

# How to Respond to a Promise

King David Pt.7

2 Samuel 7:17-21 9-13-2009

**Summary:** David received the promises through the faithfulness of Nathan who did not mind telling every word of a vision that contradicted what he had already said. David also submitted, and that caused gratitude when David meditated on what had been given, what was promised, his own lowliness, and God's greatness.

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>RECEIVING THE PROMISES V.17</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Faithful proclamation.....	2
Submissive reception .....	3
<b>GRATITUDE FOR THE PROMISES 18-21</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Meditation 18a</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Past grace 4	
Future Grace4	
<b>Humility 18b-21</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Shock at honor 5	
God's slave 6	
Not self-loathing 6	
Self-esteem 7	
So why the blessings? 7	
The law of man 8	
No words 8	
<b>God's Greatness 22</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Lord Yahweh 9	
Titles.....	10

2 Samuel 7:17 Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation. 18 Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said: "Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, Lord Yahweh, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, Lord Yahweh? 20 "What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Lord Yahweh. 21 For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. 22 "How great you are, Lord Yahweh! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. 23 And who is like your people Israel--the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? 24 You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, Yahweh, have become their God. 25 "And now, Yahweh God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, 26 so that your name will be great forever. Then men will say, 'The Yahweh of Hosts is God over Israel!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you. 27 "Yahweh Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to offer you this prayer. 28 Lord Yahweh, you are God! Your words are trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. 29 Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, Lord Yahweh, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever."

## Introduction

The past few weeks we have been studying the promises God made to David in 2 Samuel 7. We found that this is one of the most important chapters in the entire Bible, as it is the foundation for almost all

Messianic hope. So we are not surprised that the writer slows his pace way down and devotes a large amount of space to describing this covenant with David. What is a little surprising, however, is the fact that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the writer of 2 Samuel devoted even more space to David's response as he devotes to the promise itself. From verse 17 all the way through the end of the chapter we have a long prayer from the heart of David in which he responds to the promises God gave and this prayer teaches us how to respond to God's promises.

Now, what I just gave you is not the greatest introduction to a sermon, because probably none of you walked in here thinking, I am dying to know what is the right way to respond to a promise. I think by the time we get to the end of the sermon you will very likely be convinced about how important it is to know how to respond the right way to God's promises. But that will be too late, because by then you will have already listened to the sermon with a not-so-eager heart. The purpose of an introduction is to help you start out with an eager heart, so let me show you at least one reason why this is so important in your walk with the Lord.

This is a very familiar passage.

**2 Peter 1:4 Through these (his glory and goodness) he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to ...**

- and then he goes on to tell us some things we need to do to make that happen. Let's apply some logic and think that through for a moment. The goal is to obtain two amazing things: Participation in the divine nature; and Escape from the corruption of the world. Start with the first one – participation in the divine nature. I do not have time to preach a whole sermon on what all that means, but for now can we agree on this – whatever it means, it is something really, really, really good? Can you think of anything more valuable or more important for your spiritual life than participation in the divine nature? I think it would be fair to say that there is nothing more important or more valuable than that.

The second one is not hard to understand at all – escape from the corruption of this world. We all certainly want that!

So Peter mentions two things that are supremely important and valuable. And both are available to us. They can be obtained. How?

**2 Peter 1:4 ...he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption ...**

It is through God's promises that we get these two amazing things. But how does that work? Is it automatic? God just promises these things and we get them no matter what? Look at verse 5.

**5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith ...**

Obviously it is not automatic if it requires that we make every effort.

So you put all that together and what you get is this: You can escape from sin and participate in the divine nature if you respond the right way to God's promises. And David's prayer in 2 Samuel 7 teaches us the right way to respond to God's promises. That is why this is important. A huge portion of the success of your spiritual life is riding on how you respond to God's promises. So let's see what God has to teach us here.

## **Receiving the Promises - verse 17**

It starts with David receiving the promises, and that involved two parts. The first part came from Nathan's faithfulness as a prophet.

### **Faithful proclamation**

**2 Samuel 7:17 Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.**

The word “all” and the word translated “entire” are the same word in the Hebrew. Nathan reported to David according to all these words and according to all this revelation (or vision). So there is a strong emphasis on the fact that Nathan reported every last word and accurately described every bit of the vision. Nathan is a faithful prophet. His initial reaction to David’s desire to build was to tell him to go ahead with it, and that surely God would be on board. And then He finds out that the Word of the Lord says otherwise, and instead fudging the truth or adjusting the vision to fit a little better with what he thought, he faithfully reported it with complete accuracy even though it was the exact opposite of what he naturally assumed.

That is the mark of a faithful prophet, and it is a model for a faithful teacher today. The responsibility of the preacher or Bible teacher is to deliver the Word to the people accurately.

## **2 Timothy 2:15 Make every effort to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.**

The pastor is more like a waiter than a chef. My job is not to create something in the kitchen. My job is just to get the food God has prepared from the kitchen to your table without messing it up or dropping it. Any time you are preparing a message, whether it be for a sermon or a Bible study or Sunday school class or devotional – or you are just using a passage of Scripture in a debate, and the passage does not quite say what you were really wanting to say, there is always a temptation to fudge it a little to make it fit your message. That is a constant temptation that we all face all the time – especially those of us who teach. If you have some really good material, and what the text actually says seems a little on the dry and boring side, and you are scared to death of being boring –oh, it is so tempting to just sort of look the other way when your conscience tries to point out to you that what you are saying is not really what the text is saying.

And other times it is even less intentional than that. It is not that the teacher purposely says something other than what the text says – he just ends up misrepresenting the text because of lack of proper study. He takes a glance at two or three commentaries, does not quite have time to look up the key words, bypasses the more difficult commentaries in favor of the ones that have a lot of application or popular level material, and overall just does not put the hours in that it takes to meditate and think thoroughly through the passage. So he ends up teaching what the passage seems to say, but because of lack of study he misinterprets or misapplies it.

It is a very serious matter to be a spokesman for God and claim that He said something that He did not say. If you were a spokesman for a major corporation, or for the President of the United States and you did that you would be in big trouble; imagine how serious it is to do be a spokesman for God and misrepresent Him. Well, whether you are a teacher or not if you are a Christian you are a spokesman for God. That is why I was so pleased to see how many of you were interested to take the hermeneutics class. We should all be zealous about making sure we know how to properly interpret God’s Word.

## **Submissive reception**

So the first part of David receiving the promises had to do with Nathan’s faithfulness. He swallowed his pride, did not mind a little egg on his face, and went ahead and reported with total accuracy exactly what God said. The other part of David receiving the promises had to do with David’s attitude. David had this huge life dream that would have been the hallmark of his whole career and legacy, and it seemed so good and all his momentum was moving in that direction, and God said, “No.” And when David gets word from God’s messenger, how does he respond? Some kings would have just put Nathan to death and moved ahead with their plans. Others might have gotten depressed and sulked for a while, or tried to argue about it. Others might have acquiesced to God’s Word but with a bad attitude. But David’s response is a long, heartfelt, emotional prayer of thanksgiving. Instead of focusing on what he could not do and could not have; instead of focusing on God’s “no”, David turned his attention to God’s will in an accepting, submissive posture, and the result was that David was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude. The tone of this prayer is one of astonished joy. God’s promises take David’s breath away, and at some points he is even at a loss for words to express the gratitude in his heart.

What happens in your heart when God says no or when He takes some precious thing away? When God says no or takes something away that is proof that that thing would not have been what is best for you at this time. Does that generate joy and gratitude, or does your soul refuse to trust Him and cling to thinking that that thing would have been good? As long as your attention is fixed on that thing you thought would be good, you

will be blind to the goodness of what God has promised. But David has a submissive heart so the moment God says no to his dream David is ready to embrace what God does promise because he trusts God just as much in His “no’s” as in His promises.

## **Gratitude for the Promises - 18-21**

So because of David’s attitude, God’s “no, but…” generates joy rather than sorrow. And in verses 18-21 we get a clinic on gratitude.

### **Meditation - 18a**

#### **18 Then King David went in and sat before the LORD**

This is the only place in the Bible where someone is said to pray in a sitting position. Normally people pray bowing or kneeling or standing or prostrating themselves – but only here do we read of someone sitting. Sitting should not be the normal posture for prayer. Your posture in prayer is part of your prayer. What you do with your body is part of what you are saying to God. And usually what we want to say to God should be communicated best by kneeling or prostrating ourselves or standing. That is what we always see in Scripture – except here.

Here David sits down. The Hebrew word can be translated *sit* or *dwell*. It seems to be the point that David went in there for a long time. And that is reflected in the fact that it is a long prayer. Usually in Samuel when someone speaks or prays the writer just gives us one or two lines to give us the gist of what was said.

So when the narrator includes a section this long (from verse 18 all the way to the end of the chapter) to summarize a prayer you get the feeling that this was quite a prayer.

There is a place for times of extended prayer. There are all different kinds of prayer. There are the quick, one-liners that you offer up to God all through the day as you go about your work. There are the prayers that last a minute or two – giving thanks for a meal or asking for guidance or whatever. And those are an important part of our prayer life to be sure. But another crucial part of our prayer life are those times when you follow Jesus’ example and get away, alone for a time of extended prayer. You get the feeling that it was fairly often that David grabbed some writing materials and went off alone somewhere for a time of extended prayer. There is a lot missing in your pursuit of God if that is not a part of your prayer life.

#### ***Past grace***

So David goes in there pulls out his pen and prayer journal, and takes a seat. He is going to be there a while. Doing what? What will occupy his thoughts and prayers? Well, he begins by meditating on what God has done. If you are like me, gratitude does not just spring from your heart automatically when God gives you blessings and promises. For real gratitude to rise up requires some meditation and consideration and serious thought about the gift.

And that is what David does. He started by looking at past grace.

#### **18 ... and he said: "Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"**

How far? Five miles? It is five miles from Bethlehem where David was born and raised to Jerusalem where he is now. Is that what he is talking about? No. He is not talking about the five miles; he is talking about the twenty-three chapters. From 1 Samuel 16 where he was out tending sheep to 2 Samuel 7 where he is reigning as king. He starts with a survey of past grace.

For most people that is as far as they go when it comes to gratitude. Almost all their thanksgiving is about what God has done in the past or what he is doing in the present. But that is not David’s main focus at all. Nor is it God’s main focus.

#### ***Future Grace***

**19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, Lord Yahweh, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant.**

Literally it says, “This was small in Your sight, and so You spoke about the future of Your slave.”

The massive, staggering, unimaginable blessings You have heaped on me over the past twenty-three chapters of my life, taking me from chasing after some sheep in the field to being an exalted, internationally respected king – Oh Lord, You look back at all that blessing and say, “That is small. It is not enough. It is not even close to enough. Let me tell you what I am going to do in the future...” And it is those future promises that really light up David’s heart with thanksgiving. If the thanksgiving and gratitude in your heart is mainly focused on what God has already done you are missing most of what there is to be thankful for. I think if David was sitting at the table at Thanksgiving with his family and they went around the table and everyone said what they are thankful for, I think David would have talked about the future more than the past.

What God has already done is staggering – more blessing than we can even conceive of. But it is small in God’s sight compared to what He has promised in the future.

## **Humility - 18b-21**

So David enters the presence of God in the Tabernacle, takes a seat, and begins by meditating on God’s past grace and promised future grace. That is step one in nurturing gratitude. Step 2 is humility and recognition of you own lowliness.

**18 ... and he said: "Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"**

### ***Shock at honor***

One of the most striking things about this prayer is how surprised he is by it. He is shocked at the idea that God would give him such honor – given his lowliness. That is remarkable, because David was one of the most impressive men alive. He had tremendous physical ability, tremendous mental ability, tremendous leadership ability, he was a great musician, a great writer, everything he did was a success, everyone loved him, his enemies feared him, he was the king and was honored by surrounding nations, and yet when God honors him with these promises it comes as a genuine shock. Most of us do not have a tenth the ability or fame or success or character that David had and yet when some honor comes our way we think it makes perfect sense. “It is about time I got the recognition I deserved!”

One of the ingredients of greatness is the ability to discern reality. And when you can see reality you can see the truth about yourself and all your inflated conceptions about your own importance disappear in a hurry.

Someone recently asked me if it is wrong to seek honor from God.

She said, “I am always put down and treated as worthless and ignored and neglected and it hurts. And something in me longs to be paid attention to and respected and honored and treated as though I had some worth. Is that wrong? Is it wrong for me to want that and to seek that?”

Well, what does the Bible say?

**Matthew 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled**

**Luke 14:8 When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor**

Nebuchadnezzar sought glory for himself and God struck him down, took away his senses and let him crawl around on the ground like an animal. Herod sought honor for himself in one of his speeches and God struck him dead on the spot and his body was eaten by worms. Seeking honor and glory can be an extremely wicked thing.

But on the other hand, it can be a good thing too. In fact, it is such a good thing to do that you have to do it if you want to go to heaven.

**Romans 2:7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.**

If you are self-seeking you go to hell; but if you seek honor you go to heaven. So desiring and seeking honor can be wicked and it can be righteous. What makes the difference? Two things. The first is how you get the honor. The Bible does not say, “Do not seek honor.” It says, “Do not seek to honor yourself.” Being honored by God is always a good thing in Scripture. What is condemned is exalting yourself. If you exalt yourself God will oppose you. But if you humble yourself God will exalt you, and that is a good thing.

The other key is to seek honor as an undeserved gift of grace rather than as something you deserve. If you think you deserve some credit for once, and you deserve a little honor and respect, and when it comes you think, *It's about time I got what I deserved* – that not only disqualifies you from receiving honor from God but it would destroy the joy you would get from the honor anyway. The reason David's heart is so full of joy here is precisely because of his sense of unworthiness. If you get the honor you think you have earned, that is no big deal. But when you realize you are a nobody and deserving of nothing and then God grants you honor, that brings real joy in the Lord.

### ***God's slave***

David refers to himself as “your servant” ten times in this prayer. A more accurate translation is “your slave.” Humility at His feet is the only path to really knowing Him, and that is the only path to joy. The prideful human heart resists that. In our flesh we want to take God's place and imagine that we are supreme – or, if not supreme, at least relatively important. What we do not want is to be anybody's slave. Our prideful, puffed up hearts revolt against that idea. In fact – even our Bible translations stumble over that. The word is “slave” not “servant.” And yet throughout both the Old Testament and the New, almost every time the word “slave” appears it is translated “servant.” We can live with the idea of being a servant. That at least retains a little dignity. A servant is an employee. But a slave is the personal property of his master. The master literally owns the slave. And nothing is a greater assault on the pride of the human heart than the idea of belonging to someone as their own personal property.

### ***Not self-loathing***

I should point out at this point, however, that this kind of humility is not the same as self-deprecation or self-loathing. When you get frustrated with your failures and say, “I hate myself” – that is not the same thing as humility. In fact it is the opposite of humility – it is pride. Pride looks at itself in the mirror and expects to see wonderful things. And when it doesn't, it is shocked and becomes angry or despondent or depressed. Humility looks in the mirror and sees exactly what it expected to see and then turns its attention to God.

So a proud person stumbles into some sin, or reads Scripture or listens to a sermon or one way or another the sin in his heart is exposed; and Satan, the Accuser jumps on him while he is down with all kinds of attacks, and he just leaves his defenses down and allows the enemy to drive him to despair. Now he is depressed, and all he can think of is how worthless he is and how much he hates himself. His heart is ugly, and that is an intolerable reality for his pride to deal with. So he just gets more and more discouraged until he finally just gives up the fight. He says, “It doesn't matter anymore,” and he just gives up.

Contrast that with a humble person. The humble person comes face to face with the sin in his heart and it causes sadness and sorrow, but not despair. The humble man looks at his ugly heart and then turns his attention to a redeeming God. And the ugliness in his own heart makes his delight in his redeeming God all the greater. It makes his longing for the fulfillment of God's promises all the more intense. It makes him more of a round peg to fit in the round hole of knowing God. It makes him all the more humble and all the more suited for nearness to God, because God says...

**Isaiah 57:15 "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."**

God *lives* with the contrite. There are two places He prefers to dwell – in a high and holy place and with the contrite and lowly. But contrition is not the same thing as self-loathing.

That does nothing to restore a broken relationship. Think about it – think about your own relationships. When someone sins against you, for the relationship to be completely restored that person needs to repent, and part of repentance is contrition. Doesn't it go a long way in restoring closeness when the person who hurt you

has a profound sense of how serious his sin was and is deeply broken and contrite? So you want true contrition. But what if the person responds not with true contrition, but with mere self-loathing? What if he just beats up on himself and goes around talking about how worthless he is, and he is just depressed and discouraged and angry with himself. Is that what you want? Does that make you feel any better or do anything to restore the relationship? No. So if you want to understand the right way to respond to your own sin against God, it may help to think about what you want when someone sins against you. You want contrition for sure, but you do not want self-loathing.

### *Self-esteem*

Another point of confusion in the matter of humility has to do with self-esteem. The world will tell you that the solution to just about everything is to increase your self-esteem. And in many quarters the church has bought into that idea and Christianized it by saying, "The way to get high self-esteem is by realizing how much God values you. When you see how important you are to God that will help you realize your great worth and importance, and then you will have healthy self-esteem."

That may sound biblical at first, but it is not. When you realize how much God values you that should not increase your self-esteem, because God does not value you because of your intrinsic worth. So then why does He treasure you so much?

### *So why the blessings?*

That is what David is asking.

### **2 Samuel 7:18 Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?**

That is a rhetorical question. The answer is, nobody. Who am I to receive favor from God? Nobody. What claim do I have in myself to grace? None. What is there about me that would cause God to bless me? Nothing. How much intrinsic worth do I have? None.

So then why the blessings? Why the favor? Why the grace? People are forever trying to come up with explanations for why God will send some people to hell. If God is so loving and so gracious, why do people go to hell? But if they understood anything about holiness they would not ask that question. The pressing, impossible conundrum in their hearts should be, "If God is truly holy, how is it that any sinner could ever receive His favor?" Why does anybody go to heaven? And most of all me – why on earth would God ever even consider saving me?

So David begins his prayer, "Why me?" A lot of people begin their prayers that way but for the opposite reason. They say "Why me?" when they face trials. But David did not ask that when he faced trials; he asked that when he faced blessings.

"Why me, Lord? It doesn't make any sense. There is nothing in me that would justify God showing me favor and blessing. So how can God justify making these promises to me?"

The answer comes in verse 21.

### **21 For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.**

I am not deserving of anything good but God gives me good things anyway for two reasons: For the sake of His Word; and According to His will. **For the sake of your word** means God is doing this in order to fulfill the promises He had made in His Word in the past. For example,

### **Genesis 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.**

God gives blessings for the purpose of showing the reliability of His past promises.

Secondly, He does it according to His will. In other words, He does it just because He wants to do it. It is in His heart to do it. God blesses you not because you deserve to be blessed but because He likes blessing you.

Sometimes people have resisted the doctrine of election because it seems to make God arbitrary and capricious. They say, “If God chose me for no reason that would be arbitrary, because the definition of arbitrary is when you do something for no reason.”

So there must be something God saw in me. He must have looked into the future, saw that I would believe, and chose me based on that. Because God wouldn't do something for no reason. What those people do not understand is the truth of this verse. God is not capricious. Is there a reason why He chose you and blessed you and passed over others? Yes, there is a reason – but it is not a reason in you; it is a reason in Him. The reason God chose me is not my worthiness. The reason God loves me is not my loveliness. The reason God chose to love me is because of His will and His heart. In the overall scheme of His grand, eternal plan He had a good reason – in spite of the fact that there is no reason in me.

God is His own motive. His grace is not tied to what we deserve; it wells up by its own energy like a perennial fountain. God is self-moved to bless because He blesses for His own sake. He loves with a self-originated love. His highest priority is His own glory, and so He will do what glorifies His name. And in His love He has tied the glory of His name to the way in which He loves you, so that the more He blesses You the more He is ultimately glorified.

### *The law of man*

#### **19 ... Is this your usual way of dealing with man, Lord Yahweh?**

That is a very difficult sentence to translate. There is no question mark in the original - literally it just says, “This is the law of man.” Probably the meaning is something like “This is the charter for all of mankind.” David seems to have some idea of the connection between God's promise that all men would be blessed through Abraham and the promise God just made to David. David's offspring is going to be the mechanism through which all of humanity is going to be touched.

### *No words*

#### **20 "What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Lord Yahweh.**

David runs out of words. One of the most eloquent men ever born is at a loss for words. Gratitude is an emotion. We all know that it is possible to say “thank you” without actually being grateful. Gratitude is caused by thought and reason and understanding, but gratitude itself is a feeling.

If you recognize that someone has given you something, and you even feel a sense of indebtedness to them, but at the same time you resent them – that is not gratitude. Gratitude is a feeling of indebtedness combined with delight in the gift and the giver. It is when you have positive, warm feelings of love toward a person in response to a gift. If I find \$100 bill on the sidewalk, then I am happy. But if you give me a gift of a \$100 then my happiness is directed toward you. That is why two people can give you the exact same gift and you can have gratitude toward one and not the other. Gratitude is not delight in the gift; it is delight in the giver because of the gift.

So David receives the promises from God through the faithful prophet, and he instantly throws out the direction he was going and embraces God's way. And he goes in before the Lord, takes a seat, and spends some time thinking through God's blessings – especially future ones. Then he moves to thinking about his own lowliness and unworthiness which increases his gratitude because you are thankful for the things you are given, not the things you earn. And the less you deserve them the more thankful you are.

### **God's Greatness**

But David is not finished. Acknowledging his own lowliness is only half the story. The other end of worship is recognizing God's greatness. And both are crucial. The farther the distance between your lowliness and God's greatness the greater your worship will be. And I realize at first that might seem a little counter-intuitive. Normally you would think that for a relationship to be close you want to be alike. But that is not how it is with a relationship with God. There is one sense in which you want to be especially close to God. But when it comes to your perception of God's greatness compared to your greatness, the further the distance the



better. Trying to relate to God when you have a high view of yourself or a low view of His greatness will not work. Anything that starts to close that gap between your lowliness and His exaltation will ruin your relationship with Him. The kind of relationship with God that will bring you joy and motivation and passion and meaning in life – it will not click into place until your heart embraces the truth about you and the truth about God.

If you want to experience awe when you stand and look at a mountain, the greater the distance from the base to the top the more awe-inspiring it is. If the peak is only a couple thousand feet from sea level, that is not much of a mountain. But if the top of the mountain is, say 14,000 feet, but the base is at 11,000, then it is still not that impressive. But when you are standing at sea level and looking up at a peak that is 18,000 feet above you – that is an awesome thing to see.

We need to have a high view of God, but a high view of God by itself is not enough to awe us. If we also have a high view of ourselves we will not think much of His greatness. And if we have a low view of ourselves that is not enough either if we have a low view of God. But the farther we can stretch that distance between our lowliness and God's greatness the more awestruck we will be.

And so David turns his attention to God's greatness. And he does that in a couple different ways. One is in the titles he uses.

### ***Lord Yahweh***

David began the prayer by addressing God as “Lord Yahweh” and he keeps using that title throughout the prayer. He uses it so often it really sticks out. Have you ever been around one of those people who like to say the Lord's name in between every phrase in a prayer?

“Dear Lord, we thank You Lord, for this day You have given us Lord, and we pray Lord, that Lord, You would watch over us Lord, and guard us Lord, as we trust in You Lord...”

That is kind of how David's prayer is here – and every time He refers to the Lord he says the same thing, “Lord Yahweh.” Adonai Yahweh – Adonai is the word for Lord; Yahweh is God's personal name.

**18 "Who am I, Lord Yahweh ... that you have brought me this far? 19 And as if this were not enough in your sight, Lord Yahweh, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, Lord Yahweh? 20 ... you know your servant, Lord Yahweh. ... 22 "How great you are, Lord Yahweh! ... 28 Lord Yahweh, you are God! ... 29 ... you, Lord Yahweh, have spoken...**

Seven times David uses that title.

Why does he do that? Was David one of those people who mindlessly repeats God's name over and over in prayer – almost as a substitute for the word “um” – as a verbal pause? No. For one thing it is not the only way he refers to God in the prayer.

### **24 Yahweh**

### **25 Yahweh God**

### **26 Yahweh of Hosts**

### **27 Yahweh of Hosts**

So David uses a variety of titles. And I think it is safe to say that saying “Lord Yahweh” was not a mindless habit, because David never uses that title any other time in Samuel or Kings or Chronicles. It is not a habit. He never says that, and then all of a sudden he says it seven times in six verses. And he never says it again after this (except in a couple Psalms).<sup>1</sup> So what is David up to here?

I did a search on that exact Hebrew phrase and found that the first time it appears on the pages of Scripture is in Genesis 15 – which is the account of the Abrahamic Covenant. When God first made His

---

<sup>1</sup> Ps.69:7, 71:5,16.

promises to Abraham, Abraham twice used this title to refer to God. Genesis chapter 15 is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. And it was certainly one of the most important chapters in David's Bible. And I think it is a very safe bet to assume David knew that chapter extremely well. I think David understands what is happening here. He knows this is a big, big event – on the scale of what happened with Abraham. And so he borrows Abraham's way of referring to God in his prayer of thanksgiving. It is not a thoughtless habit; it is a very thoughtful way of addressing God in a manner fitting for the situation at hand.

### *Titles*

Use of various titles for God is a wonderful way of enriching your prayers. Finding a title that fits what you are praying about and fits the emotions you are feeling at that moment can really amplify and assist the affections in your heart toward God. Depending on the prayer you address Him as...

Oh great God  
My dear Father  
Lord of Hosts  
Mighty One of Israel  
My Master  
My King  
My Savior  
My Lord  
My Maker  
My Rock  
My Redeemer  
The Eternal One  
Lord God Almighty  
Holy Father

There have been times when I have been writing a prayer and I use one of those titles and at that moment my heart gushes with delight in God or awe or love or amazement that I can address Him in such a manner. If you are praying about some concern and asking God for some huge providential action, and you refer to Him as the Almighty Sovereign, you might find your heart surging with faith as soon as you call Him that. When you have sinned against Him and are seeking forgiveness and refer to Him as Redeemer or dear Father, that can inject hope into your heart. If you are praying for guidance and you call Him the Light of the World, or you are praying for protection and you call Him Lord of Hosts, or you are crying out for help in the midst of chaos and trouble and you call Him my Rock – whenever you do that you not only honor Him by recognizing those truths about Him but you preach a sermon to your soul that can have all kinds of soothing, calming, strengthening, convicting, or faith-building effects.

**Benediction: Colossians 3:15-17 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him**