

'All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of Thy mouth. Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.'

Psalm 138:4-5.

You are warmly invited to meetings arranged by the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony, to be held, God willing, at
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44 SALUSBURY ROAD, LONDON, NW6 6NN
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Theme for 2021 – By the Mouth of ALL His Holy Prophets

January 22nd, 7pm

Subject: The Testimony of Abraham
Speaker: Ivan Foster

February 26th, 7pm

Subject: The Testimony of Samuel
Speaker: Paul Toms

March 26th, 7pm

Subject: The Testimony of Gad
Speaker: Philip Knowles

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Watching and Waiting

LIGHT FOR PERILOUS TIMES

SCRIPTURAL

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The objects are:

1. To teach the nearing approach of our Lord's return. James 5:8
2. To hold forth the Truth and to expose and resist error. Jude 3
3. To note passing events in the light of 'the Scripture of Truth.' 2 Peter 1:19
4. To unfold the Word of God by comparing Scripture with Scripture. Acts 17:11
5. To encourage missionary endeavour, and all service for Truth. Acts 1:8
6. To comfort and strengthen those who seek to stand with the Lord, apart from abounding lawlessness. 2 Timothy 2:19
7. To call for separation from false ecumenism. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

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Nathan – The Prophet Sent from God

(This is a summary of a message given at a Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony meeting on 22nd May, 2020. It was recorded and can be downloaded from the SGAT web-site).

The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony meetings are presently following a series on the prophets who foretold the coming of the Saviour into the world. The prophets spoke of the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, which we call, **‘His Incarnation.’** The Saviour was virgin-born. The prophets also told of His second coming, which we call, **‘His Coronation.’** This means that when He comes, the Lord will fully show forth His divine glory. It will be the day of Christ, the day of His public recognition in the world. An ungodly world will see Him. The saints of God will see Him as the King of kings and the Lord of glory. It is then those wonderful words in Revelation 11:15 will find their fulfilment, **‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.’** Think about those words. Turn them over in your mind. ‘The kingdoms of this world.’ The thought goes a long way beyond the contemplation of many. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign for ever and ever. That is plain enough.

The Introduction and Background to the Chapter

My subject is the testimony of Nathan, (2 Samuel 7). Nathan is mentioned by name twenty-nine times in the Old Testament and he has a very fitting name for a prophet. The name means ‘given’ or ‘sent’ – given or sent of God. There is a fuller version of his name in the New Testament. I refer to Nathaniel and there the name belongs to a different person, but Nathaniel, as a name, means ‘sent of God.’ That is how I look at Nathan. He was a God-sent man. Time after time, we see this in his ministry.

The first time Nathan is mentioned in the Scriptures is in 2 Samuel 7. This chapter falls into three parts. First of all, verses 1 to 3 give the introduction. Then, in verses 4-17, God Himself was speaking to Nathan. He was speaking to Nathan about David, and Nathan was to convey this message to David. Then lastly, verses 18-29 have David’s response. David was at prayer; he offered thanksgiving for the promise God had given unto him, for the blessing of God upon himself, upon his house, and upon the nation too. So, there are wonderful things here for us about which to think.

We turn our thoughts then to 2 Samuel 7. The parallel passage with this chapter is 1 Chronicles 17. The two chapters complement one another so that they show a close correspondence, as you would expect. Chronologically, these two chapters follow on after the details are given concerning the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath-Jearim, where it was initially, all the way to Jerusalem, the city of David. That is the background to 2 Samuel 7, the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant from Kirjath-Jearim to the city of David. This is an event of huge significance *historically*. It is of huge significance *politically* and *spiritually* and much thought needs to be given to this time in the history of Israel.

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Two Psalms Are Especially Relevant

There are two psalms that have special relevance to this event and I think you should keep them in mind. First of all, Psalm 132. For the sake of time, I focus on verse 6 which reveals that it was David's expressed desire to find a home for the ark, and he had sworn with a holy vow before God that he would not rest until he had found such a place. He cried '*Lo, we heard of it at Ephrath: we found it in the fields of the wood.*'

The word 'wood' there in the psalm ties in with the Hebrew form of the name 'Kirjath-Jearim' so we may understand that is intended there, 'we found it at Kirjath-Jearim.' When he says 'we found it,' that does not imply that he had to begin a very intensive search to find the ark. No, everybody in the company of David knew that the Ark of the Covenant was in Kirjath-Jearim; but the finding of it refers rather to the thrill, the joy, the jubilation of seeing the Ark of the Covenant.

Then there is Psalm 78, which gives the divine perspective on what was taking place. Verses 60 and 61 tell us, '*So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men; and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand.*' Verses 67 and 68 expand on this, '*Moreover He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which He loved.*' These are two psalms where we have the commentary of the Holy Spirit of God on what occurred here in 2 Samuel 7, and indeed what occurred immediately before that, with the removal of the ark.

So, as a follow-on from all that, we find in 2 Samuel 7 that there were two men engaged in deep conversation. Those two men are identified for us. We have Nathan the prophet and David the king. David was voicing his thoughts. He had contemplated this matter before the Lord for some time and now he will speak to Nathan the prophet about it hence he said, '*I dwell in a palace but the Ark of the Covenant is lodged behind curtains.*' The sense is that it just did not seem right. 'Surely, I ought to feel it incumbent on me now, to do something more. Let me build a temple, so that the Ark of the Covenant can be lodged there in its place.' He was putting this to Nathan the prophet for the prophet's consideration. Nathan responded enthusiastically because he had in mind that it sounded good; and David was the king. This was something David had in his heart; and the Lord had been with him in a remarkable way. Therefore, he urged the king to go and do this.

A Timely Lesson on Inspiration

Then a little time passed and during those dark hours of the night a change was made. God interrupted the sleep of Nathan with a very challenging message to go and tell David. The substance of the message was that he was not to build the temple. There are lessons for us to learn from all this. God sent Nathan, but He not only sent the man, He told him the message; and our hearts desire, when we go on an errand to deliver the Word of God, is that we may be 'sent men,' delivering the word that He would have us bring.

There is a lesson on the inspiration of Holy Scripture. Let us learn this highly important lesson. Many scholars and commentators have erred and erred badly, in my opinion, for writers have indicated that, according to their mind, as to the giving of the

Scriptures, the prophets of old time had to research their subject or go and discuss matters with others in authority. Take the example of Matthew. They have been suggesting that Matthew would have needed to pay a visit to Capernaum to research material for his Gospel – to find out there from people who knew from their own experience what the Lord said and did before their very eyes; then he would be entitled to write those details into his account.

That does not correspond with Scripture. Keep in mind 2 Peter 1:21. It explains what the position of the Christian should be in regard to the inspiration of Holy Scripture. There the word is, ***‘For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man,’*** that is to say, the prophet did not fulfil his own desires. He did not write his prophecies out because the message seemed to be good either in his own opinion or that of others, that he should intimate those things to the nation. No, prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, by the desire of man, by the effort of man. I continue with the reading of the verse, ***‘But Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.’*** So, the words of the prophet, whether they were spoken or written, are those words which are prompted by God Himself. That is the plain teaching of Scripture and no wonder verse 20 begins with the words, ***‘Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.’*** The prophet did not decide for himself that he would write out his particular prophecies. That is why we read, ***‘holy men of God spake as they were moved.’*** The utterance was the utterance of the Holy Spirit. The word itself was the word of the living God. It certainly was not the word of the prophet. So, the inspiration is not in the prophet; the inspiration is in the message.

This comes out very clearly in the narrative here when Nathan, in good faith, said to David by way of encouragement, ‘Yes, go on, build the temple; this is marvellous. It is a wonderful thing that the ark has been brought back. The ark is now resting behind curtains in the city of David; the time surely has come.’ We see this very clearly in his thinking, but then God stepped in, showing Nathan that this was not according to His mind.

The word of the Lord is in the message, not in the messenger and this is why Nathan was permitted to say the thing that he did, at the first, to David; God has intended for us all to find out in the chapter, that Nathan did not have the mind of God just then. The mind of the prophet may be one thing, but the mind of God may be something else. It is the utterance, the prompting of the Holy Spirit that matters. That is where the inspiration is. It is in the message.

A Pertinent Example From Paul

There are other examples in the New Testament and whilst I do not intend to extend this at any great length, I do feel it is an important point today for the Lord’s people to understand. In 1 Corinthians 11 we have the passage which contains information about the institution of the communion feast. There the apostle begins to tell us how the Lord, that fateful night before they all left for Gethsemane’s garden, took bread, and He spoke about His atoning death – the bread that symbolized His body, the cup too as a symbol of His precious blood, by which redemption would be accomplished. How could he

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speak with such authority? How did he know? Let us give him his former name, Saul of Tarsus. Saul of Tarsus was not there in the upper room. He did not know at first-hand exactly what the Lord did, how he took the bread and distributed the cup. He did not know anything from personal experience of what took place there in the upper room. How, then, can he write about it so clearly? He tells us himself in verse 23. We have read the words so many times, but for quite a number of Christians, the truth has not sunk in. The apostle said there, ***'For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you,'*** in his description of the communion feast. Even though he was talking about all that our Lord said and did in the upper room, he could say he knew about it because he had received it by divine revelation. He did not make any mistake about it either. He had the mind of Christ. That is what we are talking about when we speak of divine inspiration for Holy Scripture.

Also, in Galatians 1:11-12, Paul wrote like this, ***'But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it.'*** How important that is. He did not begin any programme of research. He did not have a tutorial from the best of men, from the most prominent apostle in Jerusalem. No, he says clearly, ***I certify you*** about this, that I received it not of man, even the best of men and I was not taught it either, ***'but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.'*** The apostle Paul is saying, with all this, he had the mind of God given to him and those details that he had recorded about the teaching of Christ, he had received them from above, although he admired the apostles who were stationed in Jerusalem. 'I did not receive any tutorial from them. I received it from above.' That says everything.

I quote from those words of David himself in 2 Samuel 23:2, when he said, ***'The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His word was in my tongue.'*** There again, we have a positive declaration of what inspiration is all about. The utterance is the utterance of the Holy Spirit. The word is the word of the living God. It is the word that has proceeded from God's own mouth, so that David is able to say for all those portions that he wrote under inspiration, 'This is the explanation, the Spirit of God spake by me and His word was in my tongue.' The word was His. The Holy Spirit is the real author.

This Time Nathan Held Fast to What God Himself Said

Perhaps we can dwell a little more on the subject of the inspiration of Holy Scripture. I refer you to 2 Samuel 7:17, because here we have the affirmation of God on what we have been saying. It says there, ***'According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.'*** Nathan approached the king from a different perspective. He spoke to him as a man sent from God and the words that he was delivering to the king are those words expressly that have come from God, and the Holy Spirit of God is careful to have the reader note this. Any word that Nathan spoke to David during the session that we are describing, was according to all this vision and according to the Word of Almighty God. That should keep us clear about this matter.

Then there is another touching lesson in the chapter and it is about prayer. David had been praying concerning his intention of building the temple. In effect, God said 'No'

to him. Often the child of God at prayer faces this difficulty, knowing he has a burden in his heart, but fearing the Lord may say 'No.' There is a great lesson which emerges from 2 Samuel 7, where, in effect, God said 'No' to David. It was because He had something better in mind; and on many occasions when God says 'No,' it is because He has something infinitely better in view.

Often God's 'No' is Better

Take Abraham as an example. He had the burden of heart concerning the birth of the son of promise, and he had several candidates, because as time passed, Abraham's faith was tested very severely. So, he offered his candidates. He had Lot, of course, who was virtually an adopted son, there in Abraham's encampment. He offered Ishmael with the prayer: *'O that Ishmael might live before Thee.'* Would the Lord take him as his son?

Was Abraham looking for the prophecies to be fulfilled 'spiritually' when he provided his list of candidates? Was he looking for a kind of spiritual fulfilment when he suggested the Lord should take Ishmael to be the son that was promised, or Lot; and what about Eliezer of Damascus? In every case, God, in substance, said 'No.' The mind of God is clear, *'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.'* Nobody can take the place of Isaac, who was named and spoken of as if he was already in existence before he was born. All the time, in the mind of God, Isaac was there as if he was present physically, although we know that moment had to wait until he was actually born.

God said 'No' in all these instances, because it would come to the point when Isaac was born. Abraham and Sarah rejoiced in the birth of the child. His name means 'laughter' and what holy laughter they had, to rejoice in the Lord, in the miracle birth of Isaac. It was clear then to Abraham and clear also to Sarah that God's 'No' was for their own betterment. The Lord, when He said 'No,' had the purpose of doing something that was infinitely better for Abraham than that of which Abraham had thought in the first instance.

So it was with David. God had something far more wonderful in view and we begin by looking at David's intentions. David had the intention of building the temple of God in Jerusalem, if the Lord would permit him to do this. David was subject to the will of God and happily so. He did not mean to act in a contrary way to the will of God, and the Lord accepted his intention. It is clear here, that David had this in his heart to build the temple and when God said 'No,' it was cutting across David's own feelings, intense as they were. This is a touching point about the chapter. When God said 'No,' not only did He have something better in mind for David, which He did, but God took David's intention, just as it was, as if David had already carried it out and God would reward him for that. He would reward him in kind and this takes our attention here in the chapter.

God Sees Our Heart's Intention and Makes More of It

God recognizes our intentions many times, when we have never been able to carry out those intentions. One may say in his or her heart, 'Oh, if I could do such and such a thing, then I would respond. I would serve the Lord in this way.' If that is said, with

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all earnestness and if it is said as a token of goodwill and a full intention of carrying out that project, then God accepts the will for the deed.

Thus reward in kind was given to David, because God spoke to him about his house. He said, in effect, 'David, you have been prevented from building Me a house, and I have recognized your intention, I am going to reward you accordingly. I have prevented you from building Me a house but to make up for that, I am going to build you a house.' David goes over the matter in his prayer of response (in verse 27) and he is clear on the original point made at God's behest in verse 11, *'the Lord telleth thee He will make thee an house.'* David said, Lord, Thou 'hast revealed to Thy servant saying, I will build thee an house.' In view of this promise, then, David brings his petition *'Thy servant hath found in his heart to pray this prayer'* – because God had undertaken to do this as if David had actually built a house for Him. This that God promised to David was infinitely better for David, than if it had been the case that David had built the temple.

So, God's way is always better. God's will is infinitely better for us. Notice too, that David, because he was prevented from building the temple, did not opt out of the service of God. I fear that some believers, when they hit upon a stumbling block and have been prevented from going on in the Lord's work, have then decided that is finished for them. They will not be back at the house of God. However, David wanted to prepare; his heart was in this. In 1 Chronicles 29, when he speaks of his intense preparations, providing silver and gold, precious stones and then the huge stones as well, ever so much is done by way of readiness, in preparation for the building of the house. David showed by example that if he could not actually build the house by God's permission, *then he would do as much as he could to help forward the work of God. It falls to us today to do what we can for the Lord. If, like David, I can do some things, let me prepare with all my might.*

How David Benefitted on Two Ways

Now let us look at this. David benefitted by how God spoke to him through Nathan, the prophet. He benefitted in two ways.

First of all, he benefitted by obtaining a revelation from God. Also, Secondly, he was promised rich blessing by God; and these two points emerge in David's response to the Lord. David spoke about God's revelation to him, His precious Word, that it is true. He said, in verse 28, *'Thy words be true, and Thou hast promised this goodness.'* So, upon the truth of God's Word, David rested his prayer and expectation. He is saying, 'On the truth of what Thou hast said, let this promise be fulfilled.' God revealed His word to David as we see from verse 27.

God gave David a revelation. That word 'revelation' comes from the Hebrew term 'galah.' It is a verb that occurs many times in Scripture. If I remember correctly, it occurs 188 times, but there are those instances when the word has a special use. I refer now to the process of revelation, God speaking to men.

Turn to 1 Samuel 9, which is most interesting. The Hebrew word 'galah' appears here in verse 15. The words are *'Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear (galah) a day*

before Saul came, saying, Tomorrow about this time.’ So, the Lord communicated this information to Samuel. Samuel was by then an old man. Israel was clamouring for a king. God had consented to this being done and He was saying to Samuel that as he left the city *‘Tomorrow, about this time,’* on going up the hill to the place of the sacrifice, he would meet a man about whom God would tell him something. Please notice, *‘Tomorrow, about this time.’* This is talking about a 24-hour time span. This prophetic word, as God delivered it to Samuel, was fulfilled literally. Tomorrow is tomorrow. Twenty-four hours later, Samuel would meet this man. That is what this verse 15 is telling us. Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear. There is something very fascinating about that – the Lord telling Samuel in his ear. The word ‘galah’ is used here to signify a revelation that God gave and put into the ear of Samuel the prophet. So that the word had its fulfilment, precisely, the very next day.

There are some interpreters who, when it comes to God’s prophetic word, are always very insistent in pointing out that when God in prophecy speaks about time in the future, He is talking in terms of thousands of years. They base their ideas on the line, ‘one day is with the Lord as a thousand years.’ Therefore, arbitrarily, they have made that a rule for prophetic interpretation, that one day would be a thousand years. Was it so here in 1 Samuel 9? Not at all! *When God said, ‘tomorrow,’ He fulfilled that word the very next day. It was indeed on the morrow as God had said.* You see in verse 14, *‘And they (Saul and his companions) went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place;’* and that was the time of which the Lord had told Samuel in his ear the day before, *‘Tomorrow, about this time.’* So the Lord indicates in verse 17, *‘When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of.’*

God’s revelation involved a given time with Samuel. God said to Samuel ‘Tomorrow, about this time,’ and twenty-four hours later, that prophetic word came to pass literally, exactly, as God had said.

Further Use of the Idea in the Word ‘Galah’

When you come to 2 Samuel 7:27, you see David saying that God had revealed all these good things to him. *‘For Thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house.’* He had this by revelation from God. Now, it is striking that the language would be somewhat similar, in respect to David as it was with Samuel, that God spoke to David’s ear. Look at the margin in the Authorised Version, and you will see there, how He revealed it in David’s ear. That is how the Hebrew text runs: God opened David’s ear that he might hear with perfect understanding what God had indicated to him. That is wonderful.

It reminds me of the experience of the apostles on the resurrection day when the Lord not only opened their eyes that they would recognise Him, He not only opened the Scriptures to them, beginning with Moses and all the prophets (and we are studying the prophets) expounding all those things concerning Himself; but we read later on, in Luke 24:44-45, *‘And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of*

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Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. So, the Lord not only opened up the word, but He opened up their minds. He gave them the mental capacity to take to heart the very things He had taught them. We need the Lord to work in this way to open our eyes in relation to Scripture. This is how in the Old Testament, ‘galah’ comes into play, similarly, for the prophets and the apostles.

Consider Psalm 119:18, ***‘Open Thou mine eyes.’*** Again ‘galah’ is used here for the opening of the eyes, as if the Lord would remove a veil. He would take away the bandages that have been wrapped around the head of the man who is in the process of recovering his sight and now as every bandage comes away, he could see suddenly with perfect vision. ***‘Open Thou mine eyes.’*** That is how it is in the Psalm 119.

With David, 2 Samuel 7, it is opening his ear, revealing it in his ear; and with the apostles in Luke 24:44-45, it is opening their understanding. *In a secondary way, we can also cry to God about this and say, Lord, open our understanding, give us, as we study this word, the ability to take to heart and to understand every word that is there as best we can. Lord, reveal Thy word to us.*

What Exactly Did the Lord ‘Reveal’ unto David?

Let me say that God’s revelation mattered to David. Somebody may say, ‘Well, what exactly did the Lord reveal to David?’ This is where we look at the actual word given to Nathan the prophet. In 2 Samuel 7, the Lord speaks, first of all, of how He had watched over David from his early days in the wilderness when David shepherded the sheep. He says, ***‘I was with thee in all the places whithersoever thou wentest,’*** and David now, by revelation, saw *God’s hand back then in his life.* Not only so, but he could see *God’s purpose for the future and there is special reference to Israel.*

2 Samuel 7:10 reads, ***‘Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel.’***

Now, when these words were spoken, first of all, to Nathan and then secondarily to David, Israel’s borders were secure. There was no danger from any quarter. David was the king, he reigned supremely; he reigned in power. There was no question of any fatal attack from the enemy. Indeed, 2 Samuel 7:1 says of David, ***‘the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies.’*** So, there was never a time when the border of Israel was more secure than it was at that point, in David’s time, when he sat in his house in Jerusalem, installed as the king over the nation. This is wonderful. God was saying in regard to Israel in time to come, when the nation is uprooted, many are scattered across the face of the earth, I will bring Israel back, I will give them their home in this land, I will appoint for them a place and I will plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own.

The world is against Israel for the most part. We have many clamouring with authority declaiming against Israel, and they are using every means in their power to oppose the people of Israel but the day is coming when God will establish them before all their enemies. It says here, when the Lord establishes them ***‘in a place of their own, they will move no more.’*** There will be no more disruption, no more displacement. They will not again, suffer anything by way of oppression at the hands of the wicked, ***‘neither***

shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.' So, there is a marvellous place in this revelation as it is given to David for us to think about Israel in time to come. God has appointed a place for them. I am talking about the Land of Promise. This land is described further on in our chapter (in verse 23) as *'Thy land.'*

Let us pick out those words. This land that God is going to appoint for Israel as an inheritance in the time to come, when King David's Greater Son will take His place upon the throne, reigning over the house of Jacob, God will appoint as a place for His people that they may move no more, that the children of wickedness may afflict them no more; and this land is His land. That is what verse 23 entitles us to say, *'Thy land,'* God's own land. It does not lie with United Nations to decide Israel's future. It does not lie with any department of the United Nations to legislate against Israel for this land is God's land and He has appointed a place for His people. David understood, as he looked down through the corridor of time, that the Lord had spoken about *'Thy servant's house for a great while to come,'* and part of that revelation concerned the appointment of a real national home for the people of Israel. They will be His people living in His land, as this prophecy foresees it.

The Coming Messiah, The King, God's Dear Son

Not only does David foretell the establishment of the nation of Israel, but he also tells us of the person of God's dear Son. He gives us what really amounts to a Messianic prophecy. I pick up in verse 14, *'I will be His father, and He shall be My son.'* God promised to David, that the Messiah shall come from his family line. The Son of David in later time, the Messiah, will sit upon David's throne in Jerusalem and His kingdom will be established by God. So, the Lord was speaking to David about a person, about Christ. It is marvellous when you think about it, the things that God put in David's ear that day; God's purpose concerning Israel. That in future years, He would establish His people, as a redeemed people. He would be their God and they would be His people and not only did He promise that the Messiah will come out of David's loins, the Messiah would appear in the House of David. He will be the Son of David. The Holy Spirit has become the interpreter of those words in verse 14, *'I will be His Father, and He shall be My son.'* He has applied them directly to Christ. I am making reference to Hebrews 1:5, where these words are quoted. The reference is to Christ. The Holy Spirit is the best interpreter and the Holy Spirit has shown us that Christ is in view here.

This is tremendous. *I will be His Father. He shall be My son;* but He is also the Son of David. When God spoke of His kingdom David's name was linked in. Christ will sit upon the throne of David.

Do Not Miss This Word 'Forever'

That brings me to the permanence of this prophetic word. You see the word *'forever'* there. It occurs eight times in 2 Samuel 7 beginning at verse 13, working through to the end. Three times there God uses the word as He speaks directly, He uses it as from Himself. I wish I had time to go through and specify these references, but it is also true that in 1 Chronicles 17, the word *'forever'* is used eight times. God says in

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2 Samuel 7:13,16, the kingdom will be established forever. David's house and kingdom are established too. Scripture speaks of the throne, in verse 13, being established for ever, working right through until David has his five-fold repetition of the word 'forever' (for David picks up on that). He sees the permanence of God's appointment. He is saying there, '*Lord, let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may be before Thee for ever; for Thou blessest, O Lord GOD, and it shall be blessed for ever.*' I am overwhelmed with the permanence of it.

The angel Gabriel, prior to the birth of Christ, speaking to Mary left these words with her, '*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end*' (Luke 1:32-33). He shall be great because of who He is. He is the Son of the Highest. He shall be great because of the throne He occupies. God shall give to Him the throne of His father David. The throne of David is not in Heaven. The throne of David will be in Jerusalem. All this is in the message of Nathan to David. And He shall be great because of the perpetuity of that kingdom. He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever. *The angel Gabriel expounds the prophecy that was given so long ago by Nathan the Prophet, even to David.*

There are wonderful words here for us to take as a basis for meditation today, and I pray that God will richly use and bless His Word in your own soul and life. May we learn some of the lessons there, that many a time when God says 'No' to a believer, a believer who is so earnest in presenting his petitions to God, that child of God need not be disappointed because in many, many instances, God is just about to do something far better. *David had no regrets when looking back on it all.* Later, he could see what God undertook to do for him, speaking of his house for a great while to come, a way, way out into the future when Christ the Saviour would appear, when the Lord Jesus Himself would actually sit enthroned in Jerusalem, sitting there upon the throne of David. It is a marvellous thing and David doubtless could have said, 'Oh, it is far better. I am glad the Lord said 'No' to me because He gave me something far more wonderful besides.' May the Lord rejoice our hearts. David pleaded the promise in his prayer. The Lord had said these things, and David was expecting Him to do it for His Name's sake.

(Editor's Note: Because of time, Mr Douglas felt unable to say all that he desired, so he has kindly prepared the following notes as it is important that friends should realise the significance of 2 Samuel 7 and the evidence that later prophecies give of the impact that Nathan's prophecy had).

NOTE....THE PROPHECY of 2 Samuel 7 holds a major place in Scripture, particularly with its reference to the Throne of David. This passage holds the key to things yet to come. Thus the influence of 2 Samuel 7 reappears in after times:

THE PSALM

I had intended to mention while preaching, that Mr DeBurgh suggested David wrote Psalm 138 with 2 Samuel 7 in mind. (I ran out of time). The message of this Psalm

and the scope of its prophetic vision have the closest connection with the subject of Nathan's revelation.

SOLOMON'S Inaugural Prayer of Dedication

In his great prayer which he offered at the opening of the Temple Services, Solomon is seen to reflect on 2 Samuel 7.

It is at the beginning of this memorable prayer that King Solomon makes insightful reference to God's own word to his father back then.

He thinks on what God had said exactly even though all this took place before he was born.

This shows how carefully the King had been instructed as a child in the things of God. It is remarkable that he should quote so fully and astutely from what God had said, in former times, while looking now for those words to be fulfilled as to their first part, and making them foundational to his prayer (2 Chronicles 6:4-10).

FURTHER, Solomon's recital includes words which are not given in the initial account of Nathan's exchange with David, but they truly belong there, in that they fully convey the sense of the response God made to David that day.

He shows that what David had intended in his heart was as wholly accepted by God as if he had performed it, and God rewarded him for it though he could not physically do the work (1 Kings 8:18), 'And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto My name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.'

2 Chronicles 6:8 – 'But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for My name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart:' God took the will, for the deed.

The prophecies of Isaiah and Micah are like stepping stones of faith leading on to the Messiah. At the same time these utterances are to be viewed as projections from 2 Samuel 7.

ISAIAH 9:6-7

This well known prophecy is all the more precious and takes on deeper meaning when linked with the words first spoken by David and Nathan.

Micah 5:2 has its telling reference not only to Bethlehem, but to the Person of Messiah Himself, and like Isaiah, touches on His humanity and His Divinity. The Holy Spirit places the verse there as an expansion of 2 Samuel 7.

THE MIGHTY ANGEL GABRIEL in the New Testament (Luke 1:32-33)

The Angel Gabriel speaking to Mary about the forthcoming birth of the Lord, proceeds to build his prophecy on 2 Samuel 7 (and 1 Chronicles 17).

In the ultimate prophecy about Christ he does not bring so much a new revelation to Mary. Rather Gabriel recognises and rehearses, in effect, the earnest discussion of Nathan and David. He shows how very importantly 2 Samuel 7 stands in the calendar of God. It is a Messianic hub in a way. He expounded this prophecy of 2 Samuel 7 to Mary, and gave her reason to think about it as never before.

The Gospel of the Grace of God

1.

By Dr Cecil Yates Biss

That it is right and necessary for Scriptural truths to be presented in the manner, and within the limits, in which they are revealed by God in His Word, would seem to be a proposition admitting of no question. When we remember that spiritual things are wholly unknown to the natural intellect of man, and that our knowledge of them is derived only from that revelation which the Spirit of God has been pleased to give in His inspired Word, it is clear that the conditions under which each truth is to be declared by God's servants to those who are the subjects of their ministry, must be defined by the Scripture itself, and not determined by the exercise of reason. In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul enunciates these two points – 'We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery' (i.e., the divine wisdom revealing Christ, and Him crucified, as the salvation of God, was a mystery UNTIL REVEALED BY GOD), 'even the hidden wisdom' (hidden until revealed), 'which none of the princes of this world knew' (Intellectual Leaders are especially meant, such as the Greek Philosophers alluded to in the 19th and 20th verses of the first chapter). 'As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man' (that is, man in his natural condition, unenlightened by the Spirit of God), 'to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.' Thus he defines the **nature** of the testimony. 'Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, combining spiritual (ideas) with spiritual (words):' that is, Spirit-taught ideas – thoughts given by the Holy Spirit – are united to and expressed in Spirit-taught words. Thus he defines the **terms** of the testimony. These quotations show very clearly that the apostle regarded himself as responsible to declare those spiritual truths which had been revealed to him by God, only in the terms, and under the conditions, in which Revelation had set forth those truths.

To no part of the great body of Revealed Truth, 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' can these remarks more justly apply than to that Gospel which God has committed to His servants to be preached in His name to all nations. For the Gospel is God's own appeal to men. Even when preached through men, the Gospel is to be declared as a direct message from God. 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech by us: we pray, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God' (2 Corinthians 5:20). How needful, therefore, that we should realise, if we would serve God aright, the responsibility that rests upon us so to declare the Gospel as to represent, with perfect accuracy, the divine attitude toward men, the divine message to men. How careful should we be lest by the substitution of our own thoughts, of our own ways of viewing truth, we should misrepresent, in the slightest measure, the solemn, and yet most blessed message of God's authority and grace. We may never say of our ministry, as the

apostles could of their's, that it is inspired, infallible, unerring; but we may, and ought to exercise the most strenuous care to form our language by the model of the divine Word, and to see that in nothing it goes beyond, or falls short of the limits defined in Scripture; so that in every respect our words may be a truthful echo of the words of God. Unless there be the exercise of this care, and an unfailing and prayerful dependence on God for His guidance, we may be sure that the Enemy, who is so skilful to pluck away, or neutralise the good seed as it is sown, will find means to hinder the testimony, and to lead us to grieve the Holy Spirit of God at the very time when we are seeking, and yet perhaps ignorantly failing, to declare His Word. How deeply the apostle Paul felt the burden of such holy responsibility as this may be seen in the verses which close 2 Corinthians 2, where he adds to the expression of gratitude concerning the manner in which God had used him and his fellow workers 'to make manifest the savour of his knowledge by them in every place,' the words, 'For we are not as many who corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.'

Not only is it a matter of duty that we, as servants, should repeat the message committed to us with scrupulous care as to the accuracy of the terms in which we deliver it, but we must remember that only in this way can we secure the expression of that harmony which exists between all portions of the Word of God. That there is, and must be, such a harmony of truth in Scripture is obvious. The Word of God is ONE in all its parts: one in its origin; one in the substance of truth revealed; one in the objects for which that truth is revealed: no lower view than this is consistent with a reverent acceptance of the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture. Contradiction, or incompatibility, between the statements of Scripture is necessarily impossible: if there appear to be such, we may be sure that the apparent want of agreement is the result of our own defective understanding of the meaning intended to be conveyed. And this may arise not only from such mistakes as a more careful study of the text would have avoided, but from the profound character of the truths themselves. Over all our present knowledge must be written the words 'We know in part.' The apparent incoherence of separate truths may arise from the fact that these truths do not manifestly lie in continuous contact with one another, although they really are in the deepest and most essential relation, there being between them unrevealed links of connection ignorance of which disables us at present from perceiving the substantive unity which exists: just as cliffs on opposite sides of a strait may appear completely severed and apart the one from the other, though beneath the waters they are joined by the rock-bed that is common to both.

(To be continued)

Called Home

Mr Cecil Humphrey, father of our trustee and committee member, Mr Martin Humphrey, was called home on 26th July 2020, age 87. He faithfully served in the church at Brixton Tabernacle in many ways. He was in the Sunday School as teacher

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and superintendent for nearly 50 years. In 1973, he was made a deacon and, at different times, he helped as treasurer and then secretary of the church.

S.G.A.T. Meetings: Arrangements have been made, God willing, for meetings of the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony to be held in 2021. During 2020 we have been considering the statement of the apostle Peter, ‘God hath spoken by the mouth of all His Holy Prophets since the world began.’ It has been decided to continue with this series with the same theme – ‘**By the Mouth of All His Holy Prophets.**’ We would like to see others come to our meetings, which we expect to hold on the fourth Friday of each month except August and December. The Spring Conference is in April and the Autumn Conference in September, when we have afternoon meetings at 4.p.m. in addition to the usual evening meetings. All evening meetings are at 7.p.m. Details of the meetings for this Quarter are given on the back page but so that you can insert the dates for the remainder of the meetings in your diary and arrange to be present, we give particulars which are as follows:

April 23 (Aft).....	The Testimony of Elisha	<i>Brian McClung</i>
(Even).....	The Testimony of Ezekiel	<i>Brian McClung</i>
May 28.....	The Testimony of Hosea	<i>John Douglas</i>
June 25.....	The Testimony of Amos	<i>Gordon Dane</i>
July 23.....	The Testimony of Habakkuk	<i>Ian Shaw</i>
September 24 (Aft).....	The Testimony of Zephaniah.	<i>Stephen A Toms</i>
(Even).....	The Testimony of Haggai	<i>Martin Humphrey</i>
October 22.....	The Testimony of Zechariah	<i>David McMillan</i>
November 26.....	The Testimony of Malachi	<i>Richard Monteith</i>

Recorded Messages: During 2020, the different subjects and speakers were – The Testimony of Enoch (*Ivan Foster*); The Testimony of Job (*Philip Knowles*); The Testimony of Jacob (*Martin Humphrey*); The Testimony of Moses (*Brian McClung*); The Testimony of David (*Brian McClung*); The Testimony of Nathan (*John Douglas*); The Testimony of Elijah (*Gordon Dane*); The Testimony of Isaiah (*Ian Shaw*); The Testimony of Daniel (*Stephen A Toms*); The Testimony of Jeremiah (*Paul Toms*); The Testimony of Joel (*Richard Monteith*); The Testimony of Micah (*David McMillan*). The messages can be downloaded from the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony website. They can also be heard on www.sermonaudio.com on our page which is, *The Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony*.

If Government restrictions continue due to the virus, so that we cannot hold our meetings in London, the services can be heard on line at the same time as announced (British Summer Time) by using one of the following links:

<http://sermonaudio.com/sgat>

<http://facebook.com/sgat>

<http://youtube.com/channel/UC8fFgLBzrc8GuSzcMOC5vmA?>