

Psalm 89: The Davidic Covenant in Rubble

A Maskil of Ethan the Ezraite

1 The lovingkindnesses of YHWH
forever

I will sing!

To all generations

I will make known

Your faithfulness with my mouth!

2 For I have said,

“Forever

lovingkindness will be built;

As for the heavens,

You will establish Your faithfulness in them!”

3 I have cut a covenant with My chosen one;
I have sworn to David, My servant.

4 Unto forever I will establish
your Seed

And I will build for all generations

your throne.

Selah

Introduction

vv1-4 is an introduction that outlines what follows in vv5-37.

The flow is two key steps:

- 1) I will praise God for His excellent attributes (vv1-2) and
- 2) Those attributes of God are on display in the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7

God’s attributes are behind His promises, and history showcases the attributes by how He carries out the promises. This is one key to the revelation of God in the Bible.

God's Rule in Heaven

5 And they will praise,
the heavens,

Your wondrousness, YHWH
Also Your faithfulness

in the assembly of the holy ones.

6 For who in the sky

will stand equal to YHWH?

Who will resemble YHWH

among the sons of the mighty ones?

7 A God:

who is dreaded

in the great council of the holy ones

And feared

by all who surround Him!

8 YHWH, God of the Armies,

who is like You,

mighty Yah?

And Your faithfulness

which surrounds You?

vv5-8 Present God in His eternal abode in Heaven, surrounded by myriads of elect angels.

- v5 focuses on His mighty works and character, with the angels looking on.
- v6 emphasizes the distinction between God and the angels—none of God's super-creatures approaches His glory. The contrast heightens our appreciation of God's attributes.
- v7 shows the reaction of God's angels to His essence. The only appropriate response to the divine majesty is awe. Those who know best fear God the most.
- v8 closes the discussion of God and the angels with a refreshment of v5: God's might and faithfulness

When we look at this section as a whole we see verses 5 and 8 are bookends that highlight God's attributes of omnipotence (power) and faithfulness, and the contents in vv6-7 demonstrate the relationship between God and His angels.

vv49-52 The Appeal

49 Where are Your lovingkindnesses
from the first, Lord?
You swore to David
in Your faithfulness.

50 Remember, O Lord,
the reproach of Your servants;
I bear in my bosom
all the quarrels of the peoples

51 With which they have reproached,
your enemies, YHWH;
With which they have reproached
the footprints of Your Messiah/Anointed

52 Blessed be YHWH forever!
Amen and Amen

God's Rule on Earth, vv9-18

9 You rule
the swelling of the sea
In the rising up of its waves,

You still them!

10 You crushed like one pierced
the Proud One (RACHAB = Egypt?)

With the arm of Your strength You scattered
Your enemies.

11 Belonging to You, the heavens,
also to You the earth;

The world and what fills it,
You have founded them.

12 The north and the south,
You created them;

Tabor and Hermon

at Your Name shout for joy.

vv9-12 Present God's Mighty Works in History

- v9 suggests that God alone controls the water. This will be important in v25 when the Davidic Heir will rule the water
- v10 for example, God used the water to destroy Egypt in Exodus 14.
- vv11-12 the entire creation testifies to God's omnipotence as the Creator. God as the creator of EVERYTHING constantly calls us to worship the Source and not the creation itself.
- v12 Tabor is the low mountain where Deborah and Barak were victorious over the army of Sisera.
- Mt Hermon is the highest point in Syria
- These places glorify God as His creations; their shout for joy is a personification that reminds us of the right way to respond to God as our Creator: Worship.

13 *Belonging to You, an arm*

with strength,

It shows itself strong,

Your hand;

it is exalted,

Your right hand.

14 Righteousness and justice

are the foundation of Your throne;

Lovingkindness and truth

go before Your face.

15 How happy are the people

who know the trumpet blast

YHWH, in the light of Your face

they walk

16 In Your Name they rejoice all day

And in Your Righteousness they are exalted

17 For the splendor of their strength

are You,

And by Your favor it is exalted,

our horn.

18 For *belonging to YHWH* our shield,

And *belonging to the Holy One of Israel* our king.

4

vv13-18 Emphasize God's attributes and their benefits to His people.

- v13 Emphasizes God's power.
- v14: Righteousness, Justice, Lovingkindness, Truth!
- vv15-18: Because of God's mighty attributes, God's people rejoice and are exalted. God's strength is their strength. God has provided them their king.

At the time of writing, David's House is a desolation.

It seems as though God is not keeping His eternal Davidic Covenant! There is a sharp contrast between what Israel is experiencing and God's wonderful promises.

There are several false solutions to this difficulty:

- 1) Assume God is not really going to do what He said.
- 2) Assume that what God said is not what He meant. (Functionally the same as #1).
- 3) Pretend that there is no difficulty; the desolation of the Land is not really all that desolate, and the shame in vv38-45 is not all that shameful!

The only real solution, within Psalm 89, is to "stay tuned." If God's promise is forever, then we have not seen everything yet! **This is the anticipation of Biblical eschatology.**

As Bible-believing Christians we need to learn to rest in constant anticipation. We do not see God's promises fulfilled yet, but we continue to expect that He will fulfill them. Thus we live in light of this expectation, this hope.

46 How long, O YHWH,

will You hide Yourself

in perpetuity?

will it burn like fire,

Your wrath?

47 Remember me,

what is my lifespan!

For what vanity did You create

all the sons of man?

48 What man can live

and not see death?

Can he deliver his soul

from the hand of Sheol?

Selah

vv46-48 is the Lament of the Psalm. The writer is not experiencing the expected blessings of the Davidic Covenant, and he will probably not do so in his lifetime. This section calls for eternal life and the resurrection body if one will enjoy eternal promises.

9

38 But You

have cast off and rejected;
You have shown Yourself angry
with Your Messiah/Anointed

39 You have repudiated
the covenant of Your servant;

You have profaned
to the ground his crown.

40 You have broken down
all his walls

You have put
his fortified city a ruin

41 They have plundered,
all those who pass on the road;

He has been a reproach
to his inhabitants

42 You have exalted
the right hand of his adversaries;

You have made rejoice
all his enemies

43 Also You turn back
from the enemy his sword

And You have not sustained
him in battle

44 You have caused to cease
his splendor
And his throne to the earth

You have thrown down.

45 You have caused to be shortened
the days of his youth

You have covered
him with shame **Selah**

vv38-45: The Ruins of David's House

8

vv39-40: What God
has Done to
Destroy the House
of David

vv41-43: Military
Defeat and Destruc-
tion of the Land

Compare v38 and
v44: Summary of
God's Judgment

v45: The Summary
of vv38-44

19 Then You spoke in a vision to Your
beloved ones

And You said,

"I have placed help upon a mighty one,
"I have exalted one chosen from the people."

20 I have found
David, My servant.
With My holy oil

I have anointed him.

21 Whom My hand
will be established with him,

Also My arm
will strengthen him.

22 He will not exact usury,
the enemy, him.
And the son of malice

will not afflict him.

23 And I will crush before his face
his adversary
and those who hate him

I will strike

Verses 19-37, the Reflection on the Davidic Covenant is Structured as follows:

- vv19-21 point out the strength and anointing of David from God's hand.
- vv22-23 discusses the inability of David's enemies to hurt him.
- vv24-29 present the special relationship between David and YHWH
- vv30-37 establishes the permanence of the Davidic Covenant despite

vv19-37 The Davidic Covenant

5

vv19-21: David
Designated and
Empowered

vv22-23: David's
Enemies Defeated

24 And My faithfulness and My lovingkindness

6

will be with him,

And in My Name

it will be exalted, his horn.

v24 and v28: God's
Attributes and the
Covenant

25 And I will set

on the sea

his hand,

And on the rivers

his right hand.

v25 and v29: God's
power to establish
David's power and
dynasty

26 He will cry to Me,

"You are My Father,

My God and the Rock of my salvation."

27 Also I firstborn *status*

I will give him

The highest of the kings of the earth!

28 Forever I will keep/guard for him

My lovingkindness

And My covenant

will be faithful/permanent for him.

vv26-27: The Special Relationship
Between YHWH
and David

29 And I will set/establish

until then

his seed,

And his throne

as the days of heaven.

30 If they abandon, his sons,

My Law

And in My judgments

they do not walk,

31 If My statutes

they profane,

And My commandments

they do not keep,

32 Then I will punish

with a rod their transgression

And with affliction their iniquities

33 But My lovingkindness

I will not break off from him;

And I will not break faith/cancel

the contract

against my faithfulness.

34 I will not profane

My covenant

And the pronouncement of My lips

I will not alter.

35 Once and for all

I have sworn

in My holiness;

Not to David

will I lie!

36 His seed

unto forever will be

And his throne

Will be like the sun before Me

37 Like the moon

it will be established forever;

And the witness in the sky

is faithful!

Selah

7

If, vv30-31

Then, v32

But, vv33-34

Perpetuity, vv35-37

This poetic summary of 2 Sam 7:8-16 strongly brings out three key items:

- 1) The Davidic Covenant is based on God's Attributes, not man's performance.
- 2) Like God's Attributes, this is an eternal arrangement.
- 3) When David's sons fail, God's covenant will not fail. It will be perpetual and therefore eternal.