

CONCERNING THE WAY

November 4, 2008

LESSON 37: ISRAEL: 2 SAMUEL



Chapter 6

In this chapter we'll be moving back and forth a bit between 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles. Chronicles covers everything from Genesis up to the time of the Babylonian exile, and summarizes it from the perspective of the priesthood, who wrote it. Chronicles, therefore, looks at history from a priestly point of view. The same event will occur in these two books but it will be looked at from different perspectives. There are no contradictions, this is not two ideas of what went on as the liberal higher critics would say. This is the same situation you have in the Gospels in the New Testament where you have four men writing about the same history from four different perspectives.

2 Samuel 6:1 David again assembled all the best men in Israel, thirty thousand in number.

1 Chronicles 13:1-4 David consulted with his military officers, including those who led groups of a thousand and those who led groups of a hundred. (2) David said to the whole Israelite assembly, "If you so desire and the LORD our God approves, let's spread the word to our brothers who remain in all the regions of Israel, and to the priests and Levites in their cities, so they may join us. (3) Let's move the ark of our God back here, for we did not seek his will throughout Saul's reign." The whole assembly agreed to do this, for the proposal seemed right to all the people.

This is after David establishes his capital in Jerusalem. 1 Chronicles here provides additional details. This lets you in on what a diplomat this guy was. He is trying to see how the Lord is leading in the nation, to check the response of the people. He wants to see if the people really want the ark. Why does David make a big deal over the ark? The ark is a synonym for the presence of God.

The tabernacle was at Shiloh, but the ark that was supposed to be in the tabernacle, that was taken a long time ago, back in 1 Samuel 4 by the Philistines. Remember God had some fun with the Philistines. The ephod, the tabernacle and the ark were originally all together. **What David is going to do is gradually bring these three together.** The first move that he makes is to recover the ark. Now of these three things which one do you think Saul was most interested in? The ephod. Why? Because it gave him something that he needed, he needed a hotline to God and that's the only one of these three things Saul ever had an interest in. What is it that David shows an interest in? The ark. Why? Because David cherishes the presence of God Himself; to him that's the issue.

All during the reign of Saul the ark was parked in a place just on the boundaries of Philistia and Israel, Kiriath-jearim. The Philistines apparently maintained semi-control of the area and the Israelites never managed to get hold of it. In all of Saul's campaigns he never once sought to open the road to recover that ark, there wasn't a concern that God be here indwelling the center of the nation.

Why does it take thirty thousand men to go get the ark? That's also involved in what's on David's heart. To David the ark is the throne of Yahweh, the Lord of armies. He wants to have a victory parade of God Himself leading the army into Jerusalem. To David this becomes a military parade with Yahweh at the head.

2 Samuel 6:2 David and all the men who were with him traveled to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts, who sits enthroned between the cherubim that are on it.

So far it was divine viewpoint, so far it was admirable what David was doing, but at this point he is going to blow it, and here is one of those places where you're going to think God is very unfair. I'm not going to comment on the unfairness of God until after we present the details of what happened, then we'll comment on how it is that God is fair and He can do something like this.

2 Samuel 6:3-7 They loaded the ark of God on a new cart and carried it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart. (4) They brought it with the ark of God up from the house of Abinadab on the hill. Ahio was walking in front of the ark, (5) while David and all Israel were energetically celebrating before the LORD, singing and playing various stringed instruments, tambourines, rattles, and cymbals. (6) When they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and grabbed hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. (7) The LORD was so furious with Uzzah, he killed him on the spot for his negligence. He died right there beside the ark of God.

First verse 3, "they loaded the ark of God on a new cart." At this point they are making a mistake; you can say it was an innocent mistake, but it was still a mistake. To show you they later realized this mistake, turn to 1 Chronicles 15, after it happened and David had a chance to think about it.

1 Chronicles 15:12-13 He told them: "You are the leaders of the Levites' families. You and your relatives must consecrate yourselves and bring the ark of the LORD God of Israel up to the place I have prepared for it. (13) The first time you did not carry it; that is why the LORD God attacked us, because we did not ask him about the proper way to carry it."

Numbers 4:15 says the Levites were supposed to carry the ark. You might say well, good night, I wouldn't have remembered it either. Well, you would have got killed too. Only authorized personnel are to carry the thing.

Numbers 4:15 "When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is ready to journey, then the Kohathites will come to carry them; but they must not touch any holy thing, or they will die. These are the responsibilities of the Kohathites with the tent of meeting.

They were not to touch any holy thing. Or they would die. So when David came to pick the ark up, which in itself is a good thing, they are not carrying it the way God specifically described. And he held them accountable for that, to know His Word. So as they were stopping in verse 6, the oxen apparently shook the cart, and the verb means that the thing is beginning to topple. This seems very, very unfair, here Uzzah sees the thing toppling and he's just putting his hand up to stop the thing, that's all, and he gets blasted. Now what is the deal?

Why is it that God acts so violently, so rapidly, to a man that was simply just trying to help out? Well, that's the problem, you don't help God, He doesn't need your help. And here is a vast theological point that is important to understand. **God is a God of grace, but He is creator first, and He will not share His glory with any other person, period.** And when it comes to those areas in God's Word where His character is at stake He becomes violently angry when it's compromised. This ark was to be a typology of God's very presence.

What is a type? **A type is something that pictures God's truth. When He designs a type He does not want people to tamper with it.** This is why you're warned in the communion service to not take it lightly. God is just as particular about us observing communion properly because that is a type of His work, and if we do not do it properly we can receive judgement, as the church in Corinth did. It's the same thing here, God doesn't have anything personal against Uzzah, that's not the point. The point is that when he reached up to support that thing, he was helping God and God says no, no creature helps Me, I do not need even a hand of support, I will support myself.

Now the tendency in Christian circles is to forget this, because we are so imbued with the concept of grace we forget about other aspects of God's nature. We take His grace for granted. God at this point is clarifying something and something that He periodically does. When Moses hit the rock twice he got clobbered, in the wilderness. I probably would have hit the rock five times if I had a million people griping at me like Moses had. I'd have hit them; never mind the rock. But when Moses hits it twice, he has smashed one of God's types and for that he didn't get to go into Canaan. Can you think of other incidents we have studied?

Abraham and his son Isaac, remember? He told Abraham, I want you slit your son's throat this morning, what did Abraham do? He said, "Yes Sir" and got up and started it. Now why did God order that? Why is God so hard-nosed

on what looks to us as trivial little details? Why doesn't he get hard with David in the area of his polygamy, and does get so hard-nosed over something like this? He gets hard-nosed about what seem like trivial things to us and then lets a whole bunch of sins go by and never bothers with it.

Why does our God work this way? It goes back to the idea of a witness. You can use this application to predict in your life where God is going to bear down hard and where he isn't. Now don't misuse it, this isn't to give you an escape from discipline, but God is going to lay into you at the point where He considers your life to be critical in His program. He has given you a calling of some sort, be it housewife, be it businessman, somewhere, **He has given you a calling, and He wants something in your life to be a testimony in history and He is going to get it, even if He has to rub your nose in the ground to do it.**

Here is where the legalist is way out to lunch. They're worried about who took a drink at somebody's party or who took a puff outside the church. It is the legalists that are way out, because if God the Holy Spirit isn't making an issue of it, why should they? **The Holy Spirit is more concerned with mental attitude sin, usually pride** or something like that. Why does God make an issue out of pride? What is Satan's sin? Pride. Do you think Satan fell because he had a cigarette? Did he have a beer party in Eden? Did he go see a pornographic movie under the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? No, it was because he rebelled against God's authority, and that's the mental attitude sin of pride. **That's where you and I become most like Satan, and that is why God lowers the boom in that area.**

If you are part of the body of Christ, what God wants is a person who is grace oriented, a person who understands who God is, what sin is, and who is doing something about his sins, that is, he is trusting grace moment by moment. In other words, his life is basically submissive to God. That's what God is after.

Now it's possible that we just don't have the full story here. Maybe Uzzah was a self-righteous person, maybe he was prideful enough to worm his way to the side of the ark because it would make him look good. We just don't know. But we do know that **they were transporting the ark inappropriately and God's character was threatened.**

You may ask the question, why does He want men to bear the ark at all? If He wanted to illustrate His autonomy, why doesn't He use levitation to bear the ark? The reason for this is the way that God operates in history. God always uses natural instruments. For example, when an altar is made, you are never to cut a rock for the altar, you're only to use natural rock for the altar. When the ark is carried, it is supposed to be carried by certain people, made in God's image; no human instrument or construction is involved. The cart that the ark was put on, like the Philistines did, is a human instrument. It is an instrument that man makes to help God lift and God does not accept those kinds of human instruments. So God only wants that which is natural. This is a common theme, and if you're puzzled on this read the book of Leviticus and watch every place where something is made and you'll notice God is always relying on natural, not man-made materials.

2 Samuel 6:8 David was angry because the LORD attacked Uzzah; so he called that place Perez Uzzah, which remains its name to this very day.

Peraz Uzzah means basically the place where God broke out against Uzzah. He suddenly broke out, because God at this point was concerned more for His glory than He was of the life of Uzzah. That shows something else; is human life the highest value in the creation? No, **the glory of God is the highest value and never get that reversed.** The humanist, the apostate humanist today has only one highest supreme value, the life of man. God says no, there's one greater, My glory. And when it comes to choose between whether men shall die or whether My glory shall prevail, My glory shall prevail and men will die.

Now we know from the way the Hebrew is constructed in this verse, and that verse in 1 Chronicles 15, that David was angry at himself. He knows he's made a mistake. And the next reaction in verse 9 is a very normal reaction.

2 Samuel 6:9 David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How will the ark of the LORD ever come to me?"

The fear that David has of God here is something that you would have expected in the early days of David's life. Didn't we say that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom," a respect for God. Here's another lesson to pick up and use in your Christian life. Periodically in David's life, not all the time, but once in a while there would be a crisis that would arise by which God would remind David, My glory first David, not yours, Mine. Even though I love you, no matter if you are a believer in union with Jesus Christ, don't get in the way of God's glory and get run over. David had to be reminded and his response was fear. Fear and respect of what kind of a God it is we serve.

2 Samuel 6:10-11 So David was no longer willing to bring the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. David left it in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. (11) The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months. The LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his family.

All during this time the ark was just sitting outside the city. The ark had almost gotten to Jerusalem, and then it stopped and David left it there. So what happened to the household where God's presence was? It's being blessed. And it was close enough to the walls of Jerusalem that every time he'd walk out of the city they'd say look at that guy, look at his crops, fantastic. The ark of God is there. How come the ark isn't in the city? We can't move it, we're afraid someone will get killed again.

Now what was needed to bring the ark back in the city? Just follow the Word; all he had to do was go back to Numbers 4, find out how to move it, do it the way God told him to do it and he could have moved it that night. It sat there for three months because nobody took the time to go back into the Word of God and find out how to do it. The instructions were all there, the Bible was written very plainly. It's an interesting lesson. **How many blessings are we missing outside the city walls; they're not ours because we're not following instructions.**

Now in 2 Samuel 6 you're going to see the result of 400 years of history. David is bringing the nation back into divine viewpoint. There's a little application here to our contemporary situation in this country. A divine viewpoint culture cannot be built overnight; by that I mean a culture area where you have economics, science, philosophy, all the fields dominated by divine viewpoint. The desire of the church in every age, wherever its locale, is that men are won to Jesus Christ, built up strongly in the faith and then subdue the earth under the commands of the Word of God.

That byproduct of Christianity occurs very rarely in history. The Puritans, as one example of this, developed a tremendous culture, but it was the product of the Reformation; what had happened 100-200 years before; this didn't happen overnight. Today we have destroyed that culture; there is not one area left in this country that is run according to divine viewpoint. We have cancelled out in approximately 100-200 years what it took the Puritans 200 years to build. We have destroyed it. **Every major field is controlled, dogmatically, totally, from one end to the other, with human viewpoint today.** In every one of these areas we're suffering because of this process that has gone on.

Now how do we reverse the process? If we're sane believers we don't want our children to face this. **It's too late to change the culture of America for us;** we've lost the school systems, we've lost the colleges, we don't even have a base to start with. There's only one place there can come a change in this country and that is in a local church. You cannot have the change happen in some evangelistic organization because it isn't deep enough; those organizations can only win people to Christ and they can't do more than that. **Change is only going to come when we get local churches in many, many areas that are teaching the Word of God in depth,** not just a little evangelistic service with everyone trotting forward to dedicate their life every week. I mean local churches that are going to consistently teach the entire counsel of God. That's the first step. Probably after a generation of about thirty years of that kind of thing then you'll have people trained enough to move out into various fields. So the minimum amount of time it would take to start changing the culture would be 50 to 100 years.

Now David has seen this and here in 2 Samuel 6 you're going to see the result of 400 years of history. There's going to be something wonderful happen here and David is very excited about what happens, but it took four centuries to get to this point.

2 Samuel 6:12 David was told, "The LORD has blessed the family of Obed-Edom and everything he

owns because of the ark of God." So David went and joyfully brought the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David.

This blessing that David witnessed changed his attitude. David interpreted what had happened as that the Lord was unhappy with his attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem. Then it dawns on him, wait a minute, God's blessing that guy down there and I could have that blessing. This is developed in a parallel passage, 1 Chronicles 15:1.

1 Chronicles 15:1-4 David constructed buildings in the City of David; he then prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. (2) Then David said, "Only the Levites may carry the ark of God, for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to serve before him perpetually. (3) David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring the ark of the LORD up to the place he had prepared for it. (4) David gathered together the descendants of Aaron and the Levites:

David must have finally read Numbers 1:50, 4:15; 7:9; or 10:17. These four places in Numbers are places where God's authoritative Word has said you will do it this way, period, no variation.

1 Chronicles 15:12-16 He told them: "You are the leaders of the Levites' families. You and your relatives must consecrate yourselves and bring the ark of the LORD God of Israel up to the place I have prepared for it. (13) The first time you did not carry it; that is why the LORD God attacked us, because we did not ask him about the proper way to carry it." (14) The priests and Levites consecrated themselves so they could bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. (15) The descendants of Levi carried the ark of God on their shoulders with poles, just as Moses had ordered according to the divine command. (16) David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint some of their relatives as musicians; they were to play various instruments, including stringed instruments and cymbals, and to sing loudly and joyfully.

In verse 16 we have a very interesting verse that tells us about the addition of music to worship, and why it was added. This is not ordained in the Mosaic Law. It's a very foolish argument that people use who don't like to use instruments in worship. They argue that in the Old Testament they had music but it's nowhere commanded in the New Testament. So since instrumental music is not commanded in the New Testament, therefore it's wrong. But the fallacy in the argument is that instrumental music wasn't commanded in the Old Testament either. Where do you have instrumental music commanded in the Law of Moses? It's not there, it is added by David; David did not have to do this.

There's nothing wrong with art, there's nothing wrong with music; it's just the culture that's screwed it up so much. People who say it's wrong are people who are arguing that you have to give up part of your humanity to worship God. God accepts us with our whole humanity, He doesn't like sin, but don't ever confuse sin with part of your humanity, it's legitimate to express yourself culturally, as long as it's done along Biblical lines.

The role of the instruments in verse 16 was to carry the people to worship in a louder, more consistent and clear way. In other words, **the music was to aid the people in worship, not perform at them.** Now it's OK once in a while to have people perform solos and so on, this is good, that's a ministry of music. But the main thrust of music in the Bible is to perform with, and if you're ever designing a church perhaps the best place for the choir, the band, the worship team, whatever, is off to the side, or maybe in the back, because they are simply there to help the people worship.

And the rest of this chapter in Chronicles gives details to show what the procession looked like. Remember he's got a division of soldiers mixed in here too, that's thirty thousand men. He's got three choirs leading off, each of these choirs has instrumentalists. Then comes the ark, and surrounding the ark he has priests, seven with trumpets, and then he has what they call door-keepers. So we have the choirs, then we have the ark, then we have the king and the elders, they're right behind the ark. So you have this tremendous parade, with all the soldiers it was a massive thing. Think of a whole division of soldiers coming up the street; battalion after battalion, regiment after regiment, over and over in front of you. So that was the parade that David organized to escort the ark into the city.

Now back to 2 Samuel 6:13, we'll pick up the other narrative for this, and here's where Saul's daughter comes into the

picture. Remember Michal, we studied her a couple of lessons back. Michal was like her father, and she inherited her father's human viewpoint. She is a proud self-righteous woman. And we've mentioned how God has humiliated her in various ways.

2 Samuel 6:13-23 Those who carried the ark of the LORD took six steps and then David sacrificed an ox and a fatling calf. (14) Now David, wearing a linen ephod, was dancing with all his strength before the LORD. (15) David and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD, shouting and blowing trumpets. (16) As the ark of the LORD entered the City of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked out the window. When she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him. (17) They brought the ark of the LORD and put it in its place in the middle of the tent that David had pitched for it. Then David offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before the LORD. (18) When David finished offering the burnt sacrifices and peace offerings, he pronounced a blessing over the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. (19) He then handed out to each member of the entire assembly of Israel, both men and women, a portion of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake. Then all the people went home. (20) When David went home to pronounce a blessing on his own house, Michal, Saul's daughter, came out to meet him. She said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself this day! He has exposed himself today before his servants' slave girls the way a vulgar fool might do!" (21) David replied to Michal, "It was before the LORD! I was celebrating before the LORD, who chose me over your father and his entire family and appointed me as leader over the LORD's people Israel. (22) I am willing to shame and humiliate myself even more than this! But with the slave girls whom you mentioned let me be distinguished!" (23) Now Michal, Saul's daughter, had no children to the day of her death.

Michal is not concerned with the parade, she's concerned with whether or not her husband exposed himself. And he may have, that isn't the point, David doesn't deny he did it. The issue is the attitude involved.

People with this kind of self-righteousness, it is more important to be dignified than anything else. John the Baptist was undignified, after all, not too many people make locusts a diet, not too many people dress like John the Baptist. But in God's point of view, human dignity is not the issue, the issue is the first commandment, "you will have no other gods before Me." John had no other gods in the wilderness; Jesus had no other gods in the parties and God didn't condemn one over the other; one was a socialite, the other was an ascetic, it didn't matter. If you learn that it'll make your fellowship with believers much more relaxed. If you can understand that **what God sees in the human heart is whether or not that person is oriented to the first commandment, whether or not they are passionately involved with God alone**, that's the issue.

And this should be our attitude both in the local church and individually. The job is to communicate the Word, not to worry about how people look. Wherever you are, in the home, on the campus, in your neighborhood, on the job, you're there as an ambassador for Christ. And God is not going to have you make an issue of how people look, how people talk, the issue is the Word, the truth of God, whether they are or are not going to submit to his authority, that's the issue, nothing else. Just relax and have patience, and just trust the Lord to work out those bothersome details that give you a hang-up, you'll find God will take care of it.

In Michal's case she couldn't relax, she had to have dignity now and the presence of God later. And so God gave her no children forever. It's an expression of His displeasure. In the Old Testament a woman could not have any worse thing happen to her; a woman could be assaulted, a woman could be beaten, a woman could be thrown out of her house, but there was no worse punishment for a woman than to be rendered childless. It was an embarrassment.

Chapter 7

Now we start the chapter that is the highlight of the Old Testament. At no point in the Old Testament are the blessings of grace greater than here. This is the spiritual high point of the Old Testament as far as the outworkings of blessing on a nation is concerned. This is the peak of national prosperity. The nation Israel will never go higher than this until Jesus Christ personally returns and takes over leadership on the throne of David.

2 Samuel 7:1-3 The king settled into his palace, for the LORD gave him relief from all his enemies on all sides. (2) The king said to Nathan the prophet, "Look! I am living in a palace made from cedar, while the ark of God sits in the middle of a tent." (3) Nathan replied to the king, "You should go and do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you."

Verses 1-3 are the introduction of the chapter; then verses 4-17 is called the oracle of Nathan. Nathan is the prophet in David's court. He is the main prophet, the king-maker, the man who directs the king; and he takes over from the prophet Gad. Nathan is a reminder to us that under Israel's setup politically the civil government had to be subject to the Word of God. There wasn't this garbage about neutrality; there was no neutrality. A nation is always committed to the Word of God or it is committed to its denial. Every national culture is an expression of religious faith, and it shows up in the schooling, in the way people act, in the design of the political institutions, in the way men conduct business, in the way people spend their time of leisure. A nation is always controlled by a dominant religion. In America it used to be Christianity. **Today the dominant faith of America is humanism.** Of course people provide lip service with Christian words and God words, but the dominant faith that controls American thought and activity is basically humanism, that man is the measure of all things. And it's happiness that is the end all, whereas it was previously thought that it was God's happiness that is the end all, not man.

The key word for this whole chapter is the word "relief" in verse 1, a better translation is "rest". It is a word that is used synonymously with the word to sit. Rest and sit; sitting on his throne he rests from his enemies. Now this rest has to be defined because later on it's going to become a model for something in the Christian life.

Notice who is it that is given rest? The king, the head of the nation. So we go back, since this is a national office, to the covenant of all covenants, the Abrahamic Covenant, Genesis 12:2. Everything goes back to the Abrahamic Covenant. This is the great election, the choosing of God in history, why did He choose the Jew? Nowhere does the Bible tell us why; we're to believe that God had a reason for choosing the Jew but He hasn't told us the reason.

In Genesis 12:2 among the great blessings that were given, the Abrahamic Covenant being a blessing of land, a blessing to the world, and the survival of the people. And it is going to be fulfilled when they become a great nation. So there's got to be something happen in history that makes them into a great nation. You first have to have a family and it takes time for one family to become a nation, but they do become a nation.

If in the year 2000 BC you start with Abraham and Sarah, and you proceed to the year 2000 AD and attain the known Jewish population, and we know they all came from one family in 2000 BC, it's a simple problem of geometric ratios to discover population growth. So we have an idea of how fast the world's population is growing, and you compute it from the Jew because you know his starting point and you know the final value. And he is a good way to compute how fast the population of the earth is growing because the Jew has been more subject to destruction than other races. So whatever population growth rate from this computation is going to be conservative. Actually Gentiles probably grow faster than this, but the Jew grows, in spite of the six million killed in Germany and so forth, at a certain rate.

Now taking the same population growth rate, and working off the total world population today backwards, you come out with a figure of about 3000 BC as the starting point for the present human race. And of course that fits, that fits exactly what the Bible's been trying to tell us for centuries, that the human race has not been around for millions of years. **If the human race were really around for millions of years, or even tens of thousands of years, you'd be standing on top of one another,** because the population growth rate would have completely enveloped the planet earth. It's simply false to say that the population growth rate of the world shows anything but a very short time span. Now you can argue, well isn't it true that there may have been disasters, great physical catastrophes that wiped parts of the human race off the map? No known catastrophe to humans, whether it's the black plague, nuclear warfare, or any kind of physical catastrophe, if you study population growth statistics, makes a dent. There's been no major war that's even made a dent in the population growth, no major catastrophe and no major disease. The human population growth is a pretty constant rate, regardless of wars, diseases, catastrophes. This is a very powerful evidence of why the human race is only thousands of years old; the population growth rate.

God chose the Jews for a destiny, therefore they will fulfill his destiny. And this means that no matter what attempts are made, anti-Semitism will always fail, and by verse 3 in Genesis 12 anti-Semitism will always earn God's cursing.

The anti-Semitic tendencies have been obvious down through history. When you study European history you understand how the Jews financed Columbus, they were responsible. When Columbus came to America he didn't take Catholic priests, he took rabbis aboard the three boats. **Columbus was financed from the start to the finish by Jews; it was a Jewish attempt to find the western hemisphere.** So the Jews are behind the discovery of America. And when Spain, which had borrowed and borrowed money from the Jews, began to start with certain Catholic priests what became known as The Inquisition, then you the destruction of Spain began. Then there's the destruction of Germany. Isn't it ironic that the Nazi's wherever they went would construct walls in the Jewish ghettos, to wall the Jewish ghetto away from the Gentiles. And what happened to Germany's own capital after the war? The wall through Berlin. Always this thing happens in history. **The nation that becomes anti-Semitic will always receive God's cursing.** One of the things that brought Soviet Russia down was anti-Semitism. Whenever you have a group who go anti-Semitic, sooner or later that group is going to decay or die away. It has to, because that promise in verse 3 is meant to be taken literally.

Now let's look at the prophecies of the **rest** and notice how the Mosaic Covenant talks about this rest. Deuteronomy 3:20 teaches that before the rest can occur the believers must possess what God has given to them. So the first characteristic we learn about rest in the Old Testament is there's a state in which believers are moment by moment enjoying the provisions that God has given to them. So rest means actually enjoying the provisions of God.

Characteristic #2, Deuteronomy 12:10 teaches that rest comes after the fight. You fight to attain the rest; the rest is not given to the believer at first; never has, never will. You must fight and work to enter the rest.

And in verse 11-15, the third characteristic of the rest is a place of worship. There will be a national location geographically where they can come and worship God. And verse 13 tells us it's not just any place. Why? Because verse 11 says God has chosen; He has elected that His name is going to be there, that is His presence. You say but isn't God omnipresent, can't we meet God everywhere? Yes, God is omnipresent, but don't draw the wrong conclusion, you can't meet Him everywhere. You meet God on His terms, you don't dictate the place where God meets you; God dictates the place where He meets us. And **the place today is the Word of God.** That's the place, not in the area of emotions, not sitting contemplating your navel, the place where you meet God is in His Word; that's the only place. So, wherever you can get the Word of God, that is where we meet God. Now to get the New Testament commentary turn to Hebrews 4:7-9

Hebrews 4:7-9 So God again ordains a certain day, "Today," speaking through David after so long a time, as in the words quoted before, "O, that today you would listen as he speaks! Do not harden your hearts." (8) For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken afterward about another day. (9) Consequently a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God.

There remains a rest, it has not yet occurred, it is still future. Now we have to tie it in to the New Testament a little bit and look at the Old Testament and New Testament and see how this is going to work together. Under the Old Testament you have a partial rest under David. That is 2 Samuel 7; the partial rest under David is a time of tremendous national blessing.

What is the New Testament counterpart to this doctrine of rest? The doctrine of rest refers to a certain area of Christian life. From the time you become a Christian until the time you die, you have your ups and your downs. If you've studied your life and the lives of others you know that you advance very rapidly in some places, then you kind of plateau off for a while, then you move on. And if you'll look at **the times when you've made your greatest progress were usually the times when you suffered the most.** And if you look again at your Christian life the times you haven't progressed have been actually the times when you've been blessed, because blessing in the fallen world causes us to get lazy. When we should have been appropriating what God allowed us to enjoy, we just goofed off.

So this is why oftentimes in the Christian life God can't give you a rest because the moment He does, we let up. **Because He's going to bless you for all eternity, God is not primarily interested in blessing in the sense of giving us a rest right now. His prime concern is to force us to grow spiritually, to put us in a place of pressure, of testing, where pride is going to be destroyed, where**

grace is going to be appropriated and we can move.

Now what is a Christian rest period? A Christian rest period can occur on a small scale in the middle of pressure. You may be looking for a job, for example, the doing would be putting out the contacts, writing your resume, by various means seek out a job. You do it in faith, in faith that God has a job out there to find. And yet while you're doing the doing, there should be a resting. **God expects you to do what you can do. And what you can't do you are to leave in His hands, and not try to do what you can't do.** You can worry, you can fret, but there are some situations where you just can't do anything else. That is a position of rest, that is a rest under a condition of suffering.

When you are placed in a position where you can't do anything, God says for you at that point to rest, to relax in His promises, and to abide with His promise that He will take care of your every need. God has put you in a position where you can't do anything. So what usually happens is you sit there and worry. And worry doesn't do anything.

Now there's a larger scale rest that you can observe in your Christian life, the second category of rest is actually when God gives you a breather, where He allows you freedom from the every day pressure. God does give rest periods to those whom He can trust to deal with it appropriately. **Do you want to get more rest periods; make use of the ones He gives you, maybe you can convince Him to give you some more, you're so productive in those rest periods that He might be persuaded that it's a good thing for you to give you rest.** A rest period can be a time when there's no major trial, no major pressure, and during that period it just seems like you have blessing on top of blessing and you're enjoying yourself. Don't misinterpret this because what happens is that sometimes it's the calm before the storm. God is giving you a period of rest so you can strengthen yourself spiritually to get ready for the next round, because the next round is definitely going to come. We're not in the eternal kind of rest yet, the permanent rest, we're not face to face with the Lord yet. There's always more to come, just like there was more to come after David's day in the nation Israel. Israel had more lessons to learn. So learn to enjoy the rest but don't expect it to last.

So by this chapter David has a unified kingdom; a land, the presence of God in the ark, and now he has an eternally decreed prosperity. **It is that sovereign decree of God behind the Davidic Covenant that is now the basis of everything that's going to follow in this book.**

Now in 2 Samuel 7 David has entered into what is called the rest. And there are five examples of rest in the Old Testament we want to list, because it is this concept that is later brought out in Hebrews 4 and used very effectively by that author to point out certain things about the Christian. The first example you want to see about rest is very obvious, and that is the model of it is the seventh day, the Sabbath rest in creation. God rested on the 7th day, His work was done. Some Christians have taken this to mean that you just kind of go passive and let the world go by and you don't do anything, you just sit down. But God built the universe before He rested. **The rest, then, in the Bible is rest after the job has been finished.** You don't rest until the job is complete.

The second illustration in the Bible of historic type of the rest is Joshua's rest; the main work of conquest had been finished under Joshua. He didn't rest before he hit Jericho; after his military victory, then he rested.

The third illustration of the rest in the Old Testament is the one we have before us, David's rest. David has secured the control of at least the central highlands. His job, then, has been completed, at least most of his job. And so now David rests.

A fourth illustration of rest is the millennial kingdom, predicted by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the book of Revelation; it's a rest after Satan and his forces have been removed. There's a lot of activity in the tribulation to get rid of Satan and the demon forces, and after the job is finished, then the rest.

And finally, the fifth illustration of rest in the Bible is the eternal rest in the last chapter of the Bible, the eternal rest of Revelation 22. And this rest shows us something very critical. The first rest, the creation rest, taught us that rest occurs after the job is finished; the last rest, the eternal rest, teaches us that the rest itself has content, it's not just taking an eternal snooze. The eternal rest means then the creature has time to praise God in all ways, without resistance, without constantly having to fight. All of that's over, so now you have a full blossoming of the creature relaxing in God's presence and worshipping. So another connotation of the word "rest" is worship.

From verse 4-17 we have what is known as Nathan's oracle. Remember, David said God has given me a rest period, God has subdued my enemies, I'd like to do something for Him, and so David has on his mind building a temple for God. So Nathan says go ahead David, build one. Now in verse 4 God's Word comes to the prophet to cut off this attempt by David to build a temple.

But first I'll give a little background to explain why God is so anxious to stop this little project of David's. In the Ancient Near East it was customary that when a king was prospered, he would then go around building temples to his god or gods. Now the reason he built the temples to the gods wasn't just to thank the god, it was to secure his reign from its political foes. The making of the temple of the god was actually a salvation by works process, in which the king would try to cement his administration together.

2 Samuel 7:4-5 That night the LORD told Nathan, (5) "Go, tell my servant David: 'This is what the LORD says: Do you really intend to build a house for me to live in?'

When you see the "This is what the LORD says," that means that the prophet is to repeat verbatim what God said. He is not to add, he is not to subtract; he has got a message from God and whether people like it or not, he is to say this message.

God is using some sarcasm here, the only way to get it across in the English would be to read it this way: "You, David, are going to build a house for Me?" In other words, who do you think you are David? You don't build Me houses. Yes the King of Tyre builds one for his little Baal, or the kings of Philistia build them for their Dagon, but the King of Israel doesn't build them for Jehovah; Jehovah is not sold and bought as these gods. And you're not going to secure blessing for your kingdom, David, because you build Me a house; you're not going to secure blessing for your farmers and your agricultural industry because you build me a house; we don't buy salvation by works here in Israel.

God wanted David's reign to be totally different from the reigns of the other kings. Now God would allow certain things, like He allowed David to get the craftsmen from the city of Tyre up to build a cedar palace. But when it came to anything with a highly religious flavor to it, David had to be completely separated from the other kings of the world. So David's building program is vetoed right here. Even though David's had good intentions, it was too much like what some of these pagan kings would do for their gods.

2 Samuel 7:6-7 I have not lived in a house from the time I brought the Israelites up from Egypt to the present day. Instead, I was traveling with them and living in a tent. (7) Wherever I moved among all the Israelites, I did not say to any of the leaders whom I appointed to care for my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house made from cedar?"'

He's asking, did I ever in the last four hundred years, at any time, asked you people to build Me a thing? See, God is in the grace business, He's doing the giving, He's not asking these people to build Him some fancy castle some place.

2 Samuel 7:8-9 "So now, say this to my servant David: 'This is what the LORD of hosts says: I took you from the pasture and from your work as a shepherd to make you leader of my people Israel. (9) I was with you wherever you went, and I defeated all your enemies before you. Now I will make you as famous as the great men of the earth.'

The God of Israel is going to give David something that he wanted but it's going to be given to him in a divine viewpoint way, not a human viewpoint way. First God reminds David that the stability of his reign to begin with didn't depend on David. David, you didn't get to be king because of anything you did, you got to be king because I called you to that office. So don't change horses in midstream, if your reign began by My sovereign decree, it's going to be secure eternally by My sovereign decree.

2 Samuel 7:10 I will establish a place for my people Israel and settle them there; they will live there and not be disturbed any more. Violent men will not oppress them again, as they did in the beginning

and during the time when I appointed judges to lead my people Israel. Instead, I will give you relief from all your enemies. The LORD declares to you that he himself will build a dynastic house for you.

This verse has to be in the future; it has never historically been fulfilled yet. It will ultimately be fulfilled in the millennial reign of Christ. It must be fulfilled, or God is a liar.

2 Samuel 7:12-15 When the time comes for you to die, I will raise up your descendant, one of your own sons, to succeed you, and I will establish his kingdom. (13) He will build a house for my name, and I will make his dynasty permanent. (14) I will become his father and he will become my son. When he sins, I will correct him with the rod of men and with wounds inflicted by human beings. (15) But my loyal love will not be removed from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

Now that looks like it just refers to Solomon, because Solomon did come from David. But further history shows that the promise isn't just to Solomon because the dynasty continued. **The Davidic Covenant is a covenant that is eternally secure.** No matter what would happen, David's dynasty would be secure forever. The concept of eternal security is not something cranked out by John Calvin in Geneva; it is something that God spoke right here to David. Eternal security is the basis for all these covenants.

People who deny eternal security are very proud people; they are people who think they can commit some sin greater than the grace of God. People who attack eternal security are basically destructive of God Himself; they worship a god of Chance, they do not have a sovereign God to worship, it is always the God of the Bible plus something else that causes history. We believe that God is sovereign, there is no chance and there's nothing outside of the decree of God to compete with it; ALL is controlled by God.

So the obvious question is, who is going to fulfill these promises given to David, this Davidic covenant? It's got to come about by somebody who is human, because he's got to be of the seed of David, he's got to have the genes of David. Yet on the other hand, he has to reign forever and ever, which means he must have the attribute of eternity, which means that the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant has to be in a God-man. That's why **this covenant defines the person of Jesus Christ.** And that's why the Church has always confessed, undiminished deity and true humanity, united without confusion in one person forever; Jesus Christ, God-man, the fulfiller of this. David's kingdom, then, has now had its future secured, not because David is going to build a temple to Yahweh; but because God has chosen it and God has decreed it. That is sufficient.

Next we have one of the most beautiful passages of God's Word that shows you how one all-time great believer responded to grace. It's a model of response and I want you to be thinking, as you read through this, comparing your own heart attitude toward what God gives you in Jesus Christ with how David responded to what God gave him through Nathan. This is a classic passage in all of God's Word on thanksgiving. It's one of the greatest prayers ever prayed.

1 Chronicles 17:16-27 David went in, sat before the LORD, and said: "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my family, that you should have brought me to this point? (17) And you did not stop there, O God! You have also spoken about the future of your servant's family. You have revealed to me what men long to know, O LORD God. (18) What more can David say to you? You have honored your servant; you have given your servant special recognition. (19) O LORD, for the sake of your servant and according to your will, you have done this great thing in order to reveal your greatness. (20) O LORD, there is none like you; there is no God besides you! What we heard is true! (21) And who is like your people, Israel, a unique nation in the earth? Their God went to claim a nation for himself! You made a name for yourself by doing great and awesome deeds when you drove out nations before your people whom you had delivered from the Egyptian empire and its gods. (22) You made Israel your very own nation for all time. You, O LORD, became their God. (23) So now, O LORD, may the promise you made about your servant and his family become a permanent reality! Do as you promised, (24) so it may become a reality and you may gain lasting fame, as people say, 'The LORD

who commands armies is the God of Israel.' David's dynasty will be established before you, (25) for you, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a dynasty for him. That is why your servant has had the courage to pray to you. (26) Now, O LORD, you are the true God; you have made this good promise to your servant. (27) Now you are willing to bless your servant's dynasty so that it may stand permanently before you, for you, O LORD, have blessed it and it will be blessed from now on into the future."

David went into the tabernacle to pray, and now the ark of the presence is back in the tabernacle, it's now functioning once again, God's presence has returned to the tabernacle. What has just happened in David's life? Nathan has brought him the Word of God. Now instead of just putting it in a notebook and saying well, that's pretty good, we've got a Davidic Covenant going now, and going on to other things, David didn't do that. David didn't just say well, that's really great for Scripture memory, I'll memorize all the words that Nathan taught to me, and then every day when I shave I'll say it five times, and that will make me feel good as a king. David didn't treat the Word of God that way; nothing wrong with memorizing, it's just that he wasn't satisfied with just that. David acted on what he heard. And how did he express his action? He wanted to get alone with God.

Now notice the order of this thing. The first thing that happened is they took in the Word of God, then he spent time alone with God. God is not going to give you illumination, because you crawl in your closet and have a five hour yoga session meditating on nothing. **Spending time with God can only be done after you have taken in the Word.** And you can fool yourself, and go to all these prayer groups where they hold hands and everything else and that is not going to give you the presence of God. All that does is stimulate your emotion, and you can get high on it. But you first get the Word, then you apply it. And that means coming and spending time alone with God. This is what David does.

Also, I want you to notice the relaxed way he talks to God. He doesn't say oh, YahwehYahwehYahweh, he's relaxed and he talks to God in a normal tone of voice, just like you talk to a man. If you were to portray this time in a film you'd have David just there, speaking to God, probably looking at the place where the ark was, he wasn't in the Holy of Holies, but looking there and talking to God. And God was not talking back because God talked to him through Nathan; see, God doesn't talk to David directly. He talks to David only through the prophet.

This prayer is David's praise to God. He's acknowledging God's works and Words in his life. Who am I, O Lord God?" Now that immediately tells you that David is amazed.

Here is a test of your spirituality, and only you can answer it, nobody else can answer it for you; go in the quiet of your heart and ask yourself something - does God's grace hold any amazement for you? And **that's one of the signs of a real in depth thanksgiving, that the grace of God toward you is really something amazing.** There's a sense of honest awe about what God has done for you, and that comes when you perceive grace. And that is opposite to the attitude of, oh God, why have you allowed this to happen to me? Completely different. There's an amazement.

Chapter 8

We'll skip chapter 8 and 10, they're pretty straightforward reading that you can read on your own. Chapter 8 is a catalogue of all of David's military victories. Chapter 10 takes one incident out of chapter 8 and expands it, typical of the way Jewish history is written. In chapter 8, David defeats the Philistines and subdues them. Then he defeats the Moabites and makes them subject to him. He also defeated the kingdom of Zobah, and the Arameans and made them his subjects, and then did the same to the Edomites. So he's conquering some of the neighboring kingdoms which have been enemies of Israel, and expanding the country, taking back some of the land promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. The Arameans are basically present day Syrians, the Edomites are present day Jordanians, and Zobah was the area of Iraq and Iran.

Chapter 9

In chapter 9 we come to a passage that shows how David dealt faithfully with the house of Saul.

2 Samuel 9:1 Then David asked, "Is anyone still left from the family of Saul, so that I may extend kindness to him for the sake of Jonathan?"

Something has happened before this and that is described in chapter 21. Remember these books are not always in chronological order. Chapter 21 happened before chapter 9. Now what is David's interest? "that I may extend kindness," that's *chesed*, there's the Hebrew word for loyal love. Remember the oath that David made with Jonathan back in 1 Samuel 20:15? It's that agreement that David shows loyalty to in verse 1.

Now to do this David has got to trust the Lord. Chapter 9 is the last time you see David functioning like the great believer he is. After this things begin to deteriorate, but here he's functioning as a fantastic believer because he is doing something that no king of the Ancient East ever did, nor would any bright politician try. And that is to leave alive possible heirs to the throne. You see, what's happened is that Saul's family has been eliminated. Apparently one of Jonathan's sons, Mephibosheth, is the only heir left alive. Michal, Saul's daughter, has become barren, so there can't be any seed born to her. So the whole house of Saul is cut off except for this one person.

Now this isn't just some little trivial thing that's going on here. You have to understand Ancient Near Eastern politics. In this time in history for anyone ever to permit a possible heir to the throne to be alive and breathing while you were king was essentially committing political suicide; it was a very foolish move, from the human point of view. But David could do none other than to trust God at His Word.

2 Samuel 9:2-4 Now there was a servant from Saul's house named Ziba, so he was summoned to David. The king asked him, "Are you Ziba?" He replied, "At your service." (3) The king asked, "Is there not someone left from Saul's family, that I may extend God's kindness to him?" Ziba said to the king, "One of Jonathan's sons is left; both of his feet are crippled." (4) The king asked him, "Where is he?" Ziba told the king, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar."

He is lame on his feet because of a little notice given in 4:4, the nurse dropped him when they were fleeing from the battle at Mt. Gilboa. So here we have a seed of Saul, still alive but lame. 2 Samuel from this point, reads like a novel; it is called the succession narrative, it begins technically in 2 Samuel 9 and finishes in 1 Kings 2. It is a literary masterpiece and you will see irony operate over and over in this narrative. One of the features of the author or authors who wrote this is they never made judgments on the people; they always make the people through speech give you a presentation of their own character so you make the judgment; it's a very skillfully written document.

David is acting toward Mephibosheth as the Lord is shortly going to act toward David. The Lord has made an agreement with David, in the last chapter, that David's dynasty will be secure forever, eternal security. Now, even though God has made that pledge, as you read the following chapters you're going to wonder, how can God keep the pledge, with all of this stuff, this chaos going on in the house of David, how can this dynasty succeed? It can't by any human standards; by all human standards this dynasty would have torn itself apart in the bickering, in the licentiousness, in the violence of this family. The family would have decayed had it not been for the sustaining restraining sovereign grace of God.

2 Samuel 9:5-13 So King David had him brought from the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar. (6) When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed low with his face toward the ground. David said, "Mephibosheth?" He replied, "Yes, at your service." (7) David said to him, "Don't be afraid, because I will certainly extend kindness to you for the sake of Jonathan your father. I will give back to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will be a regular guest at my table." (8) Then Mephibosheth bowed and said, "Of what importance am I, your servant, that you show regard for a dead dog like me?" (9) Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's attendant, and said to him, "Everything that belonged to Saul and to his entire house I hereby give to

your master's grandson. (10) You will cultivate the land for him — you and your sons and your servants. You will bring its produce and it will be food for your master's grandson to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, will be a regular guest at my table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.) (11) Ziba said to the king, "Your servant will do everything that my lord the king has instructed his servant to do." So Mephibosheth was a regular guest at David's table, just as though he were one of the king's sons. (12) Now Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All the members of Ziba's household were Mephibosheth's servants. (13) Mephibosheth was living in Jerusalem, for he was a regular guest at the king's table. But both his feet were crippled.

Now David also was very wise, he wasn't just being gracious because keeping Mephibosheth in Jerusalem, out from his own property, he was able to keep eyes on him, he was able to control him, so it wasn't just an act of charity, it was an act of fine political wisdom for David to keep Mephibosheth in this position. Kind of a "keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer" type of thing.

All right, that's David, that's basically the last time he functions as a great believer. Next time we'll cover a very painful section of scripture in chapters 11 and 12, the story of David and Bathsheba. It is painful to see David fall as he does, but very instructive to us as believers to see how we can get ourselves into a mess. Even more importantly, we'll see how David repented, and we'll study in detail the doctrine of confession.