

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by
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In this chapter we find the beginning of what we call the "New Covenant." The passage in II Corinthians 3:2-6 is the classic passage on the New Covenant. This covenant is not some magic term we dreamed up at PBC. David was living it 3,000 years ago. We have some kind of a strange idea that God wants us to do our best, to strive mightily and work like the dickens at being a Christian. Somehow we feel being sincere, zealous, dedicated, giving our uttermost for the highest pleases God. Scripture clearly teaches us exactly the opposite. It teaches that the flesh is incurably evil and that it can never please God, even when it is sincere, zealous, dedicated and giving its uttermost for the highest. Therefore germane to being pleasing to God must be God's life lived out in our humanity and through us. We are made in the image and likeness of God and not in the image and likeness of "Super Bob." I am not to do my best. It is not good enough. It will never be good enough. The flesh cannot please God; not won't, can't. I was made in the image and likeness of God that God might live his life in and through my humanity, my emotions, my intellect, my will, and my body so that God's image might be made manifest to a world that cannot see the invisible and God's life be demonstrated to a humanity that cannot see the invisible God. Everything coming from God and nothing coming from me should be the description of a Christian's life. Now that doesn't mean Christians are to end up as blobs who sit back and say, "Zap me, Lord." It does mean that we are to step out and do the normal, natural obvious thing that is right in front of us just quietly thanking the Lord that his indwelling life is living through our body, soul and spirit, our mind, emotions, intellect and will while by faith we rely on another's strength. That constitutes the New Covenant. The New Covenant is as old as man. It started in the Garden of Eden. That is exactly what Adam and Eve did before the fall. They did whatever was normal, natural and obvious in front of them relying on the indwelling life of God as their power source.

So we go back 3,000 years, now, and see that David had exactly the same theology on the New Covenant that we have today, that Paul has in II Corinthians. Very obviously David lived in the flesh at times, and very obviously he lived in the power of the Spirit at times. This passage is one that reveals David living in the power of the Spirit.

This chapter also contains the Davidic Covenant. God made covenants with the people. He made one with Abraham which is spelled out very clearly in Genesis. He promised Abraham a seed that would bless all the earth with all spiritual blessings. Jesus Christ is the answer to that, of course. He also promised Abraham's physical descendents a land which ran from Egypt all the way up to the Euphrates, ostensibly most of the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, that they would possess forever. This is the Promised Land the Jews are looking for. Now God makes a covenant with David which involves not only the physical children of Abraham, the Israelites, but also the spiritual children of Abraham. It has a twofold meaning. Interwoven in this covenant is both the picture of David's dynasty which he established on earth and also the picture of the eternal reign of the Son of David, Jesus Christ.

So let's take a look, now, at II Samuel 7: 1-7. It begins with David's desire to build a house for God. This is typical of humanity. We are what I call "Pendulum Petes." We seem to swing from side to side and have great difficulty kind of getting in the center. In the last chapter, the ark of God, turned out to be a vessel you didn't mess with. Now the ark of God is not God. It is not even God's dwelling place. It is the place where God meets man. In fact the "tent of meeting," which originally contained the ark, was called the tent of meeting because that is where God met man. God didn't dwell in that tent. God is everywhere. He is both

transcendent and imminent. He is above and beyond the universe, yet he is directly involved within his universe. A little box, 4x2x2, even though it is gold and is made to his exact specifications, is not God's dwelling place. It is God's point of meeting. Now it is very easy to transfer a place where God meets his people to a place where God lives. We call these sacred places, and we tend to invest them with the attributes that belong to the Creator. As we have seen, this ark has been a dangerous thing, and consequently David was investing it with more than it really was, the meeting place of God with his people. So you see the necessity of the 2nd Commandment. The 1st is "Thou shall not have any Gods before me," and the 2nd is "Thou shall not make any graven image." We have an insatiable desire to see God, to see him in some way. It is hard to walk by faith. It is hard to talk to the air. And yet that is exactly what God requires. Somewhere along the line, if you want to become a Christian, you have to talk to the air. And that air, the person who lives in that air, when he comes into your life, becomes your Lord and your God and thereby your Savior. Thereafter you have to talk to that air as if you were carrying on a conversation with a person because there really is a person there. You need to obey what that air tells you through the Word or through circumstances or through the inner witness of the Spirit of God, but your conversation, your whole walk down here, your whole sojourn as a Christian, a pilgrim, is talking to an unseen person. That's kind of scary. It is other worldly. It is not very solid. So we have a desperate need to somehow put our God in a box that we can see. We do it with religious articles, crucifixes, icons, relics, locations. People go to a certain place to get cured of all diseases. This type of thing. Why? There is something special there about God. He dwells there in a way he doesn't dwell any place else. We'll travel thousands of miles to go to a physical location to meet a God who is transcendent over the whole universe. Something is wrong! Or we erect big images on the top of our altars. We say we don't pray to them, but we sure do. We don't pray looking the other way. We always look there. Why? Because we have invested that image with some of the attributes of God. The tragedy is, of course, we have designed these images ourselves. We have molded them or chiselled them out ourselves. So we invest the images with the attributes we think God ought to have, what he ought to look like. This is a little bit of what David has slipped into here.

II Samuel 7:1-3:

Now it came about when the king lived in his house, [This, of course, is a great big beautiful cedar palace made by Hiram, king of Tyre.] **and the Lord had given him rest on every side from all his enemies,** [so things looked very good] **that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar,** [typical palace of an oriental king] **but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains."** [It is still in that old skin tent] **And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you."**

David, while living in a gorgeous palace built for him by a foreign king using skilled artisans, observed the ark sitting in a tent, just a skin tent. He began to think something was not quite right, "There is God in a skin tent while I'm in a palace," and the tent, although designed to be beautiful on the inside, was very ordinary on the outside. There is only one problem here. God was the one who specified the design of that tent. God told Moses, "This is exactly how I want you to build this thing. I want you to follow the directions exactly. I am giving you a beautiful picture here, a picture of reality. It is a symbol of the reality behind it. Therefore I want this to be a tent, and I want a tent that is ordinary on the outside but gorgeous on the inside." David typically did not check the Scriptures. He did call Nathan the Prophet however. To Nathan the prophet the idea seemed great. What could be more religious than for someone who is living in a gorgeous palace to want to build another gorgeous palace for his God? What problem do you see here? If you build another gorgeous palace for your God, you are equating your God with another you. You have reduced him to the level of living in a gorgeous palace as if that would please him. But it did seem right. Nathan, a prophet of God, said, "Go do all that is in your heart." He shot from the hip. This is the last time he ever does that, by the way. So, David departs with the idea of building a house for God. Now the motivation is not wrong from God's viewpoint. God is not a capricious God who demands you toe the mark and have no feelings. In I Chronicles 22 God inferred that he appreciated David's desire, but the trip was wrong.

So God doesn't leave David in error very long.

II Samuel 7:4:

But is came about in the same night [Yahweh corrects immediately] **that the word of the**

Lord came to Nathan saying, [He doesn't come to David, now. Nathan is the prophet of God. Prophets are the outsiders of God and Nathan should have known better. He makes Nathan go back and correct David and he is going to correct Nathan] "God and say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord, "Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in? [By the way, the construction here indicates a "No" answer is expected] For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle. Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'

God tells Nathan to go back and tell David there are some things wrong with what he wants to do. First one we don't pick up here, but it is implied in verse 5, "Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?" And it expects a "No" answer. He tells David over in both I Chronicles 22 and 28 "Because you are a man of blood and a man of war, you cannot build my temple" You have too much blood on your hands. In fact he says, "You shed much blood." Most of David's life has been spilling other people's blood. He is a skilled spiller of blood, and that is not the kind of picture God wants from a king who is going to build his house, a place of rest. It's OK to bring my people into the land of rest, but you are not a man of rest. During all of David's reign as a king he never really has a time of rest. Verse 1 above says, "God had given him rest from all his enemies." Well about two chapters down the road he winds up getting in trouble with Bathsheba and is told the sword will never depart from his house. Next chapter Amnon his #1 son, the heir apparent, rapes Tamar the sister of Absalom (David's #3 son) and Absalom kills him. Following that, #2 son Chileab apparently dies. Then #3 son Absalom chases his father out of town and gets killed in the rebellion. Finally #4 son, Adonijah tries to grab the reigns from Solomon and gets his head chopped off. There is one continual problem of unrest in the kingdom of David. So God indicates to David he is not the kind of man to build a temple for a God of rest. Of course you remember David, being the runt of the litter, had to fight for everything all of his life. He is, in a sense, a self-made man, by divine appointment it is true. But God doesn't want that kind of a person to build him a house. He wants a person that lives out of rest.

Then he says here in verse 6, "For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle." God wanted them to live out of rest. So, he deliberately designed a tent, a temporary dwelling, to be used by the Jews as a symbol that they had not yet come into the place where God wanted them to be. During David's realm he did finally extend Israel's borders from Egypt to the Euphrates, but his own household was in constant rebellion, so there was no rest in the time of David. Now God does give David the exact plans for the temple and does allow him to accumulate the material for it, but Solomon, which means "peaceable," not David will actually build the temple. David's lifestyle is not at all what God wants pictured for the children of God. They are to live out of rest.

God does want this temple built, but he says it will be a place for my Name [II Samuel 7:13], a place where my name will be magnified, a symbolic place which says, "This is where God will meet with man." So God says it is a temple for my Name not for Me, for all that I stand for, yes, but not for my person. God wants to get them back to the fundamentals, the tent of the meeting, a place where man can meet God. Back in those days God used object lessons for theological infants. So God had an actual place of meeting, but that was not God's dwelling place. That was where God met man. God was far bigger than that, and so God calls it a place for his Name. God did want a temple built some day, something firm and established so that the people would know they were now in the place where God wanted them to be. God never wanted to give them the idea that the life they were leading, which was a life of constant disturbance and upheaval, constant conflict, within their own families even, was what he promised in the land of rest. Although Canaan is a picture of rest, it is not a picture of heaven. In Canaan, we are told, we are to have constant battle. We are to take the land by force. God has given it to us, but we are to go out there and take it by force using the strength of God. So Canaan cannot be a picture of heaven. But it is a picture of victory here.

You ask me, "When Christians are referred to as temples of God, is that, in a sense, the same thing?"

It signifies the meeting place of God with man. I may be the temple of the living God but obviously God is far bigger than me. Also I am not the only temple of the living God. Every believer is the temple of God, the place where the believer and God meet. God is really there, but God is also in the universe, in outer space, beyond outer space. So I don't contain God. That is the concept. But I do meet God right here in the

temple. We come here to a church to have fellowship with one another where the saints, the temples of God, can get together and worship in a building, but this is not a temple. This is not a sanctuary. This is a building with a mortgage on it. Scripture is trying to get away from the idea that God is in a box, that God is in this place here or that place over there. He is not in this church anymore than he is in any other church where the truth is taught. He is even in churches where the truth is not taught. So there are times when, depending on what is being taught, there is an aroma of life unto life or death unto death. The problem here is God doesn't want a permanent building until there is a land of rest. David will never give him that. The sword will never depart from David's house throughout his whole life according to God. So there will never be rest for David, but there will be rest for his son Solomon whose name is peaceful. God's literal name for him is Jedidiah "Beloved of Yahweh." God named both Solomon and Jedidiah. God says, "Peaceful will build my house, and he will be beloved of me, but David you can't do it."

This is a picture for us. God wants us to live out of rest. In Hebrews 4 it talks about the coming of the sabbath rest of God. Hebrews 4 argues that God did not bring in the Sabbath rest of God by Moses or by Joshua. Even back in Jeremiah these is talk about a rest for your soul and rest for the land. Hebrews 4-9-10 kind of sums it all up.

Hebrews 4:9-10:

There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

What Hebrews is saying is whoever enters the rest of God acts exactly as God did. God created in six days and on the seventh day, he sat back, looked at his creation and said, "It is very good." He was satisfied with his work. Now he kept right on running the universe the seventh day, but the creative work of God was over, and he was satisfied with what he had done. He sat back and said, "I have created everything I am ever going to create. I am satisfied that it is perfect and complete and nothing needs to be added to it or subtracted from it. I am satisfied with what I have done."

Now, the question for every Christian is, "Are you satisfied with what God has done?" Can you rest in the midst of a strenuous life and say, "I know that God is sufficient, that he has done everything necessary for me to have victory? I believe that the finished work of Christ is totally adequate for whatever I need in whatever circumstance God puts me. In the midst of turmoil, fighting, striving, people coming apart at the seams, I can rest." The day I reach that point I enter into the Sabbath rest of God, Sabbatismos, a special Greek word used in the New Testament only here in Hebrews 4:9 and pointing the reader back to the 7th day when God rested mentioned in verse 4. I enjoy this rest by trusting in Christ's work as God rested from his work on the seventh day. That is the secret to Authentic Christianity.

You say to me you don't understand the rationale here. God allows the temple to be built by Solomon instead of David when David is called a "man after God's own heart" and Solomon falls into idolatry and later on God does raise up enemies against Solomon so he was certainly not a perfect type of rest.

That is right and man never will be a perfect picture of God. David was a man after God's own heart by God's own statement. However we have seen him as a man of vindictiveness and passion. He raped a woman. He wanted to kill off a whole family of males because someone insulted him. None of the symbols, and that's the point, will every be satisfactory. The ark is not a satisfactory symbol of God. The temple was not a satisfactory symbol of God. Solomon was not a satisfactory symbol of God The nation is split asunder in the next generation after him. He became a tyrant. Even though he is a symbol, he is not an entirely perfect symbol.

You are still asking me questions about the ark. Remember in the last chapter when David went to move the ark but didn't consult God's word and Uzzah died. He was so scared of the "symbol" that he dropped it on Obed-edom. Then God blessed the house of Obed-edom. So David finally checked the Scriptures and decided he was going to move the ark the right way this time. Remember how after six paces they sacrificed and, since nobody died, they knew they were doing it right. So they now go back to the word of God and find out how to deal with God. God wants them to do that because there is tremendous symbolic meaning there. Now symbols never take the place of reality, but they teach. We call them "object lessons" when

teaching children. God is trying to teach these spiritual [theological] infants, who have not yet seen Jesus as we have, the deep truths of life. He is doing it with object lessons, theological truths of the New Testament. One of them is that God is a holy god, and you approach him by his route which according to the 14th chapter of John is Jesus Christ. "I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by me."

God is telling those Jews back there, there is only one way to approach me, and don't kid yourselves, you will die if you try it any other way. When they came the wrong way, he killed them. God wants to demonstrate that. [And if you approach God apart from Jesus Christ in this day and age, you shall die. I will guarantee it. I will put it in writing.] Now the people that were killed didn't necessarily go to hell, but they did lose their physical life. Achan picked that wedge of gold out of Jericho and was destroyed by God. He made a full confession before he was slain. When you get to heaven you are going to see Achan up there. But God is trying to make one single point, "There is no other way to approach me except the way I lay down. I set the rules in this universe. It is my universe. I have some very strict rules in my universe and you disobey them at your peril." The most critical of all of them is how we approach God. Our eternal destiny hangs on that. God will not accept anything else than exactly the way he lays down. Jesus Christ is Lord and God in my life and he thereby becomes my Savior. The Lord himself said that. And just as surely as those men died doing the wrong thing, we will die if we don't approach through Jesus Christ. So we are not playing games here. God is not being capricious or vicious; he is trying to shock people, "Hey, pay attention. You do not negotiate these terms." The shock factor was having its effect on his people, but he also wanted them to understand that he still loved them for he blessed the house of Obed-edom. "How you are approaching me is the problem." It is the same with our time down here.

Let's take a closer look now at II Samuel 7:7.

Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?"

God says, "Did I ever ask anybody to do this?" He wants to say, "I am the initiator, you are the responder. You do not initiate things with me. I do that." My Bible says that I am the bride of Christ, not the husband of Christ. That is what God is trying to bring out here. God wants to do all the initiating in every single instance and I am only to respond. This is very critical in the New Covenant. We have a, and I use the word theologically, damnable attitude toward God. It is a hellish attitude toward God. It is deadly. We see God as very busy. He has a huge universe out there. He has 4 billion people on our particular universe alone. He is judging myriads of angels. He is very busy. So I will handle all the little things in life, the trivia, and I will give God all the traumas. Why bother God with the little stuff. I'll initiate all the little things and let God handle the big ones. But you see, thanks to the grace of God, most of life is trivia not trauma. There are great periods when we don't have massive things in our lap. Now if I practice my little principle that sounds so religious and so right, as it did to Nathan, I don't get any practice for the traumas. The only practice I get for handling traumas in Christ is handling trivia through Christ. There is no way I can handle a trauma in Jesus Christ if I haven't been handling the trivia in Jesus Christ.

It takes practice to make perfect. We have talked about this before. Golf lessons, tennis lessons, whatever it is, you don't go to a pro, give him \$100 bucks and say, "Teach me golf." Say he gives you 25 points for a golf swing, and you say, "Fine, no problem. That's all I need." I go to the US Open the next week, and on the first tee with TV cameras rolling, 1,000,000 people watching, Jack Nicklaus as a playing partner, I step up to the ball and swing. I'll be lucky to hang on to the club never mind hit the ball. If I hit the ground I'll be doing well. No, you have to practice until it becomes habitual, a lifestyle. Traumas do not make appointments. Have you ever noticed that? I have yet to have a trauma come by and say, "Hey, Bob, tomorrow at ten o'clock I am going to show up and you are going to have one dickens of a time." No! Tomorrow at ten o'clock I am walking along doing my own thing and Pow! my wife backs into a sign and dents the fender. [I never do that.] How do I handle that? I'll never forget the true incident from one of our counseling sessions. Some woman got into a wreck. She called her husband from the hospital, and what do you think was the first thing he asked her? "What happened to the car?" Why did he ask her that? Because he hadn't been exercising the role of the husband for a long time. He had been doing his own thing which was self-centered, self-seeking, self-motivated, self-energized, selfish. And when the trauma hit, the first question over that telephone was, "What happened to the car?" She said, "Nothing, not too much, and by

the way I'm not badly hurt either." That marriage has been on the rocks for a long time. He acted exactly the way he always acted. He had had no practice in trivia, so he had no practice in handling traumas.

God wants us to understand, "I am the initiator. I will initiate everything in your life. I want to help you get out of bed in the morning. I want to help you eat breakfast in the morning. I want to live my life through you, brush your teeth, comb your hair." Who does your wife see when you are shaving, you or Jesus Christ? Who do your grandkids see when they have a problem? How do you respond when Johnny comes over and, in the middle of your nice white livingroom carpet, knocks over a glass of iced tea? That's tannic acid in the middle of your room. Well, if Christ is in your life in all the little things, you just give it to Christ. God doesn't want help. He doesn't want an initiator. He wants responders in everything.

And lastly it doesn't say here but in I Chronicles it does; God has not yet given David rest. David thought he had rest, but there is a whole unrest within his own family. David has what I call a "fortress mentality." The Jebusites had it. Remember they sat in that fortress on Mt. Zion for four hundred years and repelled the Jews. They felt totally secure when David came. They had always been secure, so it was going to stay secure. But David took it. Now David has the fortress, and he has enlarged it and made it even stronger. Now he sits in his fortress and he feels secure. He is at rest everywhere. He has conquered most of the people around him, and he has secured his fortress. The only problem is that the danger is inside his fortress. It is his sons. But as long as the walls are thick and high, he feels secure. He has a "fortress mentality." In WWII the French had the Maginot Line. It was a tremendous fortress. Only trouble was it quit too soon. No one wanted to insult the Belgians, so they did not build the fortresses along the Belgium border, just across the German border. So Germany just went around through Belgium and all those gorgeous concrete fortresses were worthless. We get a "fortress mentality." We get a security in things the way they are, and we trust in those things instead of trusting in God. I have had a little experience with that trauma. I worked for an 8 billion dollar company that had an annuity plan and a stock plan. That company is going to last a long time. They are a very paternal company. They pay well, and they have excellent benefits. They desire to keep you there. In order to become a pastor of this screwy church, I had to walk away from all that stuff. After 25 years of my fortress being a company with 8 billion dollars behind them, I am now stuck with the Lord God Almighty. The only security I have is Jesus Christ the Holy One of God. He is my annuity plan. He is my stock plan. Man, I've got real problems. Do you see how dumb that thinking is? It's that "fortress mentality," trusting in those things around you that look so solid. This is the beautiful picture that God paints. He lays out the problem that David is struggling with and then he presents the solution. Starting with verse 8 to the end of this chapter, we have the beautiful Davidic covenant. God gives this covenant without price, in grace, to the kind of a fellow we have just been describing. There is hope for us.

Father, we thank you so much because there really is hope for us that you see us exactly as we are, little children having wonderful desires at time to please you and yet pouring iced tea all over the middle of the rug. Father, it is just amazing what you put up with and yet you do it because we call you, Father. We are your children. We know that. You/We know from all eternity. You expect nothing more from us than childish actions, but you want us to grow up. You want us to let the adult Jesus Christ become our life in every area of our being, not in the trivia only, but in the trauma, and not in the trauma only, but in the trivia, every area. You are to be the initiator, the power source, the life source for every facet of our being. Father, help us to remember that we truly are the bride of Christ, the responder and not the husband of Christ the initiator. Teach us to rest in his finished work, trusting his power, his indwelling resurrection life to be all that we need to be in whatever circumstances you allow into our lives. We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Editor's Note: I am extremely sorry but Bob Roe's lesson on the last part of chapter 7, the Davidic Covenant, if not available. I summarize those verses here for continuity. [hd]

Summary of II Samuel 7:8-29

The Lord tells Nathan the prophet to remind David that He, the Lord, picked David, a shepherd boy, to be ruler over His people Israel. Also that He has been with David wherever he has gone and has cut off all his enemies from before him. He promises David He will make him a great name on the earth and that He will appoint a place where His people Israel may live and not be disturbed. He also promises David He will raise up a descendant from the House of David whose kingdom and throne shall be established forever [This is

known as the Davidic Covenant] David then prays a humble prayer of thanks to the Lord God for the future he has promised David and his house.

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