**The LORD builds an everlasting house**

Text: 2 Samuel 7:16

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**Scriptures:** Matthew 1:1-18; 2 Samuel 7:8-17

**Songs Chosen:** [SttL] 269, 72, 330, 513

**Series:** Heidelberg Catechism (LD14)

**Theme:** God’s covenant with David

**Proposition:** Our security in the house which God has built

**Introduction**

We all likely know something about building a house, even if we’ve never done so ourselves. There is a need to lay good foundations. This are generally deep in the ground for a strong structure to remain standing over time. We know that construction projects usually have some problems as the building process takes place. Finally, the local governing authority (Council) has a final building inspection to sign off the work.

Here in 2 Samuel 7, the word house is used to describe two different structures:

* **A physical temple** building for the indwelling presence of the Lord. 2 Sam 7:5 “'Thus says the LORD, "Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in?” “He shall build a house for me name” – v13
* **A kingly dynasty** –a line of succession to the throne of David.

It’s this last use that HCLD14 refers to and we focus on this afternoon. 2 Sam 7:11 “The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you”. The house-builder is going to be the covenant God of Israel, not the human king David.

What’s the background to our text? The Lord had given David “rest” from all his enemies – there was peace in the land. Saul –the previously anointed king was dead, but not by David’s hand. The Philistines and Canaanites had been conquered. David had captured the stronghold of the Jebusites in Jerusalem and makes it his capital – a strategic location for transport, warfare, communication. In chapter 6 the ark of the Lord was set up inside a tent in Jerusalem. The ark represented the throne of God, the presence of YHWH, the rule of God in the midst of His people. The human king of Israel would rule under the direct command of God, whose presence was symbolised in the form of an ark. God would build an everlasting house of kings –who would follow David and role from His throne forever.

Let’s follow the construction of this house:

1. **Laying the Foundation** (deals with covenants up to and including Davidic and unconditional aspects of covenant)

A strong building needs need, solid foundations. Often holes are augered to allow concrete and steel to reach deep down far below the surface of the ground. The house which the covenant God of Israel promised David He would build has very deep roots –let’s trace them now.

* Remember His promise in the garden to Adam and Eve: Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." The seed (offspring) of a woman would conquer.
* Approx. 2000yrs later the promise narrows to one people group through God’s covenant with AbrahamGen 12:3b “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
* In our text, about 900 years later the promise narrows further to be one of the descendants of David, the anointed King of Israel.

In a deeply driven building pile, there is continuity of structure –often rods of reinforcing steel –plunge down to anchor building. See same idea here – a line of covenant promise… a treaty between two or more parties

* YHWH will make David’s name great (cf. Gen 12:2)
* YHWH will appoint a place for Israel (cf. land in Gen 12:1)
* YHWH will raise up descendants after David (Gen 17:7-10)

We don’t find the specific word “covenant” here in our text, but Ps 89 makes clear: Psalm 89:3 "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant”. The Davidic covenant is essentially of the royal-grant type (Suzarin/vassal)– like covenant with Abraham. Remember God passes between divided animals whilst Abram sleeps. Gen 15 – God is the only active party in the covenant. In the same way God makes no conditions in the covenant with David – God will do everything needed to build this house. 2 Sam7:16 "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."'"

The certainty of His promises is reflected in some of David’s words in 2 Sam 23:5b “For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things, and secured”. The words of Ps 89 echo this assurance: Psalm 89:4 “I will establish your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations." God promised to build a house which would last forever.

The blueprint here in 2 Sam 7 teaches that God would place a King on the throne of the house of David who would reign forever. When the eternal, everlasting king sits on his throne, the kingdom has come.

1. **Problems with the Project** (covenant-breaking)

Construction projects often run into difficulties: think leaky buildings in NZ. Builders don’t always follow the code. David’s house (dynasty)was to be constructed through a line of Kings sitting on thrones. Just as the building of a physical house depends upon the quality of the work of the workers, so the unfolding of God’s sure and fixed promises in His covenant is affected by the faithfulness/ unfaithfulness of individuals. There is a sense then in which God’s covenant is conditional,

We understand what a condition is. Here are some examples:

* IF you play with fire long enough, you will get burnt.
* IF you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall surely die.
* IF you seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, you will have all you need.

This ‘conditionality’ was true of the covenant with Abraham: even though God promised to do all to secure the covenant promises of a great name, of land, of descendants, individuals could forfeit the benefits of the promise for themselves – can you think of examples?? Think of Ishmael – circumcised by Abraham in Gen 17:23; Esau – circumcised covenant child of Isaac; Ishmael and Esau received the covenant sign of God’s promise, yet lost the personal benefits due to disobedience. Conditions in the covenant mean different outcomes depending on what people do: check out Deut 28**.**

Just as there was a personal, individual “conditionality” to the covenant with Abraham, so also to the covenant with David. For David personally, although he later sinned against Bathsheba and her husband, covenant blessing was not lost, because he repented when confronted by Nathan the prophet.

The Scriptures record: (1 Kings 15:4-5) “But for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to raise up his son after him and to establish Jerusalem; because David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite”.

Yet when the Lord spoke to David’s son Solomon, there were clear conditions:

* 1 Kings 6:12 "*Concerning this house which you are building, if you will walk in My statutes and execute My ordinances and keep all My commandments by walking in them, then I will carry out My word with you which I spoke to David your father*.
* Psalm 132:12 "*If your sons will keep My covenant And My testimony which I will teach them, their sons also shall sit upon your throne forever."*

At the individual level, later kings of Judah were unfaithful to the covenant e.g. Ahaz, Manasseh.

And there were big problems with the Davidic dynasty house building project. When the southern Kingdom was carried away into captivity, it seemed as though God had broken the covenant promises to David. Towards the end of the books of Kings it looks like all is lost for the Royal house of David. The big question: Was the house to crumble before the project was complete?

But there is a glimmer of hope remaining. Jehoiachin, king of Judah had been imprisoned by Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, but in the 37th year of the exile the reigning king of Babylon released him from prison and had him set at his table (2 Kings 25:27-30). When the exiles returned 33 years later, the Davidic king Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, grandson of Jehoiachin was with them.

Yet whilst the kingly line of David continued in the land there was no king on the throne. The ‘house’ of David looked like it was an abandoned ruin. Judah remained occupied territory for approximately the next 530 years until God acted. Which brings us to our 3rd point:

1. **The Final Inspection** (Christ the covenant-keeper and King)

Newly constructed buildings in New Zealand require a final inspection by legal authority. Everything must be complete and built to regulation standards. At the final inspection everything which has not been checked before is carefully scrutinised. Local councils get quite toe-y on this…as builders in congregation no doubt know. Yet even an inspection which certifies the building, does not guarantee whether it will stand in the future. Think about how many certified buildings were damaged or destroyed by the Christchurch earthquakes in 2010 and 2011.

God made a promise to David that the ‘house’, the dynasty would endure forever, with a King perpetually on the throne. The covenant promise to king David was fulfilled through King Jesus. As we heard from the genealogy Matthew Chapter 1, Joseph was a descendant of David. Children, remember Joseph “went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David” (Luke 2:4).

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit (Mat 1:20) (Rom 1:3; 9:5 show that Mary was also of David’s line).

Whilst David fulfilled the terms of the covenant by his obedience and repentance from sin with Uriah’s wife and in having him killed, Christ fulfilled the covenant conditions with perfect obedience, the benefits are therefore certain to those who are in Him. Jesus Christ is the Keeper of the covenant.

The ‘final inspection’ of the house which the Lord was building came when God said at baptism of Christ “"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matt 3:17) – Christ kept the covenant – He walked before God all days of life on this earth completely blameless (cf. Gen 17:1). Jesus cried out triumphantly on the cross “It is finished” (John 19:30). Jesus ascended to be seated at right hand of God - King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev 19:16).

Christ is the cornerstone who ensures that the building will be completed and will stand forever. The King is seated on the throne of David. His Kingdom has come. His Kingdom will come in fullness when He returns in glory. So what does all this mean for us today? Many things, including:

* We can be certain that God is sovereign- He controls history. His promises never fail.
* We have assurance in the promises of God to us in Christ represented in baptism. Conditional at the individual level upon obedience – we must each come individually to Christ in repentance and faith. Just as Ishmael and Esau received the covenant sign of God’s promise, yet lost the personal benefits due to disobedience, so likewise, covenant baptism does not guarantee that the benefits of Christ’s atoning death and perfect righteousness are imputed to the individual who has been baptised.
* We all need a changed heart which loves the Lord Jesus Christ, David’s true descendant. We all need to have our faith and trust King Jesus, Understanding the covenant promises of God in history gives us, Hope for the future fulfilment of the Kingdom. A Kingdom in which we gain a share because of our Lord: Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” An everlasting kingdom where we shall reign with Christ. 2 Timothy 2:12 *If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;*

So, in summary, when we recite the Apostles Creed and say, *“I believe… in Jesus Christ…who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary”*, We are confessing that Jesus Christ is David’s true descendant – the promised Davidic King whose Kingdom shall endure forever. We confess that the Throne of Christ is established forever And may speak with confidence of a certain future when: “*At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil 2:10-11).

**AMEN**