

Sermon - 07-18-2021
Ps 89; 2 Sam 7:1-14;
Eph 2:11-22; Mk 6:30-34, 53-56
8th Sunday after Pentecost
God's Royal Covenant

Sometimes in the great historical saga of the Bible, a king consults his prophet – and the answer God gives reaches much further than the circumstances of the moment. In the 8th c BC, king Ahaz received a word from God through the Prophet Isaiah. All of Judah and Jerusalem was shaking with fear because of a coalition army headed toward them. The nations of Israel and Aram were united to attack King Ahaz of Judah. God told Isaiah to go out to meet the king. He was to instruct this faithless ruler to stand firm in faith because the armies coming against him would be defeated by the power of God. Ahaz foolishly said, “I will not ask (of the Lord), and I will not put the Lord to the test.” (Is 7:12) Isaiah delivered the word of the Lord: “...the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.” (v 14) What an earth-shaking prophecy for God to give to an unfaithful king! The implication is that the royal house will never be destroyed, for the promise of God to preserve the throne of King David forever will stand. It stands today.

This magnificent promise was given to an unfaithful king because he is a descendant of King David. We need to pause and appreciate God's utter faithfulness. He does not promise in vain. God keeps every word He speaks. We still have the Royal Covenant God made back in the Garden of Eden. You look doubtful. Grab your Bible and turn to Genesis 3:15.

¹⁵ *From now on you and the woman will be enemies, as will your offspring and hers. You will strike his heel, but he will crush your head.” (TLB)*

From an examination of this verse, we can make the following conclusions.

1. The seed of the woman refers either to humanity in general or more specifically to redeemed humanity beginning with Abel. Most commentators agree it has its ultimate fulfillment in Christ.
2. The bruised heel of the seed or offspring of the woman refers to the crucifixion of Christ.
3. The bruised head of the serpent speaks to the final judgment of Satan. (blueletterbible.org)

The Lord spoke directly to King David and gave again the prophecy that his throne and kingdom are everlasting. David honored God and was amazed and grateful to receive the covenant that day. The subject of discussion was the building of the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. The ark of the covenant was still in the tabernacle (tent) constructed by Moses back in the Sinai Desert. In the middle of David's disappointment over not being allowed to build the great temple, he is given news that is a hundred times better. His throne is an eternal throne. And today, even as we sit here together, the Son of God, Jesus Christ is seated on that eternal throne. Jesus of Nazareth is also the son of David – the promised Messiah – the Good Shepherd.

What peace and assurance we have in this: There was no other plan than to give Messiah to the whole creation. The entire cult of animal sacrifice and the whole tradition of the great Temple of Jerusalem point directly to the Kingdom of God and its eternal ruler Jesus Christ. The Good Shepherd is the very axis of the history of the world and of humankind. More than that, Jesus is the bridge between this fallen creation and the presence of God. Remember, God does not allow any evil in the heavenly throne room. All who enter are purified. Jesus is the purifier. So, He has saved us from destruction in the lake of fire. He has paid the price of our cleansing. He has borne our sin so that we may enter sinless.

The Apostle Paul writes (to the Ephesians) that those far off – Gentiles and those near – the people of Israel – all are united in Christ so that the result is peace. We do not see it now, but at the final reckoning we are all one household. Just as the Revelation describes the City of God having no temple, so Paul explains that we the people of God are being fashioned into a temple in which God is pleased to dwell. The true church is the temple of God.

All are welcome in. The Door is Jesus. In the Mark passage for today, Jesus wanted to take a break with His disciples.

(Continued on next page.)

John Baptist had just been cruelly executed on a whim. They were in shock and grief. Yet, when the Lord Jesus saw the people flocking to be near Him and to bring their sick and crippled, He looked with compassion out on the crowds and welcomed them to touch Him and be healed.

This is our Savior – the Messiah sent by your Heavenly Father. The Royal Covenant was given in the Garden of Eden – confirmed again and again over the centuries – and fulfilled in Bethlehem when Mary of Nazareth and her husband Joseph took shelter in a barn. Let's give God all the glory for the spiritual temple we are becoming as we learn to love Him and serve Him more and more. Amen.