

October 22
Lesson 8 (NIV)

GOD'S COVENANT

WITH DAVID

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 89:1-15

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 2 Samuel 7:1-16; Psalm 89; 1 Chronicles 22:6-8

2 SAMUEL 7:1-6, 8-10, 12-16

¹ After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."

³ Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you."

⁴ But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:

⁵ "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?' ⁶ I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling."

⁸ "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. ¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning.'

¹² "When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

KEY VERSE

Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.—2 Samuel 7:16

LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Summarize the key points in God's covenantal promise to David.
2. Explain how Jesus brings that promise to its ultimate fulfillment.
3. Write a prayer that expresses a personal desire to serve God in a particular way and openness to a bigger plan God may have.

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction

- A. Lasting Legacies
- B. Lesson Background

I. Plan Denied (2 SAMUEL 7:1-6)

- A. David's Ambition (vv. 1, 2)
- B. Nathan's Approval (v. 3)
- C. The Lord's Alternative (vv. 4-6)

House Plans

II. Past Described (2 SAMUEL 7:8-10)

- A. Blessings to David (vv. 8, 9)
- B. Blessings to Israel (v. 10)

III. Promise Defined (2 SAMUEL 7:12-16)

- A. Special Descendant (v. 12)
- B. Special Duty (v. 13)
- C. Special Discipline (vv. 14, 15)
- D. Special Dominion (v. 16)

The Eternal Kingdom

Conclusion

- A. We Are David
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

Introduction

A. Lasting Legacies

Presidents of the United States have many avenues for leaving legacies. One such is by means of the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955. This act established a system of libraries operated and maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). At the beginning of 2016, the 13 presidential libraries that are maintained by the NARA contained over 400 million pages of printed materials, about 10 million photographs, over 15 million feet of motion-picture film, and nearly 100,000 hours of audio and video recordings.

It's natural to want to leave our mark on earth in some lasting way. King David himself had a plan as to how he would do that. But the fact that he had “shed much blood and [had] fought many wars” (1 [Chronicles 22:8](#); [28:3](#)) meant that God had a different idea.

B. Lesson Background

The previous two lessons examined Scriptures dealing with God's covenant with the nation of Israel. Today we move forward to the time of King David to consider another covenant God made—this one with the “man after [God's] own heart” ([Acts 13:22](#)).

David was in very ordinary surroundings when Samuel came to Bethlehem to anoint a replacement for King Saul. The youngest of eight brothers, David's viability as a candidate to be king was not seriously considered by his father, so Samuel pushed the issue: after none of David's seven brothers proved to be God's chosen, David was sent for and anointed as Israel's next king (1 [Samuel 16:1-13](#)).

After Saul's death, David became king of only the tribe of Judah, which he ruled for seven and a half years. When Saul's son Ishbosheth was murdered, the way became clear for David to become king over the entire nation (2 [Samuel 5:1-5](#)). David proceeded to conquer the city of Jerusalem and bring the ark of the covenant there ([5:6-10](#); [6:12-23](#)). He also defeated the Philistines who had been a thorn in Israel's side for some time ([5:17-25](#)).

While the above achievements were steps David took to solidify his reign, today's lesson text records what God did to solidify that reign in a way David never could have imagined.

I. Plan Denied

(2 SAMUEL 7:1-6)

A. David's Ambition (vv. 1, 2)

^{1a.} After the king was settled in his palace

The Hebrew word translated *palace* is used of a common dwelling place ([Judges 11:30](#), [31](#)). It can also describe the dwelling of a king or of a god; in fact, the word is used of both Solomon's residence and the Lord's temple in 1 [Kings 9:1](#). King Hiram of Tyre had “sent envoys to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace [same Hebrew word] for David” (2 [Samuel 5:11](#)). One gets the impression that this is a very well-designed, attractive structure.

^{1b.} and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him,

We should note that the military victories recorded in 2 [Samuel 8](#) may well have occurred prior to the events in [chapter 7](#). The material of this book may be arranged topically rather than chronologically, with the focus in [chapters 6 and 7](#) on David's faithfulness and God's blessing in response to that.

^{2.} he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”

This is the first time *Nathan the prophet* is mentioned in Scripture. He will appear later as the bearer of bad news after David commits adultery with Bathsheba (2 [Samuel 11:1-27](#)).

HOW TO SAY IT

Ahaz *Ay-haz*.

Assyria *Uh-sear-ee-uh*.

Babylon *Bab-uh-lun*.

Bathsheba *Bath-she-buh*.

Ephesians *Ec-fee-zhunz*.

Hiram *High-rum*.

Manasseh *Muh-nass-uh*.

Pentecost *Pent-ih-kost*.

Philistines *Fuh-liss-teenz* or *Fill-us-teenz*.

Tyre *Tire*.

Here David voices to Nathan his concern: he himself has a fine home in which to reside, *while the ark of God remains in a tent*—that is, in a tabernacle ([Exodus 40:21](#); [2 Samuel 6:17](#); [1 Chronicles 16:1](#)). To David, this is just not right! The ark of the covenant represents the presence of Israel's true king, the Lord God Almighty, with his people. David realizes that the Lord deserves better than this.

What Do You Think?

What should a genuine concern for things of God look like today?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

During corporate worship

In small groups

In our private lives

B. Nathan's Approval (v. 3)

3- Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you."

Nathan's initial reaction is to agree wholeheartedly with David. One gets the impression that Nathan does not consult the Lord at all. He seems to assume that the idea is a good one; what could be wrong with building such a structure for the Lord?

C. The Lord's Alternative (vv. 4-6)

4-5- But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:

"Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?"

Nathan has spoken in haste. His earlier words of approval were his own, not the Lord's.

Years later at the dedication of the temple, King Solomon will recall what the Lord had told David about his desire to build a house for the ark: "You did well to have it in your heart to build a temple for my Name" ([2 Chronicles 6:8](#)). David's intentions are good, but it is not God's desire that he should be the one to carry out this noble task.

What Do You Think?

What are some ways to correct the wrong thinking of someone who has good intentions?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

Considering the person's spiritual maturity

Considering the danger posed by leaving the thinking uncorrected

Other

6- "I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling."

For God to have the kind of house that David desires to build has never really been high on God's list of priorities. To this point the tabernacle and the tent that covered it, as prescribed by God to Moses centuries earlier ([Exodus 26](#)), have sufficed.

At the dedication of the temple, Solomon, David's son, will cite the words of the verse before us (see [1 Kings 8:16](#)). He then will note in the same verse that while God was not concerned about choosing a city in which to dwell, he was concerned about choosing a person. This is what the Lord addresses in the next part of his message given through Nathan.

HOUSE PLANS

I looked out the window of our mud hut in Africa to admire the piles of wood and cement that had just arrived. Soon we would build our own cement-block house! Then we would learn the local language, get to know people, and help them translate the Bible into their own language. But two months after we moved into our new home, we had to evacuate the country because of political instability. What a loss it seemed! And now medical issues are further delaying our return. Why did God take us away from the house and the ministry in Africa that we had planned for his kingdom?

In [2 Samuel 7:1-6](#), King David also had great plans of constructing a building. But God essentially said, "No, I have other plans." And God's plans were much greater than David's! David would have erected a building that time would soon destroy, but God established the house and kingdom of David forever ([7:16](#)), which turned out to bless all nations on earth through Christ.

Even though we haven't been able to return to our house in Africa yet, we are already starting to see how God's plans are greater than ours. Two national Bible translators have been able to use the house we built as an office, and another dislocated missionary family has found a home there, from which they can continue their ministry for now.

Has the Lord said no to any of your great plans? If so, take heart. His plans are infinitely greater!

—D. & L. G.

II. Past Described

([2 SAMUEL 7:8-10](#))

A. Blessings to David (vv. 8, 9)

8. **“Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel.’**

The Lord calls attention to what he has done for David. David did not work himself up from the position of shepherd to become king of Israel. Rather, it was God who took him from *tending the flock* and set him apart to become an infinitely greater kind of shepherd: *ruler over my people Israel* (compare [Psalm 78:70, 71](#)).

What Do You Think?

Why is it important to remember what one’s condition was before becoming a Christian?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

Regarding what we think of ourselves

Regarding how we view others

Regarding obligations imposed on us

Other

9. **“I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.**

When Samuel anointed David to be king of Israel, “from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David” ([1 Samuel 16:13](#)). Not long afterward one of Saul’s servants said of David, “the Lord is with him” ([16:18](#)). That became the key to David’s greatness ([2 Samuel 5:10](#)).

The Lord goes on to list specific blessings that have resulted from his being with David. The first is the defeat of David’s enemies. Second, the Lord has given David a great name, *like the names of the greatest men on earth*. This is reminiscent of what God had promised to Abraham ([Genesis 12:2](#)). [First Chronicles 14:17](#) states, “So David’s fame spread throughout every land, and the Lord made all the nations fear him.”

B. Blessings to Israel (v. 10)

10. **“And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning.”**

The greatness God has granted to David was not for David’s benefit alone. The Lord is concerned for his *people Israel*. God desires not only to give David “rest” ([2 Samuel 7:1](#), above) but also to give his people *a home of their own* and relief from those who have afflicted them in the past (as, for example, during the time of the judges as noted in [7:11](#), not in today’s text). God did indeed desire a place—not for himself but for his people.

But that was only the beginning of God’s intentions. At the end of [2 Samuel 7:11](#), the Lord elaborates on his desires for David: “The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you.” God has asked David, “Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?” ([7:5](#)). The Lord’s answer is, “No, you are not going to build me a house. I am going to build you a house!” (paraphrase of [7:11](#)).

III. Promise Defined

([2 SAMUEL 7:12-16](#))

A. Special Descendant (v. 12)

12. **“When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.**

Here the Lord sketches the “when” and “through whom” regarding the promised house and kingdom. The first two phrases of the verse before us establish the when: it will happen after David’s death (another kind of “rest”). After that becomes reality, God will work through David’s *offspring* to fulfill the promise. But to whom does the word *offspring* refer?

B. Special Duty (v. 13)

13. **“He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.**

The first phrase in this verse and history as it unfolds seems at first to indicate that David’s son Solomon is the one to build a house for the Lord. But the second phrase must give us pause since our knowledge of history reveals that the promise is not limited to fulfillment via Solomon. Rather, Jesus Christ is the ultimate seed of David through whom God’s *forever* promise comes to pass.

This fact begins to be established in the New Testament when the angel Gabriel tells Mary that “the Lord God will give [Jesus] the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end” ([Luke 1:32, 33](#)). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter ties the fulfillment of the promise to the resurrection of Jesus ([Acts 2:29-32](#); compare [Acts 13:23](#); [Galatians 3:16-19](#)).

Though many in Jesus’ time thought of the kingdom primarily in political terms, Jesus’ kingdom is a spiritual one ([John 18:36](#)). It is the church, comprised of those who have come out of the “darkness” of sin ([Colossians 1:13](#)) into his “wonderful light” ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).

What Do You Think?

What strategies can we use to ensure we stay focused on the spiritual nature of God’s kingdom?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

Regarding techniques that invite interaction with culture

Regarding techniques that resist interaction with culture

C. Special Discipline (vv. 14, 15)

14, 15. “I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

The first statement in [verse 14](#) is quoted in [Hebrews 1:5](#), which clearly affirms its fulfillment in Jesus. This portion of the promise raises questions, especially since we have already proposed a fulfillment in Jesus. But how can sinless Jesus be the fulfillment when it is possible for this son of David to do wrong? If the promise refers to Solomon, how can God say that *my love will never be taken away from him*? We recall that God judged Solomon for his foolish acceptance of the gods of his many wives who turned his heart away from the Lord ([1 Kings 11:4, 9-13, 31-33](#)).

It is clear from a study of Old Testament history that not all the kings who descended from David were men after God’s own heart as David was. Some of them, such as Ahaz and Manasseh, were guilty of great wickedness against God ([2 Kings 16:1-18; 21:1-16](#)). Those kings who behaved in this manner were disciplined by the Lord. He used *a rod wielded by men*—the nations and armies of Assyria and Babylon—to bring judgment upon the kings who failed to trust and obey the true king of God’s people.

None of these instances of rebellion by kings who were descendants of David nullified the covenant promises to David recorded in our text. The promise “I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” remains intact.

Regarding God’s word to David, [Psalm 89:30-34](#) states this: “If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered.”

Concerning Jesus, one could say that he was treated as though he had committed iniquity. He took the *floggings* inflicted *by human hands* along with various other abuses, climaxed by the crucifixion ([Isaiah 53:4, 5](#)). But that suffering at the cross was not the consequence of personal guilt; rather, he took upon himself the punishment that guilty sinners (every human) deserves.

All of what God has in store for David is quite a contrast with the Lord’s treatment of Saul, David’s predecessor. Given David’s knowledge of God’s treatment of Saul, David can offer personal testimony regarding both God’s stern judgment (toward Saul) and steadfast mercy (toward David).

D. Special Dominion (v. 16)

16. “Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

This verse summarizes the essence of the covenant God has made with David. The house that God will build for David will be far more wonderful and enduring than any house David could ever build for God. Even when Solomon’s magnificent temple falls to ruins before the Babylonian army, God’s promise to David remains unshakable. That house, that kingdom, is the church of Jesus. And what Jesus said of his church remains as true today as on the day he said it: “The gates of Hades will not overcome it” ([Matthew 16:18](#)).

THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

My family lives and works with refugees who have fled their country in Africa. Their president and military are dropping bombs and sending soldiers against their homes. There have been many stories about horrific abuses of civilians.

About a year after most of them fled to a refugee camp across the border, the country in which they were seeking safety fell into civil war between that country’s government and anti-government forces. Again many terrible stories of abuse have emerged from both factions. Meanwhile, our friends in the refugee camp have faced food and water rationing and constant fear of violence.

Caught between so many warring “kingdoms,” imagine how they must feel when they encounter God’s promise to David, fulfilled in Christ: “Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever” ([2 Samuel 7:16](#)).

How blessed we are to be under the ultimate rule of one who is just, merciful, and eternal! So many injustices have been done and so little mercy has been shown to our refugee friends, but they can take hope in the eternal king who will make things right. It is he who will show mercy to them forever.

If you are facing difficulties or persecution because of earthly leaders or “kingdoms,” take comfort in the promise that in Christ’s kingdom we will be under the leadership and protection of one who loved us so much that he gave his own life for us, and that he will rule forever.

—D. & L. G.

What Do You Think?

How should citizenship in God’s eternal kingdom affect how we interact with the various authority structures of the world?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

Regarding political structures

Regarding business structures

Considering [Luke 20:25](#); [John 18:36](#); [Acts 4:19](#); [5:29](#); [Romans 13:1-7](#); [1 Peter 2:13-17](#)

Conclusion

A. We Are David

On November 14, 1970, the Marshall University football team was returning from a game in North Carolina to the Marshall campus in Huntington, West Virginia. The charter plane they were on crashed, killing all 75 individuals on board. Those who perished included 37 players, head coach Rick Tolley, members of his coaching staff and the school’s athletic director, and 25 athletic boosters. In 2006 a movie was made to tell the story of that team and that tragedy. Its title was brief but compelling: *We Are Marshall*.

In a sense all Christians can say, “We are David.” True, few of us have had any experience watching sheep or fighting wild animals in defense of sheep. But what

the Lord said to David in [1 Samuel 7:8, 9](#) could be applied to his treatment of any of us. God took us from what we were (lost, sinful) and made us part of his family. We did nothing to deserve such a status; what we deserved was condemnation. But Jesus, who had done nothing to deserve death, gave his life for us at the cross.

Paul states the contrast first by describing humanity's sorry status: "dead in your transgressions and sins, . . . gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts" ([Ephesians 2:1, 3](#)). Then comes the welcome remedy: "God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ" ([2:4, 5](#)). This is the same mercy that took David from the humble task of watching sheep to become Israel's greatest king and the recipient of a very special covenant indeed.

While few of us have had any experience *watching* sheep, we have all had experience *acting* like sheep by "going astray" ([1 Peter 2:25](#)). And we have all been rescued by the good shepherd.

B. Prayer

Father, thank you for the mercy you have shown us in Christ Jesus. We are so unworthy of such treatment; your faithfulness is such a stark contrast to our unfaithfulness. May our lives each day reflect our awareness that we are not our own; we have been "bought at a price" ([1 Corinthians 6:19, 20](#)). In Jesus' name, amen.

C. Thought to Remember

What God builds with us endures.
What we build without him does not.



Visual for Lesson 8. Point to this visual as you invite learners to give examples of times God's will superseded their own.

INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

Enhance your lesson with NIV® Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the NIV® Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

Into the Lesson

Display at the front of the classroom a trophy, plaque, ribbon, medal, or the image of one of these items. When learners arrive, say, "There are many ways to define success. Sometimes we may seek out rewards for our achievements, and other times the achievements themselves are the rewards."

Ask volunteers to share their greatest accomplishments. (Be prepared to give your own example to get things started.) After several class members have shared, ask for volunteers to share a not yet accomplished goal or ambition.

Alternative. Distribute copies of the “Lasting Legacy” activity from the reproducible page, which you can download. Set a timer for 90 seconds and have learners compete to see either who finishes first or who finds the most matches in the allotted time.

After either activity, lead into Bible study by saying, “Human life does not last forever, so we desire to leave our mark on earth in some real way. David had a plan as to how he would do that, but we will see that God had a different idea.”

Into the Word

Divide learners into three groups, giving each group an index card labeled in one of the following ways:

Group 1—David’s Plan (2 Samuel 7:1-6)

Group 2—God’s Fulfilled Plans (2 Samuel 7:8, 9)

Group 3—God’s Promised Plans (2 Samuel 7:10, 12-16)

Have the groups read their assigned verses and discuss (a) the motive behind their assigned plan, (b) the details of the plan, and (c) in what specific ways the plan was or wasn’t fulfilled.

Allow several minutes for groups to work. As needed you may wish to prompt groups with these suggested responses:

Group 1—(a) *To honor and thank the Lord and to elevate his position over David’s;* (b) *To build a permanent home to replace the ark’s tent;* (c) *At first Nathan approved because of David’s good intentions, but Nathan found the Lord’s will was different.*

Group 2—(a) *To make David ruler over the Lord’s people;* (b) *The Lord took David out of the fields, was with him, protected him from his enemies, and lifted his name;* (c) *David became king.*

Group 3—(a) *To build a permanent home for God’s people ultimately through Jesus;* (b) *To plant God’s people in a permanent dwelling place, to protect them from wickedness, to bless David’s line and establish a kingdom through it, to build a house for the Lord’s people through David’s lineage;* (c) *Fulfilled by the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who came from David’s line and established the kingdom of God on earth for all God’s followers.*

Allow groups to report. As they do so, jot responses on the board. Use the commentary to correct misconceptions or fill in any gaps.

Into Life

Have learners discuss this question in pairs: “What are some of your short- and long-term goals and how can we, like David and Nathan, check whether those align with God’s plans?”

Then ask volunteers to share thoughts with the class. (Possible responses: pray, regular Bible study, guidance from a friend, give God greater control over our time and resources, etc.)

Alternative: Have students individually fill out the “God’s Plans First” activity from the reproducible page. Or you may wish to send it home to be used throughout the week.

Use either activity to note that the motive for our plans may be God-honoring, but God may have plans that are better still. Encourage learners to spend time throughout the week bringing their short- and long-term plans to God.