

God's Covenant with David

Bible Background • [2 SAMUEL 7:1-16](#); [PSALM 89](#); [1 CHRONICLES 22:6-8](#)

Printed Text • [2 SAMUEL 7:1-6, 8-10, 12-16](#)

Devotional Reading • [PSALM 89:1-15](#)

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will: ANALYZE David's desire and the Lord's promise; CONFESS our natural human limitations to serve God in a manner that is worthy of the eternal and omnipresent Creator; and APPRECIATE God's blessings and how we don't need to earn them through impressive acts of service.



Excitement filled the air as Antwon strode unexpectedly into the business meeting in the basement of the aging inner-city church. Basketball had been Antwon's ticket out of the impoverished neighborhood and his source of considerable wealth. He had come back to his childhood church with a proposal. Concerned that attendance had fallen off and that the church, like the rest of the neighborhood, was in decline, Antwon offered to pay the construction costs of a new church building if a suitable site could be found. Certainly, he figured, a beautiful new facility would bring the people back into the church.

The pastor shook Antwon's hand and said simply, "The Lord sent you to help us, but there's a greater need."

To the faithful few gathered, he asked, "Do we need a new building? Do we need a change of location? Or do we need a change of hearts? The local free medical clinic just moved out of our neighborhood. Will we follow them and move out, too? Or could we maybe bring a free medical clinic into the church? Perhaps we need to return to acts of mercy and service, bringing the needy inside and showing them grace."

Has God ever unexpectedly changed or redirected your plans or dreams? In this lesson, we will see how God changed David's plans and entered into a covenant relationship with him.

Keep in Mind

"And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever" ([2 Samuel 7:16](#)).

KJV

2 Samuel 7:1 And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all this enemies;

2 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee.

4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying,

5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:

9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.

10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.

12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established forever.

NLT

2 Samuel 7:1 When King David was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies,

2 the king summoned Nathan the prophet. “Look,” David said, “I am living in a beautiful cedar palace, but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!”

3 Nathan replied to the king, “Go ahead and do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you.”

4 But that same night the Lord said to Nathan,

5 Go and tell my servant David, “This is what the Lord has declared: Are you the one to build a house for me to live in?”

6 I have never lived in a house from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling.

8 Now go and say to my servant David, “this is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies has declared; I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel.

9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth!

10 And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won’t oppress them as they’ve done in the past.

12 For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong.

13 He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.

14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do.

15 But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight.

16 Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.”

The People, Places, and Times

David. King David played a prominent role in Israel’s early history. Born in Bethlehem, he worked as a shepherd for his father, Jesse. As a young man, with one smooth stone David killed Goliath, that much-feared giant Philistine warrior whom David called that “uncircumcised Philistine” ([1 Samuel 17:26](#)). God said that David was a man after His own heart ([1 Samuel 13:14](#); [Acts 13:22](#)). Among David’s sons was Solomon, who would succeed David as king and build the Temple in Jerusalem. David was a great man, but not without his faults. He gave in to lust and committed adultery, and then arranged for the murder of his lover’s husband. He was at

times deceitful and brash. Yet he loved and trusted God. He confessed and repented of his sins ([Psalm 51](#)). As promised by God in today's passage, Jesus was a descendant of David ([Matthew 1:1](#)).

Nathan. Nathan was King David's friend, confidant, and counselor. He was a prophet sent by God to act as His spokesman to David. Nathan had to confront David with the truth, even when that truth would prove painful for David. Sometimes, as in today's passage, Nathan had to tell David that God did not approve of what he was planning or what he had done. At the same time, Nathan was able to assure David of God's forgiveness of confessed sins. Nathan is a biblical example of something we all need—a true, godly friend and advisor.

How do national leaders normally choose to react to God's Word?

Background

The events described in this Scripture take place in Jerusalem, the then-capital of a strong and united Israel. The year is roughly 1000 BC. Previously, for more than 300 years, Israel had been ruled by judges and advised by various prophets. During that period, Israel faced near constant wars with various Canaanite tribes, including the ruthless Philistines. Those battles continued even under Israel's first king, Saul, and second king, David.

This week's Scripture begins by saying that God had given David rest from all his surrounding enemies ([2 Samuel 7:1](#)). Under David's rule, the Philistines, Moabites, and others were finally defeated. This is significant because David was finally able to establish Israel as a formidable power in the region and set up his son, Solomon, to possess all the land that God had promised. David was instrumental in strengthening and uniting Israel, and making it a great and wealthy nation. He captured Jerusalem, moved the Ark of the Covenant there, and built a magnificent palace for himself.

How was David rewarded for his faithfulness to God?

In Depth

1. A Good Idea But Not a God Idea ([2 Samuel 7:1–2](#))

David loved his new home in Jerusalem, just five miles from his birthplace in Bethlehem. Jerusalem was the well-fortified capital of his kingdom. David's palace was enormous, several stories tall, and built of thick hewn limestone, with massive cedar timbers and paneling. The palace was meant to impress—a fitting home for the wealthiest and most powerful king in that area of the world.

David also loved God and had set up the Tabernacle nearby. It was meant to be portable so God would dwell among His people wherever they went. Now, David felt that their wandering days were over. He felt that since he had a permanent home, it was only fitting to build a permanent and more beautiful home for the Ark. It seemed to be a "good idea," but not a "God idea," as we shall see later in the text. Many times, we as believers have good ideas but they're not always ideas sourced and supported by God.

When we have great ideas and formulate wonderful plans, why is it important to consult God first?

2. When God Says No (vv. 3–6)

David had not consulted God on the matter of building a temple. That night, God spoke to Nathan, and told him to relay a message to David: that God gently rejected David's offer to build a temple for Him. God reminds David that He has led and guided him from the role of humble shepherd through many battles to the position of king.

David was king of Israel, but he was still God's servant (vv. 5, 8). Although God does not divulge all of His reasons for not wanting David to build the temple in these verses, David does reveal the real reason in [1 Chronicles 28:2–3](#). There David says, "It was my desire to build a Temple ... but God said to me, 'You must not build a Temple to honor my name, for you are a warrior and have shed much blood'" (NIV).

What happens when the plans we develop conflict with God's will?

3. Greater Plans for You (vv. 8–10, 12–16)

God may have rejected David's plan to build the temple, but He revealed that He had even greater plans for David. In a play on words, God essentially says, "You planned to build a house (permanent dwelling place) for Me, but instead I will build a house (permanent family dynasty) for you." The Hebrew word for "house" is used in both cases, yet the meanings are vastly different, and clear from the context.

God is declaring or making a covenant with David that He is going to do something even more spectacular than anything any person, even a king, could do! He will do something of eternal significance that will impact all of humanity! He is establishing a royal bloodline through David from which kings will come. David's own son, Solomon, would succeed David as king, and be the one to build the Temple.

Little did David know that one of his later descendants would be Jesus Christ of Nazareth, God's own Son, Savior of all who believe in Him. Jesus is, and forever will be, the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant with David. Even before Jesus is born, the angel says of Him, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and ... of his Kingdom there shall be no end" ([Luke 1:32–33](#)).

How does accepting God's "no" show great faith in His future plans for our lives?

Search the Scriptures

- 1 What was the Lord's reason for not wanting David to build a temple ([2 Samuel 7:5–6](#))?
2. Why is it unwise to forge ahead with our own ideas without seeking the counsel of God?

Discuss the Meaning

The text says that David “summoned” the prophet Nathan to discuss his idea to build a temple for the Lord (vv. 1–2). At first, Nathan told him to do what he had in mind. Only after Nathan talked it over with God did he go back to tell David that God had rejected his idea. What does this tell us about seeking counsel concerning our future plans?

Lesson in Our Society

We live in an age of reality TV, where we see home makeovers unfolding in 30 minutes and ultra-successful startup businesses that seem to make millions in months. We admire people who seem to instinctively know what to do, and do it quickly. We look up to those who can rally others to fix things, build things, or help make the world a better place. It may seem like those people have good ideas and know how to get things done in mere moments, yet what we don’t often see is that the best leaders of churches, businesses, or families have likely spent many hours in consultation with others about their plans before they put them into action.

What would it look like for us not to just say that we are going to pray about something, but to actually sit and wait for God’s answers? As African Americans, we are known as a praying people, but are we a listening people? What if God wants to give us solutions to the challenges that we face on a day-to-day basis? It’s not just enough to have good ideas. It’s best to wait on God’s idea.

Why is it important to accept constructive criticism of our plans before we act?

Make It Happen

This lesson teaches us that as Christians, we should seek the counsel of Scripture, the advice of a mentor, and spend much time in prayer before we embark on any endeavor. God may reveal that your plan is good, or He might just reveal that He has a different plan.

- Write a letter to God about a dream or plan you have and allow time for God to reveal to you His will.
- Find someone who has seen a vision or dream realized in their life. Talk to them about the roadblocks and obstacles they may have encountered along the way.
- Look up specific promises that God has given us as believers and list all the times that God has fulfilled His promises. Share with a fellow classmate.

More Light on the Text

2 Samuel 7:1–6, 8–10, 12–16

1 And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all this enemies; 2 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. 3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee.

David now sits in the palace that he has built for himself. This is a season where he has rest from all of Israel's enemies. The text makes sure to say that it was not David who had given himself rest, but the Lord. This realization possibly prompts David to think about the splendor of his house, yet God, who made it all possible, did not have a permanent house among His people.

The use of cedar for building temples and palaces was common at the time. Cedar (Heb. ezez, EH-rez) does not contain any knots and does not decay. The material is appropriate for a building intended to house royalty.

4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,

In verse 4, we see the typical prophetic formula, “the word of the LORD [Yahweh] came unto...” This formula occurs some 200 times in the Old Testament, especially in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The fact that the word came to Nathan at night may suggest that this Word from God came to him in a dream or a vision, which was also typical of how God communicated in these times.

5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

This word that Nathan received for David was in response to the previous conversation about David's desire to build a house for God. The word “house” (Heb. bayith, BAH-yith) has wide applications, most often used for a family dwelling. It is also used, as in this case, to refer to the temple of a deity. David presumed that since he had a house while the Ark of the Covenant resided in a tent, he should build a house for God. In that exchange, Nathan encouraged David, even though Nathan had not yet consulted God.

In verse 4, the Word of the Lord came to Nathan in the form of this corrective. The interesting twist in verse 5 is that although God called David “my servant” (a term used to convey honor), it is followed by God's rhetorical question to Nathan regarding David's plans: “Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?” While this question was about David and his intentions, it was also about God challenging the very notion that He can be contained in a house. The pronoun “thou” (you) is most likely emphatic, indicating the negation concerns the person (David) rather than the action itself (the building of the temple). This implies that God's reason for denying David's plan was not that He did not want a temple built, but that He did not want David to be the one to build it.

6 Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

God had been always present with His people, so the need for a house, while not outright rejected, was here questioned. God relays that in times past, He walked or traveled with Israel in a tent (Heb. 'ohel, OH-hel) or nomad's tent. It was a tabernacle (Heb. mishkhan, mish-KON), which is a dwelling place but in some instances can refer to a shepherd's hut. Throughout that time, God never said anything about wanting a different place for His presence to reside among Israel.

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel. 9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.

As God had shown Himself to His people through His chosen leaders, He was now saying to David that his life had been a testimony to God's presence and power. He took him from the sheepcote (Heb. naveh, nah-VEH) and herding sheep. Sheepcotes are not often spoken of today, but they refer to a pen or covered area where sheep are kept. The Hebrew word has a variety of meanings, including a home for people or a den for animals. In this case, the word is used for the meadow or pasture where David grazed his sheep. God had done much for David; He didn't need David to construct an impressive building in which He would dwell.

God indicated to David that He had given him peace and victory over his enemies. God did this to remind David that He had established him; David should not establish God by building a place for Him to dwell. That God "will appoint a place for my people" (v. 10) references what God had done and how He had shown Himself to His people by providing a place for them—a place of peace where they could live free from oppression and enemy attack.

12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

As for a temple, David would not be allowed to build it; that honor would be given to Solomon. Debate surrounds the application and meaning of, "and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (from v. 13). Establishing a throne forever could be fulfilled in two ways; it could refer to David and his physical descendants, or to Jesus (as seen in [Matthew 1:1](#)). Other references in verse 12 immediately refer to Solomon but also have prophetic implications.

In the early church, this verse was viewed as support for Jesus as the Messiah; God raised up Jesus ([Acts 13:23](#)), through His resurrection, as the ruling son of David. Remember that first-generation Christians were taking their cues from Jesus, who claimed that He would destroy and raise up or build a new temple ([John 2:19–22](#)). Jesus also claimed to have an eternal throne ([Matthew 19:28–29](#)) and an imperishable kingdom ([John 18:36](#)). In the final analysis, the key

here is God’s sovereignty to act and establish not a house of cedar—but a people who were loved by Him, led by Him, and given not just a home, but heritage.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee:

The reference to the father-son relationship once again presents commentators with a dilemma. To whom was this referring? Was it referring to David and his son, as it was believed that the Davidic king was the son of Yahweh, or referring to Jesus, the Son of God? Use of the term “son” was common in this period to represent at least three concepts: adoption, covenant, and royal grant.

History suggests that the sins of David’s descendants would bring punishment and alienation, but would not result in God’s withdrawal of His love. In the end, God would establish David’s house, kingdom, and throne forever. Therefore, we end up with God being a God of His word, doing what He said He would do. It wasn’t about David or his son building a house for God; rather, it was about how God was going to build a “house” for His people through His Son.

Say It Correctly

Sheepcote. SHEEP-coat.

Portent. POR-tint.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Samuel Anoints David King of Israel
([1 Samuel 16:1, 11–13](#))

TUESDAY

God to Build the House of David
([1 Chronicles 17:9–15](#))

WEDNESDAY

Resources to Build the Temple
([1 Chronicles 22:2–5](#))

THURSDAY

David Instructs Solomon
About the Temple
([1 Chronicles 22:6–16](#))

FRIDAY

Extolling the Majesty of the Lord
([Psalm 89:1–15](#))

SATURDAY

David, Prepared for Service
([1 Samuel 16:19–23](#))

SUNDAY

God's Covenant with David
([2 Samuel 7:1–6](#), [8–10](#), [12–16](#))