

A House for My Name

2 Samuel 7:1-17

The Seventh Sermon on Second Samuel

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All of our lives are like a story. We had a beginning, we will have an end, and in between are all the ups and downs, all the ordinary and extraordinary moments. In the story of each and every one of our lives are events, moments that stick out as defining moments making us who we are, taking us to where we are. You know what I'm talking right, don't you? The Bible is the same. It starts with "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" and ends with "then I saw a new heavens and a new earth." And in between is that wonderful story of God's love for the world and his people in particular. And there are momentous moments as well. The Flood. The calling of Abram. The Exodus and Red Sea. Mount Sinai. This morning our story in 2 Samuel 7 is one of those key events that shapes the rest of the story. One commentator said 2 Samuel "occupies the dramatic and theological center of the entire Samuel corpus" and that it "is one of the most crucial texts in the Old Testament for evangelical faith."¹

The chapter has two big parts, verses 1-17, which we will focus on today, and verses 18-29, which we will focus on next Lord's Day. These two parts are God's

¹ Brueggemann, 253.

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grace and David's gratitude—that elegant gospel grammar we find in the Word of God.

1. *David's Plan: A House for the Lord*
2. *The Lord's Promise: A House for David*

May the Holy Spirit leads us into the truth of his Word today.

David's Plan: A House for the Lord

We see first of all here *David's plan*, which was to build *a house for the Lord*. At some point after the Ark of the Covenant, that tangible expression of the Lord's presence among his people, we read, **Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent"** (vv. 1–2). Circle that word "house" as it's going to be the key to what the Lord says later. We're not told David's motivation for wanting to build the Lord a house other than his observation that he, the king, lives in a house of cedar, while the true King, the Lord, lives in a tent. We also know that the Lord said to Moses back in Deuteronomy 12 that one say the Lord would no longer dwell in a tent like his people but would be located in one place. Yet there, the Lord said *he* would choose the location. Here we have David doing this on his own initiative. The rest of the chapter is the Lord telling David that the Lord would be gracious to David first! So Nathan, whom we are introduced to for the first time, tells David, **"Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you"** (v. 3).

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The Lord's Promise: A House for David

The rest of this chapter is the Lord's speech to David through Nathan the prophet. So notice a second point: *The Lord's promise*, which was to build a house for David.

Notice the Lord's response to David's plan in verses 4–7. He says, “**Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house**—there's that word again—**to dwell in?**” (v. 5) What we see here about our God is that he is totally sovereign and utterly free to do his will, and not be boxed in by David's or our plans. If he wants a house, he will determine when and where! As Paul tells the Athenians in Acts 17, “The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything” (Acts 17:24–25).

Who does David think he is to build anything for the Lord, as if the Lord needed the works of his hands? Who are we? When he asks, “**Would you,**” it reminds us that in 1 Chronicles 28:3 the Lord tells David that he would not build a temple for the Lord because he was a man of war and man of blood. His hands were stained and he thought he could build a holy temple!

The Lord then recounts that he has lived among his people in a tent just like then since the days of the exodus: “**I have not lived in a house**—again, that word—**since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I**

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have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house—that key word again—of cedar?” This is such an amazing thing for the Lord to say. He was willing and content to be with his people, humbled low like them in tents. Later in history this Lord stooped down again: “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:6–8). The Lord is our Lord Jesus Christ!

Now comes the heart of the Lord’s word to David in verses 8–16. He doesn’t merely respond to David’s desire, but not he positively says what he would do for David. He reminds David of his past faithfulness to him: **“I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel”** (v. 8). And his faithfulness to David continued all the way to the present: **“And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you”** (v. 9). Now if you know your Old Testament well, you will start to recognize some of the language of the Lord’s promises to David are fulfillments of his promises to his people in the past. So when he says again in verse 9, **“And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth,”** he is saying that his promise to Abram all the way back in Genesis 12:2 is coming true to David. And then listen closely to verses 10–11 for

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another Abrahamic promise: **“And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies.”** That’s exactly what the Lord said back in Genesis 15:7–21).

What a God, brothers and sisters! Is he reliable? Will he be there for you when you need him? I think about this and contrast it with that caveat made by investments: “Past performance is not indicative of future returns.” There’s risk. There’s instability. But with the one true God who loved David and who loves us, his past faithfulness to his promises is the reason we can trust him now and trust him in the future.

Finally the Lord comes to the astonishing promise: **“Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house”** (v. 11). David wanted to build the Lord a house of cedar, but the Lord says he is going to build a house, meaning, a dynasty, for David. The Lord makes a beautiful play on words here.

And there are several guarantees the Lord makes about the house he is going to build for David. First, not even death can annul this promise. Look at verses 12–13: **“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house—now meaning a literal house as David desired—for my name, and I will establish the throne of his**

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kingdom forever.” The Lord was guaranteeing that after David was gone he would see his promises through.

The second guarantee is that not even sin can annul this promise. In speaking of the king to come after David, Solomon, the Lord says, **“I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you”** (vv. 14–15). And notice something about this aspect of the promise that should stand out to us. We see here the grace of God that along sustains us his people. Notice the contrast between **when** and **but**. **When** Solomon sins—and he will sin—the Lord would discipline him as a father does a son, **but** sin cannot annul, cannot change, cannot forfeit, cannot remove the faithfulness of God: **but my steadfast love will not depart from him**. There’s that word *hesed* again, the faithfulness of God to his own promises. He is steadfast when we go off the path; he is stable when we are on shifting sand; he is immovable when our lives spin out of control.

The third guarantee is that not even time can annul this promise. **“And your house and your kingdom—notice how the Lord defines what he means by “house” here—shall be made sure forever before me Your throne shall be established forever”** (v. 16). And it’s that **forever** aspect of this promise that demonstrates that unlike the house of Saul, the house of David can do nothing to

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forfeit the faithfulness of the Lord until the full coming of the kingdom of David's greater son.

Why is this story such a high point in the Lord's story with his people? We here that original promise of a son to Eve back in Genesis 3:15 coming into its sharpest focus yet. Not only would the Lord bring a Savior to the world through one nation, as promised to Abram; not only would the Lord bring a Savior to the world through one tribe in that nation, as promised to Judah; but now the Lord says to focus your eyes on one house, one family line in that tribe, in that nation. And thus Matthew's Gospel opens our New Testament saying, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David" (Matt. 1:1).

Why is this story such a high point in the Lord's story with his people? It shows us that God's ancient promises always come true; that his Word is reliable. What would you try to do for the Lord today? Whatever it is, like with David, God's grace is greater than you and your efforts; God's grace will outlast your failures, your doubts, and your sin-stained attempts. And this gracious, ever-reliable Savior Jesus Christ invites you to find spiritual rest in him today. Amen.