



Sunday School Lesson for October 3, 2004.
Released on: September 28, 2004.

Study: **2 Samuel 7:18-29** "Creating a New Dynasty"
Questions and answers are found below.

Devotional Reading: **2 Samuel 7:10-17.**
Background Scripture: **2 Samuel 7.**

TIME: about 1000 B.C.
PLACE: Jerusalem

Golden Text: Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.—2 Samuel 7:16.

2 Samuel 7:18-29

18 Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant.

21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God.

25 And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

27 For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

29 Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

How to Say It.

Nathan. Nay-thun (th as in thin).

Ur. Er.

TODAY'S AIM

Facts: to analyze David's prayer as he sat in God's presence and reflected on what he had learned from Nathan's vision from God.

Principle: to learn how to approach God in prayer through praise, agreement with divine desires, and petition based on the revealed will of the Lord.

Application: to encourage believers to pray to God by placing themselves within a framework that pleases Him and thus brings good results from their prayers.

LESSON BACKGROUND

As Bible students know, David was not always the man he should have been. He was nevertheless a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). Unlike other kings, David never gave in to the lure of idolatry but always showed pure devotion to the God of Israel.

Although not permitted to build the temple (2 Sam. 7:1-10), David was promised a lasting dynasty. God declared, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" (v. 16).

A time was coming when no heir of David would sit upon Israel's throne, for the people would be carried away as captives to Babylon. The promise of David's everlasting kingdom finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Son of David (Mark 12:35-37).

David's Humility (2 Samuel 7:18-22)

If David is disappointed because he is not allowed to build the temple, his disappointment is lost in the grandeur of what God has done for him. Greater still is the grandeur of what God promises to do in the future.

1. What did David desire to build? Why was he not permitted to do so?

2 Samuel 7 opens, David was settled in his palace and had been victorious over all of his adversaries. Reflecting on his blessings and prosperity, David indicated to Nathan the prophet that he wanted to build a temple to house the ark of the

covenant.

Nathan's immediate response to David's suggestion was one of affirmation. Surely the Lord would be pleased with David's desire to build a permanent place of worship.

That night, though, the Prophet Nathan had a vision in which the Lord told him that this was not God's will. According to 1 Chronicles 28:3, David was not permitted to build the temple because he had been a man of war and had shed blood. However, David's son Solomon would be given this privilege (2 Sam. 7:4-13).

2. What did God promise David?

Even though he would not build the temple, something better was promised to David. He would have an everlasting dynasty (v. 16). This promise usually is called the Davidic covenant.

"The Davidic covenant was a phase of the original Abrahamic covenant. It was made between God and David in anticipation of the kingly rule of Christ. It was both conditional and unconditional: conditional in the sense that disobedience would result in punishment; unconditional in the sense that even if there were disobedience, the covenant itself would not be abolished. Four elements made up this agreement: (1) the promise of a dynasty; (2) the promise of a kingdom to rule over, including land and people; (3) the promise of regal authority; (4) the promise that this house, ruling over this kingdom, would endure forever" (Lindsell, Harper Study Bible, Zondervan).

Having been told of these great promises, David was overwhelmed. Our entire printed text is David's prayer in response to this awesome revelation from the Almighty.

3. What does it mean that David "sat before the Lord" (2 Samuel 7:18)?

While some passages speak of kneeling (Acts 20:36) or standing (Mark 11:25) in prayer, here David "sat before the Lord" (2 Sam. 7:18). This may also indicate that he went into the tent where the ark of the covenant was kept (6:17).

Humbled at the thought that God would choose him, David declared, "Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" (7:18). Perhaps humility is one of the reasons God was able to use David in so many different ways. Both here and in the many psalms he wrote, David expressed his utter dependence upon the Lord.

Remember from whence David had come: he was a mere shepherd boy, the youngest of eight sons. When the Prophet Samuel came to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be king, none expected that David would be the one (1 Sam. 16:1-13).

4. David knew that in and of himself he did not deserve to be king. Why do you think that God chooses to use those whom the world often sees as weak to accomplish His purposes? How should this affect our own thinking?

God intends that His name be glorified above all else. God does not desire to use people who feel adequate of their own strength, but those who recognize that it is by God's power that success is achieved. (See Zechariah 4:6.)

Just as God chose the weak things to advance His cause in the past, so the church today should do the same. Are there people who are being overlooked for ministry in

our church because we consider them weak in some way? Let us make sure we don't overlook their potential for service! (See 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.)

5. Why did David feel humbled when he considered God's plans (vs. 19, 20)?

The phrase "And this was yet a small thing in thy sight" means "as if this were not enough." David recognized that God had already greatly blessed him by appointing him king. Now God was offering more honor to him and his family. To be elevated from the sheep-fold to the throne was certainly no "small thing."

David probably would have been content to know that the Lord was going to bless his children and grandchildren. This promise, however, stretched far into the future, for God had "spoken also of [His] servant's house for a great while to come" (v. 19).

The question "And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" continues to reflect David's awe at God's gracious choice in selecting him for special privileges.

Perhaps it means something like, "Is this the usual way you deal with people, O Lord God?" If this idea is correct, then David's rhetorical question is intended to express amazement.

Again pondering his amazement at the Lord's promise, David exclaimed, "And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant" (v. 20).

Even though David was the greatest king on earth at that time, he recognized that he was but a servant of God. Here is another key to David's greatness: his awareness of who he was before the Lord. Unlike some who constantly make demands of God, David was grateful for what the Lord had already done and was even now promising to do.

Grace to the Humble; Death to the Proud

Jim Jones was a man who rose from obscurity to a position of influence over other people. Fame and power turned his head and heart, and evil took over his life. Jones ministered to a church in a poorer area of San Francisco. That church was meeting the needs of the people in a significant way. However, in 1977 reports of physical and sexual abuse came to the attention of civic authorities.

Jones ordered his church members to go with him to Jonestown, his jungle compound in Guyana, where he could continue to control their lives. Continuing reports of abuse prompted Congressman Leo Ryan and several reporters to fly to Jonestown. On November 18, 1978, the day they were to return to the United States, Ryan and three reporters were murdered. That same day more than nine hundred people in the cult were either killed or committed suicide by drinking a poisoned beverage. Jones was found shot to death, perhaps a suicide.

David also came from a humble background. It is true that he succumbed at one point to the lust connected with power, an all too common occurrence. But David had a penitent heart, and God promised him a dynasty that exists today, with Jesus, His Son, still reigning. If we are wise, we will heed the striking difference between David and the Jim Joneses of the world. God gives grace to those who remain humble (Proverbs 3:34).

-Charles R. Boatman

Glorious Lord (vs. 21,22)

6. Why would God do all these "great things" for David? Was he so worthy (vs. 21,22)?

While we think of God's Word as the Bible, God's word also includes direct revelations from the Lord. In this case, the message came through the Prophet Nathan.

David stood in awe of the word he had received from the Lord. This message was according to God's "own heart," or will. It was not according to the will of David's heart that he became king; it was the will of God's heart! It was sovereign grace (See also the parallel version of this passage in 1 Chronicles 17:16-27).

"It was not because of any goodness inherent in David but because of the graciousness of God's own heart that he took an insignificant shepherd and made him king" (Allen, ed., Broadman Bible Commentary, Broadman).

These were astounding things that God had made known to his servant David. They should cause us to marvel at God's plan of salvation through the Son of David, Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32; Rom. 1:3).

The great things that God has done are proof that God himself is great. Not only is there no other God "like" Him (2 Samuel 7:22), there is no other God "besides" Him. He is the one and only real and living God. When David reflects on "all that we have heard with our ears", he is undoubtedly thinking about God's mighty acts in Israel's history, as passed from generation to generation.

7. Often we take for granted so much of what God has done in us and through us and for us. Why are we so quick to forget the great things God has done? How can we make sure we remember these great things?

In the hectic pace at which we live, we no longer finish one task or project before we begin another. But as a Wall Street Journal article of February 27, 2003, noted, such "multitasking" (trying to manage two or more mental tasks at once) ends up making us "stupid." Multitasking doesn't allow time for reflection. This is one problem that can pull us away from remembering that it really is God who has done the great thing, not we ourselves.

Remembering the great things that God has done in your life will help you overcome fear and face trials. Now could be a good time to recall some of the great things God has done for you and for your church—things that prepare you to face tomorrow.

The Lord and His Nation (2 Samuel 7:23,24)

Thinking about the greatness of God leads to thinking about the greatness of the nation that God claims as His own. God has chosen that populous nation to emerge from only two people, namely Abraham and his wife.

God had taken those two away from the moon worshipers in Ur and planted them in the very land where David is now king. God has given that growing nation His providential and miraculous care through centuries, and now its people number in the millions.

8. Why did God choose Israel to accomplish His purposes (vs. 23,24)?

Standing in a unique relationship with the Lord God, Israel was given both special privileges and responsibilities.

Unlike other nations, Israel had come into existence by a decisive act of God. While all nations have a place in God's plan (Dan. 4:17; Acts 17:26), Israel was the nation that was to carry the Lord's name to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6). While the people often failed in this endeavor, the message of the true God would be carried "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8) by the followers of the Son of David, Jesus.

God's promises to Israel included an exclusive relationship with the Lord, special responsibilities as God's people, and the Promised Land of Israel. As promised to the patriarchs, Israel was to be God's people forever (2 Sam. 7:24). Though most of Israel rejected their own Messiah when He came, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew" (Rom. 11:2). Paul envisioned Israel undergoing a partial hardening until the full number of Gentiles are brought into the church of God (vs. 25,26).

David's Prayer for the Future (2 Samuel 7:25-29)

The first verse of our printed text begins, "Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord." All the rest of the text records what David said to the Lord. Now we come to the part of his prayer that makes requests for the future. It is notable that this modest king asks only for what God already has promised. Truly David is a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:13,14).

9. How did David characterize God in this prayer (vs. 25,26)?

One of the reasons God's name is great was the "great things and terrible" (v. 23) He had done in rescuing Israel from Egypt and then leading them and feeding them in the desert. More than that, though, was the fact that the Lord would be glorified through the Davidic dynasty, which finds its ultimate fulfillment in the coming of Jesus Christ (Dan. 2:44; Luke 1:33).

Earlier we saw that David wanted to build a house for God, but God wanted to build a house for David! Since this was the will of God, David responded with a hearty amen: "Do as thou hast said" (2 Sam. 7:25). A thousand years later, Mary, the mother of Jesus and a descendant of David, said, "Be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). It is not always easy to pray, "Thy will be done" (Matt. 6:10); but we know it is best.

The fulfillment of God's promise to David would be a means of magnifying the name of the Lord. Anytime God's word is fulfilled, it reveals the faithfulness of the One making the promise. Whether we read of promises fulfilled in the Bible or see them come to fruition in our own lives, it is a means to bolster our faith in the Lord and magnify His name before the world.

"Likewise, the very existence of the people Israel reflects glory on Israel's God. The Lord reversed the customary order of affairs in which the nations of the world choose the god whom they serve. Instead, the Lord had called Israel into being and had repeatedly exerted himself in history on her behalf" (Allen).

10. What does the title "Lord of hosts" (v. 27) mean?

Throughout the Old Testament God is referred to as the "Lord of hosts," which pictures Him both as "creator and divine warrior. It designates Yahweh as the national God of Israel" (Myers, ed., Eerdmans Bible Dictionary, Eerdmans).

David did not ask God to select his family for special honor. Rather, this was revealed to David. While it is true that God has revealed Himself generally through creation (Ps. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:20), He also has revealed Himself in special ways. In the Old Testament, this was frequently through men like Moses and the prophets. With the coming of Christ, though, God revealed Himself in a way that was both unique and complete (John 1:14; Col. 1:19; Heb. 1:1-3).

Awed by the promise of God, "I will build thee an house" (2 Sam. 7:27), David found it in his heart to offer the prayer we are studying. Knowing that God always keeps His word and is working for our ultimate good (Rom. 8:28) should give us similar confidence to pray and trust Him.

11. How does God reveal His will to us? Do all the promises of God apply to us? Why or why not (vs. 28,29)?

In spite of the fact that some doubt the truthfulness of the Scriptures, God's Word is true (John 17:17). It always has been true and always will be true. Christ asserted, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

Because God's Word is true, we can be certain that the goodness He promised to David (2 Sam. 7:28) will come to pass. We likewise can be confident that God is with us and will keep His promises to us. We should not, however, make the mistake of concluding that every single scriptural promise applies directly to us. Some promises were made to specific people or even to nations—most notably the nation of Israel; nevertheless, an abundance of God's promises do apply to Christians. More often than not, we fail to lay claim to what God has promised us in Christ.

Again David affirmed that his desire was to see the fulfillment of the promise to "bless the house of thy servant" (v. 29). As he prays, does David understand that the last and greatest of his ruling descendants will be the Son of God as well as a son of David? Does David realize that there will be one King eternal, the crucified Savior, risen to die no more, enthroned at the right hand of God in Heaven? Probably not.

What David had previously wanted was to build a temple. His son Solomon would perform that task. The magnificent temple would last some four hundred years until it was leveled by the Babylonians. What God promised David, though, was permanent; it would stand forever.

Speaking of a time to come, the Prophet Ezekiel said, "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; ... And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it" (Ezek. 34:23,24).

12. As Christians we often pray for God's blessing upon our lives and our church. How can we play a part in the answer to this prayer?

For God to bless, we must put ourselves into a position that God can bless. If we pray for God to bless us financially yet we refuse to be good stewards as Scripture teaches us, how can we expect God to honor our prayer and grant that blessing? We

sometimes pray a prayer for forgiveness, yet will not forgive one who has sinned against us. Jesus teaches that this is a prayer God will not honor (Matthew 6:15).

To be blessed by God means that we must do those things that God blesses. In your life and in your church, look and see what God is already blessing and doing, then get involved with Him in His work and pray for His continued blessing in that work. Surely this is a prayer that God will bless.

CONCLUSION

Modesty and Duty

David could have claimed credit for his rise to the throne, for all the reasons listed in the discussion of verse 18. But David chose to give all the credit to God. God had chosen him to be king; God had sent the prophet to anoint him; God had arranged the circumstances and events that had contributed to his rise.

David's modesty has appeared plainly in this lesson, and certainly it was part of the attraction of this Biblical hero. He was a doer, not a boaster. Even so, he did not carry his modesty to a counterproductive extreme. It seems that he graciously accepted the approval of a multitude in victory celebration. He did not mar the joy of the occasion by frowning or shrinking away, even though King Saul was obviously annoyed (1 Samuel 18:8).

Our challenge is to have the same balance. To be a "glory grabber" in the church is distasteful and ungodly; it is a violation of Romans 12:3. Christ is our model of humility (Mark 10:45). Even so, there is also such a thing as being overly modest. We see this problem arise in people who have skills and talents but pretend that they don't. This is false humility. May God deliver us from both extremes.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for the example set before us by Your noble people, ancient and modern. Along with the precepts of Your Word, their godly lives guide us in godly ways. And if we see in their lives some things less than godly, may we realize that these too are for our learning. By Your grace may we be led in ways that are right, and by Your grace may our sins be forgiven. In Jesus' name, amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Choose a good example, and make it better.

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Selected verses from Isaiah 43 emphasize God's redeemed people. They are encouraged to be courageous, to be witnesses for the Lord, and to look forward to new blessings from Him. The texts are almost New Testament in tone when referring to the Lord as Saviour and the salvation of His people. Study Background Scripture: Isaiah 43.

LESSON SUMMARIZED BY

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