

552 Exceeding Magnifical

The greatest king to sit on the throne of Israel is to be the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He alone is “the Son of the Highest”, and to Him alone shall the Lord God His Father “give unto him the throne of his father David” (Luke 1.32, KJV / and egs., Matthew 25.31 / Acts 2.29-31 / Revelation 5.5). That truth in itself gives us great reassurance in these wild days: God the Father is in total control, and is calmly working His purposes out in Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, until the day comes when “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2.14).

Meanwhile we consider this time the much-revered King David. We know of David’s humble beginnings as a shepherd boy in Bethlehem, the youngest of eight sons, who was summoned back home from the fields one day; we read that “he [was] ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to” (I Samuel 16.12a). There in front of him was Samuel, the judge and prophet, whose presence was cause for concern! But not on this occasion – “And the Lord said to Samuel, Arise, anoint him: for this [is] he” (I Samuel 16.12b-13). After years of dangerous adventures involving Goliath, the Philistines, Saul and Jonathan, (see I Samuel Chapters 16-31), David became king of Judah and of Israel (II Samuel 2.4a; 5.3b).

In II Samuel Chapter 5 we read – “David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David ... And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts [was] with him ... And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel’s sake” (vv.7,10,12). Then, “David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-e-dom into the city of David with gladness” – with dancing, shouting, trumpeting and “leaping and dancing before the Lord ... (David) blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts” (from II Samuel 6.12b, 14-18).

So King David was by now “at the top of his game” as the saying goes, (despite sadness with his wife Michal, daughter of Saul, (II Samuel 6.16b, 20-23). How natural of him therefore, when sitting in his own “house of cedar”, that he should wish to build a house for the Lord, and for the newly-returned ark of God: this was surely the least that David could do to express his thanks to the Lord for all His blessings? The prophet Nathan approved, saying, “Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord thy God is with thee” (II Samuel 7.1-3).

But then, that very night, “the word of the Lord came unto Nathan ...” (7.4), for Nathan had spoken hastily before he had sought the Lord on this matter – (a lesson for us all). Nathan duly told David of the Lord’s words: David’s plan was to be reversed, with the “house” being given by the Lord to David, not the other way round (from 7.11end). Then David’s son, rather than David himself, would indeed “build an house for my name” (7.12b-17). In response to these words of the Lord through Nathan, David “went in, and sat before the Lord”, with words of worship, thanksgiving and requests (7.18-29).

Yet David could not quite let go of his “house for the Lord” project! Moving over into I Chronicles Chapter 22.5, we read that David said, “Solomon my son [is] young and tender, and the house [that is] to be builded for the Lord [must be] exceeding magnifical, of fame and glory throughout all countries ... So David prepared abundantly before his death”. He certainly did just that, without quite grabbing a spade and digging out the first sod himself! - stone masons, iron nails, “brass in abundance ... cedar trees in abundance”, cedar wood brought down from Tyre, along with great piles of gold and silver (from vv.3-4,14-16). His words to Solomon came down to, “I’ve set everything up for you laddie, now go and get on with it!” (from v.16b).

We can ponder much from these deeds and events in terms of our own spiritual understanding of the Lord - such as His choice of David; David’s prowess, courage and deep love for the Lord; Michal’s reaction; Nathan’s mistake; and finally David’s motives over this “exceeding magnifical” house for the Lord. Why, really, did David want to build such a house? And why, really, did he then oversee the preparations down to the last nail? There is no record of the Lord Himself ever asking for such a magnifical house! By His grace, and by our now knowing from across His Word God’s nature and character as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, perhaps, perhaps, He has always felt more at home in a simple tabernacle rather than in any “exceeding magnifical house”?

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