



DAVID

THE SHEPHERD KING
— *and the* —
SHAPE OF THE MESSIAH

Part 3

The House God Builds

inspire
CHRISTIAN
FORMATION

The point of this study

The goal of every Inspire study is to draw closer to Jesus Christ. In this series, we will explore the life of David, the shepherd king, and consider how his story helped shape Israel's hope for the Messiah and the early Church's understanding of Jesus as that Messiah.

This study draws on four ancient lenses of interpretation: the literary, the metaphorical (which we will call the theological), the epic (which we will call the kingdom of God), and the ethical. Each lens helps us engage more deeply with the passages we read, leading us ever closer to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God to whom the Scriptures bear witness. If you would like to explore these lenses further, you can find more in the Inspire video series [How to Read the Bible \(Part 2\)](#).

The check-in & opening prayer

As we begin this study, let's take a moment to check in with ourselves and to ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate our heart. You can do this through personal journaling or by sharing with the group.



I wonder what was a highlight of your week.

**I wonder where you may have needed
prayer or support this week.**

I wonder where you noticed God at work this week.

I wonder what you are bringing to this study.
(questions, concerns, distractions, hopes, fears, learnings...).

I wonder what you hope to receive from God through this study.

Holy God,
**open our eyes that we may behold you;
open our lips that we may proclaim your praise;
open our ears that we may listen for your Word;
and open our hearts that we may be transformed,
to become like Jesus, the Son of David,
the Son of God, our friend and helper.**

Amen.

Context (read and reflect)

Reading the Scripture through the **Literary Lens**.

2 Samuel 7 comes at a high point in David's story. The long years of conflict and instability are beginning to settle. David is now king over a united Israel, Jerusalem has become his city, and the ark of God has been brought there with celebration and joy. The chapter opens with David finally "*at rest*" from his enemies. For the first time in a long while, there is stability, security, and peace. Out of that peace comes a new desire: David wants to build a "*house*" for God – a permanent temple to replace the tent that has travelled with Israel through the wilderness and the years of wandering.

I wonder what we feel moved to build, create, or offer when we experience peace, stability, or gratitude.



At first, David's desire seems unquestionably good. Even the prophet Nathan initially encourages him. Why wouldn't this great king have good ideas? Nothing seems wrong here. Yet during the night, God speaks to Nathan and interrupts the plan. God reminds David that, throughout Israel's history, God has never asked for a permanent house of cedar. Instead, God has chosen to dwell among the people in a tent – moving with them through the desert, uncertainty, and change. The story begins to shift from what David wants to do for God to what God has already been doing for David and for Israel all along.

I wonder how often we assume we know what God wants – before taking time to listen more deeply.



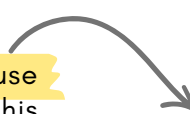
The Context continues on page 5, after the story...

The Story (mark and note)

*Reading the Scripture through the **Literary Lens**. As you read, circle, underline, and make notes on the passage, notice the characters, the setting, the verbs, the allusions to other parts of Scripture, the metaphors, and anything else that draws your attention. Throughout this study, you will notice that certain words or themes are highlighted. These are simply some of the things that stand out to me as I read. You may notice different details, patterns, or questions – and that is part of the beauty of reading Scripture together. Mark the text with what you notice, what surprises you, and what you sense the Spirit drawing your attention toward.*

2 Samuel 7:1-16

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."



In Hebrew, the word for "house" is **bayith**. In English it is often written as **beth** as in **Bethlehem** (House of Bread) or **Bethel** (House of God).

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?'



What's the difference between tents and cedar buildings?

How is the word "to build" or "to make" used effectively in this story?

Notice the shepherd imagery?

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. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever."

Context (read and reflect)

*Reading the Scripture through the **Literary Lens**.*

The heart of the passage is a surprising reversal. David wants to build a “house” for God, but God declares instead that God will build a “house” for David. The Hebrew word *bayit* can mean both a physical house and a household or dynasty. David is thinking about architecture; God is speaking about a future. Rather than receiving a gift from David, God promises to establish David’s kingdom and descendants. The story moves from human initiative to divine promise. What David hopes to build for God becomes overshadowed by what God promises to build for David.

I wonder where God may be reshaping our plans into something larger than we first imagined.



This promise becomes one of the central hopes of Israel. Even after the kingdom falls and the temple is destroyed, people continue to long for a future “son of David” through whom God’s reign would be renewed. What begins here as a promise to David will shape Israel’s imagination for generations to come.

I wonder what promises or hopes have shaped the way we imagine God’s future.



The unexpected victory

Reading the Scripture through the *Theological Lens*.

Let's take a moment to reflect on the theological theme of **house**.

In 2 Samuel 7, David desires to build a house for God — a temple worthy of the God who has guided and protected Israel. On the surface, this seems like a faithful and generous act. Yet the story quickly turns in an unexpected direction. God reminds David that God has never been contained within cedar walls or permanent structures. Instead, God has travelled with the people through wilderness, uncertainty, and change. Then comes the great reversal of the passage: David wishes to build a house for God, but God declares instead, "The Lord will make you a house" (2 Samuel 7:11).

The Hebrew word *bayit* ("house") carries more than one meaning. It can refer to a building, a household, a family line, or even a kingdom. David is thinking about architecture; God is speaking about promise. The focus shifts from what human beings can build for God to what God is building among and within human beings. In this way, the story begins to reveal the shape of the Messiah — not merely a king who rules, but one through whom God comes to dwell with God's people.

This theme echoes throughout the New Testament. Early Christians understood Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promise to David — the long-awaited Son of David through whom God's everlasting kingdom would be established. Yet Jesus also transforms the meaning of the temple itself. In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of his own body as the Temple (John 2:19-21), the true dwelling place of God among humanity. In Christ, God does not remain distant or hidden within a sacred building, but comes near in flesh and blood.

The New Testament then carries this image even further. Through Christ and the Holy Spirit, the people of God themselves become a living temple. As Paul writes, "*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*" (1 Corinthians 3:16). What begins in 2 Samuel as a conversation about a building becomes, in the end, a vision of God building a people — a living house shaped by grace, presence, and communion, fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah.

I wonder where we may still think of God as confined to certain places, buildings, or moments — and where God may already be dwelling among us.



Sharing

*Reading the Scripture through the **Kingdom of God Lens**.*

I wonder what this story reveals about the kind of kingdom God is building—not through domination or monuments, but through relationship, promise, and presence.

I wonder how Jesus reshapes our understanding of the “house of God”—not as a place we go to, but as a life in which God dwells among people.

I wonder what it means that God’s kingdom is built not only in buildings, but in people formed by love, grace, and communion.

*Reading the Scripture through the **Ethical Lens**.*

I wonder where we may be more focused on building things for God than making space for God to dwell within us.

I wonder what practices, relationships, or habits help us become a more welcoming dwelling place for the presence of God.

I wonder how we might live differently if we truly believed that the people around us are also part of the house God is building.

You may close in prayer.



The Parish of St. Mark – Ocean Park