

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.' But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 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 and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' 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 prince over my people Israel; 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. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly 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. v. 16: Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established forever. (NRSV)

After reading the above citation from 2 Samuel, one might wonder: "Why the fuss about tents, cedar houses and David's ideas, and what does it have to do with Advent? Couldn't we just turn on *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and eat cookies?" Let's pause and take another look at the text and try to discover a deeper message. As king of Israel, David had recently arrived in Jerusalem (c. 1055 B.C.), bringing the Ark of the Covenant. David lived in a lovely elaborate house made of cedar but the Ark was housed in a simple and plain tent. Perhaps David was feeling embarrassed and decided that he would build God a house of cedar. But God had a different plan. Through Nathan's advice, God sort of chews David out, reminding him that God has other plans and promises.

How like us as human beings when we often choose to do what we want to do, forgetting to check in with what God might have in mind. Throughout my life I have often had to let go of my unrealistic expectations in order to receive what the Lord has for me. How grateful am now, in these days of chaos and uncertainty, to daily remember that God is in charge! No matter how frustrated or angry I become at present circumstances, the Lord continues to remind me of what's important, namely **loving one another, caring for widows, orphans and the marginalized, forgiving each other, and being a peacemaker** – to name a few (Matthew 5-7). David could only continue to trust God. We, however, are witnesses to the fulfillment of God's promise of sending His Son, Jesus, whose birthday we celebrate when this season of waiting is over. **Thank God for God's plan and that God's throne has been established forever!!!**