

1. The Promise to David

2 Samuel 7:8-17, 27-29

David was not the first King of Israel; that was Saul. He was not the most renowned; that was David's son, Solomon. David himself was known to later ages as a precocious warrior, a chivalrous opponent, and a singer of Psalms. From later ages comes this Promise of God to David, dictated to Nathan and relayed by him, and then the response of David, as he becomes a King, accepting the promise and sealing the covenant with God. God is speaking:

Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts. I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be prince over my people, over Israel; and I have been with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee; and I will make thee a great name, like unto the name of the great ones that are in the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more, neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as at the first, and as from the day that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and I will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies. Moreover Jehovah telleth thee that Jehovah will make thee a house."

"When thy days are fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, that shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son; if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but my lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever." According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David . . .

[David prays to God]: "For thou, O Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord Jehovah, thou art God, and thy words are truth, and thou hast promised this good thing unto thy servant; now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee, for thou, O Lord Jehovah, hast spoken it, and with thy blessing, let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."

Reflections

Thus was the covenant made. In later times, the line of David in fact ceased to rule, and Israel went into exile. But the promise of God was not forgotten. Israel sought to answer the riddle of why God had departed from it, and assured itself that if only things could be made right between God and Israel, God would return, and keep his promise. A later prophet, Malachi, added this detail, this further promise, for a waiting Israel:

Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his Temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of Hosts. (Malachi 3:1)

That Jehovah, when he did return to Israel, would appear in the Temple, was only natural; the Temple was the proper abode of God, and it was there that sacrifices were unceasingly offered to him.

And so Israel awaited the appearance of the Lord of Hosts –

Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian, though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall be accomplished, and mine anger to his destruction . . . And it shall come to pass in that day that the burden shall depart from thy shoulder . . . (Isaiah 10:24-27)

Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. (Isaiah 9:7)

Jehovah's hosts will drive out the Romans, and make Israel under the Messiah, as it had been once before under David, a great nation again.

Who would that Messiah be?