

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

7Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” 3Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.” 4But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 5Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6I 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 and a tabernacle. 7Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” 8Now 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 to be prince over my people Israel; 9and 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. 10And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11from 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.

16Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Historical Context

Davidic kings ruled in Jerusalem for more than four centuries, ending with the exiling of Zedekiah in 586 BCE. But already before the end of the physical kingship, biblical writers concluded that God would keep the promise to David in the promise of the coming messiah, and Christians concluded that the promise of messiah was fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, whose title Christ is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word messiah. So, 2 Samuel 7 is the real basis for the messianic hope.

Theme: A Dynasty

David proposes to build a house for the Ark of God (7:2). David's plan is not, however, a good or workable idea to God. God will be the one to build a house for David, not vice versa. The house God has in mind is the Davidic dynasty. God has promised a dynasty forever (7:16).

God can be full of surprises when accomplishing divine plans. Just as 7:11b, the announcement of God's housing project comes as a surprise to David, so, too, does the announcement of the completion of this housing project come as a surprise to Mary in the companion gospel story from Luke. First, the angelic greeting itself catches Mary completely off-guard, but then the content of that angelic announcement is almost beyond belief. God's promise to David will find its ultimate fulfillment in a child she shall bear. Her son, Jesus, shall be the Son of God, shall have the throne of David, shall reign over Israel forever, and shall have an eternal kingdom. What David could not possibly build, God now announces. It will come to pass in the birth of Mary's child: The kingdom of God is being built through and upon its eternal monarch, Jesus.