

# David's and God's blueprint

## 2 Samuel 7

David intended to build a temple for the LORD, but God did not give him permission. If that would have been the only thing you could read in the first seventeen verses, you can well imagine that David would have been very disappointed. Just imagine swearing an oath in which you promise to do something for the LORD, something that you regard as very important, but he does not want it. However, this rejection is **not** the only response. God places his own blueprint in the place of David's blueprint. This plan of God is so amazing and wonderful, that David is almost lost for words trying to express his thankfulness to God. He does not even talk about his own plan anymore.

Headings like 'Promise regarding Solomon's Temple' or 'God forbids David to Build a Temple' have been used above these verses. These headings are not chosen with great care, for the emphasis in these verses lies on God's plan for David's house.

### 1. Verses 1-17

David's building proposal comes after "the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him". This description of the situation in verse 1 may sound kind of strange to our ears. After all, later on we read that other nations waged war from all sides against David. It was precisely for that reason that David was not allowed to build the temple (1 King 5:3). Besides, directly following this chapter you can read that he deals the Philistines a severe military blow (8:1). However, two things must be remembered:

- a) The 'rest' that is spoken of here indicates that at this time both king and people are not threatened anymore by attacking enemies. This does not exclude David's going out and subjecting other nations to himself (Ps 2:8).
- b) The 'rest' which David experiences does not mean that he is free from hostile threats at some other time in the future. Verse 1, therefore, is simply a picture at a given moment. In other words, at **that** time David had rest so that he could think about building the temple.

Verses 3 and 4 show how wrong it is to let yourself be guided by your own feelings when it comes to making decisions, rather than seeking after God's will. Your own feelings seem so obvious, so matter-of-course! After all, wasn't it beautiful that David wanted to build a house for the LORD?

***Question 1:** Can you think of other situations where people can easily make similar mistakes?*

Naturally, David is not admonished by the LORD because he came up with that plan (cf. 1 Kings 8:18). Instead, his mind is set at rest; he does not have to concern himself with the fact that God lives in a tent while he lives in a palace himself. God has always been satisfied living in a tent.

The LORD expressly wants us to focus our attention on **his** work, rather than on David's building plans. His work comes first. In his good pleasure he has already done a lot for the

king and the people (v. 8-11a; verses 9b-11a should have been written in the past tense - see NKJV). However, with that work he will continue. He will take care of the king's house (vv. 11b and 12). God makes it clear that **he** is the Builder; he is the God who is able to establish the king's house and his kingdom. Only then do human activities come into play (v. 13a). Read these words of the LORD very carefully and compare them against the background of heathen idol worship. The heathen had to work for their gods; they had to give them some fixed location on earth. Only then could these gods be of any value to them. In that case, the work of people comes first. That is not the case with the God of Israel. 'And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else'.

**Question 2:** *If at first God did not deem it necessary to assign someone to build him a temple, why did he do so later?*

God's plan for David's house reaches beyond the days of Solomon. You can notice that especially in verse 16. In that verse it says that David's throne will be established forever. One day, the great Son of David will sit on that throne. He will be a King who will never renounce the throne; no end will come to His kingdom (Lk 1:32, 33). Thus, when our passage speaks about a kingship that will endure forever, we are catching sight of the Christ. Naturally, the son referred to in verse 12 is Solomon. However, this verse also contains the promise of the Son who will appear later. What is mentioned in the first part of this verse can only be applied to Jesus Christ. The same words are applied to him in Hebrews 1:5.

**Question 3:** *Is there a difference between Solomon being called the son of God (v. 14) and us being called children of God? Would this word 'son' maybe refer to his special position? See also Psalm 2:7.*

When the Christ comes, God's work on David's house will reach its culmination. He also will be the great temple builder (v. 13a), more so than Solomon is. He will build the church of the new covenant; the house in which the LORD will be pleased to dwell. And we are included in that building! See also I Corinthians 3:16 and Ephesians 2:19-22.

**Question 4:** *Does the building of that New Testament temple, the church, start with what God does, after which believers build a house for God?*

God's promises are always connected to an obligation. This is also the case with David's royal house. There is the threat of a punishment when David's son does not meet that obligation (v. 14b). And naturally, this also counts for those who become king after the reign of Solomon (see Ps 89:31 ff). However, the punishment will have a limit. David's house will not be destroyed as Saul's house was annihilated. After all, Genesis 49:10 will be fulfilled! Just read the conclusion of outline 2 once again.

## **2. Verses 18-29**

In reaction to the words God had spoken to him, David offers up a prayer of thanksgiving. Reading this prayer carefully, you can't help but be deeply impressed. What you find in this prayer are the following points:

- a. A thankful amazement due to the many riches bestowed on him. David is perplexed
- b. A realization of his own insignificance ("Who am I..."). This increases his amazement
- c. The praise that springs forth from that amazement (v. 22)

- d. The repeated, “Sovereign LORD”. The way he addresses God reveals how deeply impressed David is
- e. The transition from thanksgiving to petition. This petition does not indicate that David is worried about whether or not God will fulfill what he has promised. It is a fervent plea for God’s promises, whereby David firmly believes that those promises are trustworthy (see v. 28, 29b). Also, this petition clearly shows that David realizes his own insignificance (notice especially these words: “So your servant has found courage...” - v. 27b).

Also take notice of verse 21. It is a beautiful acknowledgment that these promises are based on God’s faithfulness (“for the sake of your word”) and his good pleasure (“according to your will”). It is not because of David’s will that all these things will happen.

In addition, pay attention to verses 23 and 24. David clearly sees a connection between God’s goodwill towards David and towards his people Israel. Of central importance to David is that God’s work of salvation continues, both within his royal house and among all the Israelites. He continues that work so that he will reach the goal, the coming of the Messiah. All this serves to the honour of God’s Holy Name (v. 26a)!

***Question 5:** What can you learn from this prayer and how can you apply it to your own prayers? There are a number of things you could mention.*

### **3. The work of the LORD in this account**

The sole emphasis in this chapter lies on the glory of God’s deeds and the glory of his blueprint for the future. God makes known how he, through the centuries, will continue to work towards the coming of his kingdom. God was thinking of us also when he revealed his blueprint to David (see end of section 1). The faithfulness of God which is brought to the fore here, is an encouragement to us also. Whatever happens in this world, the kingdom of David’s Son is unassailable. The kingdom of God will come. And the people of God will always have a dwelling here on earth (cf. v. 24). God gives us every reason to stand in thankful awe, and to remain humble because everything is by grace alone.

### **For the Introduction**

1. A few items that can be mentioned regarding section 1:
  - a. The fact that “rest from all his enemies” (v. 1) does not mean an end to all battles can be explained using Deuteronomy 25:19. When God gives rest, then an opportunity arises for a punitive expedition.
  - b. There are other examples in the Bible in which “having rest round about” appears to be a description of something happening at a given moment. You can see that very clearly in 2 Chronicles 14:5,6 and 9.
2. Apparently, it was at a later time that the LORD told David he was not allowed to build a temple because he had fought too many battles (see 1 Kings 5:3 and 1 Chron 22:7,8). It speaks for itself that you include a reference to this in your introduction. Try to make it clear that this is not a completely new element, compared to what the LORD here says to David. When you look at section 1 of this outline you will be able to draw some conclusions. First, the LORD will give peace to Israel. His work, his care for his people, comes first. Only then, once God puts an end to all those wars, will his people be able to build a house for him. They will build this temple out of thankfulness. The king who is

allowed to build the temple, will be named after the peace which God established: Solomon (see 1 Chron 22:9,10). You can consider posing the question whether or not the LORD is pleased with all the wars that David has been waging. Are pacifists allowed to appeal to 1 Chron 22:8 to support their ideas? In the discussion you could point to Abigail's speech in 1 Samuel 25:28. According to her, God will instead reward David for waging war against his enemies!

3. When dealing with verse 21 you may refer to 1 Chronicles 28:4. In that text, David falls back on Genesis 49:10, which deals with the promise of the LORD concerning Judah. This tribe would be the royal tribe. Here, in verse 21, he says, "For the sake of your **word** ... you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant." For the sake of which word? For the sake of the promises of Genesis 49! Old promises of salvation are being fulfilled in the royal house of David. David understood that.
4. The conclusion of verse 19 ("Is this the manner [law] of man, O LORD God?' NKJV) is difficult to explain. In my opinion, you remain closest to the literal text if you understand it in the following way: this is the instruction which people will have to adhere to. Whatever God decrees for the future, his people must (and may) count on that.

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