

2 Samuel 7

- We're in the middle of studying several chapters in 2 Samuel that summarize the success David had in ruling Israel during the early years of his reign
 - God was working to bless David personally and He was at work blessing the nation through David both militarily and religiously
 - David's family is growing stronger and he's moved into his new home in Jerusalem
 - The nation is defeating its long-time foes, the Philistines, and expanding into new territory
 - And the nation is returning to observance of the Law, including moving the ark back to its proper place in the tabernacle
 - David is so blessed because he is the man God raised up to show His people how life can be when led by a man after God's heart
 - This must seem like nothing less than a miracle for the people of Israel, who have been ruled poorly for hundreds of years
 - The time of Judges was a disaster, and the rule of Saul wasn't much better
 - But now things are looking up for Israel as David unifies, strengthens and grows the nation
 - But David is not perfect, of course, and there will be moments when David takes a misstep, and when he does, the nation will suffer too
 - In short, the nation will rise or fall based on David's obedience to the Lord
 - And today we open with an early example of this relationship as David orders the ark moved to Jerusalem
- Last week we introduced this story with David and his men going to Baal-Judah to retrieve the ark
 - In the Law, the Lord had instructed the people of Israel to move the ark of the Lord in a very specific way, carried by priests on long poles
 - Furthermore, the Law required that only priests could handle the ark and that if anyone else dared to do so, it meant death

- Earlier in Israel's history, 50,000 Israelites died after the men of Beit Shemesh dared to open the ark and look inside
- It was that mistake that led to the ark being hidden away in Baal-Judah until this day
- And now ironically, as David prepares to move the ark to Jerusalem, he's in danger of making a similar mistake
 - Let's re-read the opening verses of Chapter 6 as we return to our story

[2Sam. 6:1](#) Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.

[2Sam. 6:2](#) And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim.

[2Sam. 6:3](#) They placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart.

[2Sam. 6:4](#) So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark.

[2Sam. 6:5](#) Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.

- David assembles an immense crowd of 30,000 men to accompany the transfer of the ark from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem
 - And whether out of ignorance or carelessness, David decides not to follow the Law's requirements for moving the ark
 - Instead, David arranges for his men to transport the ark on an ox cart accompanied and protected by his military
 - As we said last week, David has good intentions, and in fact notice that David and all the people are worshipping the Lord
 - They have instruments of various kinds in hand, and a crowd of 30,000 engages in loud, heart-felt praise of God
 - It's a heart-warming scene, but good intentions are not a substitute for obedience to God's word

- And eventually, when we do the wrong things, even when we do them with good intentions, consequences follow
- And King David's mistakes always bring consequences for God's people

2Sam. 6:6 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it.

2Sam. 6:7 And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

- The road between Kiriath-jearim and Jerusalem was a narrow and rocky path that snaked through the hill country of Judea
 - At a certain point along the way, the ark rolled over the threshing floor in a town called Nacon
 - The name Nacon means to be firm, which suggests that the land there was especially rocky or hard
 - So as the wooden cart rolls over this rocky terrain, the ark is tossed back and forth in the cart, and eventually tips
 - One of the men protecting the Ark as it travels was a man named Uzzah, whose name strong or mighty
 - Clearly, David chose Uzzah for this duty because Uzzah had the strength to steady the ark
 - But God's word in Numbers 4 says that a non-priest could not touch the ark or he will die
 - And although we may choose not to keep God's word, *He* always keeps His word
 - So as Uzzah reached out to steady the ark, the Lord's anger burned against this act of disobedience and God struck Uzzah down
 - Notice the writer says that this striking was for irreverence, but the Hebrew word found here is only used this one time
 - And irreverence is not the right way to translate the word, because it suggests that Uzzah was being irreverent
 - And that leads to confusion, because everyone can see that the man was trying to honor God by protecting the ark

- No, that wasn't the problem...the problem was David's mistake in ordering Uzzah and the other men to do what they are doing
 - And that means the word is probably better translated "the error" referring to David's error in judgment, not Uzzah's act
 - David made an error in judgment, and the Lord takes Uzzah's life to make a point concerning His law and David's leadership
- Uzzah was an innocent victim, but God had no choice but to strike Uzzah down
 - If God had not acted against Uzzah, then God would be violating His own word in Numbers 4
 - And though we might argue this is a situation when God should have gone against His word, you don't want God to do that
 - If God could violate His own word when it suited Him, then you would have no reason to trust in the promises of God
 - Because faithfulness works both ways...if you want God to be faithful to His promises of good for you, then He must be faithful to all His word
 - If God could overlook His promise that only priests touch His ark, then how do you know God won't forget His promises to you?
 - You can't have it both ways...either God is faithful to everything given in His word or He's not to be trusted in anything He's said
 - So because God's word command a death when a non-priest touches the ark, Uzzah must die as collateral damage over David's error
 - And can you imagine the scene...30,000 people singing, dancing and worshipping the Lord around the ark
 - And then instantly, the Lord strikes down one man for touching the ark and suddenly the worship stops and the people scatter
 - It's such an ironic scene that proves the truth of one of Samuel's better remembered statements

1Sam. 15:22 Samuel said,

**"Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.**

1Sam. 15:23 “For rebellion is as the sin of divination,
And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.

- Samuel says that insubordination to God, meaning disobedience, is equal to idolatry and divination
 - So ironically, while David and the people were worshipping the Lord with their voices and instruments, they were practicing idolatry
 - By disobeying the word of God, they were acting contrary to worship, because true worship is obedience
 - We would do well to remember that truth as we seek the Lord in worship too
 - Coming to church to sing and raise our hands in worship is important and necessary
 - But it’s also nullified if at the same time we live in ways that we know are contrary to the word of God
 - And as we see in David’s situation, neither good intentions nor ignorance of the word of God will acquit us
 - Consider Uzzah...he acted in ignorance and with good intentions, nevertheless he died as the word of God required
 - And David too will suffer consequences as a result of his poor leadership

2Sam. 6:8 David became angry because of the LORD’S outburst against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day.

2Sam. 6:9 So David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?”

2Sam. 6:10 And David was unwilling to move the ark of the LORD into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

2Sam. 6:11 Thus the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

- David becomes angry at the Lord after His destruction of Uzzah, resulting in that place coming to be known as Perez-uzzah
 - The name roughly translates as the place of Uzzah’s breaking or destruction, but it was actually the place of David’s folly

- And David's anger at God is evidence of how little David understands the word of God at this point
- And it's also an excellent example of what happens to believers commonly when we live without an understanding of the Bible
- The pattern goes something like this: we have desires and plans and assumptions and beliefs about how we live and serve God
 - Some of those ideas are correct, but often many of them are misinformed
 - And unless we consult the word of God in a systematic, consistent fashion, we remain trapped by those errors
 - But we never stop to question whether our assumptions might be wrong, much less that we might be offending God
- Then the Lord moves in our life to address our sin by bringing a reminder from a pastor or friend, or correction through a new teaching
 - Or maybe in the worst case, the Lord takes action to discipline our sin as He did here with David and Uzzah
 - And when that reminder, or correction or discipline comes, we react in anger as David did
- We react angrily to someone daring to suggest we are doing something wrong or to a new teaching that implies we have wrong thinking
 - So we lash out at God's discipline believing we're being unfairly treated
 - Or as David did in v.9, we become afraid of God thinking He's unpredictable or capricious in His anger
 - But the truth is that we were at fault for acting contrary to His word, whether out of ignorance or neglect
- Like David, we are already on notice of what God expects, but understanding what He has said requires taking time to study it
 - That's the key reason why Bible studies in general exist, and to a large extent, why VBVM and VBVF were founded
 - All Christians are called to obey the whole counsel of God's word but you cannot obey what you do not know

- In v.9 as David sees Uzzah's death and becomes afraid of God, he asks "how can the ark come to me?"
 - You should detect a little self-pity in that statement, because David is essentially saying, "It's impossible for me to please God in this way"
 - David's implying there's no way to move the ark without God getting upset, but that's not the truth at all
 - God very much desires that His ark be reunited with the tabernacle as He intended it to be
 - But the same word of God that called for the construction of an ark and for its location in the tabernacle also stipulated how to move it
 - And David's predicament and despair are the result of ignoring those instructions
 - And this will not be the last time David makes this mistake
 - As David acts outside the counsel of God's word, he will occasionally find himself stumbling into serious sin
 - And when he goes astray, so will the people under his charge, and both suffer consequences
 - This is a basic Biblical principle and it's been a pattern in Israel virtually since the beginning of their history
 - David is just the latest (but not the last) example of this truth
 - That's why the Bible places such high demands for the character and knowledge of anyone who would lead God's people
 - The fruit of a competent and godly leader will be knowledgeable and obedient followers of Jesus
 - Conversely, unqualified and untrustworthy leaders invariably yield ignorant and disobedient followers
- The Lord will use David's life as an example of both sides of this relationship, and this incident will be the first major error of David's leadership
 - In each case, the mistake has implications for David and the people, and in the end David learns from each mistake he makes
 - In this case, it takes David a few months to absorb and accept the Lord's discipline and to understand the lesson

- And in the meantime, the ark sits in another home for a time, this time in the home of a Gittite living just outside Jerusalem
- A Gittite is the name given to someone who comes from the region of Gath, which is Philistine territory in the Shephelah
 - But according to 1 Chronicles 15 he appears to have been a Levite
 - So this Levite offers (or is made) to store the ark in his home after David and the people abandon their attempt to move it
- This too is an example of consequences of ignorant leaders over God's people
 - When poor leaders lead God's people astray and consequences follow, the people often distance themselves from God
 - Believers "walk away" from practicing their faith, churches decline, and in the worst cases they disappear altogether
- That's how many old churches became museums or community centers
 - The faithful were misled by poor leaders and poor teaching, the church declined and disappeared and the world filled the space
 - David misled the people, the people suffered and abandoned this work of God and the testimony of God went under cover
 - It's a cycle that happens over and over in Israel's history and it happens still today
- So David's leadership resulted in Uzzah's death and frightened the people and distorted their view of God's character and led them to abandon the work
 - Then for three months David apparently engaged in Bible study and eventually learned the proper method for moving the ark
 - Can you imagine the "Ah hah!" moment when David came across this passage in the Law:

Num. 4:5 "When the camp sets out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and they shall take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it;

Num. 4:6 and they shall lay a covering of porpoise skin on it, and shall spread over it a cloth of pure blue, and shall insert its poles.

Num. 4:15 “When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy objects and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, so that they will not touch the holy objects and die. These are the things in the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

- David discovers there is a proper method for moving the ark and it wasn't on a cart
- Which means he also realizes that Uzzah's death was entirely unnecessary and entirely his fault
- That must have been a humbling and intensely convicting moment for David and it gave him an appreciation for the importance of God's word
 - And in typical fashion, David double-downs on obedience from that moment forward
 - David returns to move the ark properly, and when he does, he doesn't just follow the Law's requirements, he goes beyond
- It starts with assembling the necessary team:

1Chr. 15:1 Now David built houses for himself in the city of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it.

1Chr. 15:2 Then David said, “No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to Him forever.”

1Chr. 15:3 And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place which he had prepared for it.

1Chr. 15:4 David gathered together the sons of Aaron and the Levites:

1Chr. 15:11 Then David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab,

1Chr. 15:12 and said to them, “You are the heads of the fathers' households of the Levites; consecrate yourselves both you and your relatives, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place that I have prepared for it.

1Chr. 15:13 “Because you did not carry it at the first, the LORD our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance.”

1Chr. 15:14 So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

1Chr. 15:15 The sons of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles thereon, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

[1Chr. 15:16](#) Then David spoke to the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their relatives the singers, with instruments of music, harps, lyres, loud-sounding cymbals, to raise sounds of joy.

[1Chr. 15:25](#) So it was David, with the elders of Israel and the captains over thousands, who went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with joy.

- Notice the extent that David goes to follow the Law this time, including assembling representatives from all the priestly families
 - David is careful to instruct them in the Law and he explains their previous disaster was a result of disobedience not God's fault
- Finally, as the ark is moved in the right way, there is renewed celebration and praise with shouts of joy
 - This is true worship...praising God in the midst of obedience to His word
 - And the result is God is pleased and the people are edified
- Back in 2 Samuel we're told that the trigger that gets David moving again in obedience to God's word is the prospect of blessing

[2Sam. 6:12](#) Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God." David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

[2Sam. 6:13](#) And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.

[2Sam. 6:14](#) And David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod.

[2Sam. 6:15](#) So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sound of the trumpet.

- After the three month delay David hears that the man who took the ark into his home was blessed by the Lord during that time
 - We don't know what that blessing included but we can assume it was the enlarging of his household in various ways

- Whatever it was, it caught people's notice and when David hears about it, it changes his attitude toward God and this work
- David realizes that Obed-edom's prosperity is an indication that if the ark was in the tabernacle, blessing would come to the entire nation
 - Moreover, it reminded David that God is good to His people, if only they would hear and obey His word
 - So after coming to that realization and armed with the knowledge of how to move the ark properly, David is ready
- David moves the ark as we learned in 1 Chronicles 15, and because he does it according to the word, God is with the people
 - In fact, David has the priests sacrifice an ox and a cow for each six paces they walked
 - Starting from Obed-edom's home, the ark is within sight of Jerusalem, so thankfully they don't walk that far
- This was a very powerful display of repentance on David's part, but it also reminds us of Samuel who said to obey is better than sacrifice
 - No matter how hard we work to show God we're repentant, it's still a reminder that we sinned in the first place
 - The best path is to avoid sin in the first place
- Interestingly, we're told in v.14 that David wore a priestly garment, a linen ephod
 - A linen ephod is a sleeveless white garment prescribed for priests
 - David wore it over his usual tunic, but the question is why did David don a priestly garment since He wasn't a Levite?
 - There are a couple of possible answers
 - First, a non-Levite wearing a linen ephod is not against the Law, so there is no sin in doing so necessarily
 - Had David performed sacrifices then he would have sinned, but there is no indication that he is sacrificing
 - In fact, v.14 says David was busy dancing before the procession, and the word for dancing is literally whirling

- So David didn't assume any priestly functions on that day
- So, it's likely that David put on the linen ephod to identify with the rest of the procession of priests, who would have been wearing the same
 - Remember the last time he tried to move the ark, David's mistake led to a man in his service being killed
 - So by wearing the same uniform as the men this time, David identifies with them as one of them
 - And in that sense, David puts himself in the place of Uzzah to show his men that he will take the fall this time should God act
- Secondly, David is a priest of a different order, the order of Melchizedek
 - The order of Melchizedek is the priestly order of our Lord, which is a different order than the Levitical priesthood
 - Like any order, the office is handed down from father to son
 - Leading up to Christ, there was only one priest officiating from the order of Melchizedek on earth at any given time
 - And when that priest died, his son inherited the position
 - The first priest in this order was Adam and the line of succession passed from father to son until it reached Jesus
 - As Hebrews teaches us, Jesus lives forever so He holds the office of Melchizedek forevermore
 - But in David's day, he was the Melchizedek, having received the position when his father, Jesse, died during Saul's reign
 - So when David put on priestly garb, he was in effect acting as the priest Melchizedek, not as a Levitical priest under the Law of Moses
 - And in that respect, David offers us another clear picture of Christ, Who is both King and Priest in the order of Melchizedek
 - A Levite could never be king, since kings come from the tribe of Judah, not Levi
 - And a king like David from the tribe of Judah could never be a Levitical priest, since they must come from the tribe of Levi

- But David (and Jesus, the son of David) can be both so long as they are priests of the order of Melchizedek
- So the ark arrives in Jerusalem, and with it comes the blessing of the Lord upon David and the people, who celebrate with David
 - But the pattern of David's sin having consequences for him and the people will continue, and in fact a previous sin raises its head

2Sam. 6:16 Then it happened as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

- Michal was David's first wife and a daughter of Saul which David left behind when he fled from Saul
- Later, Michal was wed to another man, whom she loved, so when David negotiated her return, he ripped Michal away
- And now we see that this experience has caused Michal to despise David and really who can blame her
 - David's selfish choice has set him with an adversary in his own home
 - She witnesses David's joy over the ark and his willingness to express that joy outwardly by dancing, and Michal disapproves
- But in v.16 we see that her disapproval was a result of deeper-seated dislike for David
 - In fact, the writer calls her the daughter of Saul to link her attitude with her father's dislike of David
 - Just as Saul was jealous of David's relationship with the Lord and the people, so now is his daughter following in Dad's footsteps

2Sam. 6:17 So they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

2Sam. 6:18 When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offering, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

2Sam. 6:19 Further, he distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both to men and women, a cake of bread and one of dates and one of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed each to his house.

- David completes the process of moving the ark by preparing a tent to protect the ark, though the tabernacle itself still resides in Gibeon for now
 - David celebrates the day by speaking a blessing on the people in the name of the Lord, which means in keeping with the will of the Lord
 - So that means the Lord has moved David's heart to issue this blessing, which the Lord intends to fulfill in His purpose
 - This is the blessing for obedience to the Law and to the word of God, which the people will see in coming years
 - And in a gesture of kindness, David has gifts given to the people from his own storehouse
 - Each person present receives a cake of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins
 - These were precious and prized treats in that day, and the people would have been thankful for them
 - David's gifts commonly represented prosperity and fertility, and they follow in a long tradition of the Jewish people celebrating with food
 - Perhaps more than any other culture, Jewish culture revolves around food and feasts
 - And we see that tradition reflected here
 - But in the background, Michal is fuming at her husband and sees opportunity to lecture him upon his return

2Sam. 6:20 But when David returned to bless his household, Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself!"

- Michal's complaint boils down to dignity...she complains that David acted in an undignified way leading the ark in the way that he did

- So we need to read between the lines in Michal's complaint to understand the real issue
 - Because as so often happens in marriages, the real complaint is something other than what's being argued
 - She begins sarcastically saying "How the king distinguished himself today!"
- Her specific charge is that David uncovered himself in the eyes of the servants, which refers to David's men in general
 - Keep in mind, David was not dressed immodestly, so we must understand her complaint in relative terms
 - She's upset that a king would dress at a level equal to his subjects rather than to maintain a superior, regal appearance
 - So she speaks in exaggerated terms about being "uncovered" and shameless
- In truth, Michal despises David not for the way he dressed or danced
 - Most likely, she probably hated David because he abandoned her years ago and never returned for her when he had chances
 - Instead, he marries other women while on the run
 - And finally, David took her away forcibly from the husband who remained devoted to her even to the point of chasing her
- And now that David has taken her father's place as king, she can't view him with respect, and watching his dance was just the last straw
 - David immediately recognizes that Michal's true concerns were not with his dignity as king but with his relationship with her and with the Lord

2Sam. 6:21 So David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the LORD.

2Sam. 6:22 "I will be more lightly esteemed than this and will be humble in my own eyes, but with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished."

2Sam. 6:23 Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

- David corrects his wife saying that he was dancing not before his servants but before the Lord

- And it was that same Lord who appointed David as king in place of Saul and his family
- And for that reason David was celebrating before the Lord he says
- Then importantly, David adds that his dignity (or being esteemed) before the Lord is not his first concern
 - David says he will be more lightly esteemed than this, which means that he has even less reason to be esteemed
 - Dancing before the people is the least of his faults, in other words, and for that reason David will remain humble
 - And as he remains humble in his own eyes, he expects the Lord to make David distinguished before the people of Israel
- These are remarkable words spoken by a powerful man who had every reason to be prideful and to demand respect from the people
 - And had David demanded that respect, he no doubt would have received it
 - But if you have to demand respect and authority, then you truly have neither
- David displays perhaps his single greatest quality as a leader: humility
 - So many leaders (and individual Christians) would do well to remember David's example and follow it
 - How many ministries have fallen to pride because of a prideful leader who forgot to please God and began to please himself?
- This split between Michal and David led to their estrangement it would seem
 - In v.23 the writer gives us a footnote on her life saying she never had children with David
 - Given David's fertility with his other wives, it seems that either David and Michal were never intimate again
 - Or else the Lord prevented her from conceiving
 - But what's also clear is that David had a relationship with the Lord that Michal lacked

- She couldn't celebrate with David in his joy over the Lord, nor did she respect his relationship in that regard
- Alexander Whyte said this about David and Michal

Never, surely, were man and wife more unequally yoked together than was David, the man after God's own heart, with Michal, Saul's daughter. What was David's meat was Michal's poison. What was sweeter than honey to David was gall and wormwood to Michal. The things that had become dearer and dearer to David's heart every day, those were the very things that drove Michal absolutely mad; furiously and ungovernably mad that day on which the ark of God was brought up to the city of David.

- David did Michal wrong, and the consequence for David was to find a woman in his home who didn't know the Lord or love him
 - And David's right to the throne didn't justify his domestic neglect
 - As the anointed monarch of Israel, he cared for God's people with tenderness
 - But as husband to Michal, he was a harsh and unfeeling husband to the woman who loved him and saved his life
- In the end, Michal's barrenness was a blessing for David and the nation because any son born to a daughter of Saul might have been a rival
 - But since none of Saul's sons survived and his daughters had no children, Saul's line comes to an end
 - And the dynasty of Saul ends here
- Moving into Chapter 7, the writer continues with the theme of David's blessing on the religious life of Israel

2Sam. 7:1 Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies,

2Sam. 7:2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains."

2Sam. 7:3 Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your mind, for the LORD is with you."

- This scene takes place much later in David's life as king, and we know this because of the circumstances
 - Earlier in Chapter 5 we were told that David's palace was built with the help of Hiram, the king of Tyre who provided cedar trees
 - History records that Hiram ruled only during the last part of David's reign, and yet here we're told David is in his cedar home
- So this moment takes place late in David's life after the Lord had given David victory over all his enemies
 - That may have explained why Tyre was so generous to David
 - With the Philistines defeated along the coast, the Tyrians undoubtedly benefited from the lack of trading rivals
- So now David reflects on his position of wealth and safety living in a fine palace, and it dawns on him that the Lord's ark still dwelled in a tent
 - And so David consults with the prophet of that time, Nathan, suggesting that David should build a temple for the ark
 - Nathan responds to the suggestion by simply saying the king should do what he feels is best
 - That is the proper response for a prophet who hasn't heard from the Lord
 - Remember prophets were required by God to speak only what they were given to speak, for to do otherwise meant risking error
 - And if a prophet spoke error, it invalidated their ministry and required that they be killed under the Law
 - That rule was as much to protect the prophet from the people as it was to protect the people from the prophet
 - When a prophet knew that the penalty for speaking in error was death, it caused every prophet to pick his words carefully
 - So if he hadn't heard from the Lord on a matter, he declined to express an opinion to avoid being wrong
- So Nathan lets the king make his own decision telling David that since the Lord is with him, he can make the decision on his own

- So David goes off thinking he has a splendid idea, but before he could act upon it, the Lord comes to Nathan with the answer

[2Sam. 7:4](#) But in the same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying,

[2Sam. 7:5](#) “Go and say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in?”

[2Sam. 7:6](#) “For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle.

[2Sam. 7:7](#) “Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’”

- The Lord comes to Nathan that same night telling the prophet to remind David that the Lord never asked him to build a house
 - The Lord says that for all the years He has been with Israel since the time in the desert he has lived (contently) in a tent
 - That was all that God required for Himself, and as such He didn’t need David to build God a house of cedar
 - This is such an interesting moment because it’s God demonstrating the humility that David once possessed himself
 - How do we know the greatest of God? Is it from the greatness of the buildings that we build to honor God?
 - Isn’t that just a demonstration of our own pride, especially when God Himself hasn’t asked for such
 - Instead, God dwelled in tents because His greatness was self-evident and didn’t depend on externals
 - Moreover, the Lord adds in v.7 that He never instructed any of the tribes of Israel to build Him a house
 - And when you think back to the years in the desert, the Lord gave Israel a lot of instructions on what to build and how
 - So if the Lord wanted something more impressive for Himself, He had plenty of chances to demand it
 - The point is the Lord has no need for our buildings and His honor was not determined by them nor did He command that any be built

- Once again, good intentions do not substitute for obedience
- And a good rule of thumb for knowing what God wants is to simply do the last thing you heard God tell you
- And keep doing it until He tells you something new
- So then the Lord give Nathan the reason why He had not yet told anyone in Israel to build a permanent structure to house the ark

[2Sam. 7:8](#) “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 ruler over My people Israel.

[2Sam. 7:9](#) “I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth.

[2Sam. 7:10](#) “I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly,

[2Sam. 7:11](#) even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

[2Sam. 7:12](#) “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

[2Sam. 7:13](#) “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

[2Sam. 7:14](#) “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,

[2Sam. 7:15](#) but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

[2Sam. 7:16](#) “Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.””

- This is an important passage in Scripture is commonly known as the Davidic Covenant, a special promise made to David
 - We’ll come back to this next week and discuss the context and content of the passage
 - And learn why a tent is the right thing for God now