

# Sermon Outline

## “ABBA! FATHER!”: KNOWING GOD AS OUR BELOVED FATHER

---

I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER  
(2 SAMUEL 7:12-17)

### I. Introduction

### II. The Davidic Covenant

- A. The events in 2 Samuel 7 come more than 300 years after Deuteronomy.
- B. By now, Israel had already conquered the Promised Land under Joshua and the Judges, and had grown from a nation governed mainly by *tribal leaders* to a *monarchy* with a more centralized government.
- C. God gave his people a king in response to their requests (1 Sam 8:19-22).
  - 1. The first king, Saul, did not work out as the people had hoped.
  - 2. Saul disobeyed God and was eventually removed from power (1 Sam 15).
  - 3. But with the coming of the second king, King David, it seems that the future is now looking much brighter for Israel.
- D. By the time we come to 2 Samuel 7, King David has already been recognized as the rightful king of Israel, appointed by God, the legitimate successor to Saul.
- E. In 2 Samuel 7, David expresses regret to the prophet Nathan because even though he now dwells in a house of cedar, which is pretty expensive wood, the Ark of the Lord, God’s throne on earth, was still housed in a humble tent.
- F. David expresses his desire to the prophet Nathan build a much sturdier building—a temple—to house the Ark of the Lord.
- G. Nathan says to David that the Lord is with him and he should just go ahead and do whatever is on his heart (7:3).
- H. But the Lord reveals to Nathan that he has other plans for David.
- I. While David may want to build a house for God out of the gratefulness of his heart, God makes clear that he himself had never once asked that of his servants.

Go and tell my servant David, “Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I

commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’ (7:5-7)

- J. God doesn’t need to live a man-made castle. God needs no favors from us.
- K. But as an expression of his own generosity, God himself will build David a house: “Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house” (v 11).
  - 1. The house that God has in mind is not a *house* of wood or stone—it’s a royal *household* and dynasty.
  - 2. Note: The fact that God promises to give David a great family shows that God values human families much more than wealth or property.
- L. It is here that we come to one of the most important passages in the Old Testament, what is known as *the Davidic Covenant*—the great promise that God makes to his servant David to exalt and to preserve his household.
- M. Verses 12-17 deal directly with the theme of divine adoption.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Approximately how much time had transpired since Deuteronomy? (2) How did Israel end up getting a king? (3) What regret does David express to Nathan? (4) What does God think of David’s desire to build him a temple? (5) What does God promise to build David? (v 11)

### III. I Will Raise Up Your Offspring (2 Samuel 7:12)

- A. First, in verse 12, God says to David through the prophet Nathan: “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.”
  - 1. The first feature of this verse that I would like to draw our attention to is the use of the first person singular pronoun: “I.”
  - 2. The “I” is God’s reference to himself.
  - 3. So the first thing we must recognize is that it is God himself who takes the initiative in this promise.
    - a. It is God himself who bears responsibility for this fulfillment of this promise.
    - b. The main character or subject in this promise is not David or any of his descendants—even though David’s sons will have responsibilities to God.
    - c. The main subject or performer of this promise is the Lord God himself. It is the Lord who gives the promise. It is the Lord who will carry it out to the very end.
- B. The Lord has promised to do two things for David in his verse.
  - 1. God promises to raise up or *promote* David’s offspring after David has died.
  - 2. God promises to *establish*, i.e., to make sure and strong, the rule of David’s offspring.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What is the significance of the “I” in this prophecy? What does this tell us about the main doer/performer in this verse? (2) What are the two things that the Lord promises David in this verse?

#### IV. A Reciprocal Relationship (2 Samuel 7:13)

- A. In verse 13, we see the work that David’s descendant would do for God: “He shall build a house for my name...”
1. Here, the house is a physical building, a temple.
  2. But is there a double meaning here too?
    - Is house also a family/royal household?
    - Will David’s descendant also build a royal household for God? We can only wonder...
- B. As the son of David builds the house of God, God will do this for him: “and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”
1. The Lord is restating the promise he made in the previous verse.
  2. This time, the throne is mentioned.
  3. The king’s throne is the symbolic center of his authority.
  4. By establishing the throne of David’s offspring forever, God is saying that the authority of David’s offspring will never become obsolete. —There will never be a day when the royal authority of David’s offspring will be destroyed.
- C. This is a monumental promise!
1. By making this promise, God is making the offspring of David a permanent feature of the people of Israel.
  2. God is ensuring that Israel would always be a *Davidic* people—a people under the leadership of the royal Son of David.
- D. We find confirmation for this in the book of Ezekiel.
1. Ezekiel 34:23: “And I will set up over them one shepherd, *my servant David*, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.”
  2. Ezekiel 37:24: The Lord says, “*My servant David* shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes.”

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What would David’s descendant do for the Lord? (2) What would the Lord do for David’s descendant? (3) What is the significance of establishing the throne of David’s descendant forever?

#### V. God the Father and His Davidic Son (2 Samuel 7:14)

- A. In v 14, we have the most startling promise in this entire cluster of promises. —The Lord says, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.”
- B. Can you imagine the impact that these words would have had on David? This is almighty *God* speaking!!

1. The Lord God who made the heavens and the earth simply by speaking them into existence...
  2. The Lord God who created all the great powers in the universe...
  3. This Lord God, the Creator of all life and power, now stoops to the level of man—and adopts him as his own son.
- C. The Lord is promising to be kindly disposed to and take responsibility for this Offspring, because that is what fathers do.
- D. David can rest assured that his children will be well taken care of, because God himself has assumed responsibility for their wellbeing.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What is so significant about the Lord promising to be a father to David's son? (2) What is implied in God being as "a father" to David's offspring? What do fathers do for their children?

## VI. Discipline for Rebellious Royal Brats (2 Samuel 7:14)

- A. Since children owe honor to their parents (which is the Fifth Commandment), the future son or sons of David owe honor to God, their heavenly Father.
- B. Which leads us now to the next verse, verse 14: "When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men,"
1. This is the promise of divine discipline.
  2. God promises that if the sons of David do not obey him, if they commit iniquity, God will chastise them.
- C. How are we take the words "The rod of men" and "the stripes of the sons of men"? Are we to take these terms literally? Will God really use other men to punish his chosen king, if he would go astray?
1. Although Solomon went astray and God raised enemies to oppose him (1 Kgs 11:9), there is no record of Solomon experiencing anything like "the stripes of the sons of men" on his own person.
  2. The rods of men and the stripes of the sons of men may simply refer to harsh opposition against the royal son of David, to the weakening of his rule under foreign powers.
  3. But things aren't so straightforward, because we do know that the last king of Judah, King Zedekiah, who was also a descendant of David, does suffer physical abuse from his captors (2 Kgs 25:7).
  4. So what we see here is that the rods and the stripes of the sons of men may well be literal after all.  
—When Israel sins so grievously against the Lord, when the royal Son of David breaks faith with the Lord God, the Lord will bring harsh judgment on him. The Lord will subject his own son to the punishment of others.
- D. But lest we be discouraged at this, remember that God will never abandon his own sons.

—“but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.” This is an unconditional promise here.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What happens if the royal son of David sins against God? (2) Are the words “The rod of men” and “the stripes of the sons of men” to be taken literally? (3) In spite of the possibility of discipline, what will God not remove from his royal sons?

## VII. The Forever Kingdom (2 Samuel 7:16)

- A. Verse 16 is a restatement of verses 12 and 13.
- B. The fact that verse 16 summarizes the *blessings* of God’s promise may suggest that God wants the blessing to be the highlight, the emphasis, of this promise.
- C. While there will be consequences for David’s sons if they disobey God, the promise is still mainly one of good news.
  - 1. The House of David is set for life.
  - 2. God the almighty Lord has taken it upon himself to prosper and to preserve the House of David forever. This is the best news that any king can hope to receive.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) Verse 16 concludes the promise on a high, positive note. What does this suggest about the essential nature of the promise? Is it largely good or largely bad?

## VIII. Jesus Christ, the God-Given Son of David

- A. The promises of the covenant with David apply to us only if we are joined to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate Son of David.
- B. The Lord Jesus’ relationship to King David was one of the key tenets of the Gospel when it was first preached.
  - 1. Consider the following texts:
    - Acts 2:30, 31: The apostle Peter: “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set *one of his descendants* on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ.”
    - 2 Timothy 2:8: The apostle Paul: “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, *the offspring of David*, as preached in my gospel...”
  - 2. The Gospel is the good news that the Lord Jesus Christ is the final and ultimate Heir to the throne of David.
- C. Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you and I...
  - 1. have been joined to the Son of David
  - 2. share in the benefits of God’s promise to him.

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) How does the truth that Jesus is the Son of David relate to the Gospel? (2) What happens to those who join themselves by faith to Jesus the Son of David?

## **IX. The Five Elements of Divine Fatherhood**

**To have God as our heavenly Father is to be *possessed* by God; *promoted* by God; *purified* by God; and *preserved* by God. It is to have the *Presence* of God with us forever.**

**\*Questions for reflection:** (1) What are the five aspects of the fatherhood of God as taught in 2 Samuel 7:12-17 ? (2) What does it mean to be possessed by God? (3) Why does possession/adoption by God entail promotion? (4) Why does God purify us through discipline? (5) How does God preserve us? (6) Do you know that God is with you? How do you know?