

The Hope for a King

2 Samuel 7

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The kingdom of God isn't a democracy, it's a monarchy. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, if we look around us, we see a need for a righteous king. We live in an age of wars and rumors of wars, in a country filled with division and corruption, and where men of authority use their power to victimize others. Though God's common grace brings much that is good into our world, this fallen world reminds us that we need a king.

When it comes to human government, we rightly give thanks to the democratic republic in which we live. If human history has proven anything, it's that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. We see this around the world now from Kim Jong-un, Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini, and tragically much more. Democracy curtails the corruption of power, but no human government, including democracy, can avoid the taint of sin. At Christmas time, we are reminded that our hope isn't in the institutions of man—a president or a congress—but rather we long for the return of the righteous King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

On this first Sunday of Advent, we set our attention on the hope of a coming king. A king who has come on that first Christmas morning, and a king who will come back at the end of the age to establish his benevolent monarchy upon the earth.

As we focus on the hope of the coming king, we will turn to 2 Samuel 7:1-28. This passage is an important one in the Old Testament, in which God makes a covenant with David to secure his kingship for eternity. As we reflect on the wonderful promise of God, our hearts fill with hope over Christ, the new born king!

1. We Look for an Eternal King (v. 1-17)

The Lord's sovereign hand made young David king over Israel. After Saul's disobedience, God rejected Saul as king and sent the prophet Samuel to anoint David as king. After a long and difficult journey, at the death of Saul, David ascended to the throne of Israel. David was a man after God's own heart. Though he would fail greatly, God brought great blessing to his people through David.

During this time of prosperity and peace, David began to desire to build a permanent temple for the Lord. Since Egypt, the tabernacle of God, which marked God's presence among his people, dwelt in a tent called the tabernacle. David had built a grand palace for himself and longed to do the same for his God. David consults with the prophet Nathan, expressing his desire to build a temple for the Lord. Initially, Nathan expresses his support for this idea. However, that night the Lord came to Nathan with a prophetic word. So after receiving this word, Nathan goes to tell the king.

The Lord rejects David's offer. The Lord never expressed any desire for a permanent structure for his ark to dwell. The tabernacle perfectly fulfilled the demands God outlined in the Law. So God rejects the construction of his house, but he chooses to build a house for David. Here we receive what's often called the David covenant.

The Lord reminds David of his humble beginnings. He took him from the pasture to the palace. God made the shepherd a king. With the call of God, he left behind the woolly sheep for the flock of Israel. By his power, God brought peace to the land through the reign of David. The presence of God had gone with David, and he defeated every foe that challenged him. The reign of David ceased the violence and instability of the time of the judges. Through David, God brings stability to his people.

God promises to give David a long life and a prosperous reign, however, he also makes it clear that he will be David a house—that being a dynasty. In verse 12ff,

"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body,

and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,"
(2 Samuel 7:12–14, ESV)

This prophetic promise refers to the reign of Solomon, who reigned after David's death. David's hope to build a house for the Lord would come to pass through the work of Solomon. The Lord ensures that he will care for Solomon as a father to a son, disciplining him when necessary, but never forsaking him as he did with the kingship of Saul. However the key future promise of this passage rests in verse 16, "And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever."

Here we see the promise of the eternal reign of David's dynasty. The house of David will not fade away. The Lord will establish his kingdom and throne forever! What a wonderful promise!

As we will discover this morning, we know that this covenant God makes with David points in hope to the arrival of Jesus Christ. As we celebrate Christmas, we must remember the long, expected wait of Jesus by the people of Israel. This promise of David's eternal dynasty gave them great hope, and caused them to look with fervor for the arrival of the promised king!

Israel knew that the blessings of God flow upon their nation through a godly king. A simple reading through the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles reveal this repeating pattern. Through a godly king, God brings blessing and victory to his people. Through an ungodly king, judgment and destruction devastate the people. No matter how dark the days, Israel clung to the memory of David's reign and the promise of God to establish his dynasty forever.

As we remember the arrival of the king of kings this Christmas, the promised son of David, we must look in hope for an eternal king. It seems that the days grow dark amongst us. In desperation, we look for a messiah. Many people look to a politician or president, an economic or social policy, on the cause of Democracy or the United Nations. Sadly, many Christians also begin to place messianic hopes in politicians and bureaucrats to fix our problems. Though we should pray human government should maximize human flourishing, we are fools if we place our hopes in politics. It's astonishing that so many Christians are so quick to do just that.

These last few years have been a disaster for evangelicals politically. In many ways, we've lost all credibility in the public square as we abandon the Gospel in order to have a voice in Congress. Evangelicals often turn a blind eye to disqualifying moral failures in the name of political expediency. It's been astonishing to me to see how many who call themselves evangelicals make excuses for sexual harassment as long as their political party wins the election. Why are so many of our evangelical leaders quick to cast aside their convictions when wealth and power are involved? Why do so many pastors transform their churches into a temple of the pagan deity called nationalism? Friends, may I be so bold to say, that if our only hope is to make America great again, then we've made an idol out of America and have we've rejected Jesus as king. I know I may be pushing buttons here, but I'm convinced that the American church has a serious idolatry problems that need to be addressed.

Christmas reminds us that the only hope we have is found, not in the house of Congress but in the house of David. Our hope is in Jesus the anointed king. As we look at all our world and all its problems, utopia will not come from your political ideology. So what is our hope for this world? That Jesus would come again soon and establish his eternal reign upon the earth. What we need is Jesus and Jesus alone. We look for an eternal king!

2. We Magnify the Promised King (v. 18-29)

Upon receiving this wonderful promise from God, David responds with sincere gratitude. He's overwhelmed at the thought of God's blessing on his life. David realizes he does not deserve this wonderful promise of his enduring dynasty. At the thought of the news, he's almost speechless. Look in verse 20-22,

"And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears." (2 Samuel 7:20-22, ESV)

All David can do is praise the Lord. He realizes that this promise has come into his life undeserved, according to the Lord's heart. God has poured out his love on David, and David's only response is worship. As we stand under the waterfall of God's grace and promise in our life, joyful praise is the only proper result. As the roaring waters of his mercy flow upon us, we join David in saying, "For there is none like you!"

David understands that as God blesses the king, so too will his people be blessed. The people of God thrive under the reign of a good and godly leader. As the prosperity of the nation expands, so too will the glory of God's name.

As the word of God comes to pass—and the word of God never returns void—David knows that the name of God "will be magnified forever." As the eternal reign of David's son comes to pass, so will the fame and glory of the Lord. Indeed, this is the ultimate aim of all that God does, his own glory. As he redeems sinners through Jesus Christ, he does so "to the praise of his glorious grace."

In the witness of Scripture, we have a record of God's faithful promises. David hopes for what he does not see, but now in Christ, we see clearly. He longed for the fulfillment of this covenant promise of an eternal dynasty. In Jesus, we, how all of God's promises come to pass. As God blesses his king, we are blessed. As Jesus achieves victory, so too do we receive his victory. The righteousness, reward, and blessing that flows from Christ come to those of us who unite ourselves with him in faith.

We can trust in the certainty of God's word. In a day and age like ours, you can't believe everything you hear. It's hard to know whose word to trust and whose word is reliable. However, in this Davidic covenant, we see David's faith in this promise and we also see its fulfillment. He did not hope in vain, but God came through with his promise when Jesus was born in the city of David, Bethlehem.

Listen to Gabriel's announcement to Mary in the Gospel of Luke:

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom, there will be no end." (Luke 1:30-33, ESV)

As we gather to worship our God this morning, may we reflect on the goodness of his promises towards us in Jesus, and may we magnify his name. As God redeems sinners like us for his own possession and transforms us into

citizens worthy of his kingdom, we express our gratitude through praise. Worship is the inertial fruit of those transformed by God's promises.

3. We Wait for the Expected King (Matthew 1:1-17)

Finally, we wait for the expected king. Though God's word is certain, God's timetable is not ours. In our fast food and microwave culture, we want quick and instant results from God. We expect his promises to be instantly fulfilled. However, God is often slow in bringing about his promises. In his wisdom, he delays the fulfillment of his promises for the glory of his name.

We see this in this Davidic covenant. Though in general, Solomon's reign brought great blessing upon the land, generation after Solomon struggled to maintain faithfulness to the lord. In fact, some of them rejected the Lord completely. The history of Israel is a roller coaster of thwarted expectation. However, no matter how difficult the times, Israel clung to this promise of David's dynasty. Even though they weren't sure how God could still keep his promises, they trusted that he would. After the collapse of David's monarchy, Judah was sent into exile at the hands of the Babylonians. However, from 2 Samuel 7, the Old Testament leaves a trail of breadcrumbs causing us to hope expectantly that God had not forgotten his promise to David.

In the book of Isaiah we see the hope of David's dynasty continues,

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins." (Isaiah 11:1-5, ESV)

Yet, the people waited and waited for this branch from Jesse. The promised king was to come, though he would come in the most unexpected way possible. As we turn to the Gospels, we see the writers of the New Testament want us to make the connection to Jesus heritage and lineage. It's why the gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy. Here he traces Jesus connections to David himself.

He begins by making the connection explicit in verse 1, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." (Matthew 1:1, ESV). The genealogy is structured in such a way, that Matthew highlights the genealogical connection to David. As Matthew begins his gospel, he wants us to understand that Jesus is the promised one of God. Jesus is the one who fulfills the Davidic expectation of an eternal king. He concludes his genealogy by writing, "So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations." (Matthew 1:17, ESV) In other words, Israel waited a long time for her Messiah, and they didn't even recognize the king when he arrived!

On the first Sunday of Advent, we reflect on the often excruciating discipline of patience. Though we don't have to wait for the arrival of the king, we do wait for the return of the king. With the evidence of sin all around us, we join in the choir of groaning that longs for all to be made right again. It seems every day we become exposed to greater depths of human depravity. News article after article, clip after clip, we see the wretchedness of human sin on display as people take advantage of one another, profit off one another, abuse one another. 2017 has born an uncanny resemblance to the haunting refrain from the book of judges: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25, ESV)

However, as Christians, we hope in Christ the king! We believe that true king of the cosmos arrived in Bethlehem two-thousand years ago. We believe that he grew into manhood, and lived a life of righteousness and holiness without a hint of sin. We believe that Jesus went to the cross and paid the penalty for our sin. We believe that he was dead and buried, but then on the third day rose again, solidifying his rights to kingship. In glorious resurrection, we believe that he ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. We believe that those who hear and respond in faith to this good news of King Jesus will receive everlasting life. We believe that Jesus will come again for his church to establish his kingdom forever more. We believe that the king will vanquish all his foes, bringing judgment upon humanity for sin. We believe that those who stand cloaked in the righteousness of Christ will be brought into the joyous presence of

the king for all of eternity. Surely, his kingdom will not fade! The glory of his kingdom will only increase as the centuries turn into millenniums—we will not exhaust our praise to King Jesus!

In the book of Revelation, we get a picture of what that day will be like as John gets a heavenly vision. In revelation five, one of the elders approaches John and tells him, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” (Revelation 5:5, ESV).

We do not hope in vain. The promised God had made to David for an eternal dynasty comes to pass in the eternal reign of the God-man Jesus Christ. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. He alone has conquered our sin and death and brought us into the life of his kingdom.

Final Thoughts

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, may we reflect on the hope we have in Jesus. We hope in the certainty of God’s promise that he will fulfill all that he promised. We know that God does not lie. His word will come to pass! Christ is the king and he is coming soon.

With the announcement and hope of this king, every one of us must respond to this gospel. Will we submit our lives to the king? Will we bend our knee in devotion to him? Will we call him savior and confess him as Lord and God? Will we devote our lives to him? Will we hope alone in him?

As Christians, may we never forget the source of our hope in this life is Christ alone. We trust in him to protect us and lead us to the joy of his kingdom. We submit our lives to him as we pick up our cross and follow after Jesus.

If you not a Christian this morning, I pray that you might see the glory of King Jesus. Repent of your rebellion against him. Turn from your wicked ways, and confess Jesus as Savior and Lord. The only way to come under the blessing of the king is to confess your allegiance to him. You must put your faith in Jesus if you want forgiveness of your sins.

No matter how difficult our lives may get, nor how bleak the world around us becomes, we look forward to an eternal king, whom we magnify with our worship, even as we await for his return in hope.