout and the ongoing results from it. How do we know about the magnitude of a hurricane hitting Florida? We see the parts of the State affected, some terribly and some not as much, which gives us a big picture idea of the whole.* Scripture does this for us, which is why the study of the OT, including the history, prophecy, and yes, even the genealogies help shed light on what the whole is about.

Scripture is like a larger quilt or tapestry, a beautiful array of the colorful and creative plan of God to redeem people to Himself. My mom is an exceptional quilter, a skill that has been largely lost in these last generations (which is too bad, since quilters make better comforters). I remember watching her spending hours cutting strips of different color fabric that looked like a bunch of scraps before they were laid out, sewn together, and placed in way that came together in a beautiful arrangement (see screen). Each piece alone was unimpressive, but put together in a whole it becomes an optical wonder. If each story is a piece of fabric, the larger swatches that make up the whole are **COVENANTS**, agreements or

contracts between God and mankind that lay the foundation for His interaction with mankind and how He would ultimately bring back sinful humanity to Himself, creating a people for Himself into eternity. We will see that these *covenants are rock solid* and some are based on the faithfulness of God to keep them, NOT US. They not only are links in a chain of sequential events, but are the basis of **hope and confidence in the midst of uncertainty**.

There are **four major OT covenants** (though there are some others that are worthy to study), that not only are built on each other and overlap, but also ultimately point us to **Jesus Christ**, the ultimate seed that was promised to come in Genesis 3:15 – *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”* The word for “offspring” here is the word “seed”, which creates a thread that is woven throughout history and would become more and more clear as to **who** would fulfill this promise. Before looking at the **DAVIDIC COVENANT for a few weeks**, it will do us good to look (briefly!) at the other three major covenants to see how they led to and interact with the Davidic, and ultimately are fulfilled in Christ.

There are **2 major types of covenants** mentioned in the OT that would have been practiced by kings and kingdoms in the Ancient Near East. 1) **GRANT Covenant** – This would be where the giver of the covenant makes a commitment to a vassal – or one under the authority of a lord. It would have put the obligation on the MASTER to his vassal, and it would protect the rights of the servant, making no demands of the servant in the agreement. 2) **Treaty (or suzerain-vassal treaty)** – The giver/initiator of the treaty imposes **obligations on the vassal**, protecting the rights of the master and putting the servant under obligation. There is a promise of reward for obedience and punishment for disobedience.¹

Let’s look at each covenant and see what each type is:

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (Genesis 12, 15, 17) – This is a personal, family, and relatively broad covenant that God made with Abraham that forms the historical foundation for God’s dealing with mankind. It included **promises of land, seed, and blessing**. This narrows the focus of Genesis 3:15 and sees the promise taking the shape through the progeny of Abraham, including the promise of kings (Gen. 17:6). After the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 where mankind tried to glorify himself and make himself equal to God, God made a **GRANT covenant** with Abram, promising to make his seed/offspring like the sands of the seashore and stars of sky (Gen. 15:5). Though Abram “believed and it was counted as righteousness” (Gen. 15:6), Abraham was still sinful, giving his wife to Pharaoh in Egypt out of fear and giving himself to his handmaiden Hagar to try to advance God’s plan of offspring. But this was NOT based on Abraham’s faithfulness, but God’s.

Remember too, though Abraham had this immense promise, he NEVER got to possess the land or see his offspring grow, but instead took it all by faith. How? *“He was **looking forward** to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.”* (Heb. 11:10)

MOSAIC COVENANT – The promises of the Abrahamic Covenant came into greater focus with God and Moses for the people of Israel. In Exodus 19, God gave a **conditional and vassal treaty** that said “if” the people obeyed and kept the Law with their whole heart (Deut. 6:4-5), they would be God’s treasured vessels, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. Again, Moses nor Israel merited this Covenant (Deut. 7:6-8), and there would be specific **blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience** (see Deut. 11:26-28; Deut. 27 and Joshua 8 in terms of Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim).

¹ Michael A. Grisanti, “The Davidic Covenant” TMSJ 10/2 (Fall 1999) 233-250

Remember, this was given to Israel AFTER God saved them from Egypt. The Law was then not given to save, but as a constitution and commitment. Keeping the Law NEVER has saved, but simply points out our sin and desperation as a tutor or guardian (Gal. 3:24-26)

NEW COVENANT – We’ll discuss the DAVIDIC Covenant next week in depth, but out of that kingship comes the NEW, which moves from **regal issues to redemptive ones**. The perfect decedent King of David also functions as the mediator of the NC. This covenant brings to fruition all the other preceding covenants and find their fulfillment in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Jer. 31:31-34), including the law being written on our hearts, not on stone, becoming a people for God’s own possession, and forgiveness where our sins are remembered no more.

Remember, we celebrate this covenant in Communion at the Lord’s Table regularly. This takes the specifics of promises to Israel and broadens them out to all who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, meaning a follower of YHWH (God) does NOT have to become an Israelite to be in the family, but comes through the only door, pathway, and name that is Jesus.

Now, in between the Mosaic and the New is the Davidic, which some have said is like the middle of an hour glass, from which sand funnels through. Walter Bueggemann called it “**the most crucial theological statement in the OT**”. It focuses the Abrahamic and Mosaic not only through Israel but through an eternal line of kings that will culminate in the coming of Jesus (Matt. 1:1 – “The son of David”) and consummate with Jesus being King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:16). So the main focus of all the covenants is on God’s redemptive work through the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, which brings hope and surety to our lives. So it is a worthy study, important piece in the tapestry, and hopeful reminder that God keeps every single one of His promises.

As we come to the text, we also see what this shows us about the character and person of God, which is what we will focus on this morning, as we see **His wisdom, humility and grace** in redeeming a people for His good pleasure.

The Wisdom of God in Gentle Redirection (7:1-5)

Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ² the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” ³ And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

⁴ But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵ “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in?’

Much time had passed between the events of 2 Samuel 6 & 7. We left off with David dancing and bringing the Ark to Jerusalem as a permanent fixture of worship in the city after the debacle three months before. But enough time had passed for David to put down the Philistine threat around and to ship in all the resources from Tyre (2 Sam. 5:11) to build a spectacular house. It was here that we find David contemplating his future with his friend and prophet Nathan.

- **David’s initiative** – You can envision the scene: David had set out to put his enemy under his heel, to establish worship in Jerusalem, and to build a spectacular palace. After years of plans, blood, and schematics, he now can sit down and enjoy the fruits of his labor. But David, up until this point, has been a man of action, not rest. David did not think in terms of settling down and retiring, but in serving the Lord to the last breath. In fact, when he *fails to function this way in a*

few chapters it comes with dire consequences, i.e. not going to war when he should have, setting himself up for temptation and sin. But as he stared out at the peace brought and the accomplishments numbered, he realized he was living in a mansion and the Ark was taking up residence in a **mobile home**. In his mind and heart, he wanted to do something about it. Later on in Israel's history, God would compel the people to be faithful in rebuild the Temple instead of focusing on their own homes (Haggai 1:2-4).

David leaves us a Biblical principle of working to the glory of God, whether or not we have to work for a paycheck or not. Retirement as a means of securing financial freedom to serve the Lord is a great ideal, but retirement that seeks to spend our time and resource on self only is a foreign Biblical concept. A.W. Pink said this, lamenting the tendency for wealth and ease to cause ruin in many believers lives:

“When conflict is over, and the sword is laid down, we are very apt to relax and become careless about spiritual concerns. And then it is, while off our guard, that Satan so often succeeds in gaining an advantage over us.”²

- **Nathan's Approval** – David was careful not to act as impulsively when it came to plans as he did with the Ark, so he vetted out his idea with **Nathan**, the prophet of God. This is the first mention of someone who will be prominent in the story of David and Bathsheba, but for now he simply played the role of counselor, advisor, and friend. Everyone needs the encouragement and wisdom that comes out of friendship, and far too many are lacking Biblical friendship that goes beyond “drinking buddies”.

Proverbs 27:9 – *“Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the **sweetness of a friend** comes from his earnest counsel”*

Proverbs 27:5-6 *“Better is open rebuke than hidden love. **Faithful are the wounds of a friend**; profuse are the kisses of an enemy”*

Nathan would play both of these roles in David's life, here by encouraging to do all that was in his heart, and later having to confront him in the truth, giving him the devastating reality of consequences. We need these types of friends in our lives, and we need to BE these types of friends in others. Friendship demands dying to self, sacrificing for the good and love of another, in both encouragement and exhortation. However, even a friend is not correct 100% of the time.

- **God's Gentle Redirect** – There are times when a dad has to openly rebuke, but other times where there is a gentle, soft, and almost reluctant one. David's motive in asking to build the Temple was pure, and validated by his friend. However, God still told him, **“no, not yet”**, and once again to **“wait”**. It seems like this is a tool in God's toolbox that He exercises in our lives often. Notice that when God told Nathan a different message, it was engaging David as *“my servant”* (v. 5), a term of endearment. There are several reasons why David would have to wait until after his time to build the Temple:

- 1) **He was a man of war**, and his son would enjoy the peace that came after that (1 Kings 5:3; 1 Chron. 22:7-8). Solomon would not have to live with the blood on his hands like David, and had the privilege of building on David's faithful leadership as a soldier.

² A.W Pink, *“A Life of David”*, p. 326

- 2) **God does NOT NEED US to accomplish His purposes and will** – Praise the Lord that He uses us as instruments in His kingdom, but the reality is, God’s servants are ALWAYS limited. No matter how godly we are or how purely we walk, the ultimate future of God’s plan is NOT safe in our hands. This should keep us from deifying our heroes and remembering that God is the One who wills, does, and accomplishes, thus He gets the glory. He is the builder, not us, and unless He builds the house the builder builds in vain (Psalm 127:1). God’s intention was to build a house for David where God’s name would be planted forever. David’s heart was in the right place, but God was the One who would initiate and accomplish. This leaves us where David was: we simply cry out for wisdom and His leading in all areas of life.

The Humility of God in Determined Commitment (7:6-7)

*I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, **but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling.** 7 In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “**Why have you not built me a house of cedar?**”*

It’s a bit counterintuitive to speak of the “**humility of God**”, since by nature and definition God is the only One who’s nature is not tainted by sin, so He can act for His own glory without being sinfully jealous or declare there is no one like Him without being sinfully prideful. Here, God reiterates that He had never been jealous or zealous for His people to build Him a Temple because He was in the process of **securing rest for them first!** This was His heart for His people in the beginning and the end:

Deut. 12:9-11 “*for you have not as yet **come to the rest and to the inheritance that the Lord your God is giving you.** 10 But when you go over the Jordan and live in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and when he gives you rest from all your enemies around, so that you live in safety, 11 then to the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell there, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, and all your finest vow offerings that you vow to the Lord”*

Hebrews 4:9-10 “*So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, 10 **for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his***

In His humility, though God’s glory was the point of the universe and worship was the pathway, He was willing to be with and travel through all the mess and waywardness of His people. We have a God who stoops, who condescends, who reaches out to save rather than One who is up in an elevated spot waiting for us to clean ourselves up and qualify. We are reminded that **Jesus ultimately humbled Himself and was humiliated on the cross** (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus not only leaves us an example of humility to follow (“Have this mind among yourselves”), but through His humility, He has become exalted by the Father as LORD. It is this Lord that has lived our lives, knows our weakness, and gives us grace in the full measure of our need.

The Grace of God in Undeserved Promises (7:8-11)

*Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, **I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel.** 9 And **I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.** 10 And **I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11 from the time that I appointed judges over my***

*people Israel. **And I will give you rest** from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.*

This leads to the final point heading into the meat of the Davidic Covenant: **this promise a product of God's grace alone, NOT about man's accomplishment.** In verses 8-11, we see promises that were realized in David's life and the second part that would be seen after his death.

First, notice all of the actions God had ALREADY done in David's life: **I took you** from the pasture and made you prince/leader. **I have been** with you when you cut off your enemies. In other words, David would have still been a shepherd writing poetry that no one would ever hear and singing to sheep if God did not move him along (not that there's anything wrong with that).

Out of this gracious action comes a threefold promise to David:

A Great Name – This paralleled God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:2). God took a nobody from Ur and made him the father of nations. God took a nobody shepherd from Bethlehem and made him the KING over His people and by his son came the king of the universe. God is jealous for His name (Exodus 34:14), and will not share glory with another. The key in understanding God's grace is that neither man **sought a great name, but rather sought to be faithful, and GOD made them great.** When we think it is our job to accomplish great things FOR God, we add ingredients to a recipe for disaster.

A Place to be Planted – Jerusalem was chosen by God to be known by the world and have a people who would worship Him exclusively. Under David's reign, the nation approached the ideal boundaries that were promised in Genesis.

Rest from Enemies – David brought rest through the sword, but that rest was short-lived because of the sin of his son. This rest was both experienced in David's time but will also be experienced when Jesus puts all of His enemies down with HIS sword (Revelation 19).

Concluding Thoughts:

What do we glean from the set-up of this pivotal covenant? 1) We take heart and are reminded that though we are in a time of waiting, or in the midst of uncertainty, there is a greater story at play that WILL come to fruition. 2) We have a faithful God who leads us in wisdom, humility and grace – who never leaves us and was willing to move heaven and earth to bring us back to Himself 3) We serve a Savior in Jesus Christ who is both **King & Lord of the universe.** He is the One who condescended to buy us back from our sin and the wrath of God. We should never diminish His magnificence or relegate our thought of Him to the background, nor should anyone leave here this morning thinking they are NOT significant, unloved, or unworthy of His favor.