***Vol 3***

*Session 3*

***God Makes a Covenant with David***

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Introducing the Study

David was anointed as the next king of Israel. Though he might not have looked the part, God was grooming His man for this season of ruling, and He demonstrated His commitment to David through David’s unlikely victory over Goliath. David was the unexpected warrior and king, and through him we see the shadow of King Jesus, who would eventually win the greatest victory over sin and death.

**What are some unlikely places you have seen God work this past week?**

Though he would be the king by which future kings would be measured, David was not the end of the story. Rather, David and the promises God would make to him serve to remind us of the fact that history is moving toward the recognized rule and reign of God’s true King–Jesus Christ.

**Why is it important that we not see David as an example of what a king should be but rather see him as a shadow of Jesus to come?**

Setting the Context

The mighty Goliath had fallen at the hands of a shepherd boy, and the nation had taken notice. The people rallied to support their new champion in David, and David became a powerful leader in Saul’s army. His popularity grew and grew, and all the while, Saul’s

resentment of David grew along with it. On several occasions, Saul tried to kill David, eventually causing David to flee for his life. He only escaped with the aid of Jonathan, Saul’s son and David’s close friend.

Saul pursued David relentlessly for years. Meanwhile, David gathered around himself a band of outcasts and outlaws as a makeshift army, and they lived life on the run together. During this time, God showed He was with David time and time again, and David proved his faithfulness to both God and Saul. Though David had the chance to kill Saul and assume the throne on different occasions, he refused to take matters into his own hands and instead was content to see God’s plan come to fruition.

**What were some specific occasions this past week when you longed for the full reign of King Jesus to come to fruition?**

Eventually, both Saul and his sons were killed in battle. Rather than rejoicing, David mourned and then set about to unify the kingdom that had fractured with the death of Saul. David began his reign as king of Judah when he was thirty years old, and within seven years, he ruled over all of Israel. “Seeing Jesus in the Kings” (p. 35) shows how God’s work in David’s life points forward to His promised King—Jesus.

**What are some of the dangers we might face if we invest our hopes in what an earthly ruler might provide?**

CHRIST Connection

God promised David that future kings of Israel would come from his family and that his kingdom would last forever. God kept this promise by sending Jesus as one of David’s descendants. All of history is driving toward the day when Jesus, the Son of David, will be recognized by all as the King whose kingdom is everlasting.

Continuing the Discussion

**In your own words, what is a covenant? What made God’s covenant with David so special?**

**Why is it important that we see the fulfillment of God’s covenant with David in the rule and reign of Jesus Christ?**

***As a group, read 2 Samuel 7:8-11a.***

**Why do you think God reminded David of where he had come from prior to making these promises?**

**What are some ways God fulfills the promise of rest through Jesus?**

**In what sense do you long for Jesus to give you rest right now?**

David needed to remember that he had not manufactured what was about to happen; rather, it was through God’s provision and favor that David would be king. What’s more, the rest that would come to God’s people would be by His grace alone. Similarly, we can only find true rest when we embrace the work Jesus has done on our behalf and gratefully live inside the grace God gives to us.

***As a group, read 2 Samuel 7:11b-17.***

**Why might it be significant that God said He would build a house for David?**

**In what specific ways do you see these verses pointing to Jesus?**

**What does it mean that God is making these promises and not requiring David to make promises in return?**

At the beginning of chapter 7, David had been considering building a house for God. But God let David know that He, not David, would build the house. But David’s vision was far too small, for God was not going to build a physical structure but an eternal kingdom that would come through one of David’s descendants, Jesus the Messiah. This would come to fruition not based on David’s strength or faithfulness but by God’s grace and His strength to keep His promises.

***As a group, read 2 Samuel 7:18-29.***

**What characteristics of God did David highlight in this prayer? Why?**

**How do these verses show us the right way to respond to God’s promises to us?**

There is no room for pride in the promises of God. What God does, He does out of grace and love, and the proper way to respond is for us to acknowledge His grace and live in a spirit of humility and gratitude for all He has done for us in Christ.

MISSIONAL Application

Record at least one way you will apply the truth of Scripture as a recipient of God’s grace and rest through faith in Jesus Christ, God’s forever King.

**Personal Study 1**

**God promises to give His people eternal rest.**

***Read 2 Samuel 7:8-11a.***

We catch up with David in 2 Samuel 7, where he was living large as the established king of Israel. From his palatial balcony, David looked down and saw the travel-worn tabernacle that served as God’s house. So David made a commitment to build God a beautiful new house. In response to David’s seemingly generous act, God flipped David’s script.

Before God issued one of the most notable promises in the Old Testament to David, He referred back to recent history to remind David how he got where he was. God, not David, was the provider. Look at the reminders He gave David:

• “I took you from the pasture.”

• “I have been with you.”

• “I have destroyed all your enemies before you.”

God reminded David that every step of the way—from the pasture to the palace—He was orchestrating David’s steps. In keeping with a common pattern in Scripture, God reminded David of His faithfulness before He made His promise.

When we read this passage, we ought to ask ourselves: Are we not just as quick as David to consider ourselves independent and self-sufficient? Have we forgotten how God has brought us to the place we are now? In times of plenty, we are less likely to throw ourselves on the mercy of God than when times are difficult.

Grace—it seems so simple. It’s a gift, costly for the giver but free for the recipient. Yet this is where so many people stumble. We’re hard-wired to ask: “How much is enough? How often do I need to come to church? How much money do I have to give?” These questions will never get you to the gospel. The gospel begins with God’s extravagant gift. Jesus’ blood—and Jesus’ blood alone—is enough for your weary, guilty soul.

Christianity is not about you living a good life and then giving your record to God; it is about Jesus living the perfect life and then giving His record to you as a gift. He lived the life we were supposed to live and died the death we should have died. His life is ours, but only if we receive it. The story of God flipping the script and making a promise to King David sets the stage for that glorious gospel.

With David’s perspective corrected, God began giving promises to David. The first three conclude with God declaring that peace will come to Israel. Israel had been in wars and battles for many years, so this was welcome news. And if we are honest, we all admit we want a place to rest—a place of security, no longer worrying if something bad or tragic is just around the corner.

For the Christian, our rest is found in Jesus Christ. In John 15:9, Jesus commanded us to make our home in Him. His name and His presence are the “rest” we’ve been looking for. He who keeps His word is sure to make good on the promise to grant rest to His followers (Matt. 11:28). When we make our home in Him, He will display His glory through us to the world.

**How does the gospel of Jesus Christ grant rest to those who believe it?**

**How does our inability to rest in Christ hinder our witness?**

**Personal Study 2**

**God promises to establish an eternal kingdom***.*

***Read 2 Samuel 7:11b-16.***

God lifted David’s eyes to see something amazing. David had been thinking of building God a house. But what God offered to do instead would never have entered David’s mind as something to ask for.

David’s desire to build God a house might seem odd to contemporary readers, but it was a common practice in the ancient world. King Tut, for instance, built a temple for the Egyptian god Amon-Ra. In exchange, Amon-Ra allegedly proclaimed that King Tut would rule a kingdom that spanned the globe and lasted for millions of years. (He fell just a few thousand miles and a few million years short.)

But note the order: (1) a king builds a temple for a god; (2) the temple makes the god famous; (3) the god thanks the king by blessing his kingdom. That’s the order of every religion in the world: work hard for me and I’ll work hard for you. But God rejected that idea and reversed it. Essentially, God said to David: “My power establishes you, and you will always be My debtor. Your life will be lived in grateful response to Me.” The house that God would build would not bear the inscription “Built by David for God” but “Built by God for David.”

This promise for God to build David an eternal house is a promise that ultimately refers to the Messiah who would come and reign forever. But one detail immediately strikes a lot of readers as odd: “When he does wrong…” If we’re talking about Jesus here (which we are), then what is this about iniquity? Jesus never sinned!

It is helpful to remember that most biblical prophecies have a dual meaning. There is an immediate meaning, and then there is an ultimate one. From the perspective of the prophets, of course, it was often difficult to untie the two, but they remain distinct. Think of it like the experience of seeing a mountain range in the distance. When you first spot it, you might see two distinct peaks seemingly right next to each other. It’s only as you get closer that you see these peaks are miles apart.

The first fulfillment of this prophecy was David’s biological son Solomon. Solomon’s name literally means “rest,” so in many ways he would exemplify this promise. His reign would extend rest throughout Israel, and it would be on his watch that Israel constructed the temple (the subject of a later session). Still, Solomon would do some patently foolish things. Even so, God would keep His promise and would not strip the kingdom from him completely.

Yet this prophecy points through Solomon to another king—Jesus. He was the descendant of David whose kingdom would last; His temple was His own body and, by extension, the church. Unlike Solomon, Jesus would not need to be disciplined with the stripes of men. Instead, He would be bruised for our iniquity, and by His stripes, we would be healed (Isa. 53:5). The real Son of David would build the real temple of God and establish God’s real presence with His people forever. And He would not just be David’s son. He would be God’s own Son, building the house of salvation for God’s people on earth all by Himself.

Wrap your head around that—God would build His own house, and He would become the house He promised to build. In Jesus, God would be the fulfillment to His own promise.

**Why do you think it is important that God promised to reign through a human being?**

**In what ways does the church fulfill the role of being God’s temple?**

**Personal Study 3**

**We respond to God’s promise with gratitude and humility.**

***Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29.***

This messianic promise was astounding—so astounding, in fact, that we may be tempted to miss David’s response. But here we see the story come full circle. David began this discussion wanting to go and build for God, but he ended it by sitting, wondering, knowing, pondering, adoring, and then exalting the King who deserves all glory.

This is the key to salvation. Asking “How much is enough for God?” is the wrong starting point. Instead, salvation starts with knowing what God has already done, which leaves us sitting in stunned awe in the presence of God. Yes, trusting Christ will lead you to do things for God. But everything you do is only ever a grateful response to what He’s already done for you.

We often think that the world is supposed to look at Christians and say, “What impressive works they’ve done! They must really love God.” But as God shows us here, our witness to the world should leave them saying, “Wow, what great things God has done for them!”

We Christians are not primarily role models. We are trophies, works of art that demonstrate God’s saving power. No one admires a trophy for having done something great; they recognize that the trophy represents someone having done something great. Our lives are supposed to burn brightly with evidence of God’s miraculous greatness. And ironically, the more we steep ourselves in the finished work of Christ, the more we will find His Spirit rising up within us. The fire to do in the Christian life comes only from being soaked in the fuel of what He has done.

This story is all about God’s house, God’s kingdom, God’s unfolding drama. But the wonder of it all is that we are invited to share in that story. God calls us first to behold Him in wonder, but He also commissions us to go and tell.

What God told David is just as true for us. Our kingdoms will fail. Our businesses will fail. Our loftiest ambitions will fail. Even our families will not last forever. Jesus is the only thing that will last forever. And the greatest privilege of our lives is asking God to show us where we can join Jesus. He doesn’t need us, but He will use us for eternal value. He can make our minuscule lives into something beautiful, precious, and everlasting. For far too many of us, our lives are just so small. We think of God as a personal assistant, someone to get us out of a jam. What He desires for us is so much bigger, so much richer, so much more profound than any of us realize.

But that greatness begins in humility. It is one of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith: If you desire greatness for yourself, God will oppose you, but if you desire God to be great, your life will have eternal value and miraculous power. Don’t waste your life building houses for yourself, or even building houses for God. Rest in His all-sufficient work, and answer Him when He calls.

**In what ways do ingratitude and pride hinder us in our mission?**

**Why are gratitude and humility necessary qualities for us as we share the gospel?**