

David's Yes to God's No

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[0 : 0 0] thought to two or three verses from verse 18. When King Samuel, then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God. You have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come. This is instruction for mankind, O Lord God. What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God. Because of your promise and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness to make your servant know it. Therefore you are great, O Lord God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth, and God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name, and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods.

And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. 2 Samuel is one of the giant peaks in the spiritual mountain range, if you like, of the Old Testament. Because from this mountain peak, we can look back and also look forward from the way in which David is here confronted with the change that he did not anticipate in the building that he was planning, and now God is planning rather for him. And the way that David looks back in this takes him back to the promises of God, a way back to Abraham especially. And as he also looks back on the history of the people, back as far as that, and to Egypt. And he's also able to look forward whether he saw things as clearly as we can see them in the light of the New Testament is a question, but he certainly had here given by God details that took him forward to the New Testament, bring us forward to the New Testament age, to the kingdom especially, to the kingdom under Christ, and to Christ as the king. And that of course is in the form here of a prophecy or a promise certainly, particularly in verses 12 to 16 and in verse 19 as well, where you find God addressing David with the plans that he has to establish his kingdom and to set his throne in such a way as it will remain forever. And that of course takes us beyond David literally to the greater David who is Jesus himself. So it's a peak in that sense that you can look back from it and you can also look forward to the New Testament from this giant peak of 2 Samuel 7. It's an important chapter in the Old Testament, an important chapter in the history of redemption, the history of God's promises and covenant in the various ways in which that is then unfolded from this time onwards. So it consists really of David's plan, which was to build a house for God, that's to say a temple or a place where he would be, where God would be worshipped, because up to now it's just the tabernacle and this is David's plan that he should have a more permanent place of residence now that they're actually established in the land.

But God meets that with a very firm refusal. And it's David's response, especially in verse 18, that interests us tonight, going into the theology of the kingdom and taking that forward to the New Testament kingdom and Christ and so on. And that's important in its own right. But we can call our study tonight briefly, David's yes to God's no, because God said no, this is not what's going to happen, but this is what's going to happen. And now we come to verse 18, we can see that David has accepted that, David's yes to God's no, and his response to that is important for ourselves. So let's look first of all at God's refusal of David's plans. And then secondly, we'll look at David's acceptance of God's plans. Now this is David's concern to build a house for God to build a temple. And his argument is, well, I have now got my own house, I've got a house to live in as a king, and I dwell in the house of cedar, as you see there, verse 2, but the ark of God dwells in a tent. David thought that that was inappropriate, that the ark of God, which was the centerpiece really of the whole religion and worship of Israel, as God had appointed, that that dwelt in a tent, a tabernacle, something impermanent, whereas he himself had a house of cedar as king, a place that was fitting

for the king that he was. And he felt it's not right that God should actually be without a house when I have one. Why should God not have one? So this was his plan, to build a house for God. Now you notice when he said this, verse 1, now when the king lived in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies. So he thought it was an appropriate time because he was no longer at that time involved in warfare, involved in battles, involved in the many things of that kind that had been a feature of his life up to now. And he felt this was the time when he should approach this matter and actually build a house or have it arranged to build a house for God.

[6 : 09] Now that's itself important for us because we have a time at the moment when we're able, or should be able to do more of the reflection and of the thinking and of the meditation that this lockdown has given us opportunity for. And this time, if you like, of relative rest and peace in that sense is a time for ourselves to think and to ponder and to use as a quieter time, if you like. But the question that really comes to us is, what are we doing with that time? What am I doing with that time? And especially is our thinking, as it was for David, lo, he was taken in a different direction.

But the thinking David has was not wrong in itself. His thinking was, what must I do for God? What can I do for the Lord now that I'm in these circumstances? And that's the point. That's the question that you and I ourselves must ponder as well. We've been given this time when we're not as busy with other things as we usually are. So let's use that time wisely to ask ourselves, what have I been doing for God? What now can I do for God in the future, God willing?

Where is God actually taking me through the circumstances that I'm now in? What is he saying to me? Can I do more for God than I've done up to now? Will I have opportunity to serve God, even if I haven't done that as much as I wanted to up to now? And David wasn't actually thinking in a selfish way. It wasn't to make himself a name. It wasn't for prestige. In fact, when you go forward to 2 Chronicles chapter 6, verses 7 to 9, you find there that David is actually praised for the thoughts that were in his heart about building a place for God. 2 Chronicles 6, verses 7 to 9, where you find the Ark being brought into the temple. Then the priest brought the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord to its place. This is subsequent to the temple being built by Solomon.

And they brought the Ark of the Covenant to the inner sanctuary of the house, the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim spread out their wings, and the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place. And in all of that, it's obvious there that when you see in chapter 6, that's in chapter 5. In chapter 6, when you see what Solomon then goes on to do and to say, especially verses 7 to 9, you'll find him saying, now it was in the heart of David, my father, to build a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. But the Lord said to David, my father, whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless, it is not you who will build the house. So, I mean, that takes us back, when you go back to 2 Samuel 7, you can see from what Solomon there said, that it was not for personal prestige or for selfish reasons that David wanted to do this. And although his plan was now put aside by God and replaced with God's own plan, God was not criticizing David for how he had in his heart to do this. It was something that he wanted for the glory of God, something for the prestige of

God, not for his own personal advancement. So, David's concern was not wrong in that sense, but yet God went on to reveal to him that it was not the appropriate time for that to be done, for the temple to be built. So, it takes us on to God's response. So, there's a refusal in God's response, but then there's also a promise. He said no, despite the good intentions. He said no, because the reason that was given, and again, it's back in 1 Chronicles 22 and in verse 8, the reason that God gave was, David said to Solomon, my son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the Lord my God, but the word of the Lord came to me saying, you have shed much blood and have waged great wars. You shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood before me on the earth. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest.

[10 : 57] I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies, for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for my name. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever. He goes on then to instruct Solomon in regard to building the temple. And that really shows us that what God was saying to David was not just a simple no, and it wasn't a no in terms of being annoyed with David, or in any sense to punish David for something. And although he was saying he was a man of blood and had engaged in many battles, he wasn't finding fault with David for that, because David had actually dealt with the enemies of the Lord in many of his battles. What he was saying to David was,

it's not appropriate that in a rain such as yours, which has been characterized by lack of peace for the men, it's not appropriate that in that rain, this house will be built. It's more appropriate that it will be built during your son's rain, because that will be a time of peace being established. And that fits itself with one of the central facets of the kingdom of Christ, that it is a kingdom where peace very much is at the center of that kingdom and its administration by God himself. So it's a matter of what was suitable where David is redirected by God.

Now there'll be times when your plans and my plans will be met with God's no. And we've had certain views of where we need to go with our lives and where we need to take action for God or where we need to come to certain decisions. And indeed, sometimes that may feel right to us. And then God steps in and in providence or even through speaking to us through his word, he will show us sometimes a very firm no, sometimes a gentle taking of us aside. And it's interesting, whenever God changes, our plan, even if it's our plan for his name, he will always have something better than what we ourselves have planned.

That's such an important thing always to carry with us. If God is changing my plan today for my life, if God is changing what I anticipated to do, even for God himself, then the wisdom of God is going to provide something better for me. That's the way in which faith sees it.

I found that in my own personal experience, if I can just mention this, before I went away to study for the ministry, living in Airtong at the time.

[13 : 49] That's 40 years ago. And we had plans to build a house and everything had gone through. It was ready just more or less to give those who were going to build the go ahead to build it.

But that didn't happen because I knew that was not God's plan. It came to the point where God made it clear that I had to put that aside and follow his plan for me to actually come to study for the ministry of the gospel.

The interesting thing is that after 40 years, most of you will know, we've actually bought a house in town with a view to retirement eventually, whenever that God's providence may be. But the interesting thing is that during these 40 years, which took us from one place to another, different congregations, different experiences in life, and the place that we've now got with a view to retirement is just immediately across the road from the bit of land that we were going to actually build on in those days.

So God has a better plan. God has his way for us set out. So if he changes what's in our minds, in our hearts, or if he frustrates our plan and says, no, that's not how it's going to be.

I'm going to shift it in another direction. It'll be disappointing. But in many ways, really, these verses are how David dealt with that change, whether he was massively disappointed or not.

[15 : 14] We're not able to say there's nothing here that says he was disappointed, although I'm sure there was something of that in his heart. He was human after all. So here is God saying no.

And maybe that in your own life tonight, you're looking for some direction from God as to what the next step is for your life. And maybe you're wrestling with something where you know God is speaking to you and you're hesitating and you're not sure and you've come to him in prayer and through his word.

Maybe it conflicts with your own plan, what you thought was maybe best for yourself, for your family, for your future. But be persuaded of this. If God is taking you in a different direction, if God is saying to you, well, your plan is good, but not now.

Or whatever way God actually comes to change our thinking in a certain way, that's always going to be better for us in the long run than for us to follow our own plans.

And as Isaiah put it just in another form, my ways are not your ways. Neither are my thoughts your thoughts, says the Lord.

[16 : 25] So God's response, firstly, was saying no to David. But it wasn't just a simple no. Because secondly, God is saying to him, instead of you building me a house, I'm going to build you a house.

He then takes him to the way that he will have a son. And especially there from verse 16 of the chapter onwards, where God is saying to, sorry, from verse 11 it is, Moreover, the Lord declares to you, the Lord will make you a house when your days are fulfilled.

You shall have a son that shall come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. See, David's concern was, the kingdom of God in Israel needs to be established further.

And for that, we need a house for the Lord. We need something permanent where the art of God can be situated. Here is God saying, you're not going to build me a house. I'm going to build you a house, but I'm going to build you a kingdom.

And that kingdom will be through your son. And it will go on into the future. And it will actually lead to the great king, who will be a descendant of David, who will be known as the son of David, Jesus Christ.

[17 : 39] And he's going to establish his throne. And his kingdom shall be made sure forever, God says before me. Your throne shall be established forever. Now, isn't that interesting? God is not saying to David, your throne is going to disappear.

Your throne is going to become completely irrelevant and cut off from the future. What he's saying to him is, your throne will be established, but it will be a throne established through its link and through its fulfillment as a type of the throne of Jesus, whose kingdom and his throne will be established forever.

Now, we often say this, and I'm just going to say it again, that so many features like that in the Old Testament actually prove the truth of this being the word of God, of the scripture being the word of God.

How could we possibly have all of this coming together and then so many centuries and ages afterwards coming to be fulfilled so clearly and established so securely in the person of Jesus? It was only by accepting that God is real, that God acts in this way through the ages, fulfilling his own plan, that we really come to understand what the Bible is, what the Bible is about.

[18 : 56] But you know, this is really, this is really, and God does this very often, even with some of the great people in the Old Testament. He did it with Moses, for example, when Moses was wrestling with God after the golden calf incident for the people that had sinned against God, where God had said, in words pretty much amounting to, leave me alone because I'm going to destroy them.

They deserve this. I'm going to destroy them. But I will make of you, you, Moses, a great nation. And of course, Moses, what a challenge that was from Moses, but he turned that into prayer and he used it as an argument in favor of God sparing the people.

And in fact, he went so far as to say, if there has to be a death, let it be mine. And you can see built into that, not necessarily all that clearly, but still you've got there the embryo of Christ substituting for his people coming to be put to death in their place, that they might be spared.

Anyway, that's another point. But they're similar in this instance here where you find this test of character for David because God is not just saying no to him.

He's saying, no, and somebody else will build a house for me instead of you. And that really is a test of character and a test of obedience. God says to us, no, it's not going to be your plan.

[20 : 29] And more than that, somebody else will actually do it and not you. And so here is David faced with God's refusal of his plans despite his concern for God's glory, despite God's saying, as we read elsewhere, that to have it in his heart was a good thing.

Nevertheless, God is saying no. And he's also saying, I instead am going to build you a house and a kingdom. So that takes us really to David's own, secondly, to David's acceptance of God's plan.

And you notice this first step. Verse 18, Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, Who am I, O Lord? This first step was to go in and sit before the Lord.

Take it that that was in the presence of the ark or certainly in the place of worship in the tabernacle. But you see, he's sitting there before the Lord.

And it's for good reason that the verse here says, Then King David went in. It doesn't just say, David went in and sat before the Lord. You also have to just take account of these little details.

[21 : 41] Sometimes they're very important in Scripture. Why is the word king used along with the word David here in this particular context? Well, it's really saying to us, yes, he is the king, but he has to go into the presence of this greater king that has just spoken to him.

And as he does so, he takes his kingship and places that before the Lord and says, Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house that you have brought me thus far?

So that's his first step. He's there, not so much as a king before God, but as his pupil, as a servant of the Lord. And he acknowledges this is his relationship to God.

King, though he is, he's now in the presence of the king. And you always find these things in Scripture so instructive. And for ourselves, it's also important too.

What is our reaction to God changing the direction of our life at times? What is our first reaction? Is it to actually refuse that, to accept that?

[22 : 46] Or is it something like what Gideon did? Remember in Judges chapter 7, where he came to have this 300 men selected and so on and all the way down and God told him to go down to the camp of the enemy at that time, the Midianites.

And they came across there a man who had a dream and he was telling his comrade, his companion, his dream, the dream about the barley cake.

And I tumbled into the camp of Midian and struck the tent and struck it so that it fell. And his comrade answered and said, this is no other than the sword of Gideon, the son of George, a man of Israel.

God has given into his hand Midian and all the camp. And then you read this, as soon as Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, he worshipped it.

Isn't that so telling? As soon as Gideon heard the interpretation of the dream, the telling of the dream, the first thing he did, he didn't rush out and go back and gather up his people, his helpers, and come against the Midianites.

[23 : 57] The first thing he did was he worshipped. He made this an occasion for thanking God, for seeking God, for worshipping God. And so that should be our first step as well.

Even in times of disappointment, of change with plans, and the Lord has made it clear to us that that's his will for us, our proper response is that of worship.

And then he secondly moves from that to specific praise of God. There's actually no sign of disappointment at all, which is interesting. He went in before the Lord, he said, Who am I, O Lord God?

He makes, first of all, his confession in this praise of God. He confesses in verses 18 to 21, in a way that shows humility, in a way that humbles himself before God, in a way that gives thanks to God for his dealings with him, in a way that sits really amazed at how wonderful God is, and how wonderful God has been to him.

His plan is refused. God has said to him, No, this will not be how things will be worked out. He's put that aside. He said to David, This is clearly not how it's going to be.

[25 : 11] What does David do? Does he sit and mope? Does he sit and say, Well, that's how God is going to do. He'll have to think about something else. No, he sits and counts his blessings. He sits and counts his blessings.

He comes with confession and praise and the deed of adoration. We've got verses 22 there to 24. Therefore, you are great, O Lord God, for there is none like you.

There is no God beside you, according to all that we have heard without ears. Who is like your people, Israel? One nation on earth and God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name.

God's great kindness, his wisdom, his power, his greatness, his incomparableness. This is what David focuses upon.

Instead of getting caught up in disappointment, instead of getting caught up with himself, instead of somehow sitting there moping, what he does is takes himself to consider God and his greatness and his goodness.

[26 : 17] And this is what he feeds into his worship of God. But he doesn't leave it at that. He then comes to petition. There's confession, there's adoration. There's also petition because you'll find from verse 25 to 29 that this is what David engages in.

Now, O Lord God, confirm the word that you have spoken concerning your servant. You see what he's saying? He's saying, Lord, I've heard your word. I know what your word means for me.

I know it means that my plan has to be put aside and yours has to take its place. But now, Lord God, confirm this word to your servant. Make it come to be true and concerning his house and do as you have spoken.

And his concern now is that God will establish his name and his kingdom, God's own name and God's kingdom and his people Israel in God's own way.

And so he comes to plead with God to bring this petition. Lord, you have said this. It's meant my putting my mind and my plans aside. But now do it.

[27 : 26] Bring it to pass. Fulfill your word. So there's the first step is one of immediate worship and sitting before the Lord. The second thing you find is his praise of God and confession and adoration

and petition.

But then his encouragement to Solomon is an important aspect of his response to God's change of his plan. You find that in 1 Chronicles and chapter 22.

Read from it a few minutes ago as well. an extract from it. And in chapter 22 David is directing Solomon in the building of the house that he had planned to build for God and that God had said, no Solomon your son will actually do this instead of you.

And what he's doing here is really just making it very clear as you read that that his acceptance of God's plan was very genuine, very sincere. and nowhere is it better seen because sometimes you might say, well, his words make it clear in 2 Samuel 7, but then these are just words.

You've got to go to the action in order to see that David was really committed to doing as God himself had planned. That's why he came to instruct Solomon in the way that he did.

[28 : 47] it shows that God's plan really was for David and firmly committed himself to doing and to actually see that carried through.

And again, just to finish on that point, our obedience, friends, is always proved by our actions in respect of God's will.

not just by confessing before God that we accept his word. Of course, that's important. It's important to God as well that he hears us and sees us doing that.

But equally, if not more important, are the actions that we carry out where in accepting his will we proceed to act in accordance and obedience to the will of God as he makes it known to us.

So, here's David's yes to God's no. Here are some lessons for ourselves when God redirects us or God prevents us carrying out what we might want to be our plan for ourselves, for him, for his church.

[29 : 56] Here is a reminder to us that we need always to remember that God can step in and change our plan to make clear that that's not the way he would have us to go.

And here is David and his response showing us the ideal acceptance of God's will for us. How it's through worship and praise and confession and adoration and petition but also through action that shows that that is really what we have accepted and not our own ways.

May God bless these thoughts to us. Let's pray. Lord, our Father in heaven, we give thanks that you are sovereign, that your sovereignty directs our lives in a way that is loving and kind and gracious, that your sovereignty is not to be regarded by us as something entirely formal and distant from us and concerned only with the formal arranging of our lives.

Lord, we give thanks that we see your sovereignty in action in the way in which you bring us to know yourself and to follow your ways, taking us aside from what we ourselves might have once planned for our lives, but bringing us to submit to Christ and to your plan for us in heaven.

We ask that your blessing, O Lord, will now be with us as we have once again given our minds to your word and to its instruction and light. We pray that it may prove to be further direction and comfort to us during these days ahead.

[31 : 36] And so we commit all of this to you, asking now that you would continue to bless us and receive our worship, we pray, and hear our prayers for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to sing tonight from Psalm 89.