

## **2 Samuel 7: 8-17**

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.” In accordance with all these words and with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

## **Mark 11: 1-11**

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this: ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’ ” They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” They told them what Jesus had said, and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple, and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

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Just before our scripture from 2 Samuel 7, where God makes a covenant with David, several big things happen. David had been king of Judah, of the southern kingdom, then, he united the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel and Judah by defeating the son of the former king - an unrightful heir according to some, making David king of the united kingdom. Not The United Kingdom. But the united kingdom. Jerusalem is then made the capital of all Israel. Then, the ark of the covenant is brought from its temporary safe-keeping place, to Jerusalem as well. There's no temple yet, but a tent is set up - a tabernacle - a sacred place for the ark of the covenant to reside.

So the king's throne, God's ark, and the rightful king himself are all in Jerusalem. Political power, religious power, and the power of David's story and legend are all residing in Jerusalem.

He's won battles, he's collected a harem of concubines and wives, he's borne children, and he's consolidated a considerable amount of power into his hands.

And then 2 Samuel tells us "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.’”

Once he had settled into his ivory, well, cedar tower; once he had gained all the powers of this world in his very dwelling, once he had gotten some rest... he needed a building project. So he goes to his prophet, a religious advisor - a faithful one who speaks for God to the king, and tells him, “I think I’m gonna build a” ballroom... I mean a “house for God.” I’m gonna build a temple. That’s what kings do, right, they build things of grandeur.

Nathan responds immediately, having done no discernment saying, “Go do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.” In other words, “sounds good! You should do it!”

But as Nathan drifted off to sleep, God came to Nathan with a different word - the covenant we read today.

God says, in essence, “You think YOU’RE going to build a house for ME? David! I’M building YOU a house. I’m building up a household of all my people. I’M the carpenter; YOU are the shepherd. It’s a descendant of yours, who will establish the everlasting kingdom I’m promising you. That guy, that descendant, he’s a carpenter, and he will build me a home.”

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In the last week of Jesus' life, the disciples and their carpenter-rabbi, the good shepherd, are herded into Jerusalem by a crowd of desperately hopeful people.

Dignitaries and royal officials, officials like Pontius Pilate, would typically enter the city parading through the Jaffa Gate, the good shepherd, carpenter-rabbi, savior of the world, and eternal king entered the city from the direction of Bethany, through what is called the Golden Gate, or the gate of mercy. It is Jewish belief that the messiah will enter through this gate, coming from the Mount of Olives, signalling a new age - the end of one age and the beginning of another - an age where God reigns.

Through the Golden Gate, on a small donkey or young colt, with cloaks laid out in lieu of a red carpet, the messiah enters into Jerusalem while the people wave palm branches - a symbol of a previous, somewhat recent revolt. With their meager offerings, and shouts of praise, the people signal two things:

- They understand him to be the promised king - the descendant of David who would establish an everlasting kingdom, a household of God.
- And they think that he is going to overthrow Caesar. Or at least the local government. They think he's a revolutionary, about to enter into battle. They think he's a warrior.

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Rebecca Solnit is a prominent American author, historian, and activist known for her prolific writing on feminism, environmentalism, social change, and art. She just published a new book, and was interviewed by the New York Times earlier this month, and in that, I think she proclaimed gospel to us:

**“Q: Whether it has to do with environmental degradation or degradation of our politics or of people, it seems as if the public is hungry for an individual to be a counterweight to Trump and Trumpism. I don't know whether that person is Zohran Mamdani or Gavin Newsom, who is clearly trying to position himself that way. But for whatever reason, that person has yet to be identified. Why do you think that is?”**

A: One of the great weaknesses of our era is that we get lone superhero movies that suggest that our big problems are solved by muscly guys in spandex, when actually the world mostly gets changed through collective effort. Thich Nhat Hanh said before he died a few years ago that the next Buddha will be the Sangha. The Sangha, in Buddhist terminology, is the community of practitioners. It's this idea that we don't have to look for an individual, for a savior, for an Übermensch. I think the counter to Trump always has been and always will be civil society. A lot of the left wants social change to look like the French Revolution or Che Guevara. Maybe changing the world is more like caregiving than it is like war. Too many people still expect it to look like war.”<sup>1</sup>

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Jesus is King. Jesus is the only king any of us should ever claim. But he is not king because he is a lone superhero. He is king because he is a bridge, a gate, a doorway to peace. He is king because, like David, he is a shepherd - a guide to the kingdom of God. He is king because he laid down his life for all those in his care. He is king because with his life he knit people together, and gave them a story to gather around; he built a home that is not fleeting but is everlasting. It isn't built on something false; it's not

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/07/magazine/rebecca-solnit-interview.html>

built on image or propaganda or exploitation draped in fabrication. No, it is built on love and hope and peace and joy and faith.

Building a new kind of world is not using tax money to purchase red carpets. Building the kingdom of God looks like the people gathering together to use what they have to honor one another. It looks like waving branches and shouting blessings to one another, anytime someone enters our gates. It looks like celebration, and caregiving. It looks like cleaning up messes and having grace for one another.

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I think what's so powerful about the No Kings Day Protests is not the shouts of Hosanna, but the realization that the kingdom is far more powerful than the king. Shouting hosanna, asking for salvation is not wrong, we should do it. But part of gathering together, whether at No Kings Day protests or here in church, we realize that the answer to our shouts for help, our cries of Hosanna - God save us, will be answered by the body of Christ. It'll be answered by the gathered community. It'll be answered by those who decided to show up and love their neighbor.

I couldn't go yesterday to the protest. Well, I could, but I didn't have the capacity to go. And I am totally at peace with that. You know why? Because the protest's success is not dependent upon one. It does not all hinge on me. It hinges on us. And I knew you all had me. I knew that the body of Christ would gather.

I'll be at the next one, you can count on that, so someone else can rest.

But friends, changing the world for the better looks way more like feeding, clothing, sheltering one another, washing feet, celebrating one another, gathering for change - than it does like war.

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Jesus the carpenter, Christ the King-Shepherd, has built and is shepherding us into the household of God - this is the way God saves us.

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In the days to come, Jesus will find himself betrayed, arrested, tried, hung on a cross, dead, and buried. The kingdom of God is still being built, despite all that. The kingdom of God is still being built, despite all this.