

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2021

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SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 7:1-17

1 Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 the 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." 3 Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: 5 Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live 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 and a tabernacle. 7 Wherever 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?" 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 to 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 live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers 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 ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth 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 for ever. 14 I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. 15 But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever. 17 In accordance with all these words and with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Michael J. Wallace '14

When we step into the story of David and learn about his desire to build a house for the Lord, we might nod our heads and think, "Of course! The mighty King David should be the one to build a house for the Lord. This makes sense!" At first, even Nathan the prophet is on board with David's plan. Yet, the word of the Lord comes to Nathan declaring that David is not the one to build God's house.

Eventually, we learn that when David dies, his son shall build a house for God's name. As we meditate upon this passage, we might find ourselves in David's shoes: we seem to be God's appointed person to do some exact thing, but we find out that God has other plans. May this serve as a reminder to us that the work of the church is not squarely on our shoulders, but it is ultimately up to God! Moreover, sometimes our job is to lay the groundwork for someone else's project that we may never see to completion.

In this Advent season, when we talk so much about waiting, we learn that David, too, had to wait. Except that David would not behold God's house during his life. May this passage serve us today so that we might recognize our limitations; God's plans will sometimes be realized through us, but other times apart from us.

Even when the days are short and our hopes are dashed, may we be reminded that God is in control and will bring about this beautiful story of salvation for us and for the whole world. Thanks be to God!

PRAYER

Almighty God, so often we feel the weight of ministry on our shoulders. Help us to recognize that you are in control and that it is not all up to us. In this Advent season, may we rest in the assurance that your plans will ultimately be fulfilled. May we find hope in the end of the story, and may it give meaning to our work today. Through your son Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

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