

KING ZERUBBABEL, KEEPING GOD'S PROMISE

1 CHRON 17:4, 10b-12

1ST ADVENT SERVICE

NOV 30, '16

⁴ “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord; It is not you who will build me a house to dwell in. ¹⁰ ...Moreover, I declare to you that the Lord will build you a house. ¹¹ When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹² He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever.

What do you have that will last?

One challenge for older adults who want to downsize
or leave things to heirs in their wills
is that young people today don't want their stuff.

They have no use or place to put their
furniture, photo albums, good dishes, or collections,
including precious things we pull out at Christmas
and what can they even do with the old videos?

I have noticed that although my Grandpa Becker had 8 children,
of the four who were boys, only my father had any boys
and so only my brothers and I carry on the Becker name.
and none from my Mother's side still have the Landis name.
How long will a family name continue?

These things may seem relatively trivial,
but it does mean something to have a part of us
that will last or be remembered, that is to be eternal.

In text God promises King David something that will last forever
& this is a promise that gives us something forever as well.

THE PROMISED KING BUILDS THE HOUSE OF GOD
THE PROMISED KING IS GOD AT HOME WITH US
GOD'S PROMISES US A HOME IN HIS KINGDOM

THE PROMISED KING BUILDS THE HOUSE OF GOD

¹¹ When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise
up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish
his kingdom. ¹² He shall build a house for me,

These words come at time when God has given David
military victory over his enemies.

But will his kingdom and his dynasty last
or will it be replaced after his death, like Saul before him?

David seems to realize that if the kingdom is to last
it will not be because of military or political power
but because of God's presence with them.
So David plans to build a great temple for God
in his capital city to remind people to be faithful to him.
But God sends the prophet Nathan to tell David
that his temple will not be built by David, a man of war
but by a man of peace, by one of his sons.
It just so happens David has a son whose name is Solomon,
from the Hebrew word for peace: Shalom.
God here promises that David's dynasty, i.e. his house,
will continue with his descendants on the throne
and a house of God will be built showing God is with them.
Sure enough, when Solomon becomes king,
he rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, not a war horse,
showing he comes in peace as the rightful king.
He does build a magnificent temple for God.
But, unfortunately, the people of Israel
and David's own descendants to not remember
to depend on God to preserve them.
The kingdom is split after Solomon dies
and most forsake both David's line & the temple.
As the years go on, those remaining become more unfaithful
until finally the Babylonians take over, depose the king
and totally destroy the temple.
But what about God's promise? God has not forgotten.
And God always, always, always does what he says.
The day comes when Babylon in turn is overthrown by Persia
& God works things out so Israelites, now known as Jews
return to the ancient promised land,
and there is a surviving descendant of David's royal line
who is put in charge. His name is "Zer" - meaning shoot -
of Babylon: Zerubbabel.
A new shoot comes up yet from the old stump.
He is made ruler not by his own might
but by the powerful working of God's Spirit.
And what does he do when he returns to Jerusalem?
He rebuilds the temple.
Despite all the failures of men through the ages,
God is faithful to his promise to preserve David's house
with the house of God's presence among them.

But that is not the end of the story.

Things are still hard for David's kingdom.

They are overtaken by Greek empire, then Roman

They are ruled by a brutal king named Herod the Great,

not a descendant of David, who to get political favor

with the Jews begins to rebuild Zerubbabel's temple

But God has not forgotten his promise.

THE PROMISED KING IS GOD AT HOME WITH US

¹² He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever.

As the genealogy in Matthew's gospel shows,

even without last names, the Jews carefully kept track

of family lines from father to son,

as a sign of confidence that God would indeed keep

the promises he had made to their forefathers.

So Matthew traces the line from David to Zerubbabel

and from him to Jesus, the Son of David.

Once again, in little town named Nazareth, meaning "sprout"

there is a Nazarene, a "zer," a shoot or sprout

from the ancient stump that is still not dead.

As prophesied, by Zechariah, a prophet at time of Zerubbabel,

he enters Jerusalem on a donkey, showing him to be

the prince of peace and rightful heir of Solomon.

One of the first & last things he does in ministry is go to temple

to clean up the mess that has developed there

which angers the corrupted religious leaders

who ask what gives him the right to do this

He answers, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it in 3 days."

The temple he is talking about is not Herod's building.

It is the place where God truly dwells on earth

with his people: the body of Jesus.

Just as God has promised, David's son has built the temple

and at the same time God himself builds the house

because this Son of David is God

who has come to dwell among us.

And God's presence is what preserves the kingdom.

God promised that this kingdom will last forever,

not because it is the throne of David who died

but because it is the throne of Jesus who died for us,

for all of us who are failing and unfaithful,

and then rose again to eternal life
and now reigns at God's right hand forever.
This kingdom, this house or dynasty, is house in another sense.
It is the household, the family of God.
And it is in within these people that God now lives today.
We are built together by God into his
house of living stones, the temple of the Holy Spirit,
so that we ourselves are children of the King
who lives and reigns within our hearts.
It is to be here, among us, that people find God,
as we live at peace with each other
and speak peace to people of all nations.
Like David and his family and all the families after him,
we will forget and fail to faithfully keep our promises.
But God continues to keep his promises
When he says forever, he means forever.

GOD'S PROMISES US A HOME IN HIS KINGDOM

⁴ "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord; It is not you who will build me a house to dwell in. ¹⁰ ...Moreover, I declare to you that the Lord will build you a house.

Will anything we are or have last or be remembered?

The answer is yes.

Not because of anything great we have done or made
but because of the great things God has done for us.

Not because of the name we put on our children
but because God has put his name on us
and on our children in Holy Baptism.

Not because of anything others will inherit from us
but because of what we inherit
because of the death of Jesus for us.

Jesus, the builder of God's house,
has gone to prepare a place for us in his father's house,
an eternal home in heaven.

There all that we are, except our sinful human nature,
will not only be remembered but remain
in the personal and glorious presence of Jesus
who came to be humbly present with us.

Because now through faith our names are added
to that long list of descendants from the house of David
because his son Jesus has adopted us as his children.

and he will always remember we are his own.
Zerubbabel, though he may have stood in the shadow
of more famous kings of Israel
is a reminder of God's faithfulness
who foreshadows and points forward to Jesus,
who, like him is...

THE PROMISED KING who BUILDS THE HOUSE OF GOD
both the dynasty and the temple, because...

THE PROMISED KING IS GOD AT HOME WITH US
in the temple of his body, destroyed and raised for us,
and continuing to live in his body, the church
to which...

GOD'S PROMISES US A HOME IN HIS KINGDOM
a house not built by human hands, eternal in heaven.