



2 SAMUEL
CHAPTERS 1-7

Study #6 - 2 Samuel 7

2 SAMUEL 7 | AN ETERNAL KINGDOM

This is a chapter about building a house. It breaks into two halves. The first (vv 1-16) outlines the Lord's commitment to his eternal promise to establish a house for David. The second (vv 17-29) records David's prayerful response.

2 Samuel 1-16 | Establishing the eternal house of David

'After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him...'

The chapter begins with the picture of King David in his palatial glory and rule. Though he is referred to as king in v 1 and v 18, the picture of the Lord's anointed is one of a servant (vv 5, 8, 19, 25, 26, 27, 29) who needs to understand and humbly submit to the Lord's sovereign will (see Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 12:18; Mark 10:45). Both King David and the prophet Nathan begin the chapter with well-intended but misdirected notions.

If the theme of the chapter is the establishment of the Lord's house, the achievement of this outcome takes place not according to human means, but by the Lord's promise. Two questions give David an understanding of the purposes of the Lord:

1. 'Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in (v 5)?
2. 'Did I ever say to any of the Israelite rulers 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar (v 7)?

The Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in places made by human hands, and has no need of anything that humanity might provide (see Acts 17:24-25). The Lord's concern is not for houses being built for him, but for the fulfilment of his promises. He appointed David as ruler over the Lord's people Israel and has been with him throughout his reign (v 9). He would now make David's name great, not by impressive palaces, but by the keeping of his word, cutting off enemies so that his people (v 10) and David (v 11) might have a place of rest and freedom from oppression.

David will come to recognise that the dwelling of God is established through knowing you are at peace with him, and with one another, and that this is the means by which God grants lasting rest. The promises of 2 Samuel 7 transform the vision of the Promised Land and anchor it in an eternal house that all God's people will inherit (see Hebrews 3:1-6)

The Lord would establish a house for David through his offspring (Solomon), who would build a house of the Lord, the temple of Jerusalem. The ark, the temple, and the city of David, would symbolise that the Lord does dwell his people. The Lord will be as a father to David's offspring, who will be disciplined and suffer for wrongdoing (v 14), but the kingdom will never be removed from him, as it was from Saul. V 15 establishes that the throne of David would endure forever, as God's promises take on an eternal fulfilment beyond the Promised Land David now occupies.

Christ would ultimately fulfil the father/son relationship prefigured in the words to David in v 14 (see Matthew 3:17), though rather than floggings inflicted for wrongdoing, the innocent servant would suffer at the hands of men, to bring about God's righteous purposes (Isaiah 53:11).

2 Samuel 17-19 | Blessing the eternal house of David

David's prayerful response reflects a fresh understanding and humility befitting the revelation that has been given him through the prophet. Declaring he is underserving of the Lord's generosity, David expresses his deep gratitude that the Lord has now also revealed the future (v 19). We have similar confidence because of the way God has acted towards us in the past. Without the cross of Christ we can have no assurance about the return of Christ.

David declares the Lord has done a great thing, and made it known to his servant. The act of revelation is in itself an expression of God's grace (v 21), confirming the Lord's faithfulness to his promises. In response David recounts the history of the Lord's faithfulness to his word, emphasising God's primary purpose as the redeemer of his people. The words of v 24 are a common biblical theme (Exodus 6:7; Jeremiah 30:22; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Hebrews 8:10), finding their fulfilment in Revelation 7:9-17.

In v 25 David grasps again the overwhelming generosity of the Lord he serves. He requests that the Lord continue to act and glorify his name through the establishment of David's house (v 26). David has

found courage to pray because of the Lord's trustworthiness to his word of promise (v 27). The eternal blessing he seeks upon the house of David is a request for the Lord's continued favour to be upon his people. The transformation of David from *building the Lord a house* (v 1) to *building the Lord's house* (v 29) is now complete.

Some conclusions...

1. **We should always be humbled by God's plans.** David begins the chapter as a king, yet concludes it as the humble servant ready to do the will of God. Jesus reflected this same 'inversion' when he spoke about the life of the disciple (Mark 8:34). Paul echoed the same attitude in Philippians 2:1-4, immediately before he called us to have the same attitude of Christ.

David had it all, and was willing to use it to give God all he thought he needed. Yet he needed to be humbled, and recognise that before the Lord of Heaven and Earth you can claim nothing. Unless you first realise his purpose for you is to redeem, restore, and renew your life through Christ, your well-intended plans will amount to nought. But the one who prayerfully and willingly submits themselves to the word of God by the Spirit of God can truly make a difference for the Kingdom. This is how the house of God is built up. We are reminded of the words of James 4:

13 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. 17 If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

2. **Prayer is the evidence of humility.** A believer whose prayer life is absent, or accidental, is driven to self-sufficiency. David's response in the second half of 2 Samuel 7 is powerful, not because of his piety, but because he had grasped God's character and purposes afresh, and he realised how his own plans paled into insignificance when compared to the Lord's (and David's plans seemed pretty impressive).

Jesus called on his disciples to seek the Lord who knows our needs before we ask (Matthew 6:8). Then to ask that the Lord's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). And in those times of challenge be prepared to say 'Not my will, but yours be done.' (Matthew 26:39).

Prayer stops us from getting carried away with ourselves.

3. **People matter more than property.** 2 Samuel 7 was about a house. Not the one David thought was important. A temple was built in the time of his son Solomon, which ironically would not last. Even the attempt to rebuild it, when the exiles returned to Jerusalem, just reminded everyone that greatness before the Lord can never be measured by bricks and mortar. Jesus became the temple that was rebuilt after three days, and in his resurrection we witness the surpassing glory of the house of God.

Churches can readily be divided over plans and priorities when it comes to property. This will not do. We share a common gospel purpose that allows us consider constructively how the physical resources we've been given may best be used for the Kingdom. We are neither flippant about our material blessings, lest we forget they are entrusted to us to further the gospel, or idolatrous, as if they become the gospel.

GETTING STARTED

1. Should we treat material blessings from God different from spiritual blessings?

INTO THE TEXT

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-16

2. Describe the attitudes of David and Nathan in vv 1-3.
3. There are two questions asked of David in v 5 & v 7. Why are they asked? What did they tell David and Nathan about the Lord's character and plans (see also Acts 17:24-25)?
4. What does the Lord promise David and Israel in vv 8-11? In what sense is the outcome more than just peace in the land (see Exodus 15:12-17)?
5. Contra David's plans to build a house for the Lord, the Lord establishes a house for David in vv 11-16. What will happen when David's reign is concluded?
6. How is the promise concerning the house being built fulfilled in Christ (see Hebrews 3:1-6)?

Read 2 Samuel 7:17-29

7. What does David understand about his own position before the Lord in vv 18-19, considering the narrator has just called him king? How did Jesus see himself before the Lord, in Philippians 2:5-11?
8. How does the Lord establish his people in vv 22-24? How does he do so today?
9. What change has David undergone from the beginning of the chapter? What does this teach us about the value of prayer?

T A K E A W A Y

10. How does your belonging to the house of God change the way you think about your church?
11. What would you describe has been the key learning for you from our look at 2 Samuel 1-7?