

## **Introduction**

All over America, crime is skyrocketing. Thefts and assaults and murders are through the roof. Never before have I felt more the need to be vigilant. Between the rise of crime, the moral decline of our society, and the growing disdain for Christianity all around us, a hopeful spirit may wear thin at times. If we are looking within the world itself for hope, we will find none. But the people of God have a compelling reason never to lose hope. No matter how bleak our circumstances may become, we have this anchor for the soul. We have the covenants and promises of God. This morning we have the opportunity to consider one of the key covenants by which God has bound himself to sustain our hope.

[Read text and Pray]

When you closely examine the major covenants of God, you will observe a forward movement leading to increasing clarity about God's plan and purpose for the ages. One of the clearest aspects of His purpose is to place his people securely at rest. But through sin we botch it all up. All would have been well in Eden had the man and woman not sinned. The restart after the flood offered godly Noah and his family another opportunity. No sooner had they disembarked from the ark than Noah himself planted a vineyard and got himself drunk. The downward spiral of sin was soon in full swing again.

Out of the darkness God called a man named Abram of whom he would make a great nation and through whose descendant all the families of the earth would be blessed. He would grant to them the land where Abraham sojourned. God then made a covenant with the descendants of Abraham through Moses to plant the people in the land of promise. The Lord would bless the people if they would keep his law. In their disobedience the people experienced hostility, danger, and oppression from their neighboring enemies.

A further intervention of the Lord was needed. And he intervened in the person of David. In our text this morning the LORD binds himself to bless David greatly in order to bless his chosen people with a place of peace and security. The Lord's covenant promises a future and a hope for his people. It is a promise to which we ourselves may hold fast today.

The context of the covenant takes us a number of years from David's ascendancy to the throne in Israel and conquering of the city of Jerusalem. We come to a point in time near the end of David's reign in which all is seemingly at peace. The king is now living in his own palace which was built for him by Hiram king of Tyre later in David's reign. By this time the Lord had given David rest from all his enemies. He is enjoying some peace near the culmination of his life. Now living in luxury and with time to think, David considers the fact that the ark of the Lord is housed in a tent while he lives in a palace. It doesn't seem right. He mentions his concern to the prophet Nathan who encourages him to go forth with his desire to do something about the situation and build the Lord a house.

But the Lord is unwilling for David to build a dwelling for him. The idea was not from the Lord. He never needed or asked for a permanent building. It was not a bad idea, however. It is just that David was not the one the Lord wanted to build a house for him. He was a warrior and a man of bloodshed. But the concern of David occasioned a word from the Lord concerning his own plans for the house of David—not a dwelling but a dynasty. And this is where our focus will be this morning.

God's message to David was a reminder of his grace in the past, a promise regarding David's dynasty, and a statement of hope for Israel's future. These are the points I want to highlight this morning.

### **I. God's Grace in David's Past (8-9a).**

Nathan was dispatched to bring David the Lord's message. From the outset, he was to remind David of the evidences of God's grace in David's life. He asserted, "I took you from the pasture following the sheep that you might be prince over my people Israel." It was the Lord who had brought David from the pasture to the palace. The Lord sent Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint the next one who would be king. He came and none of the other older and perhaps more kingly-looking men were chosen. No one even imagined the Lord would have his choice set on David. Oh, he was out in the fields watching sheep. But God. God had set his choice on David. David was not chosen because he was great. He was chosen because God is gracious and God qualifies those he calls. It was a call of grace to take David from obscurity and put him on Israel's throne.

The Lord would also have David remember that he never left David. He was with him wherever he went. The Lord was with David when he went against Goliath. He was with him when he was brought before Saul to play music to soothe his frazzled nerves. The Lord was with David when Saul hurled his spear at David, when Saul pursued David, and when he almost caught up to him. The Lord was with David when he went into the land of the Philistines and faced the prospect of entering into battle on their side against his own people. Again and again the Lord delivered David. He preserved him. He was with him.

The Lord would also have David remember that he had cut off all his enemies before him. In chapter 8 we see a number of details concerning the enemies of David whom he defeated. There were of course the Philistines, the Moabites, King Hadadezer and his allies the Syrians, the Edomites, and the Ammonites. It would not be untrue to say that David was a great warrior. But it is quite true to say that all of David's success as a warrior were because of the work of God in his behalf. It was in all actuality the Lord who cut off all David's enemies.

Here was David wanting to do something for the Lord. He wanted to give him an upgrade in his living situation. It was common among the pagan kings of Palestine to construct a new and magnificent temple for their god when they had been successful. They would then expect further success as payment from those gods. David was the warrior, and he had experienced success, but the Lord wanted David and all the rest of the watching world to know that the Lord was not like the idols. It is not a relationship of interdependency wherein the god gives aid to the human and the human returns the favor to the god who is then indebted to render further aid to his worshiper. No. With the Lord who alone is the true God, it is ALL of grace. From beginning to end, from battle to battle, deliverance to deliverance, defeat to defeat.

God does not bless his servants as a return favor for the good they have done to him. He is not obligated to his worshipers in any way. He does not need us to build him a temple. He does not need or depend on anything we think we might have to give him. No! But we, like David, need God! We owe everything to his grace. We may not be kings. We may not think ourselves in extraordinary positions of importance. But if we are servants of the Lord, it is because of the Lord. He has brought us from out in the field of the world into the family of God, to be co-regents with Christ. He has been with us every step of the way, protecting, intervening, revealing himself. He has been our defense from every enemy and is our hope for the final defeat of every other enemy. Why are you here today? Why are you able to listen to this message? How is it you have a care for

your soul? How is it you have escaped who knows how many close calls in your life so that you are still alive today? It is the grace of God.

You know, we are called to serve the Lord. We are obligated to obey him. But let us never overlook the fact that we really have nothing we can do for him or be for him that is not ultimately just a matter of God's grace operating through us every step of the way.

And think about this. If we live and breathe and do this or do that purely by the grace of God, we are really no more than servants of God and of his purpose no matter what we might be considered in the world. A marked contrast occurs here in the flow of the text. In the first three verses of the chapter there is a switch in the designation of David. Heretofore, he is normally referred to as David. But what do we see in verse 1? "Now when THE KING lived in his house ..." And in verse 2: "THE KING said to Nathan the prophet." In verse 3: "And Nathan said to THE KING." David is called THE KING in verses 1-3.

Now then notice another contrast as the text continues to flow. The LORD instructs Nathan in verse 5, "Go and tell MY SERVANT DAVID." Then again in verse 8 the LORD speaks to Nathan, "Thus you shall say to MY SERVANT DAVID." It is so worth pointing out that God may put us in high places and places of earthly esteem but we are never more than his servant. But then, and most of us find ourselves in a position in which we are not called the king; we are not in a position of earthly prestige. We are an operator or a clerk or an associate or a technician. Even then it is no less true than the people who belong to the Lord are his servants. And yet, we need to understand this: To be the servant of the Lord is an exalted position. He calls Israel his servant. He calls David his servant. He calls the Messiah in Isaiah 42 and 52 and 53 "MY SERVANT." In the New Testament Paul delights in designating himself the bond servant or the bond slave of the Lord. He delights in serving the purposes of God. He recognizes that it is a high privilege.

Do you delight in serving the purposes of God wherever that will take you and what ever it may mean in your case? Being a servant calls for humility, but it is a great thing to be a servant of the Lord! It is a high privilege to serve his cause in your life. Embrace it! Delight in it! That is what Mary the mother of Jesus did when Gabriel came to announce to her that she would conceive and bear a son without knowing a man. That son would be called holy—the Son of God. The response of Mary was, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." When you look at your place in this world—I mean the things you can't do anything about—will you say with Paul and with Mary, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to his word"?

## **II. God's Promise for David's Dynasty (9b, 11b-17).**

There is a sudden shift in verse 9 from verbs that are in the past tense to verbs that speak of works the Lord WILL DO for David in the future. "I TOOK YOU; I HAVE BEEN with you; and I HAVE CUT OFF your enemies." But now beginning in verse 9: "I WILL make for you a great name (9). And I WILL give you rest (11) and I WILL make you a house. I WILL raise up your offspring (12) and I WILL establish his kingdom, and so on. Now let's take note of the things the Lord WILL DO for David in the FUTURE.

A. First, he says, "I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth." David already had a great name. Certainly he got a great name when he by the power of God defeated Goliath. He had a name then greater than Saul, for the song went that Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten-thousands. One chapter over in the account of David's victories, the

text says that David had made a name for himself when he returned from striking down 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. So he had a great name already, but the Lord will make it even greater. David is to have a great name like the great ones of the earth. In the flow of biblical history, at this point there were no greater names than Abraham or Moses. The Lord is indicating that David will be right up there among them in terms of significance. And God's covenant with David will be no less significant than the ones he made with Abraham and through Moses. So when Matthew, in the New Testament, writes about Jesus, he begins with his genealogy. His very first statement is this: "the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." And it is this son, this descendant of both Abraham and David, Jesus, of whom the Apostle Paul declares that God has bestowed on him THE NAME that is above EVERY name so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord. Now God's covenant with David way back in the Old Testament to make for him a great name is already pressing forward in that direction.

B. At this point in 2 Samuel 7, the Lord does something interesting; he speaks of what he will do with his people Israel and then he comes back to speak specifically of what he will do with David. Let's jump over what he says about Israel for now and come back to that. For now we note that the Lord will make for David a house.

David's desire was to BUILD a house for the Lord. The Lord says to David, "No, but I will MAKE you a house." David's house was to be made not built. It is not a building. The word house can also refer to one's family or household. In the case of a king, it is a dynasty consisting of his descendants. Here is what the Lord says by way of explanation.

David, when you die, I will raise up your biological descendant after you and establish his kingdom. He will be the one to build me a house. I will establish his throne forever. I will have a father-son relationship with him. That means that when your descendants disobey, I will discipline them. However, I will not turn my back on the Davidic dynasty. It will continue into eternity. I will discipline disobedience, but I WILL NOT take away from the house of David my plan for rule and dominion as I did with Saul. Your throne will be established forever.

Let's consider how this word was fulfilled. Solomon, the son of David by Bathsheba, became king after David's days were fulfilled and he lay down with his fathers. He built the first temple—a house for the name of the Lord. Like David before him, Solomon was not sinless. Nor were any of David's other ordinary descendants. The Lord treated them as sons. When they disobeyed he disciplined them. Things were so bad with them that Israel was split in two, and then the Babylonians brought an end to the active reign of Davidic kings in the southern kingdom. It is as though the family tree of David was cut off. Nothing remained for hundreds of years but a stump. But the plan of God was not thwarted, and the covenant of God was not forgotten by Yahweh. In the midst of those years the prophet Isaiah lifted up his voice and proclaimed—There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit (Isaiah 11:1).

I have a stump in my yard. Once there was a miniature ornamental tree growing in the flower bed and it died. I cut it off near the ground leaving only a stump. That was several years ago. The tree itself died, but there was still life, because every spring new shoots spring forth out of the stump. Isaiah used that kind of phenomenon to assert the same would happen with the dynasty of David. It would appear dead and cut-off, but there would sprout a shoot from the stump. Jesus is that shoot. He is David's ultimate descendant through whom this covenant is kept.

This descendant of David demonstrates how David's name is truly among the greats because this descendant is the greatest. He is exalted as the God-man who is king forever. Death could not stop him. He defeated death itself. Yahweh raised up this son from the dead. Unlike all of David's other sons, this son never sinned. Like all of David's other sons he was disciplined. He was beaten with the rod of men and the sons of men put stripes upon his back. However, not one of those stripes was deserved. This descendant, Jesus, took those stripes for others. This servant of God was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds those are healed who belong to him. We are healed from the curse of sin.

This son of David also built a house for the name of Yahweh. It is not a physical house but a better one—one made not of literal stones but of people. Jesus declared that he was building a church (Matthew 16:18). Peter explains that we "like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). Paul explains to Christ-followers that we "are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in us" (1 Corinthians 3:16). We are a place of worship, a people of worship to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. We are to abstain from the passions of the flesh and deny ourselves pursuing righteousness and holiness to the glory of God because the temple of God is holy and that is what we are. And we are ruled by King Jesus, the descendant of David whose kingdom is sure forever.

### **III. God's Hope for David's People (10-11a).**

A moment ago we skipped over the text's reference to Israel. We come back to that now. It really is part and parcel of what God covenants to do with David. Israel's hope is bound up in the future of the Davidic dynasty. The promises God has given to David are not for David alone but for all the people of God. God's concern is not restricted to David. God's concern is for all his people. God will carry out his covenant to David because it is in this way that his people are blessed and made secure.

As we look at the hope of David's people Israel, we are focused on verses 10-11a. Three terms stick out—people, place, peace.

I refer to these people as David's people because they are under his dynastic rule. In that way true Israel consists of the people for whom David has been made king. However, in the ultimate sense these are the people of God. Yahweh says of them that they are "My people." God's covenant, with David brought to pass in its fulness in Jesus Christ, is for the sake of his people. They need a savior-king who will defeat all their enemies. Jesus is that king. But these are the people of God. How may they be identified? They are called Israel in this text. These are the people whom God called out from the world. They are the descendants of Abraham. In God's great and wonderful plan however, it has always been his plan that his people would include individuals from every tribe and tongue and nation. National Israel was his way to reach the world. In the grace and plan of God, Gentiles are being grafted in to the body of his people. On the one hand NOT all natural Israelites are true people of God. And on the other hand many non-Israelites ARE part of his people. How do we know them? How do you know if you are among this people?

Well, God's people are those who by faith submit themselves to the rule of David's greater Son Jesus. He said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." He said, "Whoever comes to me I certainly will not cast out." He instructed his disciples to make disciples of all nations." The gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who

believes, to the Jew first and also the Greek. If you are a disciple of Jesus, if you turn to him as your king and savior, then by faith you are among the people of God.

If today you are not among the people of God, you abide under the righteous wrath of God. I encourage you right now to surrender yourself to God's king, Jesus. Turn from your sin and trust in God's king. He will save you, forgive you, and in him you become part of God's people!

The second word here is PLACE. Through David and through his dynasty, God assures his people that he will appoint a place and plant them so they will dwell in their own place. When Yahweh brought Israel out of Egypt, Moses put into song the Lord's intent. Exodus 15:17 says, "You bring in [the people you have redeemed] and PLANT them on your own mountain, the place which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary which your hands have established." The people were now PLANTED there, but God's promise is of a future planting of his people. He is looking beyond the city of Jerusalem in the Middle East to a new type of Jerusalem. This is the place which is the future hope of the people of God.

The third word is peace. You see in the place of which the Lord speaks, his people will be disturbed no more. Violent men will afflict them no more. They will have rest from all their enemies.

Where does this take us? The history that followed David's day is one of unrest and being carted out of the land. And when they came back, they were oppressed. But the Lord never changed his promise. Old Testament prophets continued to speak of a place where his people would abide with peace and security and without fear. Jeremiah 23:5-6 was one such reminder: "I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely."

The people of God in a place of peace. That place ultimately is the new Jerusalem in the new heavens and earth. As Dale Davis says, it's a city so secure and so safe that its "gates can be left wide open" (Revelation 21:25).

We go back to God's covenant with David, and we are pointed forward to King Jesus whose kingdom is eternal and who reigns forever. His people will forever dwell securely and without fear from any enemies. This is the hope of the people of God.

## **Conclusion**

Friday I got to witness the making of a covenant. Kurt and Sharry Sonnenburg's son Ben got married. He and Alyssa covenanted to one another their steadfast love and devotion. It was a beautiful ceremony reflecting the solemnity of marital vows. Based upon the covenant they made with one another, there is great hope for a fruitful and joyful marriage. May God bless them.

How much more assuring to you and me this morning, however, is this reality. God himself, who cannot lie, has made a covenant. He bound himself to sustain the dynasty of David for the well-being of his people. In Jesus Christ we see how he has kept that covenant. And that is one of several covenants in the scriptures which are the ground of our unflinching hope. By his king, God is determined to bless his people with a place of peace. Hold fast to that so that your hope may remain undiminished while you live in this crumbling world.