

ADVENT WEEK THREE

December 20, 2019

Anywhere!

2 Samuel 7:1-22

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. 2 Samuel 7:4-6

Who remembers Dr. Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham*? I certainly do. I have always loved the surprise attending the absurd suggestion that anyone would eat green eggs, and the word 'ham' just sounds silly. And what about the revelation of new, different food, so good it can be eaten anywhere with anyone: in boxes, trains, and boats with foxes, goats, or a mouse. What about the creature's delighted gratitude: Thank you, thank you, Sam-I-Am?

King David is at a peaceful moment in his life. He now has a house. No one is trying to destroy him or his people, and he is feeling terribly grateful. In his moment of appreciation, he hits on the idea that the heretofore nomadic God of Israel should have a house to dwell in. His prophetic adviser, Nathan, at first thinks this is a great idea. But that night Nathan receives word from God that God disagrees. God gets right down to several points, one of which is, "Have I ever asked any of the Israeli leaders to build me a house? I have my own plans." Here we see the flowering of the concept of God's "uncontainable presence." God was on to something.

There is real cause for joy here. It helps to know that this passage was written while Israel was in captivity in Babylon. It is important for the exiled people to know that God is a mobile God and is with them still. This piece of monotheism is ingenious. As much as we want to create permanent holy spaces, to concretize our faith, to materialize it to make it more convincing, we need to accept the omnipresence of the Divine.

As the creature in *Green Eggs and Ham* might respond, "Say, I can worship anywhere!" Good news, indeed.

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