

International Sunday School Lesson Study Notes

Lesson Text: II Samuel 7:4-16

Lesson Title: An Eternal Kingdom

Introduction

Have you ever wondered what the President of the United States does in his own private and personal time? George Washington, like many men of his time, enjoyed outdoor activities such as horseback riding and fishing. Abraham Lincoln enjoyed "townball," an early form of baseball.

Teddy Roosevelt was probably the one President with the greatest number of hobbies. He was without a doubt the most active president, enjoying wrestling, boxing and tennis. He also enjoyed a number of outdoor activities including horse riding, shooting, and of course, walking. President Clinton, President George W. Bush, and President Obama spent some of their leisure time playing golf.

What did the kings of Israel do with their private and personal time? King Saul, the first king of Israel, spent a lot of his private time in mental and spiritual turmoil. King Solomon, the third king of Israel, spent most of his leisure time dining with foreign dignitaries and accumulating wives and wealth. King David, Israel's second king, was unparalleled in his accomplishments and leadership. In addition, David had a heart after God and spent a lot of his private time in the presence of the Lord. That seems to be what is happening in the opening verses of 2 Samuel 7 and the basis of his desire to build the Lord a dwelling place.

Prior to the events of 2 Samuel 7, David had brought the ark of God into Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6). The procession had been his life's shining moments and a glorious revival of sorts for the king. All seems to be well in the kingdom as both David and the nation was enjoying a welcomed season of rest and peace (2 Samuel 7:1). As David rested, his mind began to spin with thoughts about his beautiful palace in comparison with the Lord's tent. He was putting together a plan to build his Lord the most beautiful temple in the world.

In wanting to build God a temple, David's heart was in the right place. He even called for the prophet Nathan and said, *"See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtain"* (2 Samuel 7:2). When Nathan responded to the king, *"Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee"* (2 Samuel 7:3), it seemed David's plan had been sanctioned from heaven. But God had other

plans. And God's plans would not permit David to build God a house. Instead, God would build a house for David!

An Eternal Kingdom: David's Plans Rejected (2 Samuel 7:4-7)

Verse 4-5

"And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?"

On the same "night" David was meditating and planning to build God a house, God spoke to "Nathan" and revealed to him that he had spoken to soon when he told David to proceed with his plans. Not every word of a prophet was inspired. But the words Nathan would now speak to David were inspired by God as indicated in the words, "the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying."

"Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?" Nathan's message to David was spoken in the form of a question but the answer is obvious in the words "Shalt thou." God had not commanded David to build Him "an house." The word "house" is used 15 times in this chapter alone and in 3 different ways. It refers to David's palace (vv.1-2); the Temple (vv.5, 7, 13); and David's dynasty (vv.11, 13, 16, 18-29).

The message God gave to Nathan was a hard message for Nathan to hear and even harder to repeat to King David. But God is merciful and kind to David even in rejecting his proposal. He addressed David as "my servant" which would be like pouring soothing ointment in a hurting wound. It was not God's intention to hurt David with the rejection of his plan but rather to reveal that He had something better. God's refusal wasn't a rejection of His faithful "servant" but a redirection. Sometimes when God says, "no," there are better things ahead!

Verse 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 gives David a small history lesson through the words of Nathan. He reminds David that He had never "dwelt in any house" since He delivered the "children of Israel out of Egypt." "Even to this day" covered a period of about 400 years in

which God manifested Himself "in a tent and in a tabernacle," but not in a permanent structure. The pilgrim identity and portability which the "tent" and the "tabernacle" portrayed was deliberate on God's part. As a people Israel was wandering in the desert and in a state of unsettledness. Thus far, then, the building of a permanent "house" was not necessary to guarantee God's presence.

Verse 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?"

Throughout all "the places" God had "walked with all the children of Israel," He had never spoken "a word" to "any of the tribes of Israel" or asked them, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" God had never once even hinted that He wanted a permanent structure in which to dwell. At this point in Israel's history, they needed a shepherd "to feed" them, not a temple. It seems as if God is asking, "Whose idea is this, anyway?"

There are ministries and churches that have never been designed or ordained by God. Often men have good ideas in their minds and ask God to bless their ideas. The only things God blesses are those things which He ordains. It is always better to meet with God in a tent of His appointing than in a building of your own making! Just because your hearts in the right place; just because your plan is a good plan; just because your friends approve it; that doesn't mean it was God's will! Every plan we design for God isn't necessarily of God!

An Eternal Kingdom: God's Plans Revealed (2 Samuel 7:8-16)

Although the word covenant is not used in 2 Samuel 7, the promises that God makes to David in 2 Samuel 7:8-16 is called the Davidic Covenant. Out of a genuine heart of love for God, David wants to build God a house. God has told him, "No," and that must have been disappointing. But God has something greater for David. God has something even more lasting than the temple which will eventually be built by his son Solomon and destroyed in 586 B.C., then rebuilt and then destroyed in 70 A.D. What God has in store is revealed in the following verses.

Verse 8-9

"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: 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."

"Now," or, "now that God had revealed why He rejected David's plan," God tells Nathan what to "say unto my servant David." This is the second time God has referred to David as "my servant." Although it is obvious David hadn't prayed about his plan to build God a house and that his plan was not God's will at this time, God didn't treat David with disdain. David is still God's "servant" and because of God's love and grace He will use David greatly to establish not just a "house," but an eternal kingdom. He is about to hear some wonderful promises that far outweighed building God a "house."

Speaking through the prophet Nathan, God told David: "I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 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." Whereas God spoke to David about the national history of Israel in verses 6-7, He now speaks to David about his own personal history. Nathan's words, "I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep" would take David's mind back to his humble home in Bethlehem with his father Jesse and his brothers. He was just a humble shepherd when the prophet Samuel came to his home to anoint him to be the next king of Israel. David wasn't even in the house when Samuel came but was summoned from the field and then the prophet anointed him (1 Samuel 16:1-13).

"To be ruler over my people, over Israel" signifies that God had called David to do a great work. God chooses seemingly insignificant people, forgotten people, overlooked people, and even rejected people to accomplish His will (1 Corinthians 1:27-28; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:4; James 2:5).

"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." The widespread and well known victories of King David and Israel over their enemies, were not just for conquering territory. Everyone today who has any knowledge of the word of God knows who David is. And that is because God "made" him a "great name."

Nathan's words go much deeper and farther than just the time of David. If the coming Messiah was to be from the lineage of "David," it was necessary that the king should hold a special place in the hearts of all the Israelites. In the Old Testament, no king is God's "servant" except David; no king is connected with Messiah but David. Therefore, God "cut off all" David's "enemies" "made" David "a great name."

Verse 10-11

"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, 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."

"Moreover" means "and," or every detail mentioned is part of God's plan. God "will appoint," God "will plant" His people in the Promised Land. David wants to build God a "house" and God is building a nation with plans to "appoint a place for my people Israel." We learn from Genesis 12-17 the foundation of God's purposes and dealings with Israel in His covenant with Abraham. God promised him: a land; a great name; to multiply descendants; and his blessing and protection. Now God's covenant with David builds on Abraham's covenant, for it speaks about the same things, the nation, the land, and the Messiah.

Anyone who knows the history of Abraham and the nation of Israel know they have been "afflicted" by the "wickedness" of evil men and nations. Some of the "affliction" they have suffered has been the result of their own sinfulness and they suffered in Babylonian captivity for seventy years (Deuteronomy 30:1-5). However, Israel's unfaithfulness to God did not cancel God's faithfulness to keep His promises made to them. Ultimately, God's promise to David is not fulfilled in a political or military event but through the gospel of Jesus Christ. By the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ God gives lasting peace, unshakable security, and true identity to His people, wherever they are in the world.

"Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house" is actually the fifth promise in the Davidic Covenant. The previous four are: 1) "I will make your name great" (v.9). 2) "I will appoint a place for my people Israel" (v.10). 3) "I will plant them that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more" (v.10). 4) "I

will cause thee to rest from all thine enemies" (v.11). The fifth is, "The LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house" (v.11).

Before you stick David with the label of being out of God's will with his desire to build God a house, think about the fact that David was just a little ahead of schedule. Instead of David building a "house" for God, God will "make" David "an house" that will result in the coming Messiah and the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Verse 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."

With the word "when" we now have God's timing in the fulfillment of this unconditional eternal covenant with David. It will be after David's death when he will "sleep with his fathers" that God will raise up David's offspring to succeed him. Then God "will establish his kingdom."

You know, timing is everything. God's first announcement of the coming of the Savior was given in Genesis 3:15, informing us the Savior would be a human being not an angel. The "*seed*" of a woman in Genesis 3:15 is a clear reference to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16). Next, in Genesis 12:3, God tells us the Savior would be Jewish, coming through the lineage of Abraham. Then in Genesis 49:10, the Savior would come through the tribe of Judah. Now we learn here that Messiah would come through David's family. Then Micah 5:2, we learn His birth place would be in Bethlehem. No wonder David was gets stirred up and worships in verse 18-29 of 2 Samuel when he learned that Messiah would be known as "*the Son of David*" (Matthew 1:1).

Verse 13

"He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

"He" is a reference to David's son, Solomon. It was King Solomon who built the temple. When Nathan spoke these words, the one who would "proceed out of David's bowels," Solomon, was the second son born to David and Bathsheba, was not yet born. This is a remarkable testimony to God's power and grace in working all things to His glory (Romans 8:28). God was saying, "David, we're going to

build a house, but it's going to be your son, not you, who's going to carry on these promises of the kingdom and build the house that you have thought of."

Verse 14-15

"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: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee."

In the Old Testament, the relation between Father and son denotes the deepest, and most special kind of love. As a "father" to David's sons, God would not tolerate any of David's descendants disobeying Him. If that happened, God would "chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men." However, even when God chastened David's descendants, He treated them as "sons," and because of God's "mercy" He promised to never remove them from His favor, like He removed King Saul (1 Samuel 13:13-14; Psalm 89:20-37).

Verse 16

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

Just as Presidents and national leaders wonder about their legacy, every biblical king wondered what would happen to his kingdom. God gives David some powerful words of assurance in this verse. This may be a short verse that doesn't demand a lot of explanation but please don't miss the wonder of it. Notice the words, "established" and "for ever." They are repeated twice in a twenty word sentence. David's "kingdom" and his "throne" will never crumble. What a promise! What a plan!

Conclusion

Although the Scriptures don't tell us, David must have been let down when Nathan came to him with a divine, "No, God said you can't build the house." As Nathan began to tell David what the Lord had told him, David must have wondered how it all would work out and how all the pieces would fit together. Had David been like most of us, the disappointment of God's "no" might have blinded him to the joy of God's promise. He could have even become bitter and jealous that the house he wanted to build for God would be built by his son. Thankfully, David didn't make that mistake.

Questions: How do you respond to change in plans? What is your reaction when things just don't work out the way you hoped they would? When the finances aren't there or a physical problem hinders your dreams, how do you handle it?

In return for wanting to build God a house, God built David a house. In return for wanting to make God's name great, God made David's name great. And in response to David's heart and desires, God built an eternal house for David, a dynasty that would lead from the tiny village of Bethlehem all the way to the King of Kings, Christ himself. What an amazing display of grace and mercy!

Amen.