

International Sunday School Lesson

Study Notes

Lesson Text: Psalm 89: 35-37; Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 1:18-22a

Lesson Title: Son of David

Introduction

As the New Testament opens in Matthew 1:1, Jesus is called "*Son of David*." Fifteen more times in the New Testament Jesus will be called "*Son of David*." It is His name that relates the Him to the promise of the Davidic Covenant. Through the prophet Nathan, God promised that it would be David's descendants through whom He would bring Messiah, the great King who would ultimately reign over Israel and establish His eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16). Every Jewish person who knew God's Word knew Messiah was coming and that he would come through David's blood line. Because of God's promise and covenant with David, the people of Israel waited for one to be born of David's line to fulfill the prophecy.

For us today, a glimpse of the psalmist and the promise, the prophet and the promise, and the parents and the promise, serves as a powerful reminder that God is faithful to keep His promises (1 Thessalonians 5:24; 2 Timothy 2:13). God's covenant with David and the prophecies of a coming Messiah were fulfilled with the birth of Christ. God's covenant with David and the prophecies of a Saviour can be experienced today through the new birth offered to all who will believe (John 3:1-7).

The Psalmist and the Son of David (Psalm 89:35-37)

According to the inscription at the beginning of Psalm 89, this psalm is one of several *Maschil* psalms. A *Maschil* psalm is a "psalm of instruction that especially emphasizes a lesson of wisdom." Psalm 89 is also Messianic. It is a psalm expressing confidence and concern over the Lord's covenant with David. The inscription over Psalm 89 also tells us that "Ethan the Ezrahite" is the author. There are several possibilities as to the identification of "Ethan." It is commonly agreed that this "Ethan" lived during the time of King Solomon (1 Kings 4:31), and may have been a counselor to one of Solomon's wives. If indeed this "Ethan" is the author, the events he describes in Psalm 89:39-45 describes the invasion of Shishak and the Egyptian army as recorded in 1 Chronicles 12. This would also fit appropriately with the writing of this psalm expressing "Ethan's" confidence that

no matter what enemy comes against God's people, God will be faithful and ultimately send the Messiah through "David."

Verse 35

"Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David."

The content of Psalm 89 express concern that David's children may "*forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments*" (Psalm 89:31). Although God was merciful to give David this covenant and promise, there were warning that came along with it. If David's "*children*" (Psalm 89:30) should "*forsake*" God's "*law*," then God promised he would "*visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes*" (Psalm 89:32).

Unfortunately, David's children did forsake God's law and failed to walk in His will. The history recorded in Kings and Chronicles give sufficient testimony to the fact that God visited them with chastening and punishment because of their sin. But that didn't change God's promise and God's faithfulness.

With a background of David's children's unfaithfulness, the psalmist writes the words of God, "Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David." Ethan, the psalmist is writing from God's perspective. Although David's children are unreliable, God isn't! "Once" means "once for all." Once God has promised something, He need never promise it again. It's as good as done!

"Sworn" means "God has given His word." God had specifically "chosen" David to be king of Israel and God gave him a kingdom and a throne that would last forever (Psalm 89:22). No enemy could undo or destroy what God had "sworn" to do. God gave his word by His "holiness." God's "holiness" is the very essence of His nature. It is that which separates Him from all others. It is God's absolute perfection. It was God's mercy and love that caused Him to make a covenant with David and it was God's "holiness" that was His guarantee of faithfulness in keeping that promise.

Verse 36-37

"His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah."

This verse is a repetition of Psalm 89:29, "*His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.*" There are two key words in Psalm 89:29 that are repeated here in verse 36. "Seed" is the first word and is linked to the

Davidic Covenant previously studied in 2 Samuel 7:12. "Seed" is a reference to David's offspring, his children. "Seed" is also a word used by the Holy Spirit in reference to the coming Savior as the world used first in Genesis 3:15, "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*" "It" is the first reference to the coming Redeemer who will come into the world through the "seed" of a woman. God is speaking to Satan and telling him that since sin came into the world through a woman, so will redemption from sin. Jesus Christ is the "it" referred to in this text and He came into the world through David's "seed."

"Throne" is the second word and is also linked to the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:16. The word "throne" is a symbol of rule and authority. One would come through David's "seed" that would rule and reign upon a "throne."

The kingdom divinely established was that of David and his "seed," the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be "before me," or before God as long "as the sun" and "established for ever as the moon." The idea in "as the sun" and "as the moon" is perpetuity. Perpetuity means "eternal, time without end." The "sun" and the "moon" are "faithful witness in heaven" to the reliability of God. All of us know that the "sun" and the "moon" are not permanent in nature and that both will one day change (Mark 13:24-25; 2 Peter 3:10). By using the "sun" and "moon" as illustrations, God is giving us as humans the simplest comparison for us to understand about faithfulness and reliability.

"Selah" closes this verse. It means, "meditate on this, think about it." God's faithfulness and reliability was the focus of Ethan's thoughts as he penned this psalm and God wants it to be ours as well.

The Prophet and the Son of David (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Many of the Old Testament prophets were privileged to write about the coming Messiah (Acts 10:43). The prophet Isaiah was blessed to record some of the most precious truths about the coming Messiah some 700 years before Christ's birth at Bethlehem. It is not likely that Isaiah understood the meaning of all he was writing about, but his words magnify the faithfulness of God to His promises in sending a Savior through the lineage of David (Isaiah 11:1).

Isaiah was born during the reign of king Uzziah and was called to be a prophet the year king Uzziah died (740. B.C.). Isaiah prophesied in the face of the powerful Assyrian threat from without and a decreasing confidence of God among His people. It is in that atmosphere that God called Isaiah to write a prophecy that

looks further into the future than any other prophet's writing. The prophecies of the coming Messiah and the Suffering Servant are the high points of Isaiah's writing.

The "seed" mentioned in the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:12 is referred to by Isaiah as "a child." Isaiah 9 opens with a messianic prophecy of the coming of a "child" who, though not named "Immanuel" in this chapter, is obviously the "child" that is to be born and rule upon the throne of David. At the time of this writing, the mighty nation of Assyria is answering everything with military and political power. God is answering everything with the promise of a "child!"

Verse 6

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

In Isaiah 7:14 the birth of Immanuel was announced. Now the miracle "child is born" and "a son is given." Isaiah of course is looking into the future when he prophesies these events. The "Son of David" will come to the earth as a "child born" and a "son given." Coming as "a child" represents the humanity of Jesus. The fact that Jesus is "given" unto us as a "son," emphasizes that Jesus is a gift from God to His people.

The supernatural character of this "child" and "son" is further indicated by Isaiah when he prophesies that "the government shall be upon his shoulder." That means that God had entrusted the coming Messiah, the "Son of David" to rule over His people. As everyone living today who knows Christ as Savior knows, this "child" and "son" has already been born, lived, died, rose again, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father (Colossians 3:1). However, the "government" has not yet rested "upon his shoulder." But that day will come in the not so distant future.

Isaiah attaches names to the coming "child." First, His name is "wonderful." "Wonderful" means "extraordinary, a hard to understand thing." With this name, Isaiah takes us to Bethlehem where the infinite became an infant (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus had an earthly mother but no earthly father. At Jesus' birth, He was older than his mother (Mary) and as old as His Father (God)! His birth was a "wonder." It was un-ordinary to say the least. Second, His name is "Counselor." "Counselor" means "direct, objective information." With this name, Isaiah takes us to the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Jericho and every other place the Son of David ministered and walked. He was without question the "Counselor" in everything He said and everything He did (Luke 4:17-19). Third, His name is "The mighty God." "Mighty

God" refers to One who has fought and won a great battle (Joshua 1:14). With this name, Isaiah takes us to the cross. It was here that the sinless One became sin. It was here the sun refused to shine upon her Creator. At the cross is where David's greater Son, Jesus Christ, fought and won the battle over sin. Fourth, His name is "The everlasting Father." With this name, Isaiah takes us to Heaven. At the cross, everyone said Jesus was dead. Pilate, Mary, the soldiers, the on-lookers, the Pharisees, the disciples and the demons. The Apostle Paul and the Hebrew author said, "He's alive" (1 Corinthians 15: 1-58; Hebrews 13:8). Fifth, His name is "The Prince of Peace." With this name, Isaiah brings us back to Earth and speaks of a day when the "Son of David," our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will return to Earth and bring lasting "peace."

Verse 7

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

Not only will Jesus Christ bring "peace" upon Earth, "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end..." The Messiah will be seated "upon the throne of David" and will have an eternal rule of "peace" and "justice from henceforth even for ever." His rule will have "no end" (Daniel 7:14, 27; Micah 4:7; Revelation 11:15). What Jesus brings when He returns to rule and reign upon the earth will be forever. If you want anything eternal you must get it from Jesus Christ!

All that Isaiah is prophesying and all that God has promised through David will be accomplish by "the zeal of the LORD of hosts." It is possible that Isaiah thought that the messianic "child," Jesus Christ, would come as Savior and set up His kingdom all at the same time. Isaiah may not have understand the timing and how it all would unfold, but he believed God's promise.

The coming of the Messiah depended upon God, not David. The coming of the millennial kingdom depends upon God, not David, his descendants, Isaiah, or Israel. The Messiah will rule because God promised it. "The LORD of hosts will perform this!"

The Parents and the Son of David (Matthew 1:18-22)

"Genealogies were very important to the Jews, for without them they could not prove their tribal memberships or their rights to inheritances. Anyone claiming to be "the Son of David" had to be able to prove it. It is generally concluded that Matthew gave our Lord's family tree through His foster father, Joseph, while Luke gave Mary's lineage (Luke 3:23)." (*from The Bible Exposition Commentary. Copyright © 1989 by Chariot Victor Publishing, and imprint of Cook Communication Ministries. All rights reserved.*)

The genealogy recorded in the first chapter of Matthew established the Messiah's royal lineage. Although Jesus descended from the line of David, His mother Mary was just an ordinary, unknown Jewish woman. King David, the prophet Isaiah, or no one else knew how God would bring the promise of Messiah to pass. God chose a sinful woman to have the unique privilege of conceiving and giving birth to Jesus, the "Son of David."

Joseph is also part of the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. Although Jesus did not have an earthly biological father, Joseph played a key role in the coming of Messiah into the world. Joseph never speaks in the story but his obedience and integrity are vital to the fulfillment of prophecy. Times were hard for Joseph and Mary. The Roman government was in power and wicked rulers such as King Herod made their presence known. But God's promises were still true and whether it was Shishak and the Egyptian army of the psalmist Ethan's day or the great powerful Assyria of the prophet Isaiah's day, God's promise would be fulfilled.

Verse 18

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

The prophet Isaiah tells us in Isaiah 7:14, "*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*" When Matthew tells us, "the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise..." he is telling us how it occurred. These words also make it clear that Jesus' birth was different from that of any other Jewish boy listed in Matthew's genealogy. Although it might have been impossible to prove, many Jewish males living at the time of Christ's birth were of the lineage of David. But all of them were "*begat*" by an earthly father. The word "*begat*" is recorded 39 times in Matthew 1:2-16 describing the earthly fathers of every generation from Abraham to the birth of

Christ. But there is no "*begat*" when it comes to Jesus' birth. Jesus Christ, the "Son of David," had no earthly father!

Mary "was espoused to Joseph" or, engaged to be married. Before Joseph and Mary ever "came together in a sexual relationship, Mary "was found with child of the Holy Ghost." By a miracle of the "Holy Ghost," Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary, a virgin (Luke 1:26-38).

Verse 19

"Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily."

To the Jewish people in that day, being "espoused" or engaged to be married was the same as being married except that the man and woman did not live together or engage in sexual relations. They were called "husband and wife," and, at the end of the engagement period, the marriage was consummated. If a betrothed woman became pregnant it was considered adultery (Deuteronomy 22:13-21). Joseph, knowing that Mary was pregnant, also knew what would be presumed by the community at large. He could have legally "put her away privily." But he didn't. He was a "just man" a righteous man with integrity and character. He did not want to publicly humiliate or divorce Mary when he discovered she was with child. His actions are nothing less than miraculous in the face of such trying circumstances.

Verse 20

"But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

Why didn't Joseph divorce Mary? The Bible says, "He thought on these things." Joseph and Mary belonged to the house of David. That means they both would have known the Davidic Covenant and the Old Testament prophecies that Messiah would be born of a woman and through the lineage of David. In addition to Joseph's thoughts, "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."

The words of "the angel of the Lord," were words of reinforcement that everything happening was of God. The angel addressed Joseph as "Joseph, thou son of David." Even though Jesus was not the biological son of Joseph, Jesus was

Joseph's legal son. Jesus' royal right to the Davidic line came by Joseph. Because of these truths, Joseph need not "fear."

Verse 21

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Joseph was told three things in this verse by the angel. First, he was told that Mary would "bring forth a son." This just reinforces that everything that is happening is not a dream or a mistake. Mary will have "a son." Second, Joseph is to name the child "JESUS." "JESUS" is a form of the Hebrew Joshua, the basic meaning of which is "Jehovah will save." Third, the angel told Joseph, "he shall save his people from their sins." Other Jewish males had names that testified to God's salvation, but Mary's son would be that salvation! By His own work on the cross he would "save his people from their sins."

Verse 22a

"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet..."

The angel spoke one other word to Joseph. He said, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled..." What was happening in the lives of Joseph and Mary was no accident. It was prophecy being "fulfilled." "All this" speaks directly to the birth of Jesus. But "all this" speaks much further back than just the immediate moment. It was God honoring His covenant with David. It was God sending a Redeemer to crush the serpents head as promised in Genesis 3:15. It was God fulfilling the prophecy He gave to Isaiah that "a virgin would conceive." It was God sending sinners a Savior!

Conclusion

Sometimes the promises of God were immediately fulfilled. Sometimes the promises of God took years to come to pass. In the case of God's promise to David concerning Messiah, centuries passed from 2 Samuel 7 until the fulfillment of the promise in the birth of Jesus recorded in Matthew 1:18-22. In spite of political and religious challenges to the fulfillment of the promise, God was faithful.

For the psalmist Ethan, he worshipped because of the promised Messiah. For the prophet Isaiah, he looked with hope across 700 years of unwritten history while

waiting for it to be fulfilled. For the parents of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the promised was fulfilled as they heard the angel's message and eventually held the "Son of David" in their arms.

God is faithful to keep His promises. Everything He promised David concerning a Savior for sinful man was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ. God will be faithful to save you if you call upon His name (John 1:12).

Amen.