

Davidic House

I read to you from Psalm 72, a Psalm of Solomon:

Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.
He will judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.
The mountains will bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness.
He will defend the afflicted among the people
and save the children of the needy;
he will crush the oppressor.
He will endure as long as the sun,
as long as the moon, through all generations.
He will be like rain falling on a mown field,
like showers watering the earth.
In his days the righteous will flourish;
prosperity will abound till the moon is no more.
He will rule from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
The desert tribes will bow before him
and his enemies will lick the dust ...

That is the first nine verses. Then verse 11 says, “All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him,” and verse 19 says, “Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.”

The heading of this Psalm, according to the NIV translators, is “Of Solomon.” This is a Psalm that pertains particularly to Solomon in the beginning of his reign and as he should have been throughout his entire reign. Solomon was indeed known as the great king. Remember what Jesus said about Solomon, when He was answering the question concerning signs. I am reading from Luke 11:29:

As the crowds increased, Jesus said, “This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.”

Here Jesus compares Himself, the Great Prince of Peace, with Solomon, whose name essentially means “peace.” Today we will be looking at Solomon; we will examine how well he fits that ideal description and what a tragic course he set for those who were to follow him.

Let us pray.

God, bless us here together this morning. We need Your guidance. Inspire us, Lord, to be like Solomon in his first days, a faithful covenant man. God, You did so much for him and You are doing so much for us, too. We thank you for that and we pray that we may also learn again what it is to be unfaithful and how You dealt faithfully even with unfaithful people. Lord, bless us here together for Jesus’ sake, Amen.

To understand what the Bible has to say about the Davidic house, you will really have to read 1 Kings 1 all the way through to 2 Chronicles 36. Now 1 and 2 Chronicles were written after the exile so they are a reflection on the history of the Davidic house, but they cover more or less the same period of time that is covered by 1 and 2 Kings, except that 1 Chronicles has a big section of genealogy that takes us from Adam to the Davidic house. In 1 Kings, 2 Kings, and the two books of Chronicles, we see the three major concepts that, as I have mentioned previously, form the complex *mitte* of the Scripture. These books show us how these three concepts are worked out and unfolded and how God is faithful and how some of His people are not faithful. At the heart of it all is the mediator, the seed, David. We have also the covenant that represents the bond with God as well as the administrative means for the kingdom. Then there is God's kingdom, which is represented, symbolized, and typified by the monarchy.

Now the mediator, the king, functioning as an administrator of the covenant, is to exert royal prerogatives, royal duties, royal service, through the covenant, which is the administrative means. He can administer God's will because God has established a relationship through the covenant between Himself and the king. So the king is able to serve within the kingdom of God, even as Adam had been when he was created and given the charge to be the covenant mediator. That is why I spoke of David's time as being the high point of Old Testament revelation, because here we see the three concepts coming together. There is the kingdom, represented by the monarchy. There is the covenant, the means. God says "You are My son. I am your God, and through the covenant, I will indeed not only make sure that the mediator is to come, but you will serve as mediator now and you will be My king in My place."

The books of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles tell us the story of how well this was carried out, particularly in the light of Moses' renewal of the covenant recorded in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy gives the details for the covenant: how the relationship is to be maintained. Deuteronomy declares, "You are a chosen one, and God chose you because He loved you." God's will is declared there. Remember that the promise of the priest and the king and the prophet is there in Deuteronomy. The passages that we will examine today are, in a way, a demonstration of how this worked out. It started out so wonderfully with Solomon. God had used David, the mediator. He had used David, the covenant man. He had used David, the king, to set everything up. Then the son, God's son, as Robertson has nicely explained in *The Christ of the Covenants*, takes over. You can read in 2 Samuel 11 how Solomon was born to Bathsheba after the death of that first child who was conceived through an adulterous affair. We read in 2 Samuel 12:24-25, "Bathsheba gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah." "Jedidiah" basically means "loved of the LORD." Solomon carried a double name—"loved of the LORD," and "peace." Solomon, in Hebrew, comes from the root *shim, lamedh, mem*, from which we get the word *shalom*, "peace."

This child, loved of the Lord, given the name "peace," comes to the throne in anything but a peaceful setting. From our reading of 1 Kings 1, we know that when one of the older half-brothers of Solomon seeks the throne, Bathsheba comes in. She pleads for her son, and David, in 1 Kings 1:30, says that his successor will be Solomon. He has Solomon anointed immediately as a vice-regent, or as a co-regent, and from then on there were co-regents. That often explains why two kings were reigning at the same time, because a father would anoint his son perhaps halfway through his reign to make sure that he could establish who would be his successor. That accounts for those fascinating and mysterious numbers in the Book of Kings, because if you would add up all the years that these kings reigned, you get a lot longer period than what we know the period was from the time that David reigned until the exile.

By anointing Solomon, David becomes the spokesman for God and indicates God's election of the loved one. Then we have the charge that David gave to Solomon. In a way, it is a basic covenantal charge. Look at 1 Kings 2, beginning with verse 2:

“I am about to go the way of all the earth,” he said. “So be strong, show yourself a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go, and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: ‘If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’”

Do you see how David brought together the Mosaic covenant and the covenant that God had made with him? He saw them as basically two aspects of one great covenant relationship. The way to fulfill the Davidic covenant requirements is to read Moses. Thus David charges Solomon: “You have the entire revelation now, all the way from Genesis through to what I have given you. Solomon, be faithful.”

If you look at 1 Chronicles 25:9-10, the charge is repeated. David adds to that, “And so be faithful now, too, in building the house of the Lord.” David in his last days really proves to be the father he should have been more consistently throughout his life. We can look to David in this respect: that as he is leaving the world, he gives his son a parental charge: “My son, be a covenant servant.” Study this, and practice it too, you who are fathers or hope to be fathers.

One of the great gifts that Solomon was given was the gift of wisdom. His wisdom was demonstrated in various ways. In 1 Kings 10, the queen of Sheba comes to hear him and is amazed. Solomon had wisdom. He had knowledge. He could speak about everything. The Book of Proverbs indicates that there is no wisdom possible without knowledge. I am not saying that everyone needs a great extensive education, because some of the most educated people have become some of the greatest fools. They showed that their hearts and heads were empty in spite of all that they had read and studied.

Without knowing the “what,” you never know the “how” and the “when” and the “where” and the “why” and the “who.” You have to put those together. Let me give you a little illustration from my life as a father. One of my sons got straight “A’s” all through high school and college. He went to school in Australia and he was right at the top of the class. He got one of the special jackets that the top five of the class got. There were about 200 boys in each class; it was an all-boys’ school. He could run and he got prizes for being the fastest boy. The more honors he got at school, the more arrogant he became at home. That is not unusual. We were proud of him, certainly, but the prouder we were, the more problems we had. Finally, one day, I said to him, “I’ve had it with you.” He looked at me with his blue eyes—he was only 12 or 13 years old—and he said, “And I’ve had it with you.” Oh, my word! What do I do with a 12-year-old who just looked at me with his clear blue eyes, looked me right in the face and said, defiantly, “I’ve had it with you”? I said, “Well, what are you going to do about it?” He said, “I’m going to go away.” When a boy says at the age of 12 that he is going to leave the parental home and he is sick and tired of his father’s administrative ways—I said to him, and I’m sure it was with the Spirit of God that laid it on my heart—I said to him, “When you’re ready to go, let me know, because I’ll ask your older brother if you may use his bicycle, and mother will pack you a lunch so you won’t be hungry the first two days.” The sparkle in his eyes just dimmed and his eyelids dropped and he turned around and walked away.

Three years later, when he was 15, on a Sunday evening, he waited until the other kids had gone to bed, and said, “Dad and Mum, may I talk with you awhile?” He said, “I have a confession to make, and I

want to tell you how much love you, Dad and Mum. I want to tell how proud of you I am, Dad, because when I thought I had you over the barrel three years ago and I was going to run away, I really thought you would cave in. Boy, did you take the wind out of my sails when you said, ‘I’ll get you a bike and we’ll pack you a lunch.’” I had said the right thing at the right time at the right place to the right person for the right reason. I put it all together, the Spirit of God helping me. I always think back to that; I wish I had had wisdom like that in many other experiences in life. Put those things together—the “what,” the “why,” the “when,” the “where,” and the “to whom.”

One time I made a bad mistake. I knew what to do, and I knew why I had to do it, but I did it in the wrong place. One of my boys needed to be punished, but I did it front of the other kids and it humiliated him. I did it at the right time, for the right reason, but in the wrong place. You must put all these things together. That is what Solomon knew how to do. The story with the two women and the baby illustrates this. Solomon knew what to do, when, where, and why. He put it all together. That is wisdom; that is what the Book of Proverbs is all about.

Solomon showed that he was wise with the way he was able to carry out his administration. What ability he had—administrative ability, organizing ability, governing ability—in the first years of his life! The Spirit of God endowed him and enabled him. He had all the gifts that he needed. In 1 Kings 5:12, we read that he had peace. His name became a real prophecy and a reality—peace. He could function wisely because he became the prince of peace, the king who was able to carry out his functions in a proper setting. We know about him as a builder. It is he who built the temple. In 1 Kings 6 and 8, we read about his building. It took him seven years to build that temple, but what I particularly like to read about is how he brought the ark in and how he beautified the whole setting of the ark and how he used the best of the materials at hand to represent that God is king. God is enthroned. He is the Lord. As a builder of the temple, he was faithful to his father’s charge. He honored his God—although he did build himself a nice palace too, which we read about in chapter 7. He built, tragically, a nice palace for that Egyptian queen and that was the beginning of a lot of his troubles. He was a tremendous builder, but what a servant he was in the first part of his life.

In 1 Kings 8, you read about the prayer that he prayed. If you want a model prayer, look to this prayer of dedication that Solomon prayed when he brought the ark to the temple. In 1 Kings 8:23-25, we read part of this prayer:

“O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or the earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth, you have promised and with your hand, you have fulfilled it—as it is today.”

Solomon adored his God and he thanked his God and he vowed, in a way, his faithfulness to God. That man could pray. He had a living relationship with God. He knew how to talk with his God and he knew how to lead his people in prayer.

We read of God coming to Solomon in chapter 9 beginning at verse 3:

“I have heard the prayer and the plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father...”

At this time, Solomon is given the assurance that as he continues in the covenant way, obeying the Mosaic prescriptions, remembering the Davidic charge, God will indeed honor His promises, His plan, His purposes. Later on we will find that God keeps His promises, even when the Davidic house becomes unfaithful, so here again the question is raised about the conditionality of the covenant. This covenant God made with Solomon was, in the final analysis, an unconditional covenant because God was faithful all the time. Even though the Davidic house proved unfaithful, God remained faithful. He kept His covenant, so there is that unconditionality, although within that unconditional covenant it seems as though God does place conditions upon the people: "If you do this, all will be well." However, I do not like to use the word "if." I would rather speak of contingency, as I mentioned before: *when* the people follow, then blessing will come. But when they do not, then the curse of the covenant comes, as it did with the exile, in time. The covenant is unconditional from God's point of view. From our point of view, we can speak of conditionality in this respect: that God demands obedience, but the outworking of the covenant will either be all the blessings He has promised or all the curses. God is faithful. God keeps covenant. God will keep His promises, and so God comes to Solomon in 1 Kings 9 and assures him, "You are on the way. Stay on the way. That is the way of peace, that is the way of love, that is the way of life."

Solomon had to have the nations in mind also, because the covenant included a proper relationship with the nations. He had a relationship with Tyre; that got to be kind of an uncomfortable relationship, as we read in 1 Kings 9:10-19. He brought in foreign conscripts. It is hard to know how we ought to view that. Solomon more or less brought in slave labor, and then he married that Egyptian wife. The queen of Sheba came and listened to him and was amazed. Then in 1 Kings 11 we read how Solomon married so many foreign wives. Increasingly, instead of Solomon impacting the nations like he influenced and amazed the Queen of Sheba, he increasingly let the nations influence him. He even gave some of his cities to Hiram king of Tyre. Once he went outside of his borders, when he had to be a blessing to the nations and interact with the nations, then the nations began to influence him.

We still face that great danger in the church today. The Amish people have sealed themselves in almost hermetically. They do not want to go out, because the world may come in, and yet Jesus said, "I put you in the middle of the world." God said to David, "You are in the middle of the nations." God said to Moses, "I am bringing these people in and you are to remove these godless nations whose cup of iniquity is full. You are not to marry with them or intermarry with them." At the same time, there is evidence that when people from these nations indeed came under the influence of the covenant, they were incorporated within it. Rahab and Ruth are tremendous examples of that, but look what happened to Solomon. The great commission of Genesis 12:1-3 was not carried out the way it should have been. Solomon, as he reached out, opened up to them. He allowed in the influence of the parasite kingdom, the satanic kingdom. Satan had tremendous influence in the foreign nations and through these foreign nations, Solomon bent. Solomon went under and this happened basically through business and women, money and women.

This reminds me of my uncle who said when I was going to the ministry, "George, in your ministry as a pastor your greatest problems will be in the area of money and women." If there are any areas where a minister and his wife have to stand strong and tall, they are in the way they live as a married couple and the way they handle their funds. These are two areas of great temptation; they were the two areas through which idolatry came into Solomon's life.

Solomon was a tremendous royal ruler. He had a vast empire, as I mentioned before. In 1 Kings 4:21, we read, "And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far

as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life." In Genesis 15, it had been promised to Abraham. Under Solomon, it was a reality. That is what Psalm 72 reflects on, which is why I read to you from Psalm 72. But then in 1 Kings 11, the ruler is challenged because of his business and wives. Then God raises up the appointed opponent and the Davidic dynasty is divided. The ten tribes go under Jeroboam and then the northern kingdom has four, five, six different dynasties. There was not one king in the northern country who was a faithful servant of Yahweh. Jehu carried out some of God's command, but he was an idolater himself. Jehu came about as close to faithfulness as any of the northern kings, but still there was not one of those northern kings who was faithful. Jeroboam set up the calves at Bethel and Dan to keep the people from going to Jerusalem, and every king sinned after the pattern of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. It is a tragic story. 2 Kings 17 sums it up, explaining that the northern ten tribes were carried off into captivity because of their persistent idolatry.

The Davidic dynasty was also divided in loyalty. Eight kings of Judah were considered to be faithful to some degree: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah (or Uzzah), Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. These eight are the ones that are referred to as walking more or less in the ways of David, but there were 11 that did not. Manasseh, in the last two years of his life, is said to have repented after he had been carried away as a captive. He repented in the last two years that he lived and he seemed to have been a faithful covenant man after that, but he was converted too late to affect his son, Amon. Amon walked in the ways of his father before his father was converted and he carried on in that evil way. He only reigned for two years, but there were 11 unfaithful kings as opposed to the eight faithful ones.

Whether the kings were faithful or unfaithful, God remained faithful to His covenant. The classic example of this is when Isaiah approaches Ahaz—and maybe we will refer to that briefly next week when we deal with the prophets—Isaiah challenged Ahaz, telling him, "God is faithful. He will bring forth Emmanuel. And the light will come and shine and a son will be born; a child will be given and he will rule and he will reign." The faithfulness of God to His covenant is unchallenged. I want you to pay particular attention to Robertson's book *The Christ of the Covenants*, because on pages 255 to 267 he has listed all the different passages that indicate how God remembered His covenant with David. In spite of what the descendants did, God remembered David and God kept His promise to David.

During the time of these eight kings who were somewhat faithful, there were also three specific covenant renewals. The three kings who attempted a covenant renewal were Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah. The first covenant renewal occurred after Athaliah was killed and little Joash comes to the throne. Then these last two faithful kings also renewed the covenant with the people. So three times during the history of Judah, we have attempts to return to the Davidic and early Solomonic situation. These kings knew what God's will was. These kings had the covenant stipulations. These kings, especially the unfaithful ones, had prophet after prophet coming to them. God was faithful. Thank God for the eight that served faithfully. Every one of those eight were human. What a tragic mistake Josiah made when he went out to try to stop the big king of Egypt! How foolish Hezekiah was when he let the Babylonian envoys see his kingdom! Jotham did not perform very well in many respects, and Azariah became a leper in the later days of his life because he committed some rather un-covenantal actions. Not one of them was perfect. Not one of them was really faithful in the way that David was and Solomon was at first. Nevertheless the Bible says that they did what was right personally, but also says often that they did not remove the idols from among the people.

As I pointed out, all the kings in the north were unfaithful. Eleven were unfaithful in Judah, and it is in the setting of these unfaithful 11 that prophetic activity really emerged as a major force. Now we are going to look at Amos and Hosea and Elijah before them. They were particularly directed to the kings

and the nations in the north, so God did not completely abandon the northern kingdom. They were covenant people also, and we will talk about that when we deal with Hosea, because the idea of the covenant through Hosea's marriage with Gomer comes through so strongly: "Look, you people who are under these unfaithful northern kings, you are a covenant people. God is married to you." That gave a setting for Amos and Hosea to preach their hearts out to these people, but in the south, the important prophets were Micah and Isaiah in the 8th century and then in the 7th century Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah. They preached particularly at times when unfaithful kings were in charge. For example, you know how the prophecy of Isaiah begins. Some of the people were even going to the temple with blood-stained hands. Isaiah, especially in the days of Ahaz, gives some of the most beautiful Messianic passages that you will find in the Bible. So it is during that unfaithful time that God showed His faithfulness by the way He brought in the prophetic word. The prophetic word, as I said before, does not really add anything new, but it repeats, expands, and applies what has already been given. It forcefully lays before the kings and the people what God had promised through Moses and through David and Solomon.

In spite of the prophetic activity, however, temple desecration reached its absolute height under Manasseh. We read of that in 2 Kings 21:2-9: Manasseh "did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites." Instead of reaching out to them, he let them come into him. "He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole,"—remember that the Asherah was the one that accentuated a woman's reproductive organs—"He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. He built altars in the temple of the LORD." These were altars dedicated to these foreign gods. The ark was replaced by the altars. "In both the courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his own son in the fire." He dedicated the covenant seed to the lord of the parasite kingdom, the devil. He took the royal seed, the seed of the Davidic line, the seed that was supposed to bring to the Christ, and he burnt them to death in honor of Satan. "He practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger. He took the carved Asherah pole he had made and put it in the temple." One of the major factors of Canaanite worship was sexual orgiastic activity, which was usually carried out in front of the Asherah poles. Manasseh brought that in the temple, so that means that there was evidently sexual orgies in the name of worship practiced right in God's temple: physical adultery representing spiritual adultery as its worst. It was because of this sin of Manasseh particularly that it is said that the cup of God's anger was full. God said, "Enough! Judah, too, must go."

What about the priesthood in those days? We do not read a great deal about the priests themselves, but Hosea gives us a little insight. He says in Hosea 4, "the LORD has a charge, a controversy, a covenant lawsuit with you who live in the land. There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God, cursing, lying, murder, stealing, adultery, the land mourns." Then he goes on to say in verse 5 and following,

You stumble day and night and all the prophets stumble with you ... my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge ... because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children. The more the priests increased, the more they sinned against me.

According to Hosea, the priests were, tragically, leading in this idolatrous worship, according to Hosea. The result was that the covenant curse, which had been stated so clearly in Deuteronomy 27 and 28, came into effect. God had promised that if the people were unfaithful, eventually they would be carried away to the nations. These nations that influenced them would become their captors, and they would

become subject to them. The Chronicler is the one who gives us an evaluation and he starts with the royal house. Why was this covenant curse executed? Not because of God's unfaithfulness. The Chronicler starts his genealogy from Adam and he carries the line all the way through, showing that God kept His seed line from Eve right through all the way. God gave them the temple. God gave them the priesthood. He gave them the royal house. He gave them the covenants so that they could walk in covenantal faithfulness: the kings, the priests, and the people.

Some people have said that the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles basically deal with the temple and the priesthood. If you read them again closely, which some scholars are doing these days, you will find that there is just as much, if not more, emphasis on the royal house, the Davidic house. You cannot separate what happened in the palace from what happened in the temple. You cannot separate what happens in your house from what takes place in your religious life. Remember, God has given us an integrated life situation. Our relationship with God, our relationships socially, and our relationship with the world at large are inseparable. These are the three dimensions of basic covenantal living. The Book of Chronicles points out these people had the covenant, but they were exiled because God was faithful to His covenant. He brought in the curse, which was the exile.

We will look at the prophets next week.