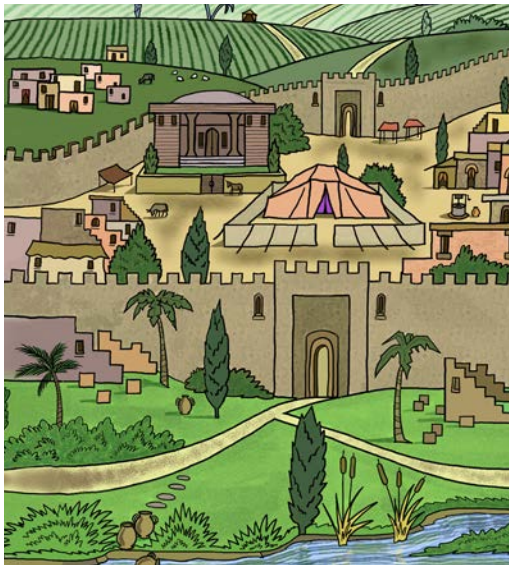


2 Samuel 7:1-14a

Let God be God

Now settled in his new capital, Jerusalem, David resolves to make a temple as a permanent dwelling place for God who has been on the move alongside his people since they left Egypt, and with David since he chose him to be Israel's king. But God has other ideas: this is not the time for the building of a temple, a task that will fall to David's successor, Solomon. Nonetheless, God makes an everlasting covenant with David that secures his royal dynasty.



Bible notes



David built his city as a centre of unity and identity for the one people of Israel. He had built a palace and a walled stronghold. Now, he wanted to build a temple for God to dwell in, like the temples that housed the deities of other nations. He planned an extravagant house built of costly cedar, a fragrant wood imported from Lebanon. He demonstrated his wisdom, as king, by consulting with the prophet Nathan, now appearing for the first time in the narrative. Nathan would play a major role in David's life, encouraging and challenging when necessary.

Nathan offers his own advice, which is then corrected by God's voice. It's important to notice the prophet's humility as a marker of an authentic servant of God. God takes the initiative by making it clear that homelessness is the right choice for now, maintaining the itinerant identity shaped during the years in the wilderness. The leaders of those years were wandering shepherds of their people, and David is also the 'shepherd king'.

The Lord developed the prophecy, expanding promises to David. There is an expectation that David was prepared to trust God for the future on the basis of his previous experience of support. This sits within the covenant relationship within which God holds David, as David holds the people. God makes three promises, as was the case for Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3). First, there is the promise of a name, a kingly reputation during Israel's golden age. Secondly, God promises a safe place and rest for the people, which the prophets would rephrase as shalom. Third, there was the promise of a 'house' for David. This is an ironic reversal of God's refusal to allow David to build a temple. At the same time, it carries the deeper meaning of a dynasty, successors for David for ever. This prophecy will be fulfilled in the history recorded in 1 and 2 Kings, which forms a continuous narrative and identifies the son who will be permitted to build a house for the Lord.



What 'season' of life are you in? Maybe spring – starting out on new endeavours – or winter – looking back on your life and enjoying some rest. Make a watercolour artwork to reflect the season you're in and think about what colours you'd use to represent that season. Once dry, write a prayer over the top inviting God to speak into this season.

First impressions

- How would you feel about staying in a place like this?
- What about living here permanently? What would be the pluses? And the minuses?
- What kind of house do you think would be fitting for God?



LOOK

Lay back on some grass or similar and watch the clouds go by. Just be in the moment – take note of what's going on around you and create space for God to speak into.

A prayer for all ages together

God of the past and the future, of our present questions and our future hopes: help us to rest in your call to us, in whichever season we find ourselves; and help us to trust that you will provide for us in the future, as you have in the past. Amen.



As you reflect on the passage this week, listen to 'Step By Step', Rich Mullins, and use the words as a prayer.



What is next? Ask this question to God and then spend some time drawing or doodling what comes to mind. Let God speak through your pencil and don't over think it, let God be God. Afterwards, pray about what you've created.