

## God's Promise

Malcolm smiled at his campaign manager, his 22-year-old granddaughter, Camille. She had arranged for them to attend a Christmas party at the home of one of the more influential principals in their school district. Camille was counting out the sleek, well-designed trifold brochures that she had created as they drove to the party.

Malcolm was running for a third term on the school board. His opposition was a younger candidate who considered Malcolm's methods outdated and his convictions irrelevant. The candidate supported new policies that, he claimed, mirrored the changing times.

"You've accomplished great things for the school district," Camille had said months before. She'd always been interested in the world of politics. "I'm going to do all I can to help you get re-elected." And she had; she'd been working non-stop for months as they prepared for the upcoming election in April.

Which was, in part, why Malcolm had let her convince him to go this Christmas party. Primarily, he wanted to socialize with the other guests who had historically supported his campaigns.

"I think this party will be good to pick up a few votes," Camille said as the car rolled onto the exit ramp. "Be sure to get a lot of face time with Principal Franklin."

"I've been meaning to tell you," Malcolm said, "that you are a great campaign manager. Thanks for all your hard work. I do hope to win this April, but if I don't, I'm part of a better kingdom, one which never ends. And I can't get voted out of that one."

**1.** *How easily do you trust in God's plan?*

**2.** *Why can it be a struggle to trust God in today's world?*

**3.** *What is a promise that God has kept in your life?*

**LESSON FOCUS:** Trust God's plan for a forever kingdom.

## David Made Great

2 *Samuel* 7:4–9 *KJV*

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 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.

2 *Samuel* 7:4–9 *NIV*

4 But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:

5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?' 6 I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. 7 Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'

8 "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.

A divine message comes to Nathan, to alter David's plan (v. 4). The word is clear: God does not want David to build the temple. Although the temple would be built, David would not be the builder.

God's presence has never been confined to one particular place. Since the Israelites' escape from Egypt, He has not lived in a "house" but has moved "from place to place with a tent as [His] dwelling" (v. 6). He journeyed with Israel through the wilderness. There was never a point from the past to the present when God had requested a house (v. 7). He doesn't need a permanent temple to confirm His greatness, which is displayed by the ways He has been present in David's life: turning a shepherd into a leader, protecting him in battle and when chased by Saul, and making him king over Israel. God will continue to grow David's reputation (his "name"), as an image of His faithfulness (v. 9).

**4.** *What does God ask in verse 5? What does He mean by this?*

**5.** *What reasons does God give Nathan for His decision?*

**6.** *What does God tell Nathan to tell David instead?*

## The Kingship Made Eternal

*2 Samuel 7:10–17 KJV*

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

*2 Samuel 7:10–17 NIV*

10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning<sup>11</sup> and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also

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.

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 for ever.

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

give you rest from all your enemies.

“The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:

<sup>12</sup> When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup>

He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. <sup>15</sup> But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. <sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

<sup>17</sup> Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

God says that He will not only make David’s name great, but will make the nation great as well. He would “provide a place for . . . Israel and . . . plant them so that

they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed" (v. 10). The Israelites had spent many years fighting other nations to keep the promised land. Some enemies even conquered and ruled the Israelites for periods of time. Because of that history, God promises, "Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they . . . have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel" (vv. 10–11). In time, Israel will have "rest from all [their] enemies" (v. 11). God's people will be freed from the turmoil, as had been the plan when they were brought back to the land of Abraham.

The passage returns to the greatness of David's house, and that God will "establish" it (v. 11). God will "raise up [David's] offspring to succeed [him]" (v. 12). God will build this descendant's kingdom, continuing the work He started. This son—later to be revealed as Solomon—shall go on to build a house for the Lord. God declares, "He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (v. 13). God promises that He will have a special relationship with David's son (v. 14). God shall discipline him when he does wrong, but He will never stop loving him.

The final words of God's revelation point beyond Solomon and David's house: "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (v. 16). These words point to the ultimate "Son of David," Jesus Christ (Luke 1:31–33; Acts 13:22–23). But even as the promise is given, David is awestruck and full of praise. He trusts in God and gives glory back to Him. David declares, "Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever" (vv. 25–26). God is deserving of all glory.

**7.** *What promises does God make to David about Israel?*

**8.** *What do God's promises reveal about Him?*

**9.** *Why is God's promise about David's throne important for believers today?*

## Are You Ready for a King?

My children love to play kings and queens. Through their games, I see what they believe about leadership—if you want to call it that. The oldest orders her younger siblings to retrieve snacks, books, and pillows for a throne.

God didn't start by giving Israel a king. The Israelites asked for a king anyway, probably because they wanted to be like the nations around them. What they were actually doing was rejecting God as king (see 1 Sam. 8:1–22).

The problem is that many leaders have nearly the same idea of leadership as my eight-year-old, assuming positions of power are for lording over others. It's shocking to read God's promise that David's family shall rule forever! We find that many of David's descendants were horrible leaders. God would send prophets to say, "Hear this, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right . . ." (Mic. 3:9–12).

God's promise to David looks like a big mistake, unless you understand that God came to earth to show a completely different version of kingship. The Son of David would become a servant, going as far as to die for His friends (Phil. 2:6–8). What looked to others like weakness and foolishness was the unfathomed mercy of God. He reminds His people, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways" (Isa. 55:8). The only way that God could give us a good king was to come to earth in the person of Jesus. It is Jesus who can be exalted and hailed as worthy, the one who turned our version of kingship upside-down.

**10.** *What image comes to mind when you think of a king?*

**11.** *What's a Gospel story that shows God's version of kingship?*

**12.** *What do you imagine will be different when all creation bows to Jesus as king?*

## Falling into Place

When I was sixteen, my father was transferred out of state for his job, and my whole family moved with him. This turned my entire life upside down. Nothing was how I thought it should be. I spent that summer in a lot of rage—anger toward my family and toward God for ripping me away from the only home I'd ever known. But that move sparked a chain of events I couldn't have possibly predicted. I went to a different state college; there, I met the man I would later marry; and I earned a different degree than what I thought I wanted. When I thought my life was falling apart, God was moving the pieces into their proper places.

► *When have you thought your life was falling apart, only to find out later that God was moving all the pieces into place? How have you witnessed His faithfulness in your life?*

### KEY VERSE

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

—2 Samuel 7:16 KJV

Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.

—2 Samuel 7:16 NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

#### Week of December 2 through December 8

(See *The Quiet Hour and Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** 1 Samuel 16:1–13—The Lord Looks on the Heart.
- Tue.** 2 Samuel 5:1–10—A Shepherd for God's People.
- Wed.** Luke 1:26–38—Christ's Unending Reign.
- Thu.** Psalm 2—God Defends the Anointed.
- Fri.** Isaiah 9:1–7—Endless Peace for David's Throne.
- Sat.** Romans 1:1–7—The Son of David.
- Sun.** 2 Samuel 7:4–17—An Everlasting Kingdom.