

Series: Questions

Title: Shalt Thou Build God an House?

Text: 2 Sam 7: 1-17

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1 Samuel 7: 1: And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies; 2: That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. 3: And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee. 4: And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, 5: Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

Every sanctified child of God has, spiritually, what David had temporally, *“The LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies.”* David fought many battles in many wars. But it was the LORD who made David victorious! God’s saints fight the fight of faith. But it is Christ who makes us victorious! *“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”* (Rom 8: 37)

Just as God had given to David freely by his grace. So too, God chose us by grace, redeemed us by grace, regenerated us by grace, keeps us by grace and shall deliver us to himself by grace. Grace means we do not contribute by our works.

David’s fighting was not yet over. But at this time, *“the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies.”* Our fight is not yet over. But the LORD has given us rest round about from all our enemies in Christ our Sabbath Rest.

Therefore, God’s saints want to honor God out of gratitude for what God has done for us, as David did, *“the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee.”* It was in David’s heart to build a house unto God’s name—unto God’s honor.

God, who looks on the heart, said the motive of David’s heart was good. Years later, Solomon said, *“And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart.”* (1 Ki 8: 18)

Out of gratitude for how God has given us rest in Christ, we ought always be looking for ways to further God’s kingdom. I ought to always be asking myself, “What can I do to help God’s people, God’s pastors and further the gospel of Christ.”

Yet, as we see from our text, God’s saints should never imagine that it is up to us to build a house for God.

This was the message God had for his beloved servant David, *“And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?”*

Here is our next question which God asks of a sinner. For our title, I changed the question slightly: *“Shalt Thou Build God a House (for God to Dwell In?)”* Shall you, shall I, build God a house to dwell in? It is a rhetorical question. God told David *“Thou shalt not build Me an house to dwell in.”* (1 Ch 17: 4)

It is not up to God’s saints to build a house for God to dwell in. Though God would not allow David to build his temple, God honored his beloved servant, by giving him this message and this promise full of the gospel in picture and in type.

GOD DOES NOT DWELL IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS

2 Samuel 7: 6: Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. 7: In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?

There is a great difference between dwelling and walking. In the tabernacle, in the tent made of curtains called the holiest of holies, God promised to meet with his people over the mercy seat to typify Christ our Propitiation. God promised to walk with the children of Israel in the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day. But God never promised to dwell in that tabernacle, nor in the temple that Solomon built. God does not dwell in temples made with hands.

Acts 7: 46: [David] found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. 47: But Solomon built him an house. 48: Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

as saith the prophet, 49: Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my rest?

Solomon only built that house to worship God. Like we did here. We want it to be nice. But it is not a house for God to dwell in. It is only house where we worship God.

2 Chronicles 2: 5: And the house which I build *is* great: for great *is* our God above all gods. 6: But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who *am* I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?

Why did God choose to walk in a tent?

1 Corinthians 1: 27: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise;...29: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Human nature is a poor and wretched tent and tabernacle. We are ruined in sin, dead and dying, here today and gone tomorrow. The flesh is weak. We are but dust. For this reason, we cannot by the works of our hands, build God a house to dwell in.

Yet, in order to be made like unto his elect, God the Son made our nature his dwelling when he came to tabernacle among us. He dwelt in the likeness of sinful flesh. God never commanded his people to build him a house to dwell in. But God entered covenant for his Son to do so.

GOD BUILDS THE HOUSE HE DWELLS IN

2 Samuel 7: 8: Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: 9: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth. 10: Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, 11: And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

The LORD calls and exalts his people, (v8) *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel.”* The LORD Jehovah chose his people. He found his people in our lowly state in sin, far worse than the sheepcote. God took and separated us to be his own. He exalted us in the person of his dear Son.

It is God’s presence with us by which we are preserved, (v9), *“And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and [I] have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and [I] have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great [men] that are in the earth.”* If God was not with his people, we would have no power at all. But God has cut off all our enemies. God has made us have the great name of Christ Jesus, *“the LORD our Righteousness.”*

It is God who plants us in our dwelling place, not the other way around, (v10), *“Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and [I] will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.”* Rather than us building a place for God to dwell in, God says that he will appoint the place and he will plant his people. I was preaching in Jamaica when someone asked me about a “church plant.” I thought they were asking about a potted plant for the church. The whole religious world is set on “planting churches.” God plants his people; his people do not do the planting. *God plants us “that [we] may dwell in a place of [our] own; and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict [us] any more.”*

When God plants us, God provides us with shepherds and he gives us rest, (v11), *“And as since the time that I commanded judges [to be] over my people Israel, and [I] have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.”* God commands his pastors to faithfully care for us like he did judges. And, through his gospel, God causes us to rest from all our enemies in this place where God makes us to dwell.

Where is this dwelling place? It is in Christ! In our experience of God’s grace, we begin to dwell in Christ when Christ begins to dwell in us. Notice this, (v11), *“Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house.”* God does not say that he will build David a house. God says *“he will make [David] an house!”* David himself was made to be the house in whom Christ dwelt. Christ’s people are the temple where God dwells. Christ prayed to God our Father, saying, *“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”* (Jn 17:23) By indwelling us, he makes us to dwell in him. We are made perfect in Christ. This signifies our great oneness!

Ephesians 2: 20: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; 21: In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

GOD HAS GIVEN HIS SON THE HONOR OF BUILDING HIS HOUSE

2 Samuel 7: 12: And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13: He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14: I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16: And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. 17: According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

Christ is the Seed of David that God speaks of when he says, (v12), *“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.”* We know this “Seed” speaks of Christ and David knew it too. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit moved the apostle Peter to declare it,

Acts 2: 29: Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30: Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31: He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

Christ builds God’ house for God’s name, (v13), *“He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.”* Christ built the house of God for his name by justifying his people on the cross. He did so by declaring God’s name as Jehovah Tsidkenu, the LORD our Righteousness. It means the name of our God is Just and Justifier. And Christ builds the house of God for his name by his work from his throne in glory, as Head of his church, sanctifying his people in heart, calling us into his kingdom through the preaching of the gospel. By this work, Christ makes his people willing to give the name of God all the glory.

Christ built this house when God made Christ sin for us, who knew no sin, (v14), *“I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.”* God the Father declared Christ his beloved Son on multiple occasions when Christ walked this earth. God is his Father and he is God’s Son. But when made sin, before the just judgment of God, Christ became guilty in place of his people. The law of God looked at Christ as Head of his people who had committed iniquity though he committed none himself.

Therefore, God kept this covenant promise, (v14), *“If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.”* That is exactly what Isaiah declared that God did, *“the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”* (Isa 53:5) By bearing our stripes, Christ made his people the righteousness of God in him.

Also, according to his everlasting covenant, God did not take his mercy from Christ, (v15), *“But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took [it] from Saul, whom I put away before thee.”* It pleased God to bruise him. It means God was satisfied in his Son and with all his people in his Son. Therefore, three days later, God raised him from the dead and forty days later, Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father where he sat down victorious!

So by the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, Christ, and we in Christ, as God’s house, were established forever, (v16), *“And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”*

Now, Christ is planting us and keeping us through this gospel message, delivered through his preacher just as he taught his beloved David through the prophet Nathan, (v17), *“According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.”*

THE EFFECT WORKED THROUGH THE GOSPEL

When God makes this everlasting covenant known in our hearts declaring that all the work is finished by God in Christ, apart from our works, God’s child bows in humility and praises God in thankfulness.

As soon as you can read the rest of the chapter. But for now, notice, the humility God worked in David, (v18) *“Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who [am] I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?”*

Then notice how God worked in David's heart to make him give God all the praise, (v21), *“For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know [them.] 22: Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for [there is] none like thee, neither [is there any] God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.”*

Have you heard and believed his word? Are you persuaded that he is all your salvation? Believe on Christ and thou shalt be saved. There is none like him and no God beside him.

Amen!