

# God's Covenant With David

Printed Text • 2 Samuel 7:1-13

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, students should be able to LIST components of God's covenant with David, ADMIRE the impact of God's covenant with David, and BE MOTIVATED to walk in covenant with God this week.

## In Focus

What is a covenant? One definition is a formal agreement between two parties with each assuming a significant part of the agreement. Many years ago, people entered into marriages by covenant agreements. Today, most folk sign pre-nuptial agreements before going down the aisle.

Covenants are built and developed on trust. In fact, it is extremely difficult for covenant relationships to survive without it. As a result, we have seen divorces, broken families, and lives destroyed because people have broken covenants. But praise the Lord, we serve a God who keeps covenant with His people. We can trust the Lord because He is true to His Word and will never let us down. We never have to sign a "pre-nuptial agreement" with the Lord before He becomes the God of our lives. In today's lesson, we will study why God's Word is sure and learn why He will not fail His people, no matter what.

Today's lesson tells us why we can trust God's covenantal promises. We are reminded that God's promises outlast any problem or difficult circumstance we face.

## Keep In Mind

"And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them" (Judges 2:17, KJV).

## Words You Should Know

**A. Ark** (2 Samuel 7:2) Hebrew Aron — The sacred box which was kept in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and later in the temple. The word "ark" literally means a container.

**B. Kingdom** (v. 12) Hebrew Mamiakhah — The rule, dominion, realm, and sovereignty, specifically of God.

## Say It Correctly

**Aphrodite.** af-ruh-DI-tee

**Ashtoreth.** ASH-tuh-reth

**Astarte.** AS-tar-t

**Hapi.** HAH-pee

**Ishtar.** ISH-tahr

**Isis.** I-sis

**Osirus.** Oh-SI-ruhs

## 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 his 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.  
7 In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?  
8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the shepcote, 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,  
11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house.  
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.

## 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.  
7 Yet no matter where I have gone with the Israelites, I have never once complained to Israel's tribal leaders, the shepherds of my people Israel. I have never asked them, "Why haven't you built me a beautiful cedar house?"  
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,  
11 starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. "Furthermore, the Lord declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings!  
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.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Nathan.** The name Nathan means “gift of God.” Nathan was a prophet in the court of David. Three significant events are recorded about him in Scripture: (1) In 2 Samuel 7 (and in 1 Chronicles 17), David consulted with Nathan on his intention to build a temple to house the ark of the covenant (vv. 1–13). After David committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged Uriah’s death, God sent Nathan to rebuke David (2 Samuel 12). (2) In 1 Kings 1, Nathan becomes the “king maker,” setting the stage and directing the dialogue to convince David to crown Solomon as his successor (vv. 13–14). (3) Nathan is mentioned as the writer of part of the Book of Chronicles (1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 9:29) and partly attributes to his authority the musical role of the Levites in the temple (2 Chronicles 29:25).

## Background

In last week’s lesson, David moved his family and soldiers to Hebron where he became king of Judah. After the civil war between Judah and Israel, the elders of the northern tribes came to David and submitted themselves to him. Thus, David became king of both Judah and Israel for 40 years.

It is clear that God was with Israel’s new king since David’s first conquest as king over all Israel was to capture Jerusalem and name it the City of David (2 Samuel 5:6–10). David goes on to defeat the Philistines with the blessings of the Lord (vv. 17–26).

The third act of King David was to return the Ark of the Covenant to Israel and settle it in Jerusalem. David was so excited when he brought the ark back to the nation, that he leaped and danced before all the people, which caused his wife Michal to despise him. Michal was the daughter of Saul who remained childless because she criticized the king. On one occasion, while David sat in his house, the thought occurred to him to “bless” the Lord because of God’s faithfulness to him.

### At-A-Glance

1. David Wants to Build A House for God (2 Samuel 7:1–4)
2. God Responds to David’s Request (vv. 5–11)
3. God’s Promise to David Will Stand (vv. 12–13)

## In Depth

### 1. David Wants to Build A House for God (2 Samuel 7:1–4)

After subduing the Philistines (2 Samuel 5:17–25), and bringing the ark of God back to Israel (2 Samuel 6:1–23), King David had an opportunity to sit back and reflect on all that he had accomplished in a short period of time. While reflecting, David realized a significant point. The ark of God did not have a permanent place to reside in Israel as did the king.

The ark represented God’s presence among His people. Thus, when David retrieved the ark from Obed-edom’s house, he set it in the midst of the tabernacle behind a curtain (see 2 Samuel 6:17). According to Mosaic Law, the ark was to rest behind the curtain or veil which separated the holy and most holy places of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:33). Though David had been given the responsibility to return the ark to Jerusalem, the king knew that the God He served deserved more than just a temporary structure as a place where the ark would reside. After all, God had prospered the king and

had provided cedar wood for a house to be built for him (2 Kings 6:11–16). Shouldn't the king do more for His God? Perhaps David felt guilty because of the apparent "inadequacy" between him and God. Or, maybe David felt the need to reciprocate to God what he had received. Whatever the reason, David confided in Nathan the prophet about his concern. Convinced that the king's heart was right, Nathan encouraged David to proceed with his plans, assuring him of God's presence and protection every step of the way.

The old song lets us know that we can't beat God's giving, no matter how we try. God has blessed us with material resources and benefits, and we can give to Him by being generous to those less fortunate than we (Proverbs 19:17). Scripture declares two important principles that correlate with King David: (1) the king's heart is in God's hand who turns it wherever God wants the heart to go, and; (2) we may have our own plan, but God is the One who searches and weighs the heart of people (see Proverbs 21:1–2).

Though David's request was noble and honorable, God never asked the king to build Him a house. To clarify that Nathan the prophet was speaking his own desire to please the king, rather than for Him, God came at night to Nathan in a vision and gave him a specific word to give to the king.

## **2. God Responds to David's Request (vv. 5–11)**

The first word that God told Nathan to give to the king came in the form of a question. In essence, God wanted to know why did David want to build a house for Him. Next, God gave the king a history lesson that reflected both His character and His desire. God reminded David that He had carried the people from their place of bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land. In fact, the Scriptures declare that "the LORD went before [Israel] by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night . . . before the people" (Exodus 13:21–22). In another instance, Moses affirmed that the "cloud of the LORD" lifted from the tabernacle of Moses when the Children of Israel went on their journey home. The cloud symbolized God's presence (Exodus 40:34–38). Never once did God ask or command the Children of Israel, or anyone else for that matter, to build Him a permanent dwelling place. Third, Nathan was told to remind the king of his own history. From all of Jesse's sons, God selected David who was feeding sheep to be His choice to replace Saul (1 Samuel 16:1–13) and to rule over both the reunited northern and southern kingdoms (2 Samuel 5:1–5). Finally, God told the king that He had been with him every step of the way, from the time when Saul made several attempts to take his life to David's victories over the Philistines.

Through everything that David experienced, from the time he was anointed until he was firmly established as king, God's desire and purpose was to make David's reign part of an everlasting kingdom. After all, it was through David's loins that the Messiah would be born to redeem the world. Thus, God made it clear that David would not build a house for Him (see 1 Chronicles 28:3). God did not want David to take credit for building Him a house. However, God promised that He would select the place for Israel to dwell and would plant them so they would never have to move again or be afflicted by their enemies (2 Samuel 7:10).

Where would God "plant" Israel? Through Jesus Christ, God's people would be in Him (see John 12:26; 15:5) so that the wicked one cannot touch us. Once we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, we have a covenant relationship and are assured of a permanent place with God (John 14:3).

We can never understand the mind of God. He reminds David that no human being can really build Him a house. God is the only One who builds "houses." God built an earthly tabernacle in the womb of Mary and dwelt among us full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Paul affirms that if our earthly "house" passes away, God Himself has already built for us an eternal "house" so we can be with Him forever (2 Corinthians 5:1).

God's "houses" are more sure than any we can build for Him. It is clear from His Word and through the prophet Nathan that God had a higher, eternal plan for His people that was greater than King David could imagine.

### **3. God's Promise to David Will Stand (vv. 12–13)**

The final word that God gave Nathan to convey to the king was that God's house would be permanent and last longer than David. Long after David was dead and buried, two things would happen: (1) Solomon, David's son by Bathsheba and Israel's third king, would be responsible for building an enormous temple where Israel would worship (1 Kings 6:12); and (2) David's other "Son," Jesus Christ, would rule and reign over Israel forever (Luke 1:31–33; Acts 2:25–35).

Our God is eternal. His covenant will stand forever. We can be confident of our hope of salvation because Jesus Christ is the same today and forever (Hebrew 13:8). When we put our trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord, we too are recipients of the New Covenant and are assured of a beautiful house where we will dwell with Him forever (John 14:3).

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. Where did the Ark of God reside when King David returned it to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 7:2)?
2. What was God's response to David's desire (v. 5)?
3. Of What did God remind David (vv. 8–10)?
4. What did God promise the king (vv. 10–11)?
5. How would God fulfill His promise (vv. 12–13)?

### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. Why did David want to build a house for God?
2. Do you believe God was insulted by David's request? Why or why not?
3. What did God mean when He said that David's son would establish his kingdom?
4. Is it possible today to build a house that would please God? Why or why not?
5. Can we ever break God's covenant through our actions, words, or deeds? Why or why not?

### **Liberating Lesson**

What can we learn from today's lesson that can help us reinforce covenant relationships in our families, communities, cities, and nation? Make a commitment to help people who may not attend church to understand God's New Covenant and apply these truths in their lives.

### **Application For Activation**

This week, focus on God's covenant to you as a believer in Jesus Christ. Remind yourself that God's promises are more sure than any problem or difficult circumstance we face. Spend time praising God for His Word, His promises, and His love for you. Report on your activities during next week's class time.

### **Follow the Spirit**

What God wants me to do:

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## Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## More Light on the Text

### 2 Samuel 7:1–13

This passage deals with David's desire to build a house for God and God's response to David's proposal. God responded to David with a promise of perpetual kingship. This account in 2 Samuel is also repeated in 1 Chronicles 17. David thanks the Lord for this glorious promise in prayer and praises the unmeasurable grace of God. He also prays for the fulfillment of this renewed promise of divine grace.

**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 his enemies;**

We read, "it came to pass, when the king sat in his house." What does it mean to say he "sat in the house?" The Hebrew for "sat" is yashab (yawshab) and primarily refers to sitting down. But specifically it is used to speak of judges. Here it anticipates the peace and quiet which the king is now experiencing. Until now David probably lived in a tent, and now he has a place where he can remain settled and established. The place of habitation signals a sense of security. Within the next phrase is an important Hebrew word nuwach (noo-akh) or rest. Note here that rest is a gift given to David from God. However, this rest was not merely from inner turmoil, but from external foes as well. The phrase "all around" is translated from the word micaabiyb. This word is rooted in the Hebrew word cabiyb (saw-beeb, which refers to a circle of neighbors. The environment was now friendly. Everyone who hated him was at peace with him.

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

David's life demonstrates to you and me that in times of peace and rest, we should meditate on God's Word and think of doing His work. David was concerned that the ark of God remained in a tent and therefore wanted to build a permanent structure to house it. David thought of building a temple to honor God. It seemed inappropriate for the king to live in a palace, while God's ark remained in a tent. David was grateful to God for his success. In spite of all his kingly glory, David sought to honor God. God resists the proud but gives grace to those who are humble (James 4:16). Because every good gift comes from God, grateful souls can never do enough for God who has done everything for them. They cannot enjoy their comfortable accommodations while the church of God is in distress. When God blesses us, in gratitude we too should find ways to bless God. David shares his revelation with the prophet, Nathan. He shares a reality. He lives in a cedar palace, yet, the ark of God dwells inside a curtain. But he does not tell Nathan of his real desire, that is, to construct a temple for God. Everyone in leadership needs a prophetic presence to check their actions, whether they be good or bad. Which is what the Hebrew word nabiy (nawbee) translated prophet means, someone who can check your actions. One thing that David seems to intuitively understand is that personal luxury cannot supersede the work of the Lord.

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

Nathan, the prophet, who often speaks for God, tells David to proceed with what is on his heart, for God is with him. Nathan speaks his heart and tells David to do what is in his heart. However, He does not know David's true intentions. Nathan's response is a prudent response given the fact that the king does not tell him what he intends to do. Nathan literally tells David, "according to your heart." The word *yalak* (*yawlak*) translated here as "go" can mean literally or figuratively to walk. It can also be translated "go with your heart." David must let his action flow from the heart. Unlike us, who give credence to the head, for Nathan and David, the heart was the seat of thought. The word translated "heart" is *lebab* (*lay-bawb*). For the people of Israel in David's time and for the Egyptians, the heart was the most interior organ and held the power of life and death. So, for Nathan to say "go and do according to all that is in your heart" he may have been cautioning the king to make sure his motives were in the proper place, and that he had a good understanding of what he was proposing to do.

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

Nathan had spoken well. However, what he said could be construed as tacit support for the king's project. God soon rectified the situation by revealing to Nathan what was the true desire of David's heart. The use of the word *layil* translated "night," is vital. What is interesting is not the fact that the word, as used here, means simply night. But some scholars think it is derived from the Hebrew word *luwl* which means to twist. Then it could mean that Nathan was restless as he went home. Figuratively, the word can mean adversity. Thus, Nathan may have suffered that evening and God would not let him rest until he heard what the Lord thought of David's proposal.

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

God instructs Nathan to return to David and entrusts Nathan to deliver God's message to David. The revelatory message begins with a question to David that reveals his true intentions, "Shall you build me a temple to dwell in?" The message is given to dissuade David from building the temple. David's plan to build the temple is superseded by God. God knows the reasons behind David's desires. Yet, often our desires are not what God would have us do. The task of building God's temple is not David's work. David is to enlarge the boundaries of Israel. Also, David is a great psalmist. God uses him to prepare the music for the temple.

Notice that God sends his message by the same person: (1) Nathan, the same person God uses to give David encouragement also gives discouragement. This is done to eliminate confusion; (2) God speaks to Nathan the same night in order to quickly eliminate the confusion. Because God's direct instruction cannot be misconstrued, as much as he wants to, David cannot build a house for God. This suggests that what was in his heart may not have been the building of a house for the Lord, though it was part of 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's message to David through Nathan continues. God reminds David that the ark has dwelled in a tent and in a tabernacle ever since Israel left Egypt. Jesus Christ was like a tabernacle; He was without a permanent home. The church of Christ should be like a tabernacle, in that it dwells in the hearts of men and women who take the Gospel (the Good News of salvation) into the world.

David misunderstands if he thinks that God needs a house to live in. God reminds him that this is not his priority. It is as though God is saying to David, "Certainly you do not think that when I saved Israel I did so in order for them to build Me a temple like the Gentiles do for their God, do you, David?" The

use of the word *kiy* (*kee*) suggests something like “assuredly, I did not ask them to build a house for me. Did I?” It is as though God is saying “doubtless, I asked for no such activity.” God says emphatically, “you shall not build me a house,” and proceeds to state “nevertheless for the sake of conversation, let me ask you this. Since the time I brought the children out of Egypt, even to this day, did I ask for a house?” The idea is that God has been open about what He demands from His people. The Lord may not be impressed with the idea of keeping His ark in areas away from the people. The use of the *ohel* (*o-hel*) suggests that God is saying I have always been where I can be seen from a distance.

**7 In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me a house of cedar?**

In this verse, God continues the interrogation of David. The question here is “did I tell any of the judges of Israel to build me a house of cedar?” The phrase “spake I a word” is translated from the Hebrew as *hadaabaar dibarity* and could be translated “did I make such arrangements?” Another way of stating this is “did I force them by a command to build me a house?” It must also be noted that this rebuke is also for Nathan who should have known better than to give David a false impression that this was what God wanted.

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

God tells Nathan to remind David of how God changed him from a shepherd to a prince, and now the king of all Israel. David is reminded of the great things God had done for him. This is a powerful verse in that God reminds David that His choice of him has nothing to do with what he had accomplished lest David think that his building a house for God will give Him perpetuity. By the use of the word *tsaba* the verse also suggests that God called David to organize for war, not to build him a house.

**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.**

God reminds David of how He was with him wherever he went, and how it was God who cut off his enemies and elevated him to greatness among the people. God gave David success over his enemies. God continues by reminding David that everything he has God has given to him. In a variety of situations, God has walked with him and applied his strength on his behalf. It was God who had continually given growth. God allowed his enemies to fall and be destroyed. God says David has been given a great name. God has allowed him to make his mark.

**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,**

God promises to give Israel a permanent home where they will live in peace. God tells them that He will appoint, He is the one who calls Israel by name and is committed to Israel. God says He will cause Israel to stand. God will not let the enemy strike. Using the word *tachath* (*takh-ath*) translated afflict, God assures Israel that they will no longer be at the bottom, depressed by the hand of the oppressor. No longer will they be below, rather God will raise them up.



**11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee a house.**

In this verse, God addresses David's major concern: his legacy. David wants to build God a house, but God promises to make David a house by blessing his family and posterity. God tells David what He will do for him. In this verse, by using the word asah (aw-saw) God is saying that He will accomplish what David desires. God will advance David.

**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.**

This verse contains really what David is looking for. Will he have the respect of posterity? Will he be remembered? The Bible indicates that David will die a peaceful death. God also promises David that his seed will succeed him on the throne. One of the greatest fears of ancient times was to die without a successor. There are three things inherent in this. First, it may mean that one dies young; second, it could mean that one dies without an heir; and third, one may have heirs but none of them is fit to carry on the spiritual legacy. God responds to all David's concerns. The word mal'e (maw-lay) suggests that God will fill him or cause him to be full. Even when he is dead and his body is ravished this fullness will continue to his heir. God says his seed (Hebrew zera, zehrah) figuratively means the fruit of his work or of his body or that which he has planted will experience establishment by God. Actually, the word used is the Hebrew word kuwn (koon); to stand straight. They will be as some say "set." It implies that God will prepare prosperity for his seed.

**13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.**

God reveals to David that his successor to the throne, his son, Solomon, would be the one to build the temple and his kingdom would be established forever. David is not allowed to build the temple because he is a man of war, but his son, Solomon, will be a man of peace. However, David is permitted to gather the materials that Solomon will need to construct the temple. This passage refers to the messianic reign. Here God moves from the temporal to the eternal by the use of the Hebrew word owlam (o-lawm) meaning eternity.

# Daily Bible Readings

## **Monday**

Psalm 93

## **Tuesday**

Psalm 2

## **Wednesday**

Psalm 45:1-9

## **Thursday**

Psalm 94:8-15

## **Friday**

Psalm 98

## **Saturday**

Revelation 11:15-19

## **Sunday**

2 Samuel 7:1-13