

SESSION #18

2 SAMUEL

When we flip over the page to 2 Samuel we move into the book of David's kingly reign, a 40 year period. He establishes Jerusalem as the national capital and of course from that time onward that is what it is, the focal point for the nation politically and religiously.

The theme of 2 Samuel begins with triumphs but they turn to troubles because of one reason, and it's the reason we've seen over and over again already in the OT... through sin.

The structure like so many books of the Bible is in two parts. This book is split evenly between chapter 12 and chapter 13. The first half of the book are David's triumphs. First of all, he's king over Judah, the smaller nation of Judah and Benjamin in the south. Then he's king over all Israel and it's a triumphal set of chapters. David, as the increasing king of Israel.

Then when you move to the second half of the book, chapters 13 through 24, it becomes troubles, not triumphs any longer. And the reason we'll come to shortly. First of all, troubles in his family. Then troubles in the nation.

God makes a covenant with David which we need to notice, in chapter 7 and verse 16. God said, "*Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.*" This is the summary then of a special agreement God makes with David. The throne of David would from this point on be incorporated into God's plan. God's plan for the nation and God's plan for the ages.

There is a dynasty about to begin here. David, of course, is the founder of this dynasty. And under God's covenant agreement with David it will involve three things.

There will be David's **house** which will be forever. His family in other words. His kingly line will go on forever. Of course, out of that kingly line, out of that house of David, comes Jesus Christ as the Son of David.

Then his **kingdom** will last forever, again because Jesus the Son of David will be Kings of kings and Lord of lords.

God promises that the **throne** of David will last forever, again because Jesus Christ will fulfill this aspect of the covenant. So all three of those aspects of the covenant as promised to David come to pass not just for him and his immediate family, but beyond that. In fact, when you look at the covenant God makes with him we begin to see something of the Messianic implications.

The covenant God made with Abraham was focussed on a seed, the promised Seed. God promised to Abraham, *“I’ll give you a Seed; I’ll give you a son.”* And that promise was immediately fulfilled in Isaac, in the first sense. But then in the ultimate sense, the Son of Abraham is none other than Jesus Christ, the capital “S” Seed. And so the Abrahamic covenant finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham.

God’s agreement with David doesn’t focus on a seed but a similar idea, a promised son. In the immediate sense for David that son is King Solomon who will succeed him. But in the ultimate sense it is Jesus Christ, the Son of David indeed.

Both Abraham’s covenant and David’s covenant are unconditional – they both find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. We noted in session 11 something of the importance of the Abrahamic Covenant being an unconditional one: God will work it out, God will fulfill that one even if the people don’t obey Him.

The covenant with Moses at Mt. Sinai on the other hand was an “if...then” conditional one.

But not Abraham’s and not David’s either; these were both unconditional. So God will indeed perform what He said to David: *“your house, your kingdom, your throne will last forever.”* And they do because all three aspects find fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

When we look at the promise made to David we begin to see a fourth major development in Messianic prophecy.

The first of the promises about the coming Messiah we found away back in chapter 3 of Genesis, verse 15, a promise made by God to the human race in general through the

founder of the human race, Adam. There God said that through the seed of the woman He would defeat Satan, the serpent. That's the beginning of a promise about the coming Messiah, a promise given to the whole human race.

That promise narrows down increasingly as you move through the OT. The promise to Abraham narrows it down to one nation (Gen. 22).

The promise to Abraham's son, Jacob, narrows it down to one tribe, the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49).

And now as we come to the covenant with David, the promise about the Messiah who will be the focal point for all of God's workings in human history, is narrowed down to one particular family within that tribe, within that nation, within the human family. That family is David's.

We don't have time to look at all of the stories of his triumphs. But we do have to focus on the turning point chapter, chapter 12. David sins in chapter 11. And then chapter 12 tells us the outcome.

We won't reiterate the whole story of how the army had gone off to battle, and David the commander-in-chief of the army decided to stay home. That was the first fatal decision. It only moves on from one bad thing to the next after that first decision.

He sees Bathsheba bathing. He lusts after her. And because he's the king his command is law, and Bathsheba comes to his bedroom. And he sins with Bathsheba.

It's the turning point in his entire life; a tragic turning point. Chapter 11 describes it. It is, however, a sin which didn't just happen out of the clear blue. It occurred when he was "*in prosperous ease*". And prosperity and ease can be spiritually perilous as we see in his example, but not only his.

Somebody has noted that in the history of the Church, for example, persecution though producing tremendous amounts of suffering and difficulty for Christian individuals, has never ever been fatal to Christianity. But prosperity has often been fatal to the growth of the Church in a given place.

Or as Chuck Swindoll puts it: *“Adversity is a test of a person’s stability. But prosperity is a test of our integrity.”* Adversity tests your stability; can you stand firm? But prosperity is more subtle; it tests our integrity.

And David’s integrity is tested in a time of prosperity and ease, and he fails the test. Moreover, what happens to him in chapter 11 was a culmination of a process, a process that began with the taking of many wives. And out of that personal history of his comes this incident with Bathsheba in chapter 11. It isn’t just a stand-alone situation; it’s the outworking of something for which he has already been planting seeds in his own life already.

And then the results of it. The results were tragic indeed. Years of suffering for him, for his family, and for the nation, resulting in incest, fratricide, rebellion, civil war and finally revolt.

Nathan the prophet points his accusing finger at King David in chapter 12. He uses a very clever technique to help David understand that he has sinned, telling him a story, a parable. And then when David agrees that that sin should be punished, David pronounces judgment unknowingly on himself when he says, *“That man who did that thing (in the story that Nathan tells) must repay four times.”*

And Nathan turns to David and points his finger at him and says, “You are the man!” And sure enough David pays a four-fold price for that sin.

Number one, the baby conceived with Bathsheba dies. Number 2 his daughter Tamar is raped. Number 3 his son Amnon is killed. Number 4 another son, Absalom, divides the kingdom and he is killed. The sad tragic story of David’s family at this point is surely an OT illustration of a NT truth from Galatians chapter 6 verse 7: *“Don’t be deceived; God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap.”* We get back what we sow, but we get a lot more back than what we sowed. You sow one seed; you’ll get multiplied seeds back, isn’t it? You don’t just get one in return.

David sows one sin. He reaps a harvest of consequences out of that. And it’s a truth that applies right across the Old and the New Testament too. It’s a sad turning point in his life and for the nation as well.

But the astonishing thing, as you follow the story through to its conclusion, is to see what happens within the heart of David. And how God talks about this man, David. If you want to see the inside story of what's going on in David at this time, read Psalm 51. It is one of his most famous psalms as he describes the agony of heart when he comes to a point of repentance.

Saul sinned. David sinned. But Saul goes straight down to a suicide. David keeps on walking with God to the point where God declares, in the NT, that David was "*a man after God's own heart*". What made the difference? What made the difference between Saul and David? The difference was how they responded when God put His finger on their sin. Saul continued to rebel against identifying his sin. He had lots of excuses to work his way around the sin and not call it what God called it.

David, when God put His finger on David's heart, and said, "*You're the man. You sinned*", David said, "*Ouch! You're right. That was sin. I repent.*" He fell down on his face and wept and wept. Saul wept too but not with tears of repentance.

David weeps with tremendous repentance. And God says, "*You're a man after my own heart.*" In fact, 1 Kings chapter 11 says that David had "*a perfect heart*".

How could he have a perfect heart when he committed adultery and as a result of that adultery, committed what amounted to murder? How could he have a perfect heart? Ah, because he turned back to God and God forgave him, God renewed him, God restored him. Oh, he's a marvellous example for us because none of us can say we've never sinned. We've all sinned. Maybe as grievously as Saul or David. But if we will respond like David we too can be called "*people after God's own heart*".

Join us for the next session in 1 Kings as we look at Israel's "Golden Age" followed by national disaster.
