

2 Samuel 7:1-17  
House: Spiritual or Worldly Kingdom?  
WRCoB 10.20.24

This past October 7th marked the first anniversary  
Of the Hamas attack on Israel  
And Israel's subsequent retaliation.

The conflict, regrettably, continues unabated  
Drawing in Hezbollah and Iranian conservatives  
Thus, escalating the war against Israel.

The casualty figures, according to Aljazeera  
Are heartbreaking:

42,979 Palestinians, including 16,765 children  
And 1,139 Israelis killed

This tragic conflict between Israel and Palestinians  
Is a story rooted in biblical history  
Reaching back to the time of Abraham  
Some 4000 years ago.

It's a constant source of debate  
That provokes international tension and concern.

The conflict stems from God's promise  
To the chosen people, the Jews  
That they will have a place to call their own.

This is known as the Davidic Covenant  
Our subject matter for today.

Our question for today is this  
How do we, as followers of Jesus, respond  
To this never-ending conflict  
Between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

~~

Let's take a look at today's Scripture Lesson.

Our passage brings us to King David.

God has given him rest from his conquest of Canaan.

Now that his attention is no longer needed  
On the battlefield

His focus turns to the ark of the covenant  
The exquisite and elaborate box  
Which carries the stone tablets  
Inscribed with the 10 Commandments.

The ark now resides in Jerusalem  
But remains in a tent they call a tabernacle.

It has traveled all these years with the Hebrew people  
From Mt Sinai, through the wilderness  
Into Canaan and now here in Jerusalem.

King David after building his house made of cedar  
Is struck by the fact that he has built himself a house  
But God still lives in a tent.

He vows to himself and to the prophet Nathan  
That he is going to do something about it.

But God goes to the prophet Nathan to go ask David

## **2 Samuel 7:5 NIV**

**<sup>5</sup> Are you the one to build ME a house to dwell in?**

Is David capable of building a house for God to live in?

Has God ever asked him or anyone  
To build him a house?

## **2 Samuel 7:7 NIV**

**<sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers. . . , “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”**

No!

In fact, quite the opposite, rather.

## **2 Samuel 7:11b NRSV**

**The Lord will make you a house.**

What God is saying to Nathan to tell David is that  
God will establish a dynasty with the house of David

God says, I will be like a father to him  
And he to me, like a son

The fulfillment of God’s covenant to the house of David  
Is met, then, in David’s son, Solomon.

It is he who takes over the kingdom.

It's Solomon who strengthens it, expands its borders  
Builds a fabulous palace  
And builds a temple to house the ark.

However, having said this, is the Davidic Covenant  
Ultimately pointing to Solomon?

Is it Solomon's throne that will be established forever?

From our vantage point  
We can see Solomon's great successes  
And his dismal failures.

Is his throne the one that lasted forever?

So what is God talking about here?

Is the house and throne referenced here  
A worldly kingdom and reign?

Or should we interpret it  
As a spiritual kingdom and reign?

From a Jewish perspective  
It is no doubt an earthly kingdom.

And since its recreation in 1948  
The nation of Israel has fought tooth and nail  
To keep its right to exist  
As a nation among nations.

~~

But maybe we have it wrong.

Maybe God speaks in metaphorical ways  
And uses the term “house” as in “house of David”  
To be more of a spiritual house and a spiritual reign

The Davidic Covenant points to an heir of David  
His house and kingdom to be established forever.

Three times the text says forever!!

In a worldly, immediate way  
The passage points to Solomon’s worldly reign  
And the right of the nation of Israel to exist.

But on another level, a more spiritual level  
Perhaps this descendent is not Solomon  
But another one whose kingdom will reign forever

In fact, we know Solomon is not the one.

Following the collapse of Solomon’s kingdom  
The kingdom split into two, Judah and Israel

And following that the Jews were sent in exile  
And became a nation no more.

The later prophets, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel  
Began to look forward  
In the lineage of David for a savior.

**Isaiah 9:7 CEB**

**<sup>7</sup> There will be vast authority and endless peace for  
David’s throne and for his kingdom, establishing**

**and sustaining it with justice and righteousness  
now and forever.**

Isaiah saw it.

**Isaiah 9:6 NRSV**

**<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting  
Father, Prince of Peace.**

~~

Ultimately, God's redemptive history  
As recorded in the Bible  
Declares a spiritual kingdom  
Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The kingdom is here initiated in the incarnation  
But not yet has it reached its fulfillment.

We do what we can to herald in the kingdom  
While waiting expectantly for its fullness.

But now, today, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict  
Needs to find a way to a peaceful resolution.

It is a complex and contentious matter  
That requires careful consideration  
And deliberate actions

As Brethren,  
We believe violence is not a means to peace.

*The Church of the Brethren opposes all war and  
supports the wellbeing of and peace for all people*

We recognize that all people  
Are created in the image of God.

We acknowledge the right for Israel to exist  
But also recognize the right  
Of the Palestinian people for autonomy.

To add to the dilemma  
Palestinian Christians are caught up in the conflict  
And violence against them comes from both sides  
From the Jews and the Muslims.

And so, as Brethren, how should we respond?

The New Testament calls us first and foremost  
To mourn with those who mourn.

That means we are to grieve with the Israelis  
Over the Hamas attack that initiated this conflict  
One year ago.

It also means, we are to grieve with the people of Gaza  
Christian and Muslim who have suffered horrifically  
At the hands of the Israelis.

And it means we grieve for the increased antisemitism  
And Islamophobia in the world  
As a result of the conflict.

Secondly, we must pray for peace.

Some people might say, "What's the point?"

But if we believe in the power of prayer  
Then we can believe that God has the power  
To turn the hardest of hearts.

Thirdly, it means we, who follow Christ  
Are to testify to the gospel of Jesus  
Which is a gospel of peace.

For we are called to be peace-makers  
By Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

We must remain faithful to the teachings of Jesus  
And actively seek peace in our world today.

From our fellow pacifist Quaker brothers and sisters.

*Even in this time of violence and pain, we hold the belief that a different future, free from injustice and violence, is possible.*

*Lasting peace and reconciliation will be realized when both past and ongoing injustices are acknowledged and addressed, ensuring freedom, dignity, equal rights, and justice for all people living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Let us work together to make this vision a reality.*

And so, in conclusion, let us embrace the idea



That the House of David  
Is not composed of earthly kingdoms  
Led by various kings of unjust reigns.

The House of David is a spiritual kingdom  
Under the authority and reign of God  
Through the life, ministry and death of Jesus.

Our loyalty is to that house.

Because our kingdom is not of this world.

Yes, it's in it, but not of it.

We are the salt of the earth  
And our peaceful presence will influence the world.

May we be a people who  
Like trees planted by streams of water  
Bring forth fruit in season  
Whose leaves never wither

Bearing witness to the power of peace  
In a world desperate for its embrace.

May it be so!

~~

Prayer after the sermon (not for power point)

*A prayer by John Paarlberg, from a release by  
Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)*

**O God of life and love and peace,**

we witness the violence and injustice in your world and our hearts ache. Our hearts ache for the people of Israel—for the victims of violent attacks by Hamas, for those held hostage, for those who live with fear and insecurity, for families separated or bereaved.

**O God of life and love and peace,**

our hearts ache for the people of Gaza—for the victims of the Israeli military assault, for those grieving the death of children and loved ones, for those being denied water, food and medical care, for those who have been driven from their homes.

**O God of life and love and peace, we pray—**

that weapons of war be laid down, that walls of separation be dismantled, that prisoners be released, that enmity and hatred give way to understanding, that calls for revenge and violence will grow silent, and that those in authority might find ways to work together for the good of all people.

**O God, you have promised to speak peace to your people,** to those who turn to you in their hearts. Kindle in our hearts a true love of peace. Make us instruments of your peace that the barriers of fear, suspicion and hatred may crumble and fall, and the people of the world be united in justice and peace.

**O God, may your will be done on earth and it is in heaven,** and may your kingdom of peace reign in the hearts of all people now and forever more. Amen and amen.