

God's Covenant with David
2 Samuel 7:1-29

How many of you grow frustrated when the stoplight turns green, but the person in front of you doesn't go *immediately*?

- They haven't mastered the art of anticipating the green light like you have!
- Are you tempted to honk your horn for Jesus?
- Do you want to lay hands on them, ala Nehemiah 13? Pull out their hair?
- Do you just keep it to yourself and consider it as "God's providential way of working patience into your life"?
- Are you a more reflective type, pondering the mystery of this problem: "How can this person be unmoved by the green light?"

We think it's absurd to be unmoved by a green light.

But my friends, today we find a more important truth:
It's absurd to be unmoved by God's promises. (ht: Davis)

God's promises are green lights for worship.

In 2 Samuel 7, David hears God's eternal promise to establish his dynasty forever, and his response is *grateful worship*.

- The promises of God ignited David's praise and prayers.
- That's how it should be!

2 Sam 7:1-17

This chapter— at least the first half, without exaggeration – is one of the most important passages in the Bible for understanding the Messianic storyline of Scripture.

Brueggemann sees it as "the dramatic and theological center of the entire Samuel corpus" and in fact "the most crucial theological statement in the Old Testament."

- The Lord's words to David recorded here is also the longest recorded monologue since the days of Moses (197 words).

Verses 8-17 are often referred to as the "Davidic Covenant."

The term "covenant" actually doesn't appear, but it does in **Psalm 89:3**.

- The Bible speaks of God making a **covenant with Noah** – as he promised to deliver Noah and his family from the flood, and to refrain from such devastating floods in the future. The rainbow was the sign of God's promise.
- Then we read of God's **covenant with Abraham** (Gen 15, 17). God promised him descendants, habitable land, and assured him of protection and making his name great. God changes Abram's name to Abraham in Gen 17, and gives circumcision as the sign of the covenant.

- **Moses.** God redeems Israel from Egypt, and establishes a unique relationship with them, and promises to fulfill the land promises. It's a more conditioned and elaborate covenant. God identifies Israel as a missionary people, mediators between God and the nations, thus fulfilling the promise to Abraham (Gen 12).
- With the **Davidic covenant**, God deepens and furthers his promises, and this time **the concept of kingdom is dominant.**
 - Jesus came announcing the kingdom had arrived, fulfilling the OT yearnings for a king like David – but Jesus transformed people's concept of a kingdom.
 - In the Davidic covenant we also see the idea of the kings being a “**son of Yahweh** (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7).
 - In the NT, this Father-son relationship reverberates through the NT, as Jesus is the Son of David, and the Son of God – very God of very God, begotten not made, and the son of David.
 - Paul opens his magisterial epistle to the **Romans with a reference to David (1:3)**

The way **verses 1-17** work is simple: David desires to build the Lord a **house**, that is, a **temple**. But God responds with “I will build you a **house**,” that is, a **dynasty** (read 16).

- The word “**house**” appears some **15 times** in the chapter.
- More kings would follow David, and **only one would ultimately fulfill this promise.**
- God prophetically placed the scepter in Judah hundreds of years earlier (Gen 49:10), he here secured its place within that tribe “until he comes to whom it belongs.”
- **The Davidic covenant became the core message of the prophets in later generations (cf. Isa 9:1–7; 11:1–16; 16:5; 55:3; Jer 23:5–6; 30:8; 33:15–26; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Hos 3:5; Amos 9:11; Zech 12:7–8).**
- Jesus would rule from David's throne as **both David's son and David's Lord**, as Psalm 110/Matthew 22:41-46 indicates.

So this is an appropriate place **to begin an Advent series.**

- The series will end in **Revelation 22**, where Jesus identifies himself as “**The root and descendant of David, the bright morning star.**”
- He's not just the descendant of David, he's also “the root” – He's David's Source, David's Lord.

I want us to look at this passage, and understand what it says about **the nature of our covenant-keeping God and the glory of our Messiah.**

The main applications for us are simple: **We can trust God (for He always keeps his promises) and we should worship God, as David does in 18-29, with humble gratitude.**

We shall study it with three simple headings: **(1) A Noble Desire, (2) A Wonderful Promise, and (3) A Grateful Response.**

#1: A Noble Desire (7:1-3)

Context: David has been crowned king, and has made Jerusalem the new capitol city (ch 5). The capitol had been in Hebron, but he moves it south to Jerusalem. The Jebusites had held it previously.

After a time of rest from war (v. 1), David contrasts his own luxurious house (v. 2), which was made of cedar (5:11), with the measly little tent that housed the ark (6:14-17). He implies that the ark deserves more suitable quarters. (v. 2)

Ark (Ps 132)

Let me remind you about the ark, especially if you only know about it from Indiana Jones!

The ark signified God's special presence and his power among his people (cf., Ex 25; 37)

- It was located in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and later in the temple.
- Human hands were not to touch it (some guys die in the previous chapter for doing so).
- God would speak to Moses, the representative of the people.
- It became important for the events surrounding the Day of Atonement, as well.
- **The ark had accompanied the people from Sinai to Israel, through the wilderness journey, and had been kept at Shiloh from the time of conquest.**
- In a battle, the ark had been captured by the Philistines, and was a war trophy until they experienced shame and disaster as a result of possessing it (see **1 Sam 4-7**).
- It was eventually returned to Israel, to Kiriath-jearim (1 Sam 7:1-2, or "the fields of Jaar" in Ps 132 – "woods" or "thicket"), where it rested for some twenty years until David retrieved it and brought it to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6-7).
 - They basically found it in the woods!
 - **You can find a lot of stuff in the woods... my son**
- **It was out of sight and out of mind in the days of Saul (1 Chron 13:3)**
- But now with David the ark is retrieved and brought to Jerusalem.

There was rest, and in Deut 12:10-11 we find an expectation of resting from war, settling down, and having God's name dwell among them in a particular place.

- **The entrance of the ark into Jerusalem seems to be a confirmation that this is the "place" God has chose.**
- **So surely this is a good time to build a permanent structure for the ark.**

Psalm 132

- **The writer says that David vowed to not enter his bed, nor allow his eyes to sleep or slumber until he found a dwelling place for God (3-5).**

7:3: Nathan the prophet (who would come to play a major role in the course of David's life) then makes a general comment (without any word from the Lord yet), affirming David's noble desire to build a house, "Go do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you."

- **It was a noble desire. It seemed right.**
- **It was as obvious as serving coffee at a coffee house.**
- **Put the ark somewhere glorious!!!**
- **Nathan will receive a clarifying word this very night, as we will see...**

#2: A Wonderful Promise (7:4-17)

God rejected this agenda, and he did so by revealing his word to Nathan (4).
God reveals not only his plan but his own character.
We learn about the nature of this covenant making and keeping God.

A. The Lord's Authority and Wisdom (4-5)

David wants to take the initiative to build this temple, but the Lord reminds him that the He alone will take this initiative.

If there's a temple, the Lord will determine where it is, when it's built, and who will build it!

Notice: "Would *you* build me a house to dwell in?"

We find two important principles for God's guidance here: Sometimes God says

(1) "Not yet" [or sometimes he says...]

(2) "Not you."

- And He can do that because he has all **authority and all wisdom!**
- It's possible to have a good desire (one that even pleases God!) but the Lord says, "Not yet."
 - Ex: If you "desire" the office of an overseer, you desire a "noble task." (1 Tim 3:1)
 - It's a good desire to want to serve God on the mission field, as a pastor, so on.
 - But sometimes God says, "Not Yet."
- Sometimes you can have a good desire, and God says "Not You."
 - David was a man of war. He wasn't the man to build the temple.
 - In 1 Kings 5:3, according to Solomon, David couldn't build because was too busy waging more war.
 - 1 Chronicles 22:7-8 - David says this to Solomon.
 - It wasn't that Solomon was more morally qualified; or that David was wrong for going to war. David was actually a greater man than Solomon. But he wasn't the man to build the temple.
 - "David served the purposes of God in his generation" (Acts 13:36)
 - And that purpose wasn't to build the temple.
- So God is in charge of the building of the temple – He will disclose the details of it.
- God alone is God.

At every significant period of redemptive history, it is the Lord taking the initiative, working out his redemptive agenda.

God counters David's plan with something **stunningly gracious and magnificent.**

If we were studying through 1-2 Samuel, we would recognize a reoccurring theme – *God's ways are not our ways.*

- **God often does what no one expects!**
- David's own appointment as King illustrates this! Samuel is trying to select a king, and assesses the options differently than the Lord. The Lord has his hand on little David, not Eliab with his fine physique (1 Sam 16:6-7).

B. The Lord's Humility (6-7)

6-7: God never lobbied for a house previously.

The Lord has not dwelt in a house because he has been traveling about – that's because his people have been on the move.

- They had been wandering in the wilderness, in were unstable during the period of the Judges.
- In other words, God can't settle down until they've settled down.

Do you see the Lord's humility here?

- **He's the God who travels with his people!**
- He's a pilgrim God while they're a pilgrim people!
- He shares in the journey with them!
- At Christmas we celebrate **"Immanuel, God with us."**
- That's our God.
- He condescends to us in divine humility.

God doesn't want a cedar temple yet, because he wants to settle Israel first (v. 10).

- That's what kind of God we have.
- He's the Shepherd of Israel, who is with the flock all the way, and looks out for their needs and interests.
- Consider what humility this is from the Omnipotent God of glory!

Example: Maroon Five and Jimmy Fallon singing in the Subway in NYC...

- Kevin Durant played flag football with a group of guys...
- Flying to NOLA, Rick Flair in front of me!!!
- Why are these moments a big deal?
- Exalted individuals aren't normally hanging with ordinary folk...

But examples like these pale in comparison with the thought that God Almighty will not enjoy rest until the people have enjoyed rest; the God who will travel with his people; who is not ashamed to dwell in a tent.

Look how close God is to His people!

- And consider how much greater this is in the *New Covenant!*
- After reading passage like this, Philippians 2 doesn't come as a total surprise.
- John: "The Word tabernacled among us" and now by faith in Christ, the Spirit indwells us.
- Our God is with us in our journeys.

**Foes will oppose us, friends may leave or betray us, the trials of life may crush us,
but Jesus will never leave us or forsake us.**

C. The Lord's Grace (8-11)

Nathan now receives a word from God.

- He will have to give David the “revised-and-expanded-version” of counsel.
- It's a word of grace.
- **It's grace on top of grace.**
- God does everything for David.

God rehearses his goodness to David in the past (8-9b), and promises goodness in the future (9c-11): read 8-11.

i. Experienced Grace (8-9a)

God's gracious choice (8)

The Lord took David from the pasture.

- He was an unlikely pick. Again, the pattern of Samuel.
- And the pattern of the birth narratives.
- If anyone is relationship with God, it's because of God's gracious imitative, not our merit.
- Christmas is about good news, not good advice.
- The Lord is gracious in calling, rescuing, and keeping us!

God's gracious rule (8b)

“you should be **prince** over **my people** Israel”

- Notice he calls David a prince (*nagid*), not king (*melek*).
- Why? Because **David serves under God's kingly rule.**
- They are *God's* people. He rules them.

God's gracious presence (9a)

“I was with you wherever you went.”

- God may not have had a home in a cedar temple, but he had a home with David.
- This makes all the difference: *God's presence*.
- Remember Moses? “We won't go without you!” (Ex 33)

God's gracious exaltation of David (9b)

An **echo of Abraham**, “I will make your name great”

He will give David a good name.

God's gracious rest (9b)

“I cut off all your enemies before you.”

- The Lord is a warrior, who fights for His people.
- He was working out his purposes by intervening in these battles, giving Israel the victory.

- **“disturbed no more”** -- That promised rest, will come to fulfillment in Christ himself, who says **“Come to Me, I will give you rest.”** **“I will take care of your great enemies.”**

ii. Future Grace (9c-11)

Notice the promises to David in verse 9c and 11, and the promises to Israel sandwiched between them.

9c: I will make your name great.

11: I will give you rest. I will make you a house.

10: I will appoint a place for my people Israel...

God makes a covenant to David for the good of his people.

- David will be exalted so as to give Israel peace, that is, they will be planted – the climax of Israel’s freedom from Egypt (Ex 15:17).
- In the long run, this covenant will also be a blessing to **all nations**
- James refers to the Davidic covenant and its relation to **Gentiles** in the famous meeting in Jerusalem in **Acts 15**: "Simeon [Peter] has related how God first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written [quoting Amos 9:11] ‘After this I will return and I will build the dwelling of David which is fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up, that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and *all the Gentiles* who are called by my name.'" (Acts 15:14-18)
- So when God said to David in 7:16, "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure before me forever," **he had in view a house much greater than Israel.**

As we read through Kings, we know that the **kings failed miserably to secure the people’s peace and stability.**

- The people were eventually taken into Babylonian exile.
- **But God didn’t cancel the plan.**
- These promises of peace and **“rest”** weren’t fulfilled in David’s lifetime.
- But later prophets understood them to refer to a future period (Isa 9:7; 16:5; Jer 23:5–6; 33:15–16).
- We find his promises of **peace and stability** coming to full fruition in Rev 21:25.

D. The Lord’s Faithfulness (12-17)

Tons of ink has been spilled over these verses. I’m not going to mention every conceivable detail.

- Ralph Davis says he would stamp over them but one word to summarize: **“Indefectible”** – that is “not liable to fail.” Or if you like, **“Unstoppable.”**
- **God’s promise will not fail regardless of how many things might threaten it.**
- In these verses, the Lord states many obstacles to working out this promise and he says ***death does not annul it, sin cannot destroy it, and time will not exhaust it.***

As you read these verses, note that we find both **immediate and future** fulfillment here.

Death does not annul it (12-13)

David will die but the promise will remain: read v. 12.

- Solomon and other descendants will reign.
- We will read in 2 Kings of reoccurring phrases, “God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem,” and “his son reigned in his place.”
- In the dark days, God was leaving the light on.

Sin cannot destroy it (14-15)

Did you notice that, “When he commits iniquity” (14) – that is Solomon or those Davidic kings to come....

God is a realist.

- God will discipline him, but there’s also mercy (15).
- His faithful love will not depart.
- The covenant is grounded in God’s **covenantal mercy.**
- God will punish kings in the future, but their sin will not break God’s covenant.
- Sin will not have dominion over God’s dominion.
- Sin will not dissolve his faithful love.
- Ultimately, one king would come and not sin, and would keep the covenant faithfully.

Time will not exhaust it (16)

Time wears out a lot of our promises, right? **Diet, Bible reading plan, exercise...**

- God’s covenant will not wear out with time.
- Twice we find the word, “**forever**” in **v. 16**, and once in verse **13**.
- This can only mean either (1) we will have an eternal succession of kings, or (2) that one king will finally come and reign forever – the King to end all Kings.
- From the rest of Scripture, we understand that the latter is in view.

Jesus is the forever King that God promised.

- It seems like a strange way to bring the kingdom when you read of his birth and ministry, and then he dies on a cross!
- That’s the forever King – reigning from the cross?
- Yes, this King would be crushed for our iniquity, and by his stripes we are healed; and on the third day, he vacated a tomb in the Middle East, as the vindicated and victorious Son of God - David’s Son and David’s Lord. In him, we find rest.

V. 17: Nathan faithfully fulfilled his responsibility.

Summary: Neither death, sin, nor time will frustrate God’s plan to establish the Davidic dynasty.

Despite a time of exile, and despite the evaporating reform of Ezra/Nehemiah, and the passing of the intertestamental period, we open to the NT and we find this Davidic promise fulfilled in Jesus.

Luke 1:26-33

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Jesus trampled over sin and death by his death and resurrection, and he reigns forever.

God's kingdom is unstoppable.

Application: So my friends, you can trust God.

If God can keep his promises about something eternal, of which death and sin and time can't destroy, then can't you trust him in small things?

Now, as an American, we don't really like this idea of a king, do we?

- We don't want anyone with too much power.
- We distrust leaders.
- **But suppose you could have God as King!**
- Suppose your King were perfectly just, never deceived, all-powerful. Suppose He welcomed, transformed, and strengthened sinners, and promised to make them kingdom citizens in a kingdom without sin.... **Wouldn't you want that King?**
- The whole kingly dynasty would never have one of those.
- **Until we get to Jesus.**
- **This servant-King died for his people, and rose in glory.**
- **To Jesus we all say, "Come be our King!"**
- We should trust Him, and we should worship Him...

#3: A Grateful Response (2 Sam 7:18-29)

David gives us a good model to follow.

- God rejected David's noble plan but he did not reject David.
- David is overwhelmed by God's grace to Him.

v. 18: He sat before the Lord, presumably inside the temporary tent before the ark and offers (1) praise and (2) petition to God.

A. Marveling at the Grace of God (18-24)

David is awestruck. Rightly so.

Marveling at Previous Grace (18)

- He marvels not just at God choosing him, but also preserving him up to this point.

- There have been 21 chapters since 1 Samuel 16.
- He has experienced danger, battles, treachery, slander, despair, and more!
- Yet, God had brought him safe thus far.
- **Just stop and take note of your life at some point this week, and consider God's grace to you and how he has preserved you. See if that doesn't trigger praise.**

Marveling at Future grace (19)

- If preserving David wasn't enough, now God was giving him a forever promise!
- David marvels at his role in the working out of history.

Marveling at Sovereign Grace (20-21)

- God's plan for David and the kingdom didn't originate with David – it was not the result of human wisdom and ingenuity.
- It was God's sovereign plan.
- **God wanted to do it.**

God has left David in speechless wonder.

"Who am I?" – we can join him in this question.

Marveling at Redeeming Grace (22-23)

David's praise now is prompted by a reflection on **how good God has been to Israel.**

23: The **purpose** of redemption: from bondage, to/for God's possession.

- God didn't just free them – he adopted them. He took them as his own.
- **We too have been saved from something and for someone.**
- We have been "redeemed from our empty way of life" (1 Pet 1:18-19), and our lives are no lived for the glory of our Lord.

24: the Lord also promises to **preserve** his redeemed people.

- In the NT, we find the Lord **Jesus assuring his people of their eternal security.**
- John 10 – "No one can snatch them out of my hand."
- Do you hear the Shepherd's word to you this morning?

24b: The people are also a **privileged** people: "you have become their God."

- This is covenant language. See Ex 6:7
- **God gives Himself to his people.**
- We hear our story here – **redeemed, belonging to God, preserved, and privileged.**

It's not possible to look at the flock, and not praise the Shepherd!

If someone paints a picture of you, and it's a well-done work of art, one question that always arises is this: "Who painted it?"

- David is saying something like that.
- When you look at God's people, you say, "Who is their King?"
- Not "Who are these sheep?" but "What Shepherd gathered them?" (Davis)

B. Praying the Promise of God (25-29)

Finally, David's praise ends with prayer.

- He asks that God's promises be made historical reality.
- David is profoundly confident in God's Word.
- His prayers are aligned with what God has promised.
- He takes the promises of God and says, "Do it Lord." "Be pleased to do it."

Two Brief Reflections/Summary Statements

#1: God's revelation to David prepares us for David's greater Son, King Jesus.

- **Acts 2** in the Pentecost sermon, Peter refers to David saying: [read **2:23-36**]
 - Repent and believe!
 - Proclaim the King like Peter to the nations!
- **Matthew** opens up with a genealogy – that's boring, right?
 - No! It's incredibly important for seeing God's promise fulfilled.
- **Hebrews 1** is remarkable to reflect upon related to **2 Sam 7**.
 - **1:5**: quotes Psalm 2 and then 2 Sam 7:14
 - Jesus is the Son *par excellence*
 - He's the perfect Son, the perfect King (**Heb 1:8**).
 - The message of Hebrews involves this: "Persevere because Jesus is King"

#2: God's grace should lead us to humble gratitude.

- "Do all things without grumbling and complaining" (Phil 2).
- It reflects a lack of gratitude.
- Gratitude is the right response to our gracious, covenant-keeping God.

Carson story while ministering in Vancouver:

"A woman well known for her *enthusiastic complaining* (!)....

One day I came beside her, and said, My dear.... I have 'a word from the Lord' for you. I know what the Lord's will is for you.

"What is it?" She asked.

He said, "This is God's will that you be *thankful*." (1 Thess 5:18).

He said, "She didn't speak to me for a year, but even that was an improvement!"

May we be known for being humbly grateful people.

Look what He has done for us.

Let us join with David and bow before Him.

As the hymn says, "Oh come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord."

Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother;

And in His name all oppression shall cease.

Sweet hymns of joy *in grateful* chorus raise we,

Let all within us praise His holy name.

Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,
His power and glory evermore proclaim.
His power and glory evermore proclaim.

He shall reign forever.