

Romans 16:25–27; Luke 1:26–38

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, <sup>2</sup>the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” <sup>3</sup>And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, <sup>5</sup>“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup>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 for my dwelling. <sup>7</sup>In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’” <sup>8</sup>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, that you should be prince over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>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. . . . <sup>16</sup>And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’”

### IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

King David wants to build the Lord a house. With good cause—the other kings around David, in the countries to the North, the East, the West, they’ve all built houses to their gods. Their gods are the idols, of course. When you don’t have the true God, then you start making up gods, and the gods you make up are nothing more than personifications of the things that scare you. So the kings surrounding David, they’ve got their gods, such as the Sun-god and the Moon-god, the Thunder-god and Ocean-god, and the god Death, of course, and everything else that looks big and powerful in your life.

These kings surrounding David, they’ve made houses for their gods, big houses, impressive, opulent temples where the worshiper could go to sacrifice to whichever god he was most afraid of at a particular time.

Now David wants to build a house for his Lord, the true God, the God of Israel who created all things and who placed David on his throne. David is nearing the end of his life. His kingdom has been enlarged, his enemies have been vanquished, the economy is strong, so it’s time to build a house for the Lord who set David on this throne and who has brought David all this strength.

2 Samuel 7:2:

[King David] said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.”

David's going to fix that, and build the most impressive house for God the world has ever seen, and take the ark of the covenant out of the tent and put it into the new Temple.

The Lord God will have none of that. 2 Samuel 7:5:

**The word of the LORD came to [the prophet] Nathan, <sup>5</sup>“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup>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 for my dwelling.**

Not only will the Lord not have David building his house, he says he will build for David a house, a lineage to sit upon the throne, so that Israel's salvation would come from the Davidic throne, all by the Lord's doing.

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David was right in one thing. The sinner does need for God to have a house here on Earth, a dwelling place among sinners. For if God is not here, among us, cleansing and sanctifying us, then we remain as we are apart from him, condemned creatures lost in our sin, with no hope of help.

So David was right. The sinner does need for God to have dwelling place here on Earth.

But that dwelling place can't be built by men. Everything built by men is of men, of the sin and guilt that belongs to men, and that will never be a good enough dwelling place for Holy God when he comes down to Earth.

So God will build the house; he will make the dwelling place here on Earth. He will dwell among sinners; he will not abandon those he loves—but he comes among us in his own chosen way, and it will all be his doing.

To come to Earth and make his dwelling among men, the Lord appoints a virgin. Luke 1:31:

**The angel said to [Mary], ... “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”**

God the Son comes in the flesh as a man, a human person, the child of the Virgin Mary—and God now has his house, his Temple on Earth, his dwelling among sinners.

How many men had presented themselves to the world, building themselves up as being leaders and saviors of mankind, before they were brought to nothing, self-destructing, as must all things which are manmade?

But now God is with sinners, setting himself in human flesh and blood among them, dwelling with them with the Name Jesus.

It is all God's doing. God the Son comes forth from the Virgin—it is God the Holy Spirit who brings this forth in Mary's womb, and the One he brings forth as Mary's child, he is of the lineage of David. He is the One promised to King David back when David wanted to build the Lord a house on Earth, and the Lord said, no.

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It is always the Lord who builds the house. If the house is going to endure, if the house will be the dwelling place of God on Earth among sinners, it is the Lord who builds it—no other house will do.

With David, the Lord had his Temple built not by David, but later, after David died, by King Solomon, David's son. That Temple was unlike all the temples built to idol-gods by the kings in surrounding countries. They built temples to gods they had made up in their own minds according to the things of creation they were afraid of. They put an idol of the god in the temple so that the worshiper could bring a sacrifice to the idol and appease the god, buy him off, hoping he might show some sort of favor to you and your tribe.

Were you afraid of the coming storms? Then bring a sacrifice to the Storm-god, buy him off, and maybe you'll live to see another day. Were you afraid of death? Then bring a sacrifice to the Death-god, buy him off, and maybe you'll get a few more years of life. And on and on it goes, people buying off the gods they are afraid of, even though they had made the gods up in their own minds.

But the Temple of the Lord, it wasn't like that. There was no idol there to sacrifice to. There was only the Ark of the Covenant bestowing the gift and promise of God upon his people. On top of the Ark of the Covenant in the Temple, there was no idol figure, but only an empty seat. But that empty seat—it was called the mercy-seat, or the seat of atonement—that seat was God's dwelling place on Earth.

You bring your sacrifices to that Altar not in order to buy a god off, as if he were a common trader, but you bring them as gifts the true God has given you, and there, by that sacrifice, at that Ark of the Covenant, the Lord God is cleansing you of all sin, sanctifying you to be his. All by his doing. His grace. His kindness and love. He builds the house.

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So that when Mary has her Son given her by the Holy Spirit, the Temple in Jerusalem has now come to an end, for the Temple of God on Earth is now the Man Jesus.

Do you want to know where God is dwelling on Earth among men? Where he has located his Temple in order to be found by sinners? Where he has placed himself to come in mercy, to give the atoning sacrifice, to forgive sins, to cleanse and sanctify the sinner? Then go to Jesus—he is the Son of David, he is God dwelling

on Earth, and he is not only holy, but is the One making you holy by speaking to you the Gospel of all sins forgiven.

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It is God who builds the house, not us. The house of God on Earth, his dwelling place among sinners, it is him, the Man Christ Jesus, and he places himself to be found on Earth at his Body and Blood.

That's why he came as the child of Mary—so he would be human, with true Body and Blood, so that he could give that Body and Blood as the atoning sacrifice for all sinners on the cross, and so that he could bring that Body and Blood of the cross to those he loves, in order to cleanse them, sanctify them, making them his.

We can't cleanse ourselves. We cannot make ourselves a worthy dwelling of God by our own efforts any more than David could build a worthy Temple by his own efforts.

But God can. He builds the house. He dwells among us. He makes us his. It is all according to his Word, for his Word creates what it says.

We cannot build ourselves up to make ourselves worthy of him—no house can build itself. But by his Word of forgiveness, he does make us his, he does dwell with us, so that we can rejoice along with Mother Mary, and say as she did in Luke 1,

**Behold, I am a servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your Word.**

**IN THE NAME OF JESUS.**