

Notes for Next Sunday

Fourth Sunday in Advent

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16). The Lord tells David and Nathan not what they will do but what He will do and make for David—an everlasting house and kingdom. In all we do for the Lord, we must first consult His Word to find out what is pleasing to Him. Jesus Christ is the “rest” and “house” promised to David. In Him, God’s people have rest from their enemies of sin and death, and in Him they shall dwell forever.

Epistle (Romans 16:25-27). Paul’s closing words encompass the entire good news of God, from the prophetic OT writings to the proclamation of Jesus Christ being made known to all nations. God’s eternal being, His wisdom, knowledge, and power, are all far beyond ours. He calls those of faith to respond in obedience to His will. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was entrusted to Paul and faithfully proclaimed among the nations in accordance with God’s will.

Gospel (Luke 1:26-38). The angel Gabriel announces Jesus’ birth to Mary, who responds in faith. By announcing the Gospel, the Lord likewise calls us to faith and to bear Christ—not as our child—but as the Holy One of God, our Savior.

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

OLD TESTAMENT – 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.” ³ Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.” ⁴ That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: ⁵ “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? ⁶ I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. ⁷ Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’ ⁸ “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning ¹¹ and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.’” “The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

7:1 After the king was settled in his palace. For so much of his life David had been caught up in the business of war and fighting. A courageous warrior, he had carried out some of the most successful military campaigns in Israel’s history. But now he found himself in a unique situation, at least as far as his life was concerned. David experienced a time of rest and peace. (PBC)

7:3 Nathan replied. In consulting a prophet, David sought God’s will, but Nathan boldly voiced approval of David’s plans in the Lord’s name before he had received a revelation from the Lord. (CSB)

7:3 *did I ever say ... “Why have you not built me a house ... ?”* David misunderstood the Lord’s priorities. He reflected the pagan notion that the gods were interested in human beings only as builders and maintainers of their temples and as practitioners of their cult. Instead, the Lord had raised up rulers in Israel only to shepherd his people (that is also why he had brought David “from the pasture,” v. 8). (CSB)

7:9 *I have cut off all your enemies.* David had always been sure of the merciful presence of Jehovah, even during the years when Saul persecuted him. David’s victories had brought him into prominent attention in all the surrounding nations. Of so much concerning his outward success Nathan was to remind David first, of the fact that he owed his position and all his success to the Lord alone. (Kretzmann)

7:10 *I will provide a place for my people Israel.* It is for this purpose that the Lord has made David king, and through David he will do it. (CSB)

7:11 *I will also give you rest from all your enemies.* See vv. 1, 9. David’s victories over threatening powers will be complete, so that the rest already enjoyed will be assured for the future. (CSB)

7:16 *your throne will be established forever.* That’s the wonderful thing about God’s “No’s.” Though at first they may appear to be depriving us of some joy, in reality they are designed to give us more. How wrong ever to think we know better than God. How foolish of us every to second-guess the Lord. (PBC)

EPISTLE – Romans 16:25-27

²⁵ Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, ²⁶ but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

16:25 *now to him.* The purpose of Paul’s intended visit to Rome was to strengthen the Roman Christians. (1:11) That was also the purpose of this letter. However, God alone has the power to strengthen and establish the Christians in their estate. (Stoeckhardt)

16:25 *my gospel.* Not a gospel different from that preached by others, but a gospel Paul received by direct revelation (see Gal 1:12). (CSB)

16:25 *proclamation of Jesus Christ.* A description of the gospel; it is about Jesus Christ, who is its content. (CSB)

16:26 *revealed and made known through the prophetic writings.* The mystery is revealed not only by the incarnate Word, but also by the written Word. Jesus’ teachings and the apostles’ teachings are not disconnected from the Old Testament prophetic writings (Eph 3:4–5). “Obedience of faith” does not refer to sanctification but refers to the subjective appropriation of God’s objective gift of grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

16:27 God is all-knowing, but also all-wise in providing for our salvation. (TLSB)

16:27 *to ... God be glory.* The ultimate purpose of all things. (CSB)

16:27 The doxology is directed to God the Father, and not Jesus Christ. However, any access to God—even in praise—occurs through Christ alone. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

GOSPEL – Luke 1:26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with

you.”²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called^a the Son of God.³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God.”³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

1:26 In the sixth month. This is the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, not the sixth month of the Roman calendar year. (CC)

1:26 Nazareth. Never mentioned in the OT. Jesus’ hometown is obscure and insignificant. (TLSB)

1:27 pledged to be married. Jewish betrothal was binding in ways that modern engagements are not. Betrothal usually preceded marriage by at least nine months to assure that the bride was not pregnant. The young man would give the bride’s family a gift. The fathers of the families would sign a marriage document. (TLSB)

1:32 his father David. Mary was a descendant of David, as was Joseph (see Mt 1:16); so Jesus could rightly be called a “son” of David. (CSB)

1:34 How will this be ... ? In contrast to Zechariah’s skeptical question (v 18), Mary wonders in faith. Zechariah walked away unable to speak, but Mary burst forth into holy song (vv 46–55) after Gabriel’s departure. (TLSB)

1:35 Son of God. Title forcefully underscores Jesus’ divine nature. “The divine and human natures in Christ are personally united. So there are not two Christs, one the Son of God and the other the Son of Man. But one and the same person is the Son of God and Son of Man” (FC Ep VIII 5). (TLSB)

1:36 Elizabeth your relative. It is not known whether she was a cousin, aunt or other relation. (CSB)

1:37 nothing is impossible with God. Ultimately this is a matter of trust, of taking God at his word. There is a possible allusion to Sarah (Gen 18:14). Jesus himself says the same thing regarding salvation (Mt 19:26). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

1:38 Lord’s servant. Demonstrating great humility and purpose, Mary identifies herself as a household slave. (TLSB)