

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Adult Bible Class
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After God's Own Heart - I Will Build You a House

If there was a "Camelot" in the time of King David, it occurred during the early stages of his reign. David concurred Jerusalem, made the city his capital, and brought the ark of the covenant to the city. After years living as a fugitive, David has a palace constructed with the help of Hiram king of Tyre (Lebanon). Toward the end of 2 Samuel 5 we find this summary, "And David knew that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of the people of Israel."

However, one big piece of the puzzle was lacking. 2 Samuel 7 opens with these words, "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." And with that David begins to build a temple in Jerusalem as the signature piece of his reformation of the worship life of the people of God.

Some Background

While David sounds somewhat dismissive of the "tent" which has been home to the Ark of the Covenant for several centuries, this was no mere tent. The Tabernacle was built at the command of God and God's instructions for its construction are highly detailed. The last 15 chapters of the book of Exodus are largely devoted to the plans for and construction of the Tabernacle. At the end of Exodus we learn why things are carried out to such detail: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." Exodus 40:34-35.

Through the Tabernacle, the holy transcendent God made possible his dwelling among his creation. By using a tent, he was truly dwelling among the people who likewise were living in tents as they traveled from Egypt to the promised land.

So, it is not just the ark that is living in the tent, but in a certain sense God himself was living in the tent. This will never do! David wants something better than that for the God who has made him king.

God's Answer (Part 1)

David has barely disclosed his plan to Nathan the prophet when God answers. And God's answer is the most generous "no" ever spoken! His answer to David's plan falls into 2 parts:

- 2 Samuel 7:5-11a – Did I ask you (or anyone, for that matter) to build me a Temple?
- 2 Samuel 7:11b-14a, 16 "Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. 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 for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son ... Your throne shall be established forever"

In the first instance, God's answer to David's vision focuses upon Solomon. He will be the next king and he will build the temple. David will not build God a house, but he will have a role to play. 1 Chronicles 22-29 details all the plans and purchases David made for the building of the temple. As David's reign ends, he speaks one last time to Israel and to his son, Solomon:

³But God said to me, 'You may not build a house for my name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood.' ⁴Yet the Lord God of Israel chose me from all my father's house to be king over Israel forever. ... ⁶He said to me, 'It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. ⁷I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues strong in keeping my commandments and my rules, as he is today.' 1 Chronicles 28:3-7

And David gives a blessing to his son: ²⁰Then David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished. 1 Chronicles 28:20

David will not build God a house, but God will build David a house, a dynasty, that will be established forever! This is not just the most generous refusal, but one of the great prophecies of the coming Messiah. It joins several other such prophecies as bit by bit the picture of the Messiah comes into focus:

- Genesis 3:15 – a descendant of Eve will crush Satan
- Genesis 12:3 – Through Abraham all the families of the earth will be blessed
- Genesis 49:10 – The scepter shall not depart from Judah

Gradually the promise is coming into focus. Now we learn the Messiah will be of the family of David!

Psalm 132:11–12

The LORD swore to David a sure oath
from which he will not turn back:
"One of the sons of your body
I will set on your throne.
If your sons keep my covenant
and my testimonies that I shall teach them,
their sons also forever
shall sit on your throne."

Moreover, this promise is a covenant. Covenants between God and people are always related to his calling his people in love and promising to be there God so that they can be his people. The promise to David ranks among the great covenants of the Old Testament, Other such covenants are:

- The covenant with Noah – Genesis 9
- The covenant with Abraham – Genesis 12, 15
- The covenant at Mt. Sinai – Exodus 20

David's Response

How does one even begin to respond to a gift like this? David does about all a person can do. He goes to the Tabernacle and "sat before the LORD." And in time he prays. The second half of 2 Samuel 7 is

David's bold prayer of thanksgiving. There are at least 3 subjects to his prayer:

- 2 Samuel 7:18-21 – Who am I that I should be blessed in this way?
- 2 Samuel 7:22-24 – There is no God besides you!
- 2 Samuel 7:25-29 – Now O LORD God confirm the word you have spoken.

God's Answer (Part 2)

David prayed God to be confirm the word he had spoken, and God did just that. Though a time would come when there would no true king of Israel, God did not forget. When the time was right two descendants of David would return to the ancestral home, Bethlehem, and promise would be fulfilled for all time: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:30-33

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit."
Isaiah 11:1

God the Father will proclaim Jesus to be "my beloved son with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). People would call out to him as the Son of David, and ask for healing (Matthew 9:27, 15:22, etc.) and on Palm Sunday he would be hailed as the "Son of David who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 21:9). Meanwhile religious leaders would debate whether the rabbi from Nazareth was indeed the promised descendant of David (Matthew 22:42-45, John 7:42 etc.) Perhaps the most striking testimony to Christ being the fulfillment of the promise to David come from the 2 great leaders of the early church, Peter and Paul.

- Acts 2:22-36
- Acts 13:32-39

The resurrection and subsequent ascension of Jesus are the ultimate fulfillment of the blessings promised to David. In the closing verses of the Book of Revelation Jesus will, himself, confirm this for all time: ¹⁶ ***'I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.'*** ¹⁷ ***The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.'*** -- Revelation 22:16-17

Not only is Jesus the ultimate son of David he is also the fulfillment of the temple. John begins his Gospel by telling us that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only son from the Father, full of grace and truth. With his sacrifice on the cross the sacrifices of the temple become obsolete. Christ becomes the new temple, the new assurance of God's presence with us. **"And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple was the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb"** Revelation 21:22