***The Age of the Jews, No. 5

DS5A***

Matthew 7 carries the story concerning two people who built their houses on different foundations. One of them built a house upon a rock, and it stood the adversities of life. The other built his house upon sand, and it collapsed under the pressures of life. One of the things that perhaps you have not noticed about that passage is that both of the individuals begin at the same place. Verse 24 says, "Therefore, whoever hears these things of mine and does them." Then, verse 26 says, "And every one that hears these sayings of mine and does them not."

Notice that in both cases, they have the information. In both cases, the individuals knew what God had to say, and what God thought. It was at that point that the difference came. It wasn't because the poor man that experienced the tragedy of having his house collapse around his ears on the sand had not been told what it was all about. It was because he had been told, and he said, "No." The other had been told the Word of God, and said, "Yes." That's the difference between respecting the teaching authority of the communicator of the Word of God, and rejecting the authority of the communicator and of the Word of God which he communicates.

Therefore, Satan will be actively engaged in his work of seeking to get you to build your life upon the sand in every subtle way he can think of. In one way or another, he will seek to bring you to where you are negative. Maybe you don't like the speaker. Maybe you don't like the words he uses. Maybe you don't like the way he says it. Maybe you don't like the person that came and sat down next to you when you came early to get a good seat. Maybe you don't like the guy who's sitting in front of you who's got a funny looking head; or the lady whose hair is shielding your view--hiding you from other people; or, whatever your problem may be. All of these things Satan is going to try to weave in to get you to be subjective.

So I warn you and I caution you that you must learn to be objective in these studies when we study the Word of God. No matter who says it and no matter what is surrounding you in the circumstances, there's only one thing that's important. That is, have you heard the truth of God? Then you are obliged to say, "Yes" to it. To say "No" is to start building your life on a sand foundation, and in time only you will suffer for it.

We are studying the second dispensation. We look at human history from the way God looks at it, and God looks at human history in terms of people, groups or individuals, who are placed in charge of a certain era of time. For that reason, we call the first dispensation the era of the gentiles because the gentiles were the stewards. They were responsible for the world. That period breaks down into certain phases. Phase one was the phase of innocence; phase two, of conscience; and, phase three, of human government. The second dispensation which we are now studying fits right in here. It is the dispensation of the Jews. It also has three phases. We have already studied phase one--promise. We are now in phase two--the law. We will come to phase three next which is the tribulation period, separated by the intervening church age which is dispensation number three. The age of the kingdom is dispensation number four.

Within one Bible, you have divine truth given to each of these four eras of human history. Unless you are able to read the Word of God and relate it properly to these periods of human history, you will be trying to take something out of one part of the Bible and apply it to a portion where it will not fit, or a part of your life today in which it just won't make any sense. As a matter of fact, it can be very very destructive. So we have looked at the gentiles. Now, we're looking at the Jews. This period extends from Abraham to the Second Coming of Christ minus the church age which intervenes itself.

The Palestinian Covenant that we studied was an amplification of the promise which was given to Abraham which centered in three keywords. Abraham was given a covenant by God in which there was a promise that consisted of a promise concerning a land; concerning a seed; and, concerning a blessing. Later on in the Scriptures, these specific promises are amplified. Land is amplified in the Palestinian Covenant which we looked at last time. This includes unconditional ownership forever of the land of Palestine from the Euphrates to the Nile. The Arab-Israeli world, the Middle East world, is gathered in conference to decide who's going to own Palestine. The issue has already been settled. Whatever they may decide, it will be a temporary decision. God has already decided that the Jew owns Palestine, and he will own it forever.

The Jews were told that they would be punished for disobedience. The punishment would be temporary dispossession from the land, and when the Jew is out of his land, he's out of blessing. God only blesses the Jew as a people when he's within the land. That's the condition of the Jew today. He's dispossessed because of disobedience. However, that doesn't change these covenants. Remember that there are no "ifs" in these covenants. In these four covenants here, there is not a single occurrence of the word "if." It does not depend on the Jew behaving himself in a certain way for God to fulfill these covenants. We also learned that the Jews would come to salvation eventually here under the New Covenant, when it comes into force. They would then return to Palestine in belief and back to blessing. This will happen when the Lord returns.

The second phase of the dispensation of the Jews is the one that deals with law, and it is the one that we are currently looking at. I remind you that the law is a way of life for born again Jews only. We say that because the Bible very clearly declares that the law was never given for anybody to be brought to salvation. It cannot save you. Therefore, the law was given as a way of life to people who were already saved. Furthermore, it is never applied as a system of life to the gentiles, nor is it ever applied as a system of life to the Christians. This is one of the greatest problems that we have--trying to apply what belongs to the Jews to Christians and to gentiles. This dispensation is the one that is the hardest to keep straight. People get fouled up on this one. They are incorporating things into this dispensation that have nothing whatever to do with their lives as believers. I think you'll see that a little more clearly why they do that as we go along.

There were 613 rules given in the Jewish law system. These rules constituted the arrangement of the theocracy where God was ruling the nation, and it covered civil, religious, and moral matters. These actually reflected the divine standards of God's righteousness. The law was designed to carry the Jews through all of these long generations--these centuries and centuries--until the time when Christ was born, and they were in effect being led to Christ through the law.

The problem with the law was that if you broke one point of it, it was like a very valuable piece of China--one crack, and the whole thing is gone. You had to obey every bit of the law, and if you missed it at one point, the game was over. You didn't go back and start over again. The Jew had an impossible situation as far as pleasing God through the law, for all were demonstrated to be guilty because everyone has an old sin nature. The Jew simply could not keep the law. The law was not only not a way of salvation, but it didn't provide people with the power to perform the 613 regulations. You and I, in this dispensation--the dispensation of the Church--have God the Holy Spirit who actually lives the Christian life through us. Therefore we can live the supernatural life.

**Dispensational Order**

I want to contrast the law phase of the dispensation of the Jews and the church age that we're coming to. Here is where the confusion lies. Please remember that both the Jewish way of life and the Christian way of life are ways of living which have come from God. He provided both of them. For this reason, John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It is fantastic how many teachers of the Word of God miss that simple little statement of truth.

I am constantly hearing religious leaders, often carrying considerable authority, who will get up and make a remark like this: "There is no difference between law and grace." That shows a depth of disorientation which is very very bad. If anybody teaching you the Word of God ever gives you the faintest glimmer that he thinks there is no difference between law and grace, you better cut out right then because you're going to pick up a lot of misinformation and a lot of misinterpretation. It is crucial that we understand that the law came by Moses, and grace came by Jesus Christ. The two systems are totally different, and they are totally unrelated. There is no mixing of these two systems in the Word of God. They're independent one of another. Law, as a way of life, was designed for the dispensation of the Jews. Grace, as a way of life, was designed for the dispensation of the church.

Basically under the law system, a person was expected to do works which were compatible with the law's rules. However, under grace, it's just altogether different because God does all the work through the believer. The believer it's not called upon to perform any works--God does them through the believer. Those who try to mix the two are simply operating on human viewpoint. The law system was the Mosaic Covenant. When we speak about the law, we're talking about the Mosaic Covenant. It was an agreement delivered to the people of Israel through Moses. This is the only conditional covenant that we have in the Bible. This was an "if" covenant. The Jews were told, "If you will do this and this and this, then God said, 'Then I will do this and this and this in blessing toward you.'" Their treatment by God depended upon their response. This is not true of the other covenants that we've looked at.

The Jews, when they were presented with this Mosaic Covenant, really thought that they could cut the mustard with this. They very quickly and very readily agreed to accept this. We read in Exodus 19:5: "Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant (this Mosaic Covenant), then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine." Notice in verse 5 that you have the "if" condition. "And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak unto the children of Israel."

Notice that there are some words that are very familiar to you from 1 Peter here in this passage. We have the words "a peculiar treasure," or "a peculiar people." We also have "a kingdom of priests," and "a holy nation." This is what God was saying he was going to do for the Jewish people. It didn't pan out. Just to show you at this point the marvelous contrast of grace, this is exactly what is stated concerning the church about you and me today. God says, "You are my peculiar people; you are a kingdom of priests; and, you are a holy nation unto me." What have you done to secure that? Not a thing. All you did, under the blessing of God, was to be born in the dispensation of the grace of God, and God has done for you what the Jew would have given anything to have come true in his experience. At this point, in the wilderness, they thought this was going to happen.

So verse 7 says, "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord had commanded him." Now here's the punchline in verse 8: "And all the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord had spoken we will do.' And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord." Moses goes back and says, "God, they said they'll keep all 613 rules. They agree to keep them all." If you had been a smart Jew out in that wilderness, and you understood something about the old sin nature, you'd have gone to Moses and said, "Listen, Moses, go back to God and say, 'Whom are we going to be kidding here? There's no way we're going to keep 613 regulations. We can't even keep the Ten Commandments. That's only ten of the 613, and you want to give us 603 besides the ten we can't keep?' You go back to God and say, 'God you better do something for us some other way because if we have to get your blessing on the basis of what we do, there is no way we're going to have your blessing.'"

However, they didn't. They were very confident that they could do this. So they proceeded to place themselves under this arrangement. Romans 3:20 says, "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The New Testament saw very clearly that they could not be justified by keeping the law. Yet, they thought that they could please God and gain His blessing. Galatians 2:16 says, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ (the grace way). Even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." There was no way to gain God's blessing by keeping the laws because they couldn't do it.

God Himself would have certainly been delighted had they been able to live up to this ambition that they had cut out for themselves. However, the Lord also knew that they were doomed to failure. Deuteronomy 5:28-29 says, "And the Lord heard the voice of your words when He spoke unto me. And the Lord said unto me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto you. They have well said all that they have spoken. Oh, that there were such a heart in them.'" He's talking about what we read back in Exodus. They said, "All these things we will do." God says, "Oh, that there were such a heart (such a mentality) in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever." God says, "I wish that were true. I wish that they would be able to do the things that they have agreed to do."

So we as Christians have become everything that the Jews longed to be. We're reaching out to be. 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6, and Revelation 5:10 describe about us all of these things that God said He would do and make of them. But you and I receive it simply as a gift. There is, in other words, no way that anybody can keep the law (Romans 8:2-4). So if anybody comes along and pretends that he can keep the law in some way, he is very very disoriented, or he does not honestly identify the sins in his life.

There were certain contrasts that I want to review with you concerning the law. There was not only this contrast, first of all, between works that we must do to gain favor over against grace whereby God simply gives us the blessing. The contrast is something like this: The Old Testament said, "Be good and I'll bless you." Whereas the New Testament says, "Be good because I already have blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus." That's the contrast. There was another contrast in offerings, for example. Under the law, here's how you handled your money: God gave you a specific amount, a specific time, and a specific place for you to give your offering. It was all clearly defined within the law system.

**The Tithe**

Giving under the law was purely of necessity, and it was in the form of a tithe. You didn't go home and decide on the basis of the income you had, "Shall I give an offering to the Lord today or not." You weren't asked. If you were part of the Commonwealth of Israel, you were under the obligation to produce 10% of your income, because this 10 percent was a religious income tax. It was imposed on every Jew, and you had to pay it to the temple, to what was called the storehouse. That was the treasury.

Here is one of the beautiful places where you can see how Christianity has moved in, in certain churches, and grabbed a fistful out of the law and thrown it over into the dispensation of grace. Christian giving is found in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, and it's spelled out in detail. It is absolutely different from the giving of the Old Testament. Yet, we are constantly being told to tithe. The grace system just does not fit into this. There is no way you can take tithing and fit it in, because tithing was an income tax. It was paid for the support of the temple. If you give your money under the legal system of the impetus of the tithe, and of the dispensation of the law, you get exactly zero reward in heaven for what you gave. Yet, you can take that same amount of money and give it under the grace principle system, and God rewards you richly for it. You have a lot at stake. You have a great deal at stake to understand the difference between these two dispensations.

This tithe that you had to bring to the temple was for the support of the temple and for the support of the priests (Numbers 18:21-24). That's how the whole system was financed, and even the priest had to tithe. A priest took 10% of the tithe that he had received, and he tithed 10% for the support of the high priest (Numbers 18:22-24). There was also a special tithe which was taken once every three years, and that was for the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28-29, Deuteronomy 26:12-14). So there were actually several tithes that were involved, but all of them had to be delivered to the treasury in the temple.

Now there were offerings in the Old Testament, and these were freewill. However, you didn't make an offering until after you gave your tithes. So the matter of offerings is a great contrast between law and grace. You find the freewill offerings spoken about in Deuteronomy 16:16-17. Grace giving, of course, in contrast to all of this, has no amount, no time, and no place. It is freewill, and it's up to the believer. And I mean it is freewill and it is up to the believer. I've had people around here who said, "Yes, it's freewill and up to the believer," and then they would try to come in the back door with the dispensation of the law saying, "But we Christians have so much more privilege than the Jews. Certainly we will give as much as the Jew. We all will start with a tenth, won't we?"

The person who loves the tenth, by the way, among the Christians, is the guy who starts off in life, and he gives a tenth, and he doesn't have too much. He makes $1,000 a year, so he gives $100 to the Lord, and he lives off $900. He goes on and his life expands and his finances expand. A few years later, he's making $10,000 a year. He still loves to tithe. Do you know why? Because he can tithe out of $10,000; give the Lord $1,000; and live off $9,000. It took me a while to catch on to this. I wondered why some people were such fanatics for tithing around here, and I finally caught on. It's because, as life went by, their incomes had expanded so tremendously, they loved the tithe. However, if you go to 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, and you learn the principle of grace giving, you discover that God does not look at what you give, but at what you keep. Ah, that makes a whole different kind of ball game. My blessing and reward are determined, not on what I give, but on what I have kept back. If I'm keeping back that which I legitimately should give to the Lord, I suffer loss.

So don't be impressed by people who love to speak about tithing, and try to get in the back door. No, we don't have to tithe just because we have greater privileges. We do exactly what the New Testament outlines for grace giving. Tithing is a system that in no way fits into the grace way of life, and it robs the Christian of blessing and rewards. However, it is a good illustration of mixing dispensations.

Also there is the spirit between these two dispensations. The spirit of the law was harsh justice. The man went out to gather up some sticks on the Sabbath day. It was probably a cold day, and he forgot to get his fuel together, so he goes out and picks up a few sticks, and they find him picking up sticks. That's work on the Sabbath day, and in Numbers 15:32-36, you discover that the harshest kind of punishment was imposed because justice said that if you work on the Sabbath day, "I don't care why, you're going to die." So immediately they took this poor guy out and they stoned him to death for gathering up a few sticks to build a fire that he had not prepared for before the Sabbath day began.

You see why I have asked you if you want to be a devotee of the law, why are you not going out and stoning these people who are playing golf on Sunday? Why are you not getting that guy who's washing his car next door and letting him have it right there on the spot? Obviously we do live in a different dispensation. It is so ridiculous; it is so ludicrous; and, I've heard this so often recently, for preachers and leaders of big churches to say, "I don't believe in the dispensations." I hear this on the radio, and I'm just itching for somebody to call in and say, "When was the last time you sacrificed a lamb at the temple?"

So the spirit of the law was harsh. It was immediate justice. Every violation was promptly dealt with, and the punishment was made to fit the crime (Hebrews 2:2, Deuteronomy 9:21). In other words, if a man stole bread because he was hungry, the punishment was of a certain type, and different than if he stole it just to be stealing. However, stealing required more than just giving back what you took. Under the Old Testament law, if you stole something, you also had to make not only restitution, but multiplication. You had to give anywhere from five to seven times more back than you stole. So if you stole $10 bucks from somebody, you had to give him back $50 or $70. Consequently, there was very little stealing in Israel. The whole system had a way of discouraging theft. Exodus 22:1 and Proverbs 6:30-31 tells you about that.

The law absolutely knew no mercy. Hebrews 10:28 puts it this way: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses." Capital crimes received the death penalty (Deuteronomy 24:16). If you were a young person, and you were rebellious against your parents--you badmouthed and back-talked your parents, or you treated your parents with disrespect--do you know what the punishment for that was? Look it up in Deuteronomy 21:18-21. It was death by stoning. Consequently, the children of Israel were notorious for good manners. Now that's harshness, brother. I mean that is harsh. And that's the law. That's why it's so pathetic when people want to laud the law as being something so wonderful to live under, and to praise the law system is what we need.

The contrast is amazing with the grace of Christianity which is characterized by the spirit of mercy. In the dispensation of the church age, the believers are to judge themselves. They are to confess their own sins to the father (1 Corinthians 11:31, 1 John 1:9). Mercy is grace operating on the basis of the death of Christ which paid for our sins. So God's grace is free to exercise its mercy toward us. The Christian is called to live a supernatural life, and he does it. He fulfills all of the ideals of the Old Testament law through the filling of the Holy Spirit. Grace is characterized by freedom from these works through which we have, in the Old Testament, been trying to please the Lord.

**The Christmas Covenant**

At this point, I want to stop and look at another covenant with you. For you to understand the rest of the dispensation of the law, you need to understand this Davidic Covenant. This is the Christmas Covenant--the covenant to David. It was this covenant which confirmed the promise of seed made to Abraham under the Abrahamic Covenant. This Davidic Covenant was given to King David about 1000 B.C.--1,000 thousand years before Christ was born, who was the one who fulfilled this covenant. This covenant provides for a qualified Savior--a virgin-born Savior. Without Jesus Christ, this covenant could not have been fulfilled. For this reason, we call it the Christmas covenant. So we're going to read the Christmas story in Luke 1:26-37. Here we have the record of the historical fulfillment of the promises which were made here in the Davidic Covenant. I want you to notice certain keywords in this Christmas story that we're going to read. Keyword number one is "house;" keyword number two is "kingdom;" and, keyword number three is "throne."

**The Davidic Covenant**

You will notice as we read this account of the birth of Christ--the promise of the coming of the Savior--that it is tied back into the Davidic Covenant by the very use of these three strategic keywords. That's why we know that Jesus Christ came to fulfill the Old Testament law. This is why we know that the things promised in David's covenant have never yet fully been realized. That's why we know that God has a future for the Jew. That's why we know, as we look at the meaning of "house," "kingdom," and "throne," that what God promised to Israel has not phased into a spiritual meaning.

This is what happens: The amillennialist says, "Yes, God did make these promises to the Jews. Yes, He did reflect these earthly concepts that He was going to give them. But when they rejected the Savior, all of this changed, and God took away these earthly promises, and they were transformed into spiritual promises." So you say, "Well, wait a minute. Where is the house?" He says, "Oh, that's in heaven. The House has now become heaven. House is a symbolic word." You say, "Well, where is the kingdom?" He says, "Oh, the kingdom is the church. It's all of the believers. We're the kingdom. You see, every time you witness to somebody, or you win somebody for the Lord, you are bringing in the kingdom." Have you heard anybody talk about bringing in the kingdom? This is what they mean. If anybody uses that phrase, by the way, he's also tipping himself off to you as being a confused person concerning dispensational order.

Or, you will say, "Well where is the throne?" They say, "Oh, the throne is in heaven. Jesus Christ is sharing it with His Father." Now I want you to get that in mind. Where is the house? They say that it's now heaven. That's the house that we're going to have. Where is the kingdom? They say that it's all of the believers in the church age. Where's the throne? They say that it's God's throne in heaven.

Now we're going to read the Christmas story which uses these words, and you tell me what you think Mary must have thought when she heard this message from the angel. How would she normally have taken it? How do you think David took this? Do you think that when God made this promise (and we'll look at the Scripture here in 2 Samuel in a moment), that David was thinking about some kind of a heavenly interpretation of all of this? Not on your life. David was very glad to hear what God had to say in the way of promises relative to his house, his kingdom, and his throne.

Here's what Mary was told: Luke 1:26: "And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David." Now notice--that's important. Jesus Christ had to be born of the house of what? Here is the keyword--of the house of "David." He could not have been born through any other lineage. He had to be in the line of David, and both Mary and Joseph were in the line of David. "And the Virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her and said, 'Hail, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you. Blessed you are among women.' And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered in her mind what manner of greeting this should be." Well, it was a Christmas greeting, but she didn't recognize it at the time.

"And the angel said unto her, 'Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And, behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son and shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.'" He is going to be God. You call His name Jesus. He is a man. Jesus is His human name. But He is also going to be Son of the Highest. He is going to be God. Thus He is going to be a very outstandingly different kind of person than the world has ever seen--a God man.

"And the Lord God shall give unto him the *throne* of his father David." Okay. You see the word right here. That was one of the keywords to David in the promise of the Davidic Covenant. "And he shall reign over the *house* of Jacob." Now you tell me, how are you going to convert the house of Jacob into a heavenly concept that the house of Jacob is heaven? What kind of a stretch of reason would it take to say that the house of Jacob is heaven? "He shall reign over the house of Jacob." And notice, again, the eternal aspect of this covenant. "For of this *kingdom*, there shall be no end."

"Then said Mary unto the angel, 'How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?' And the angel answered and said unto her, 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you. Therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.'" Mary naturally wondered how she, unmarried and not participating in sex, could possibly have a child. Verse 36: "And, behold, your cousin Elizabeth also has conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month with her who was called barren, for with God, nothing shall be impossible." You cannot understand this record of the Christmas story unless you tie it back here to the Davidic Covenant because the angel's announcement was specifically to that point.

I want to show you the troubles that you get into when you try spiritualizing these words like house, kingdom, and throne. The liberal, of course, wants to spiritualize these things. So the evangelical, who is off base and will not take house, kingdom, and throne literally, exposes himself to this problem. He wants to spiritualize these words, but he does not want to spiritualize the statement that this virgin woman would conceive and bear a child. He says, "Oh, yes, that was actually true. This was a virgin woman who bore this child."

However, the liberal comes along and says, "Wait a minute. What kind of exegesis is that? What kind of hermeneutical principle is that? How can you, within one context, take something literally, and then you jump over here, and say, 'Oh, this is symbolic?'" The liberal says, "Oh, yes, I believe that house, kingdom, and throne are symbolic. And I also believe that the virgin birth idea is symbolic." That's how he comes to what he teaches people at this Christmas season--that Jesus Christ was simply the natural son of Mary and some Roman soldier or some man, so that in effect Jesus Christ is declared to be the illegitimate son of Mary. There is no way that you can come out with any other conclusion if you violate the principle of literal interpretation.

King David had been a successful ruler and he was a great soldier. The time came in his experience when he was at peace with his enemies. As he lived in his luxurious house, he looked out the window and he saw the tabernacle, and the thought occurred to him, "It offends me that I should sit in this luxurious house, and my God should live in that tattered tent." So he made a decision that he was going to do something about this. He was going to build God a place to dwell which would be befitting the God of all the universe. He called his prophet Nathan in, and he told Nathan what he wanted to do. 2 Samuel 7:12-16 is the statement of the Davidic Covenant. Now remember that Jesus Christ was to come of the seed of David. He was to come to fulfill the promise made to King David. This promise has not yet been fulfilled. The time will come when it will be fulfilled.

In verses 1-3, David recognized what he was living in while God was living in a tent. When he shared his plan with Nathan, Nathan said, "That's a good idea, David. Go ahead with it. However, Nathan spoke too quickly. In verses 4-7, you find that that night, God spoke to his prophet Nathan and said that David will not build the temple. He explained to him, "I, God, have always lived in the midst of my people in this tabernacle tent, and it pleases me to live there." God had not commanded the building of the temple, in other words. In verses 8-11, God here declares that instead He will build a house for David, and for David's son Solomon and their posterity. He reminds David, in the process of this, of the humble origins from which God had brought him.

Picking it up at verse 12, God says, "And when your days be fulfilled, you shall sleep with my fathers. (He'll die.) I will set up your seed after you (his descendants) which shall proceed out of your own body, and I will establish his kingdom." This refers to the fact that Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, would succeed David on the throne. Verse 13: "He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Now there you have it--the three keywords all in one verse. What does house mean? It means a dynasty. It means a ruling monarch. That's all it means. The House of Windsor now rules the country of England. That's a house. That's a dynasty. God said, "David I'm going to build a house for you. You wanted to build a house for Me, but I'm going to build a house for you." God was making a play on words because He meant a dynasty here, and David understood it.

Furthermore, he said, "I will establish the throne." And what does throne mean? It is the authority to rule--the seat of government. It is the authority to reign. Then he says, "A kingdom." And what is a kingdom? It's a sphere of rule. It's a nation on the face of the earth. It's a group of people. Notice that verse 13 has the word "forever." So God says, "I'm going to give you, David, forever a house--a dynasty. I'm going to give you a seat of government--a throne. And I'm going to give you a people on the face of the earth over which you will rule." Verses 14 and 15 speak concerning David's son Solomon and his descendants: "I will be His Father and he should 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."

Verse 15: "But My mercy shall not depart away from him as I took it from Saul whom I put away before you." This promise of this covenant is unconditional. God says, "If Solomon does not obey me." And Solomon started off great. Solomon had a magnificent spiritual maturity structure in his soul built by Bible doctrine. That prayer that he offered to God was simply brilliant. It makes you want to weep when you read it--to hear a young person talking like that and asking for those things. However, the sad part about it was that he got away from doctrine. As he got away from doctrine, his spiritual maturity structure collapsed. So he wrote a book called Ecclesiastes in the Bible, nine-tenths of which is his human viewpoint and therefore not true.

However, he describes all that he went through for most of his life. Then when he came to old age, he could see how all of these things were useless and empty and vain. Now all the time he was out of fellowship, he was under the discipline of God; under the stripes of men; and, one thing and another. However, God never abrogated the Davidic Covenant. It was never canceled because he said, "I won't change my mind. I'll punish Solomon, and I'll punish the kings who follow him for their disobedience. But I will never change my mind." In other words, there is no "if" here. It's all dependent upon God.

So verse 16 says, "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." And there are the three keywords once more in verse 16. This throne is to be occupied forever over a kingdom representing David's dynasty on this earth forever. We know also that this must be from the city of Jerusalem, and this is what Christ is going to come at His Second Coming to fulfill--these three specific factors.

So Jesus Christ had to qualify to fulfill the Davidic Covenant. He had to have the right family line. He had to be born of a virgin, so that He could be a God man. He had to be born in the city of Bethlehem, and he had to be able to conquer death. The mercy that God promised was never to be withdrawn from the Davidic line. Our salvation is built upon this Davidic Covenant. Therefore, our salvation is literal, eternal, and unconditional.

Psalm 89:3-4: "I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David my servant, 'Your seed will I establish forever and build up your throne to all generations.'" Versus 34 and 36: "My covenant will I not break, nor will I alter the thing that has gone out of My lips once I have sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David." To the extent that Mary was acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, we can see what she thought when the angel made this declaration and tied it back to David and tied it back to these three keywords. She knew exactly what that angel was saying. She knew that that angel was saying, "Mary, you are going to have a baby, and that child is going to be a boy, and He is going to be the Messiah King that Israel has looked for all these years to fulfill the Davidic Covenant."

Please remember that after the southern kingdom of the Jews went into Babylonian captivity for 70 years, and they came back, they had all those years--those centuries--when they had no king. They had people ruling, but they did not have a legitimate Davidic line of kings upon their throne until Jesus Christ came along. Then they had one who was in the line of descent and qualified on every account to be the King. So this was something fantastic. God says here in Psalm 89 that He is going to keep His Word. The only way that David's posterity can be on this earthly throne forever is for eventually someone to come along who lives forever, and therefore will be able to rule forever from that throne, and that was Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 7:14: "And therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and call his name Emmanuel," which means "God with us." This is quoted in Matthew 1:23. If Jesus Christ had not been virgin-born, He would have had an old sin nature. Therefore, He could not have qualified as the one who could die for our sins spiritually. So the virgin birth was a miracle and it was a necessary miracle.

The Davidic Covenant include a house, a kingdom, and a throne. We trust that as you've studied this exposition of how the Word of God fits together in all of its facets, you have realized anew that there is a God out there who makes declarations and then keeps His Word. A thousand years before Christ was born, this declaration was made relative to the Davidic Covenant. A thousand years later, all of the conditions were specifically fulfilled. Christ came ready to bring in the kingdom, and to bring it in forever. Instead, His people rejected Him and crucified Him. In the process of that death, He died spiritually and physically for our sins in order that we may be set free.

If you have never received Christ as your Savior, we invite you to now recognize that as God has kept His word to David, so He will keep His word to you. That word is that if you will believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, you will have eternal life. That word also says that if you do not, you will experience eternal death, separated from Him in the lake of fire which God has created for those who reject His Son. There is only one sin standing between you and heaven, and that is unbelief in Christ. So if He's not your Savior, you should know that Christmastime is indeed a unique time. This event that fulfilled so much of the promises of God can fulfill the promises that God has for you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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