

First Things First

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16

Introduction

What are your Christmas plans? Are you going to spend Christmas at a relative's house? Are you hosting a Christmas get-together? Maybe you're going on a skiing trip? Or maybe you're just looking to spend a quiet Christmas at home? The point is, no matter how elaborate or simple, we all have plans for Christmas. We make plans for important things. We make plans for certain occupations. We make plans for our life. But the old saying is true: "Life is what happens while you're busy making plans."

David's Plans

In our Old Testament reading, David had some grand plans. One of David's first acts as king of Israel was to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. This was done with great rejoicing and celebration. *So, David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn (2 Samuel 6:15)*. But there was a problem. The Ark was supposed to be kept in the Most Holy Place, located in the tabernacle. And the tabernacle was still in Samaria. David didn't think it was right that he should live in a palace of cedar while the Lord lived in a tent. So, he planned to build a temple, a house, for God.

God's Plans

This was a good idea. The tabernacle had served its purpose. While the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for forty years, the tabernacle was a "portable temple." It could be taken apart when the people had to move and set up wherever they made camp. Now, the Israelites were settled and living in houses. God's house should be permanent, too. But God had other plans. Through the prophet Nathan, God gave a definite "No" to David's plans for building a temple. God had other plans. He would build a "house" for David instead. Not a building, but a legacy. David's descendants would rule Israel as a dynasty.

God's Reasons

God had His reasons for not letting David build a temple. It wasn't just, "You won't build a house for me because I'm going to build a house for you." In **1 Chronicles 22**, David charges Solomon with building the temple (read **1 Chronicles 22:6–10**). David had too much blood on his hands. Even though David was doing the will of the Lord, doing what had to be done, defeating Israel's enemies, it didn't matter. David was a man of war; God's house would be built by a man of peace, Solomon, whose name comes from the Hebrew *shalom* and means "peace" or "prosperity." Since his father had defeated all Israel's enemies, Solomon lived up to his name. He never had to go to war, and he was the most prosperous king of Israel. Prosperity goes hand-in-hand with peace.

God's Ultimate Plan

But what about God's plan for David. God said that *David's house and kingdom would last forever (2 Samuel 7:16)* and that *his throne would be established forever*. Zedekiah was the last Davidic

king of Israel before the defeat by Babylon. After the Babylonian captivity, Israel wasn't a sovereign nation until the middle of the twentieth century. Jesus, the Messiah is God's ultimate plan for David.

Our Plans

This brings us back to us and our plans. We want to follow God. We want to do His will. But what does that look like? How can we do that? The problem is our fallen nature. We want to do the right thing. We may think we know what the right thing is. But because of sin, we don't. Many times, we end up making plans, whether individually or in a board meeting, and ask God to bless our plans. We forget that the way to make God laugh is to tell Him your plans.

God's Plans

Let's get **FIRST THINGS FIRST**. We want to live for God, but we must bow to God's plans because ours won't work. *Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain (Psalm 127:1)*. But we don't have prophets like Nathan around who hear directly from God to tell us what to do and what not to do. So, how can we know the mind of God? How can we know His plans?

God's Word

That's where God has given us His Word. In Scripture, God speaks clearly. Put **FIRST THINGS FIRST** and listen to the voice of God in Scripture. Here are two examples of plans in God's Word.

God's Plan for Christians: Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. God's plan for Christians is to live a life according to His Word and will, to do good works. He wants us to live a holy life.

God's Plan for Salvation: Titus 2:11—14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Not only does God desire us to live moral lives, He wants to see all people come to repentance, and He promises His Son, our Redeemer will return to restore creation. There are many other verses in Scripture that show us God's plans. Getting **FIRST THINGS FIRST** means going to the Word to see God's plans and following them, wherever they lead.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
