

Bible Reading Schedule The Golden Thread

May 22 – 2 Samuel 7

Now that David has brought the Ark into Jerusalem, the next thing on his to do list is to make a permanent place for the Ark can dwell in. David does the right thing by calling Nathan the prophet to check with God and make sure that building a temple is what God wants David to do. Nathan assumes that, because David is a man of God and the Temple is for God, that it would be perfectly fine for David to build the temple. But that night God comes to Nathan and tells him that David is not the one to build a house for God to dwell in. However, as God tells David no, God also makes David a marvelous promise. It is one of the most important promises in all of the Old Testament. In verses 11 – 16, God promises to build a house for David. Not a physical house made of wood and stone, but a genealogical house—a dynasty. God promises David that someone from his family will rule forever over the house of Israel. That promise points us to Jesus, “The Golden Thread” that runs throughout the Scriptures. As we see in both Matthew and Luke’s genealogies (Matthew 1, and Luke 3), Jesus, our King of Kings and Lord of Lords, does indeed descend from David’s family lineage. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise that God made to David.

But we need to dig just a little deeper into what God says to David through Nathan the prophet. Look again at verses 12 and 13. Through Nathan, God tells David, “When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” At first glance we assume that this is Solomon, David’s son. Solomon did indeed succeed David as king, and it was Solomon who built the temple, but if we leave it at that we are missing something that is very important. Look again at the end of verse 13. God says He will establish his throne forever. Might this be pointing us to someone beyond Solomon? Indeed, these words are once again pointing us to Jesus. Solomon did build a physical temple for the Lord to dwell in, but Jesus came and built a spiritual temple.

Ephesians 2:19-22 *Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

The ultimate fulfillment of the promise that God made to David is found in Jesus, the Eternal King and builder of the true Temple of the Lord.

May 23 – 2 Samuel 9

In 1 Samuel 20 we saw the covenant promises of friendship that David and Jonathan made to one another. As part of those promises, David promised to always show kindness to any surviving members of Jonathan's family. In today's reading, we see David go out of his way to find someone through whom he can keep the promise he made to Jonathan. One son of Jonathan's was living, and this one son, Mephibosheth, needed David's kindness. Through a childhood accident Mephibosheth became lame and fell on hard times as a result of his family's loss of power. To keep his promise to Jonathan, David brings Mephibosheth into the palace to provide for all of his needs, and David also makes sure that all the land that had belonged to Saul's family was returned to Mephibosheth. It would have been easy for David to get all wrapped up in being king and forget the promise that he made to Jonathan, but David didn't. He brought Mephibosheth into his home and lavished one kindness after another on him. In doing this, David lifted Mephibosheth out of despair and raised him up and seated him at the king's table.

Isn't that just what Jesus did for us? In an extraordinary act of kindness, Jesus bent low and lifted us up. He restored what we lost because of our sin, and he placed us at his royal banquet table as part of the royal family.

Ephesians 2:1-9 *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-- it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.*

May 24 – 2 Samuel 10

For reasons the Bible doesn't make completely clear, David desires to show kindness to Hanun, King of the Ammonites, as he takes the

throne, so David sends a delegation to Hanun to express his condolences for the death of Hanun's father. But because Hanun and his advisors are distrustful of David's motives, they humiliate David's delegation by shaving half of their beards off and sending them back to Israel half naked. David's response to this humiliation of his men is first to provide for his men by giving them a place to live until their beards grow back, and then David sends out his army to crush the Ammonites, and the Arameans who had been hired by the Ammonites to help them fight against Israel. Initially, David sent his delegation to try to have peaceful relations with the Ammonites, but when his offer of peace was rejected David came with the full force of his army to destroy them. This Old Testament historical account is very similar to a parable Jesus told.

Matthew 21:33-44 *There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and went away on a journey. ³⁴ When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. ³⁵ "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. ³⁶ Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. ³⁷ Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. ³⁸ "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' ³⁹ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹ "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³ "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."*

In Jesus' parable, the landowner represents God, the rebellious farmers represent Israel, and the servants represent the prophets who warned Israel repeatedly to honor God. The son, whom the tenant farmers kill because he is the heir, represents Jesus. Just as the Ammonites rejected David's offer of peace, the Jews rejected God. Just as the Ammonites humiliated David's delegation the rebellious tenant farmers humiliated and killed the prophets. Just as the owner of the vineyard brought the rebellious farmers to justice, so God will one day bring to justice those who have killed his son and rejected his authority. God is patient, but the day will come when all accounts will have to be settled.

2 Peter 3:8-10 *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is*

not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

May 25 – 2 Samuel 12

In 2 Samuel 11, David sins about as badly as a man could sin. He not only takes another man's wife and commits adultery with her, he also arranges to have the man killed in battle, and then David seeks to cover up his sin, by taking the woman, Bathsheba, to be his wife. David thinks he has gotten away with it, but then in 2 Samuel 12, God sends Nathan the prophet to go and confront David about this sin. As Nathan confronts David, David realizes his sin and he repents sincerely and immediately. David wrote Psalm 51 as an expression of his repentance.

Psalm 51:1-17 *A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. ² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. ⁵ Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. ⁶ Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. ⁷ Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. ¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. ¹⁴ Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. ¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶ You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

As David confesses his sin, he is confident that God will hear his prayer and forgive his sin. There is a great model of repentance for us to follow in this Psalm. Notice first that David acknowledges his sinfulness, and expresses sorrow for his sin, but David doesn't stop with that. David also asks God to cleanse him from his sin (verse 7), change him (verse 8), and then use him and his failures to teach others (verse 13). So often we are sorry for our sin, but we give up asking God to change us, because we don't really believe we can change. We are also afraid to

ask God to help us to use our failures to teach others, because we don't want to have our sinfulness exposed. But God can use even our sinfulness to accomplish His purposes. God took David and Bathsheba's repentance and brought something beautiful of it—a son named Solomon, who became Israel's next king, and arguably its greatest king. Through David and Bathsheba, God also brought Jesus.

Matthew 1:1-6 *A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ....David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife*

Jesus' genealogy lists four women, Tamar, Rehab, Ruth and now Bathsheba, all of whom would have seemed to be very unlikely to be part of the genealogy of the savior of the world. God has an amazing way of taking the least likely, the insignificant, and the broken to accomplish His purpose.

May 26 – 2 Samuel 16: 15 – 17: 23

While God forgives David's sin with Bathsheba there are still consequences that David has to live with as a result of that sin.

2 Samuel 12:9-12 *Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.' ¹¹ "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"*

Because of David's sin, God allows for Absalom, one of David's own sons, to rebel against David. Absalom turns the hearts of Israel in his favor very quickly and David is forced to flee from the palace and Jerusalem very quickly. In fact, David is in a very precarious situation. His life is in great jeopardy. David's wisest counselor, Ahithophel, has gone to the side of Absalom to advise him. David knows that if Absalom listens to Ahithophel's advice, he will lose not only the kingdom but also his life. So David prays this prayer:

2 Samuel 15:31 *"O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."*

And then David sends one of his trusted friends, Hushai, the Arkite, to be a spy and to go to Absalom and convince Absalom that he too was defecting from David. As Absalom sat down with his inner circle to devise a strategy to overthrow David once and for all, Ahithophel gives Absalom wise advice. He tells Absalom to strike David hard and fast while David is disorganized, but Hushai acting for David contradicts

Ahithophel's advice and tells Absalom to wait. God causes Absalom to reject the wise counsel of Ahithophel, which eventually leads to Absalom's defeat at the hands of David's organized army.

No matter how wise the council is that we receive, if it doesn't line up with what we think and what we want to hear we often will reject it. The message of the Gospel is not a message most people want to hear. The message of the Gospel can sound like foolishness to us if we do not understand just how desperate our situation really is. We don't want to hear about our brokenness, we don't want to hear that we can't save ourselves and make ourselves acceptable to God. It sounds foolish that the great God who created everything would come and die on a cross so that we can be saved from sin and have our brokenness made whole. That's why so many people reject the wise counsel of the Gospel.

***1 Corinthians 1:22-31** Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. ²⁶ Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not-- to nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before him. ³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. ³¹ Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."*

Absalom was defeated by David, because he rejected the wise counsel of Ahithophel. In the same way we will be defeated by Satan if we reject the wise counsel of the Gospel in our own lives.

***Hebrews 2:3** how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?*

May 27 – 1 Kings 11: 1 – 13

Talk about a man who had everything going for him. Solomon had wisdom, wealth and power. By any measure of this world Solomon was the greatest king Israel ever had. Under Solomon's reign, the Kingdom of Israel grew to its greatest size and power. Solomon amassed fortunes of wealth, but as great a king as Solomon was, he still was a man just like us. He struggled with his flesh to the point where his flesh controlled his life. He took one wife after another, 700 hundred in all,

and many of them were not Israelites, which meant they did not worship the God of Israel. To keep his wives happy Solomon allowed them to keep their idols—the false gods that they worshipped, and he even joined them in their worship of these idols. As a result of his half hearted devotion to God, God tells Solomon that the kingdom of Israel would be split in two. After Solomon's death, ten of the tribes would rebel against the House of David, and the rule of David's family line. Only the tribe of Judah would remain completely under the rule of David's family. God did this so that the promise He had made to David in 2 Samuel 7, that God would establish the throne of David's family forever, could be kept. We have already seen that Jesus is the ultimate and true fulfillment of that covenant promise that God made to David. Now as we look at Solomon's failures we understand why the promise could only be fulfilled through Jesus. In spite of all of his wisdom, Solomon failed to live wisely before God. If Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, couldn't live wisely before God; how can we?

As great a king as Solomon was; he was still a failure. Solomon couldn't save himself from himself and his desires any more than we can. We need a king who is greater than Solomon, a king who is wiser than Solomon, a king who is more powerful than Solomon, a king who is able to defeat all of his enemies and ours as well. That king is Jesus.

Colossians 3:1-5 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

May 28 – 1 Kings 17

In today's reading we meet the prophet Elijah. Elijah had the unenviable task of confronting King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, the wicked rulers of Israel (the 10 Northern tribes) about their idolatry and wickedness. As we read this account of Elijah's life we can certainly see some similarities to the life of Jesus. After Elijah gives Ahab the bad news that there is going to be a severe drought in Israel, because of Israel's wickedness, God takes Elijah out into the wilderness where for an extended period of time he is cared for by God, who uses ravens to bring him food. Jesus' ministry started in much the same way. After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit took Jesus out into the wilderness where angels cared for him.

Mark 1:10-13 *As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." ¹² At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, ¹³ and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.*

At the end of chapter 17, we see Elijah perform two miracles. In the first miracle food is multiplied to care for a widow and her son, and in the second miracle the widow's son is raised back to life again. Again these two miracles remind us of Jesus' ministry. In John 6, Jesus multiplied food to feed over 5,000 people and in Luke 7, Jesus raises a widow's son back to life again.

Luke 7:11-16 *Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹² As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out-- the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." ¹⁴ Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. ¹⁶ They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people."*

Notice how the people refer to Jesus in that passage as a great prophet. They saw Jesus as a second coming of Elijah. Elijah's miracles authenticated his ministry, and Jesus' miracles served the same purpose, but Jesus is much more than just a great prophet. Prophets are used by God throughout the Bible to point people to the coming of God's Messiah. Jesus certainly did that.

Hebrews 1:1-2 *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

But Jesus also did much more than that because he was the Messiah. The prophets could only point to the King who would come to save the people from their sins. Jesus not only pointed people to himself as their savior, he did what no other prophet could do—he sacrificed himself as a sin offering to remove our guilt and shame. Jesus is like Elijah in many ways, but he is also much greater than Elijah, or any other teacher or prophet. It is not enough to just see Jesus as a prophet, or a teacher, we must also see him as our savior and our Lord.