

## 2<sup>ND</sup> SAMUEL

### Week 11, chapter 7 continued

2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7 is a theological feast, which contains some principles and attributes of God that seem plain enough and even familiar for us, but were apparently not as obvious to David, his prophet Natan, and the Israelite population in general. Rather (as is normal for humans) they saw Yehoveh's nature through the lens of their times and the more or less common culture of their era. They had some things right and some things wrong but God seems to have been very patient with them as over and over He teaches them about spiritual matters and His nature by presenting the lessons in various ways until (hopefully) they are understood and taken to heart at just the right moment.

So to begin today's lesson I want to confront you with a largely unnoticed problem that David and Israel had, that is virtually identical to one that we face today. Do you think that because we are 3000 years advanced from David's day that we grasp all that God is? Have we finally got God figured out? If we do then why is there such vast disagreement between Jews and gentiles about Yehoveh, and there is an equally enormous schism among the 3000 or so Christian denominations? Who is right; they can't all be right? Do you realize that the lens that you (and I) view God through is not only wrapped up in our 21<sup>st</sup> century worldview, but also in a uniquely American viewpoint? European Christians don't view God as we do; Eastern Orthodox Christians don't view God as we do. And our personal God-view is further modified by what part of America we were raised in (the Midwest farmlands, the progressive West Coast, the traditional South, etc.); it also matters whether or not you were raised in a Jewish or Christian home, and if you were, which denomination or branch your family adhered to. Our personal experiences and even the generation we were born into also plays a major role in our mental picture of God. But we just don't ever think about it; we go forward on assumptions that are far more based on our cultural norms and religious doctrines and are in agreement with our family and social circles than what God has actually said in His Word.

In other words, we need to not only recognize and be understanding of David's and the Israelites' somewhat distorted views of who God is and how He operates, but we also need to understand that our own views of Him have been distorted and we are all in need of returning to the only source of truth about the Lord's attributes and mindset, and His expectations of us,

that we have available: the Holy Scriptures. How our “heart” feels about it all is Biblically irrelevant and we are warned that our “hearts” are terribly deceitful; and yet the modern teaching is mostly to follow our hearts and leave the Bible to Bible scholars and religious authorities.

One of the major themes, then, in chapter 7 is: HOW is God present with Israel? Or in David’s mind, by what means and what form is God present with David? Thus the key words are “dwelling” and “traveling”. The Middle Eastern cultural norms for that era were that a nation’s god needed a building in which to dwell so that their god could be near to them; thus the people of that culture built an appropriately grand temple for their god. But what happened when that nation’s king led the army out to war, or went on a diplomatic mission and ventured away from the temple where their god lived? The king and his army were probably outside of their own nation, and therefore outside of the boundaries where their god’s sphere of influence operated. Even more their god was essentially confined in a temple (somewhat like a genie in a bottle) and in order for that god to travel and be with his worshippers it was necessary that the god-image (an idol) be transported by humans (usually priests) to wherever the king and his army went on expedition. This unquestioned (and unconscious) worldview of the gods of 1000 B.C. therefore was generally how David and the Israelites viewed their god Yehoveh. Why would they think otherwise? We don’t see much in the Old Testament of the Israelites mocking or disagreeing with how the other nations viewed the spiritual sphere. We don’t see the Hebrews explaining to their pagan neighbors the theological error of their Mystery Babylon religions. How gods operated was not in question; mankind had long ago settled the matter. The issue was primarily: WHICH god was the most potent and what was the proper way to worship him?

Thus the all-knowing Yehoveh is able to look into David’s mind (his heart) and see that on the one hand David is feeling guilty and selfish for not providing his god with at least as nice place to live in as he (the king) had; but on the other hand David was also motivated by thinking that God NEEDED a temple and God NEEDED mankind’s intervention to help him get around. Not only that but also David wanted God to be right there, handy, when he needed His help. So the obvious solution was the same one that all cultures of that era utilized: build a beautiful Temple so that God would have a nice, comfortable place to live and therefore David had access to Him on a moment’s notice. Stuff the genie in a grand bottle. The last thing David wanted was to have God out wandering about doing something else when David needed a consultation or to have God being left behind when He went out to battle. Thus getting the Ark of the Covenant (God’s travelling box) back into his possession was David’s first step.

And to that line of erroneous human thought that so dominated David’s era and before, here is what the Lord says through the prophet Nathan:

**2Sa 7:7-9 CJB <sup>7</sup> Everywhere I traveled with all the people of Isra'el, did I ever speak a word to any of the tribes of Isra'el, whom I ordered to shepherd my people Isra'el, asking, "Why haven't you built me a cedar-wood house?"**

**<sup>8</sup> "Therefore say this to my servant David that this is what ADONAI-Tzva'ot says: 'I took you from the sheep-yards, from following the sheep, to make you chief over my people, over Isra'el.**

**<sup>9</sup> I have been with you wherever you went;....."**

Let me be clear: not everything David and the Israelites thought they knew about Yehoveh was wrong. But for the previous several centuries the Torah had been slowly and steadily set aside and the Priesthood had drifted into irrelevance; so divine truth was hard to come by. We moderns have no such excuse and yet we find ourselves in the same condition as those ancient Israelites. While the King of Israel and the High Priest were supposed to have a copy of the Torah, and vowed as Israel's leaders to follow it, few if any other folks had a Torah since to create even one was a monumental and expensive effort. All they knew about God was what they learned from everyday life and from what their leaders told them. But for us (especially in the West) God's Word is available at virtually no cost and no danger. I don't know of a Christian or Jew who doesn't have a Bible. Yet Christianity and Judaism both suffer the same condition as did Israel in David's day: what is taken for unassailable divine truth often turns out to be manmade traditions created by various religious leaders who are reacting to current political or social realities. What we take for Godly enlightenment is often custom and political correctness that is dictated by behaviors and attitudes that characterize our contemporary culture and thereby allows us to blend in without undue notice.

Not that this is necessarily accomplished consciously on our part; rather we often believe what we believe because that's just how it is and to question it is to disturb an otherwise comfortable situation; we live in blissful self-assurance that all is well between ourselves and God. Besides, if all seems well what would be the catalyst that would even cause us to re-examine our cherished assumptions?

This is just one of the several reasons why Bible Scholars, Jewish and Christian, marvel at 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel chapter 7. It is truly a Torah within a Torah. Hidden just under the surface is yet another attempt by Yehoveh to present some important divine truths to the King of Israel and His people in hopes of penetrating that thick veil of mankind's evil inclination, which prefers our ways to God's, and our unfettered personal liberty to His commandments.

Let's re-read a portion of 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel chapter 7 to continue today's lesson.

### RE-READ 2<sup>ND</sup> SAMUEL CHAPTER 7:10 – end

The Lord says that contrary to David building Him a house that He will build David a house; this is not literal but rather a play on words. House in Hebrew is ***beth*** and it means a number of things. First it can be a dwelling place just as we typically think of a house, a place of residence. It can also refer to a place where a certain activity (secular or religious) is known to take place (a house of prostitution), and in another sense it can mean a family or a dynasty. Here while David is thinking in terms of constructing a building the Lord is thinking in terms of constructing a permanent dynasty.

So in verse 12 Yehoveh tells David that after he dies, the Lord will establish an everlasting line of rulers of Israel from David's family. It is interesting and informative that the words used to speak of David's death are, "***When your days come to an end and you sleep with your ancestors***". The honorable death of a righteous man and the aftermath are couched in words that reflect the understanding of death and the afterlife in the Middle East and the entire known world in that era. It's only that what the Israelites do not appear to have known yet is that the place where the righteous Hebrews resided after their physical death was not Sheol but Abraham's Bosom. Abraham's Bosom is where the righteous dead waited for the Messiah to come and through his own death cleanse them to a far higher degree of purity than their own pious behavior ever could, and thus give them passage out of their underground chamber and into Heaven.

And so verse 12 begins a section of this chapter that is prophetic in an even larger sense than it seems at first glance. The prophecy is that the Lord will set up one of David's sons to rule after David; this is a divine promise so it will not fail. Several things will happen, including the building of a house (a ***beth***) for the Lord, by this son of David. What we need to see is that this is a prophecy for both the near future and the far future for David. As is so typical for Biblical prophecy, this foretold event will happen and then it will happen again! The key word in these next several verses is "forever". In Hebrew there are two phrases that are properly translated into "forever" in English: ***ad'olam*** and ***le'olam***. The term means eternal, everlasting, no

ending, perpetual. It can also mean until the end of the age; but in the Bible “the end of the age” means “until the end of the age of man”. And that means that humans are no longer in our present form, and even the present heaven and earth are exchanged for something else. So we don’t have to wonder about what the Bible means by the term “forever”; it means exactly how we commonly take it to mean.

Seven times the word “forever” is used in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel chapter 7. Seven is the number of perfection or perfect completion. It is perfect wholeness. The use of “forever” 7 times is by no means an accident or coincidence. We must always pay close attention to Biblical numerology because it carries great meaning with it. David’s dynasty will rule forever, meaning that there is a component to it that **MUST** go beyond the physical. David’s dynasty brings about perfect completeness to God’s plan of redemption. This of course speaks of Messiah, the gateway into everlasting redemption and rest.

Verse 13 explains that David’s son (and it does not say which son) will be allowed to build the Lord a Temple but notice an interesting nuance in the way it is explained: it does **NOT** say that David’s son will build a house for “Me” (for God), it says that he will build a house “for my NAME”. It is God’s NAME that will reside there, not God. It is God’s reputation and (in some mysterious sense) His attributes that will dwell there. God the Father, Yehoveh the Godhead, lives in Heaven, not on earth and certainly not in a Temple built by human hands (even though the opposite is what all humans took for granted about the desire of gods).

But the logical question arises, why can David’s son build a Temple but David is prohibited? This is a question that 1Chronicles 22 (a parallel account of this same story) seems to provide some answers. Turn you Bibles to 1Chronicles 22.

### **READ 1CHRONICLES 22:7 – 10**

David shed much blood; he was the warrior and so Yehoveh would not allow David to build the Lord a Temple. However Solomon, **Shlomo** (which means peace because it is taken from the root word **shalom**), will be allowed to build the Temple. David won the Kingdom through great bloodshed, and Solomon maintained the kingdom in peace and prosperity. Notice also in 1Chronicles that the Temple is **NOT** for the Lord Himself to dwell in but it is for His NAME to dwell.

2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel chapter 7 verse 14 adds even more fascinating information. The Lord says that the He will be a father for David's offspring and that the offspring will be a son to the father. The mind spins as we think about all the ramifications. The first one that comes to mind is that Yeshua is called the Son and God is His Father. Yet the phrase, "I will be a father to him and he will be a son for me" is a well attested adoption formula. When a man adopted a boy child (whether a relative or someone from outside the family) these were the words that were spoken as more or less a vow to seal the change in status of the relationship.

One of the great examples of this (and I think very appropriate for our circumstance) is when the Patriarch Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons (Ephraim and Manessah) away from him. Why would Jacob do such a strange thing? How must Joseph have felt having this forced upon him? It wasn't terribly unusual for a head of household to adopt the children of a deceased brother; but to adopt away your grandchildren from their own LIVING father? And for no stated purpose? And here we find the Lord doing a similarly strange thing in saying that David's son will be adopted away from David and he will become essentially the Lord's son. And interestingly we find that David's descendant Joseph (of Joseph and Mary) was the earthly father of Yeshua but Yeshua was essentially adopted away by the Lord God as His spiritual son.

But we also have to understand the Biblical relationship (based on the Middle Eastern cultural relationship) between a father and his son. A father's rule is absolute, but at the same time a father shows great mercy to his son. The son is afforded great privileges by the father, but the son also has great duties and obligations in return. So since Yehoveh will be the father of David's son then that son (who is ruling Israel) will be under God's personal authority. The son will be ruling in his father's name. And his father will NOT be David, but rather the Lord Himself, just as Joseph will not be the father of Ephraim and Manessah but rather it would be Jacob.

Look: all kings of Israel were beholden to God as their sovereign. But this promise that **David's** ruling sons would be as sons to God and God would be as their father is a major step beyond mere royal dynastic loyalty to the God of Israel and vice versa. It was always that God was to be the Heavenly King and Israel's monarch was to be the earthly counterpart over the nation of Israel. Israel's king was indeed "king", but God was the king's king. That is still NOT the same thing (by far) as a father/son relationship. A father/son relationship is intimate and involves a far greater degree of love than a king over a king (that is more of a vassal relationship).

Thus Israel's first 2 kings (Sha'ul and Ishbosheth) were legitimate kings over Israel and they were (theoretically) loyal to Israel's God, and Israel's God was their heavenly king. But with David an entire new relationship was created: a father and son relationship. Or better, with David's SON a new relationship would be created. Thus the Lord pronounces in verse 14 that if David's son (the next king) does something wrong (breaks the Law of Moses), indeed that king can expect to be punished (just as any King of Israel would expect to have bad things happen to him if he rebels against God). However the Lord guarantees that that son of David will NEVER lose God's grace and never be punished unto destruction. This is to be contrasted with King Saul who was given no such promise and thus when he was rebellious (as a rebellious vassal to the powerful king above him), God removed His grace from him and (so far as we know) Sha'ul was punished to eternal destruction.

But this also says something else that is at once apparent to ancient Hebrews but not so apparent to a modern Westerner; if the king is punished unto death and God has removed Himself from that king, then that is also the end of the king's dynasty. Thus when Saul rebelled and God took His grace away from him, Saul's son would take control from a human political standpoint but he would NOT be given favor by God as Israel's next king. Grace was not only removed from Saul but from his possible dynasty. The dynasty of Saul was over forever just as David's dynasty was established forever. David was exceedingly aware of this and so the Lord promises not to ever do with David's dynasty what He did with Saul's. Oh, there may be (and there were) bad kings in David's dynasty and some of them rebelled and died as a result. But unlike for Saul's dynasty, David's dynasty would NEVER lose God's favor and have His grace removed from them. So what happened with David's dynasty?

The last king of David's dynasty was Zedekiah and he ruled from 596 to 586 B.C. He was an evil king that was actually appointed by Nebuchadnezzar so the people of Judah never accepted him. There would be no more kings from David's dynasty (or so it appeared). After 6 centuries passed from Zedekiah's death and no king of Judah rose up to assume the throne, the Jews of King Herod's day longed for a miracle that somehow another member of David's family would arrive and lead Israel out of Roman oppression and into a never-ending golden age that they thought of as the Kingdom of God. They called that hoped-for king of the Davidic line The Messiah. Other Israelites, including most of the religious leadership, had given up hope for a direct descendant of David and were more than satisfied if the deliverer and future king who came along was simply Jewish (from the tribe of Judah, David's tribe). Naturally such a king would come about at their appointment and they would be that king's royal court and closest advisors. God didn't forget His promise to David even though 600 years had passed since the last of David's dynasty (Zedekiah) had ruled. Out of the line of David, through Joseph and Mary, was born Yeshua of Nazareth. But he was brought into this world in a most unexpected way, didn't play the role of an earthly warrior/ king, and so was rejected by most Jews and especially the Jewish religious leadership.

Verse 16 speaks of the “forever” nature of David’s dynasty, kingdom, and rulership. The son and father relationship between David’s ruling sons and Yehoveh is also pronounced as being forever. And of course we can rest assured that the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy is Jesus, and here is but one passage in the New Testament that not only tells us that but also makes again that connection between the father/son promise Yehoveh made to David here in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7 and The Christ who would come 1000 years later.

### Luke 1:30-33 CJB

<sup>30</sup> *The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Miryam, for you have found favor with God.*

<sup>31</sup> *Look! You will become pregnant, you will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Yeshua.*

<sup>32</sup> *He will be great, he will be called Son of Ha'Elyon. ADONAI, God, will give him the throne of his forefather David;*

<sup>33</sup> *and he will rule the House of Ya'akov forever- there will be no end to his Kingdom."*

In verse 18, after Nathan has given God’s oracle to Israel’s King, David goes to the tent and sits before the Ark (probably with a curtain between David and the Ark). He pours out his humility before the Lord and asks the rhetorical question, “Why did you choose to give to me, of all people, such honors”? He goes on to acknowledge that he understands and he believes God; that God will establish David’s dynasty forever. It is plain that David understands the cosmic and other worldly nature of such a promise. All kings hoped that their dynasties would be “forever” but they also understood that in reality the hope was that their family would rule for several generations. These earthly kings knew that in time conditions would change and it was inevitable that another family would eventually rule so the game was to keep the throne as long as possible. David sensed deeply in his soul that this was not what God meant by saying “forever”. God’s “forever” is not man’s “forever”. Man’s “forever” is by its nature temporal and temporary; God’s “forever” is by its nature permanent and eternal.

This leads us to verse 19 where David makes a statement that I think has a very deep underlying meaning, but its plain meaning is greatly disputed by Bible scholars. He says of God’s plan to establish through David’s SON his dynasty forever, “This is indeed a teaching for a man”. The problem is that the Hebrew says, “This is indeed a **torah** for an **adam**”. The great Hebrew Sages argue among themselves whether the word **adam** is meant to be a proper name (the Adam of Adam and Eve fame), or it is to be considered as a general term meaning



“man” or “humankind”. The issue for me is the context. If one sees these passages as merely a political scenario whereby the goal is to make the legal case that David’s family are the rightful heirs to the throne of Israel that is one thing. But if one sees these passages from the spiritual side, then it is obvious that this difficult statement by David is Messianic in nature. Yet, just HOW spiritual is one to take this? From the Hebrew viewpoint, since they do NOT see the divine nature of the Messiah, then the word adam merely means “man” because they fully expect a regular everyday man (even though he will be a great leader) to be the Messiah. But if we DO see the Messiah as incorporating a divine nature then I don’t know how to see the word **adam** as anything but the proper name of Adam.

In other words, the Christ is a new Adam (and this is generally agreed to by the Church as a proper characterization). And the torah (the teaching) about this new Adam is that he will come from David’s dynasty and rule on into eternity. So, again, as David is praying before the Ark in the tent in the City of David, he says to God in response to this awesome and nearly unfathomable revelation that a descendant of David will rule over God’s Kingdom eternally, “This is indeed a teaching for an Adam”. I have no doubt that David gets it that a new Adam is coming, that he will come from David’s bloodline, and that this new Adam will have dominion over the earth in a way that the first Adam could never have imagined or accomplished. But let’s also be clear: David could not possibly have developed a mental picture of this; how such a thing could be is not imaginable. David just believed God and took Him at His word. This is why David was so great in God’s eyes. It was not because David’s behavior was always proper (he broke the Law in some of the most egregious ways.); rather it was that David trusted God to a depth that most of us cannot envision.

Verses 21 and 25 also offer us some intriguing double meanings that often occur in prophecy (again, not either/or but rather “both”). And it revolves around the word “word” (**dabar** in Hebrew). David prays to YHWH (and I paraphrase), OK now that you have made this decision and communicated it to me, then (in vs. 21) I understand that it is NOT for my sake but for the sake of your WORD that you are doing this. And (in vs. 25) David continues by agreeing with God in saying, please establish your WORD and do it forever. No doubt on one level “word” is speaking about the oracle itself that was delivered through Natan to David. Yet on another level we know that from a theological and Messianic perspective:

<sup>CJB</sup> **John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

Therefore what is also being said (although I doubt David even comprehended this) was that God has made this promise to David not for David’s sake but for the sake of the coming

Messiah, the Son of God, Yeshua, who is the Word. And that David next says (prophetically and to a degree unknowingly) please establish Messiah, the Son of God, Yeshua, your Word, forever, eternally. So David is pleading with God to establish his dynasty both physically and spiritually; both temporally and eternally.

Verse 29 ends this chapter with David closing his prayer by asking the Lord to shower His blessings upon David's family forever. Maybe this is how we should all pray, by humbly asking the Lord every day to, "Bless your servant's family with your blessing, forever".

We'll start chapter 8 next time.