

ADULT UNIT I: Jesus, the Heir of David
ADULT GENERAL LESSON TITLE: God's Promise to David
ADULT TOPIC: A Very Fine House

LESSON 2

DATE: December 8, 2024

DEVOTIONAL READING: Isaiah 9:1-7
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 2 Samuel 7:1-17
PRINT PASSAGE: 2 Samuel 7:4-17

Home Daily Bible Reading

Dec. 2	M	1 Samuel 16:1-13	<i>The Lord Looks on the Heart</i>
Dec. 3	T	2 Samuel 5:1-10	<i>A Shepherd for God's People</i>
Dec. 4	W	Luke 1:26-38	<i>Christ's Unending Reign</i>
Dec. 5	Th	Psalm 2	<i>God Defends God's Anointed</i>
Dec. 6	F	Isaiah 9:1-7	<i>Endless Peace for David's Throne</i>
Dec. 7	Sa	Romans 1:1-7	<i>The Son of David</i>
Dec. 8	Su	2 Samuel 7:4-17	<i>An Everlasting Kingdom</i>

EXALT!

Invocation – Teacher or Learner

Celebration – “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord” #229 AME Zion Bicentennial Hymnal

Declaration – 2 Samuel 7:4-17 (Read together by the class, by a volunteer or responsively.)

4 But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, **5** “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in? **6** I have not lived in a house 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. **7** In all places where I 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 of cedar?”’ **8** Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. **9** And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make

for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ 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, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ¹² 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. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.” ¹⁷ In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

Affirmation – We appreciate God’s covenant love that will never be taken away. (*Spoken together by class and teacher*).

ENGAGE: (5-10 min.)

People value permanence and seek to build structures that will outlast themselves. In what ways can such plans be superseded? When David wanted to build a house for God, God promised to build a “house” for David—a never-ending kingdom! Discuss with the group the worthy goals of home ownership. What does it mean to be in one’s own home? Discuss the two meanings of house as domicile and dynasty. How strongly do we desire to build a house for our loved ones? What does it mean to make a forever promise, do you think?

EDUCATE: (10-15 min.)

2 Samuel 7:4-11: David’s desire to build a “house” for God was prompted by gratitude (7:1-2); God’s plan to build a “house” out of David was God’s response to David’s acknowledgment that God, not David, was the reason for David’s success. In 7:6, God says that he lived among his people “in a tent and in a dwelling,” language not only reminiscent of Exodus 26 but also of John 1: God’s desire from the very beginning (Genesis 3:8) has been to be with his people. Cedar (7:2, 7) in the ancient Near East was the highest quality wood for construction since it grew tall and straight (Psalm 92:12) and is unusually

durable because it repels insects; it became a symbol of wealth, stability, and power throughout the ancient Near East from the Bronze Age on. God made a promise to David that the destructive cycle of sin-judgment-rescue repeated throughout human history (compare 7:10-16 with Judges 2:11-19) would finally end through David (Matthew 1:1, 17). God's covenants (Genesis 15; Deuteronomy 27-28; even Romans 5-6) are all gifts initiated by God, not as a reward for work but as a firm commitment establishing a relationship in which God has sought out. Man has responded: much like a marriage, it is the security and stability of commitment that allows true trust and intimacy to grow. Familial relationships (7:14) involved more than inheritance: they were a commitment to raise a child in the right way to live, to teach him or her to make good (wise) choices, and to develop good character in them (see Proverbs 22:6; 13:1, 24), but God's promise to discipline with human consequences demonstrates grace rather than to judge with overwhelming divine punishment. God has in view a discipline that leads to teaching and maturing in the Covenant people. In addition to a family metaphor, God uses garden imagery here as well: in 7:10, the words "plant" and "shaken" (or "disturbed") evoke God in the garden, gently securing new plants and protecting them from the destructive elements or trespassers; consider the continuity of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8-10), Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 47:1-12), and the garden in God's new city (Revelation 22:1-2).

2 Samuel 7:12-17: "David was not a perfect man or king, as events yet to come would demonstrate (see Psalm 51). But his heart was not the same as Saul's (1 Samuel 13:14), so God chose to establish a relationship of enduring *love* with David. That is proven in the history of kings of Judah—where descendants of David and Solomon reigned after Israel was divided following Solomon's death—even as judgment was enacted (Isaiah 14:1-2; compare Romans 11). God's power, not David's achievements, was to be the basis for house-building, kingdom-securing, and thrones-establishing.... Even when Solomon's magnificent temple fell to ruins at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC, God's promise to David remained unshakable. That *house*, that *kingdom*, is established in Christ. He is David's true heir (Matthew 1:1). And what Jesus said of his church remains true: 'The gates of Hades will not overcome it' (16:18). God's promise was given not because David proved worthy where others did not. Moving beyond 2 Samuel 7, we see David's deep failures: favoritism within his family, sexual immorality, and even murder. The promise is to David by God's grace. It is an unmerited gift, given to David despite his unworthiness. It is given to Israel despite the people's unworthiness. Ultimately, it is offered to all humanity despite all our unworthiness" (*Ibid.*, p. 134).

ELEVATE: (5-10 min.)

Break into smaller groups and respond to the following questions, suggestions, and issues: 1.) Have you heard God say to you, “I will not take my steadfast love from you”? How do you shape your life in response to this promise? 2.) Think about it: What are the central promises of the Davidic covenant? Which of these promises is most important to you? 3.) In a journal, write sayings and paste photos that speak to how you understand your relationship with God and the world. Imagine that our journal is a house of meaning that God has built for you. 4.) Reclaim God’s baptismal promises to you by dabbing water to your forehead. Remember your baptism and be grateful. 5.) When has a personal disappointment led to something good that you could never have imagined? Praise God for the disappointment. 6.) Who has been your Nathan, someone who has given you bad news and has confounded your plans? Send a thank-you note to your Nathan.

iTHINK: (5-7 min.)

1. Compare the ancient Near East notion that the gods were interested in human beings as temple builders and maintainers with Israel’s belief that the Lord had raised up rulers in Israel to shepherd God’s people.
2. Identify the play on words when God says that David is not to build him a house (temple); instead, God will build David a house (royal dynasty) that will last forever (v. 16). Note the development of Israel’s hope for a Messiah from this promise.
3. Discuss the tabernacle’s role in God “tenting” with God’s people, a temporary movable structure versus a permanent standing structure. Compare to John 1:14 (“lived among us” is also translated, “dwelt among us” [KJV], “pitched his tent with us” [Greek, *skenoo*]).
4. Reflect on Mary’s pregnancy as a fulfillment of God’s tenting with the people. Compare the announcement to Mary in Luke 1:32-33 with 2 Samuel 7:14, 16.
5. Brainstorm ways that the church can be the church without a permanent structure. What are the dangers of assuming that we go to a building to meet God?
6. Watch the video “Covenants in the Bible” at bibleproject.com to understand the covenants’ significance for the Jewish and Christian faiths.

KEY VERSE: Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever. 2 Samuel 7:16.