

The Seed of David Becoming the Son of God

Second Samuel 7:12-14 is a prophecy given through typology. The intrinsic significance of this prophecy concerns the seed of David becoming the Son of God, that is, a particular man becoming God. What is presented as a prophecy in 2 Samuel 7:12-14 is unveiled as a reality in Romans 1:3-4, where Paul tells us that Christ the Son, "who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh" was "designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead." The designation of Christ, the first God-man, as the Son of God in His humanity is intimately related to His becoming the prototype for the mass reproduction of Himself in the believers, a process of organic duplication that makes them the many God-men—the brothers of Christ and the sons of God—for God's expression. Since Witness Lee studied portions such as 2 Samuel 7:12-14 and Romans 1:3-4 for decades, we devote this edition of "The Straight Cut" to his ministry on the marvelous, divine subject of the seed of David becoming the Son of God. The excerpts below are taken from Life-study of 1 and 2 Samuel, pp. 151-201.

In this message we will see that, according to chapter seven of 2 Samuel, David wanted to build a house for God. Concerning this matter I have a very particular burden.

Wanting to Build a House for God

David considered that he himself dwelled in a house of cedar but that the ark of God dwelled within curtains (v. 2). David released his consideration to Nathan the prophet, who encouraged him to go and do what was in his heart, telling David that Jehovah was with him (vv. 2-3).

God's Response to David

In verses 4 through 17 we have God's response to David through Nathan. Verse 4 tells us in that night the word of Jehovah came to Nathan. God told David that since the time He brought Israel up out of Egypt, He had never asked anyone to build Him a house that He might dwell in it. Rather, He went about in a tent and in a tabernacle (vv. 5-7). God charged Nathan to tell David that He took him from the pasture, from following the sheep, that he might be ruler over His people Israel (v. 8). Also, God had been with David in every place and had cut off all his

enemies (v. 9). This refers to the presence of God. David was prosperous because he had the presence of God.

God promised David that He would make a great name for him, "like the name of the great ones who are on the earth" (v. 9). God said that He would appoint a place for His people Israel and plant them, that they might dwell in their own place without disturbances and without being ill-treated by the sons of wickedness (v. 10). David's heart was to get a place for God to dwell in, but God's heart is to get a place for His people to be settled and even planted. For this to take place, however, God's elect people need to cooperate with Him. God told David that He would give him rest from all his enemies (v. 11). Here God seemed to be saying, "David, you have a heart for Me. My heart is for you, and I want you to have rest from all the enemies that are around you."

Jehovah declared to David that He would make him a house (v. 11). When we love the Lord, we may feel that we should do something for Him. However, when we resolve to do something for the Lord, we may have the sense deep within us that we need the Lord to do more for us. As we will see, we are short of Christ and we need more of Christ. God said to David, "I will raise up your seed after you, which will come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom" (v. 12). Here *your seed* refers to Christ, and *his kingdom* refers to Christ's kingdom. In His response to David's desire to build God a house, God in a sense came in to stop David by indicating that before David could do something for God, he needed God to do something for him.

Whenever we would think to do something for God, God within us would tell us that we are short of something. Our shortage is Christ. We all need Christ. When a sinner turns to God and believes in Christ, he may then have the heart to do something for God. However, to such a person God would say, "Do you intend to do something for Me? You have a great need for Me to do something for you. What I want to do for you is to constitute My Son into your being to be your treasure. Unless I do this for you, you will never have the capacity to do anything for Me."

In 2 Samuel 7:12 God was actually telling David that instead of building something for God, he needed God to

build His Son into him. It is a marvelous fact that eventually David's seed would be called the Son of God (Rom. 1:3). This indicates the principle of incarnation. Christ is the God-man. As God, He is the Son of God; as man, He is our seed. If the Son of God is not constituted into us, we are nothing. The Son of God must become our seed, yet He remains the Son of God.

When we were saved, many of us believed the gospel in a shallow way. The more I study the Bible, the more I realize that the gospel is not shallow. The genuine and intrinsic gospel is that God intends to work Himself in Christ into us. In 2 Samuel 7:12 we have the genuine preaching of the gospel. If we preach this intrinsic gospel, we will tell others that they should not think that they can do something for God, for their human life is empty. We will tell them that they are short of something and that what they need is Christ, the very God Himself, to be wrought into their being. This is the gospel.

In order to work Himself into us, God first became a man through incarnation. As a man He died for us, and then rose up from among the dead and became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). This life-giving Spirit is our Savior, who redeemed us on the cross and who is now saving us in our spirit. He is our Redeemer, Savior, life, and seed. As such a One, He is now being built, constituted, into us, making us a part of Him, even as He has made Himself a part of us.

If we read 2 Samuel 7 under God's enlightening, we will see that the seed of David is Christ. According to verse 7 God will establish David's kingdom, which refers to Christ's kingdom. This means that the kingdom of David is Christ's kingdom. The prophets spoke of David and Christ as one. In Hosea 3:5 and Amos 9:11 the coming of King David refers to Christ's coming.

Second Samuel 7:13 reveals that it is Christ who will build a house for God's name, and God will establish the throne of Christ's kingdom forever. Verse 14 says, "I will be his Father, and he will be My son." This actually reveals that God will be Christ's Father and that Christ will be God's Son (Heb. 1:5). God's salvation is just to make Christ, His embodiment, ours. The Son of God, who is the embodiment of God, God Himself, is in us. Therefore, we can declare that Christ, the Son of God, has been built into us.

In 2 Samuel 7:16 God said to David, "Your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever before you; your throne will be established forever." Here *your kingdom* refers to Christ's kingdom, and *your throne* refers to Christ's throne. In the Bible David and Christ have one throne. Christ is the real David (Matt. 12:3-6). Eventually, Christ and we become one, for in a very real

sense Christ has become us. He is the Head and we are the Body, and the Head and the Body are one.

Second Samuel 7 is a very difficult portion of the Word to understand, and not many Christians have the proper view concerning it. I have been studying this chapter for over sixty years. My first impression was that here we see the love and kindness of God in wanting to build David a house instead of having David build a house for Him. That was merely the natural, human concept of a young man. I spent a number of years with the Brethren, who devoted a great deal of attention to 2 Samuel 7 and who preached and taught on it and published books about it. However, they did not see the intrinsic significance of this chapter, especially of God's word to David in verses 12 through 14.

Prophecy through Typology

Those who study the Bible realize that two matters in the Bible are not easy to understand—typology and prophecy. The book of Revelation, for example, is mainly a book of prophecy, but this book also contains quite an amount of typology. Hence, Revelation is a combination of prophecy and typology. The situation is the same with 2 Samuel 7. This chapter conveys a great prophecy, but this prophecy is unveiled through typology. We may say that it is a prophecy in typology.

In 2 Samuel 7 David wanted to build God's house, but in this chapter God wanted David to realize that he needed God to build Christ into him. Thus, 2 Samuel 7 is the unveiling of a prophecy through typology showing us there is no need for us to build something for God. We simply are not able to do this. We cannot build something for God with ourselves or with our knowledge of the Bible and theology. We need God to build up Christ into our intrinsic constitution so that our entire being will be reconstituted with Christ. As a result, we are not only changed, but we are transformed from one kind of person into another. Perhaps now we can see that 2 Samuel 7 simply indicates that God does not need us to build anything for Him. We are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing. Therefore, we need Christ to be wrought into our being.

At this point we need to consider once again what God's economy is. God's economy is to work Himself into us in Christ as His embodiment. Through death and resurrection Christ has become the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Now we need to let God work Christ as the Spirit into every part of our being. The more God does this, the more we will be able to declare, "To me, to live is Christ," and "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20).

The New Testament verse that best indicates that Christ is building Himself into us is Ephesians 3:17. Here Paul says that Christ is making His home in our hearts. This is building. What is of crucial importance today is the question concerning how much of Christ has been built into us. How much has Christ been built not only into your spirit but into your heart in order to make His home there?

Our spirit, the central part of our being, is surrounded by our heart, which is composed mainly of our mind, emotion, and will. Christ is in our spirit, but how much has Christ made His home in our heart? Most of our hearts are still vacant, not occupied, saturated, and soaked with Christ. Every day our hearts are filled with other things. As a result, Christ is imprisoned in our spirit.

Ephesians 3 indicates strongly that the Triune God is building Himself into us in Christ's making us His home. Paul bowed his knees to the Father and prayed that He would grant us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man (vv. 14, 16) so that Christ may make His home in our hearts. Here we have the Divine Trinity: the Father is the One to whom Paul prayed; the Spirit is the One who carries out the strengthening; and Christ the Son is the One who is making His home in our heart. By building Himself into our being, He makes our heart, our intrinsic constitution, His home.

Second Samuel 7 is a prophecy predicting that the church will be built up by God Himself among His people in the New Testament. Christ is the One who actually builds God's house, God's temple. Christ is also the element in which and with which the church as God's house is built. In this chapter God seemed to be saying to David, "David, thus far you are still vacant and empty. Do not think that you should do something to build a house for Me. You need to realize that you need Me to build Myself into you as the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Then you will have a house, and that house will also be My house."

The intrinsic significance of 2 Samuel 7 is that the Triune God is working Himself in His processed and consummated Trinity into His chosen people. Therefore, 2 Samuel 7 is a chapter on the Triune God working Himself into us to make us His home (Christ with the church) and to produce a seed (the all-inclusive Christ). Here we have a house and a seed. Christ is the house, and Christ is also the seed. Christ is the element, and Christ is also the issue. Christ is everything.

This Christ is both God's house and our house. Hence, we and God have a mutual abode. Christ abides in us, and we abide in Him. He and we, we and He, are mingled together as one entity. The universe is waiting for this. Romans 8 tells us that the whole universe is eagerly awaiting the

expression of the Triune God mingled with the tripartite man through His building, which is by Himself, with Himself, in Himself, and for Himself. This is what we all need, and this is what the universe needs.

The Seed of David Becoming the Son of God

In 2 Samuel 7:12-14 Jehovah said to David, "When your days are fulfilled and you sleep with your fathers, I will raise up your seed after you, which will come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. It is he who will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he will be My son." The word concerning *your seed* and *My son* indicates that the seed of David would become the Son of God, that the seed of a man would become God's Son.

This thought is continued very strongly in the New Testament, particularly in Romans 1:3 and 4. Here Paul says, "Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." Here we have the same thought as in 2 Samuel 7:12-14—that the seed of David becomes the Son of God. These verses reveal, on the one hand, that Christ is the seed of David and, on the other hand, that He, the seed of David, has been designated the Son of God. When we compare these two portions of the Word, we see that both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament we have the matter of the seed of

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Deification—Becoming God in Life and in Nature but Not in the Godhead

This brings us to the matter of deification—God’s intention to make the believers God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. Athanasius referred to deification when at the council of Nicea in A.D. 325 he said, “He [Christ] was made man that we might be made God.” Although the term *deification* is familiar to many theologians and Christian teachers, during the past sixteen centuries only a small number have dared to teach regarding the deification of the believers in Christ.

I have not been influenced by any teaching about deification, but I have learned from my study of the Bible that God does intend to make the believers God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. For instance, 1 John 3:2 says, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been manifested what we will be. We know that if He is manifested, we will be like Him because we will see Him even as He is.” This verse clearly reveals that we will be like God.

God makes us like Him by imparting His life and nature into us. Second Peter 1:4 says that we have become “partakers of the divine nature.” John 1:12-13 says that we were born, regenerated, by God with His life. As God’s children we are “baby gods,” having God’s life and nature but not His Godhead. The Godhead is unique; He is the only One who should be worshipped. We have been born of God and today, having God’s life and nature, we are partially like Him. One day, when He comes, we will be wholly and entirely like Him.

It was wonderful for David to be a man according to God’s heart, but it was not sufficient. God wants those who can say, “I am not just a person according to God’s heart. I am God in life and in nature but not in His Godhead.” On the one hand, the New Testament reveals that the Godhead is unique and that only God, who alone has the Godhead, should be worshipped. On the other hand, the New Testament reveals that we, the believers in Christ, have God’s life and nature and that we are becoming God in life and in nature but will never have His Godhead.

The Seed of David Being Both Divine and Human

David had the heart to build a house for God, but God indicated to David that this was neither what he needed nor what God needed. God told David that He would build One to be David’s seed and that this seed would be called God’s Son. This seed would be both divine and human. Hebrews 1:5 indicates that this refers to Christ as God’s firstborn Son. Furthermore, as we have seen, Romans 1:3-4, which corresponds to 2 Samuel 7:12-14, tells us that in resurrection the seed of David was designated the

Son of God. In their intrinsic significance, 2 Samuel 7:12-14 and Romans 1:3-4 reveal to us a human and divine person.

Our Need for God to Work Himself in Christ into Us as Our Life, Nature, and Constitution

Just as the photograph of a person does not have the life and nature of that person, so David, a photograph of God’s heart, did not have the life and nature of God. Even though he was a man whose heart was according to God, he did not have anything related to God organically. What David needed is what we need today. We need God to build Himself in Christ into our humanity. This means that we need God to work Himself in Christ into us as our life, our nature, and our constitution. As a result, we are not simply a man according to God’s heart—we are God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. We today are not outwardly as high as David was, but we can declare that we have God’s life, nature, and constitution.

In order to accomplish this, God in Christ became a man and went through some processes that this man could be designated something divine. In resurrection He was designated the firstborn Son of God. In and through resurrection Christ, the firstborn Son of God, became the life-giving Spirit, who now enters into us to impart, to dispense, Himself as life into our being to be our inner constitution, to make us a God-man just like Him. He was God becoming man, and we are man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead.

Many Christians are still trying merely to have a behaving, a living, and a being that are according to God’s heart, but they do not have the concept that God desires to build Himself in Christ into our being. What He is building into us will be His abode, which will be our abode also. Hence, it becomes a mutual abode. The New Jerusalem is this mutual abode. On the one hand, the New Jerusalem is the dwelling place of God; on the other hand, it is also our eternal dwelling place (Rev. 21:3, 22). For eternity the New Jerusalem will be the fulfillment of the Lord’s brief word in John 15:4: “Abide in Me and I in you.”

Ephesians 3:17 tells us that Christ is now within us doing the work of building Himself into us to produce this mutual abode. We often say that Christ is living in us and working in us. Now we need to ask this question: What is Christ wanting to accomplish by His working in us? The answer is that Christ is working in us to build up God’s habitation by building Himself into us.

David wanted to build God a house of cedar, but God wanted to build Himself in Christ into David. What God would build into David would be both God’s house and David’s house. This mutual abode is also unveiled in John

14:23: "If anyone loves Me,...My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." This abode will be not only for the Triune God but also for us. What God builds up in us is both God's habitation and our habitation.

We need to realize that God will have a habitation not by our doing or working but by His building. Christ builds the church (Matt. 16:18) by coming into our spirit and spreading Himself from our spirit into our mind, emotion, and will to occupy our entire soul. This church will become His habitation and our habitation. This is what we need, and our burden is to emphasize this one thing. There is no need for us to build anything for God. Rather, God needs to build Himself in Christ into us as our life, nature, and essence. Eventually, the Triune God will become our intrinsic constitution. We will be constituted with the Triune God. That will be the seed of David and the Son of God—something divine and human satisfying God's need and our need for a mutual abode. The New Jerusalem is the consummation of this mutual abode, and we will all be there.

The Mingling of Divinity and Humanity to Produce One Entity

At the time of David, the divine revelation reached the point where God showed David what He wanted. God revealed to David that He could not be satisfied simply to have a man who was according to His heart. Rather, God indicated to David that He wants to build Himself into the man who is according to His heart and to make this man His building as His house. Then out from this house would issue a seed of humanity, yet this seed would become the Son of God. This involves the mingling of divinity with humanity, a mingling that eventually produces the church, the house of God. In this mingling God and man, man and God, are blended together into one entity. This entity is God's building, which is a mutual abode for God and man. This entity, possessing both the divine nature and the human nature, also is the wife of the redeeming Christ. This entity, the New Jerusalem, will remain forever and will be the centrality and universality of the new heaven and new earth. This is the entire and complete revelation of the Bible.

Christ's Sowing Himself as the Seed into Us as the Soil for God's Building

Matthew 13 reveals that Christ has sown Himself as the seed into us as the soil. Christ is the seed, and we are the soil with the nutrients for the growth of the seed. Christ in resurrection, Christ as the life-giving Spirit, has sown Himself into us not simply to stay in us but to grow in us. The growth of Christ in us equals the building.

The Christ who has sown Himself into us is now doing a

particular work in us—the work of making His home in our inner being, in our hearts (Eph. 3:17). This is building, and it is carried out through the mingling of divinity with humanity. Such a building is mentioned in John 14:23: "If anyone loves Me,...My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." This abode is not only for the Triune God but is also for us. Hence, it is a mutual abode.

This thought regarding the building is strengthened in 1 Corinthians and in Revelation. In 1 Corinthians 3:10 Paul says, "According to the grace of God given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid a foundation [Christ], and another builds upon it. But let each man take heed how he builds upon it." Then he goes on to speak of building "upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble" (v. 12). Revelation 3:12 tells us that Christ will make the overcomer a pillar in the temple of God, which is the New Jerusalem. Eventually, the New Jerusalem, the consummation of the building, a composition of the Old Testament saints and the New Testament believers (21:12-14), will be the wife of the Lamb, Christ, and a mutual abode for God and His redeemed for eternity (vv. 2-3, 9).

A Seed of Man Becoming the Son of God

What a great light the Lord has shown us from 2 Samuel 7! God revealed to David that his seed, a seed of man (v. 12), would become the Son of God (v. 14). How can this be? The answer is that a human seed is designated the Son of God (Rom. 1:3-4). Humanity is designated in divinity, and divinity and humanity are

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blended as one. Today, we, seeds of humanity, are becoming sons of God in divinity through the process of God's building. We praise the Lord that in His recovery on the earth today, we are undergoing the work of God's building. God is fulfilling His desire to build Himself in Christ into our being, and eventually the outcome of this building will be the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth for eternity.

God Making Himself Man in Order to Make Man God in Life and in Nature

At this juncture, I have the burden to consider some striking matters covered in or implied by these verses. These matters are all related to the significance of the seed of David being designated the Son of God. In 2 Samuel 7:12 God speaks of David's seed, and in verse 14 He says, "I will be his Father, and he will be My son." Here we have something of very great significance—the seed of David becoming the Son of God. These verses clearly unveil that a seed of man, that is, a son of a man, can become the Son of God. This implies that God's intention is to make Himself man in order to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. Such an implication is exceedingly great. Eventually, the whole Bible consummates with this matter. The New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of the Bible, involves God becoming man and man becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead, and God and man being mingled together to be one entity.

If we read the Bible without paying attention to this crucial point, then, in a very real sense, the Bible is to us an empty book. This means that although the Bible is real in itself, in our understanding of it the Bible is empty. As an illustration, let us suppose that a certain box, which is quite attractive, contains a large diamond. A child may be interested in the box but not in the diamond. An adult, however, would focus his attention on the diamond contained in the box. Today, many Christians care for the Bible as the "box," but they have not seen and do not appreciate the "diamond" which is the content of this box, and they may even condemn those who have a proper appreciation of the "diamond" in the "box." The "diamond" in the "box" of the Bible is the revelation that in Christ God has become man in order that man might become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead.

The vast majority of today's Christians neglect the crucial point in the Bible that in Christ God has become man in order to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead and that God desires to mingle Himself with man to be one entity. Some not only neglect this; they falsely accuse as heretical those who teach it. Today many believe one aspect of this crucial point—that God became a man named Jesus—but they do not believe the

other aspect—that man is becoming God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead.

The Bible reveals a wonderful, marvelous person—Jesus Christ, the God-man. This One is both the Son of God and the Son of man. On one occasion when the Pharisees were gathered together, the Lord Jesus questioned them, saying, "What do you think concerning the Christ? Whose son is He?" (Matt. 22:41-42). When they said to him "David's," He went on to say to them, "How then does David in spirit call Him Lord...? If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?" (vv. 43, 45). The Pharisees could not understand this, and they were not able to answer Him. Here the Lord Jesus was indicating that He, the son of David, was the Son of God—the very matter revealed in 2 Samuel 7:12-14.

What is revealed in 2 Samuel 7 is expounded by Paul in Romans 1:3-4, where he tells us that Christ, a descendant of David, has been designated the Son of God. These verses say, "Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ is a descendant of David, yet He has been designated to be the Son of God. This is the mystery of God becoming man to make man God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. The two, God and man, are thus built together, constituted into each other. In Christ God has been constituted into man, man has been constituted into God, and God and man have been mingled together to be one entity, which is called the God-man.

God in Christ is constituting Himself into man, making Himself the element of man. Thus, we human beings are constituted with a divine element. This means that a divine element is built into our human element, and the two elements are mingled with each other. Not only is God's divine element constituted into us—the human element is constituted into God. As the divine element is constituted into our humanity, we become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead. As the human element is constituted into God, God becomes man. This is the building revealed in the New Testament. Such a revelation should become a principle that governs our understanding of God and of God's building. When we talk about the building up of the church or about the building up of the Body, we need to realize that this building is a constitution of the divine element into the human element and of the human element into the divine element. This building, therefore, is a constitution of the divine element and of the human element into each other. Such a constitution makes the divine element and the human element one entity. This is the building of the church, the building of the Body of Christ.

by Witness Lee