

The Prophetic Significance of the Davidic Line and Covenant

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After the nations had gone into apostasy at Babel (Gen 11:1-9), God entered into a covenant with the patriarch Abraham (then called Abram) for the purpose of blessing the world through Abraham and his lineage (the Jewish race/nation). This covenant, known as the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3; 15:18), unconditionally promises three elements to the Jews: land (Gen 15:18-21), seed or descendants (Gen 15:4-5; 22:17), and blessing (Gen 15:1). These three promises are amplified in subsequent covenants (or sub-covenants) that God made with the nation. Regarding the seed promises, from Abraham's many seed would ultimately come a singular seed (Gal 3:16) or descendant who would procure all of the promises found in the Abrahamic Covenant for Israel consequently ushering in blessing for the nation and the entire world.

This seed aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant's promises is later amplified in what is known as the Davidic Covenant. After God rejected Saul, who was the nation's first king, God selected David from among Jesse's sons (1 Sam 16:1) leading to David's anointing as the nation's second king (1 Sam 16:13). In time, God entered into a covenant with David, which promised that through David's lineage would come an eternal house, throne, and kingdom (2 Sam 7:13-16). In other words, God through David's lineage would usher in an eternal dynasty and throne. Several reasons make it apparent that these promises should be construed literally. The promises are terrestrial or earthly in nature. They concern David's physical line. They are made exclusively with national Israel rather than the church, which was not yet in existence (Matt 16:18). There is nothing in the context of 2 Sam 7 which would lead the reader to the conclusion that these promises are to be either allegorized or spiritualized. Since these promises are an amplification of the seed component of the Abrahamic Covenant, they share the Abrahamic Covenant's literalness, terrestrial nature, unconditionality, and eternity (Gen 17:8; Ps 89:34-36).

The Old Testament continually reaffirms that there would eventually arise a Davidic descendant who would usher in all that was unconditionally promised to both Abraham and David (Ps 89; Amos 9:11; Hosea 3:5; Isa 7:13-14; 9:6-7; Ezek 34:23; 37:24). The Gospel accounts affirm Jesus Christ as the long awaited Davidic descendant prophesied in both the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. For example, Matthew's Gospel connects Christ genealogically to both Abraham and David (Matt 1:17). Matthew also routinely associates Christ with the title "Son of David" (Matt 9:27). Luke similarly shows Jesus to be the rightful heir to God's promises to David (Luke 1:32-33, 68-69) and notes in Acts 2:30 that Jesus is the unique Davidic descendant who will one day rule the world from David's Throne (Ps 132:11).

While the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants are unconditional, the Mosaic Covenant (Exod 19-24) is conditional (Exod 19:5-6, 8). Thus, any given generation within Israel must meet the conditions of the

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Mosaic Covenant in order to experience the blessings promised in the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. They must enthrone the king of God's own choosing (Deut 17:15) thereby satisfying the condition of obedience found in the Mosaic Covenant.

Thus, it was incumbent upon first-century Israel to enthrone Christ in order to enter into all of the covenantal blessings. While the opportunity to enthrone Christ as the Davidic king and consequently enter into the Davidic kingdom was presented to the nation through the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt 3:2), Christ (Matt 4:17), the Twelve (Matt 10:5-7), and the Seventy (Luke 10:9), Israel tragically rejected this kingdom offer (Matt 12). Such a rejection not only led to first-century Israel's failure to experience the kingdom blessings (Matt 21:43) but also to a long interim age when the Davidic kingdom would be in a state of abeyance or postponement (Luke 19:11).

During this time of postponement, Peter carefully notes how the ascended Christ has been elevated to the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33-34; Ps 110:1). In this position of glory (John 17:5), Christ pursues His ministry known as His "Present Session" in which He functions as priest (Heb 7:3b). Even in His present ministry, Christ retains His identity as the unique Davidic heir (Rev 3:7; 5:5; 22:16) who will one day occupy the earthly Davidic Throne in fulfillment of God's promise to David in 2 Sam 7:13-16.

Unfortunately, many confuse this present ministry of Christ with His predicted Davidic reign found in 2 Sam 7:13-16. Yet these two ministries are not to be equated. A considerable length of time elapsed between David's anointing as king (1 Sam 16:13) and when David actually began to reign after Saul's death (2 Sam 2, 5). In the same way, Christ has already been anointed at His Resurrection and Ascension as the one who will ultimately fulfill the Davidic Covenant (Acts 2:30). However, He will not begin to actually rule as Davidic king until a large segment of time has elapsed and Satan has finally been deposed (Rev 20:2-3) at the inauguration of the Messiah's earthly kingdom (Rev 5:10b; 20:1-10). Christ's present session at the Father's right hand could not constitute a full or partial fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant since that covenant predicts an earthly or terrestrial reign and Christ is presently in a heavenly or celestial position (Eph 1:20-21). Moreover, Revelation 3:21 says, "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." Here, Christ, sixty years after His Ascension, drew a sharp distinction between His present position on His Father's celestial throne and His future, terrestrial Davidic Throne. In other words, those trusting in Christ will be rewarded (future tense) by joining Him in His earthly Davidic reign (Rev 5:10a), just as Christ overcame and sat down (past tense) on His Father's heavenly throne. Recognized prophetic scholars have long observed that of the 59 New Testament references to David and of the multiple New Testament references to Christ's present session, no New Testament reference equates the Davidic Throne with Christ's present session.

The fact that the Davidic Covenant is not being fulfilled in the present in no wise negates its future fulfillment. When the disciples inquired as to when the kingdom would be restored to Israel, Christ

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never challenged the idea of an eventual fulfillment. Rather, He simply challenged the disciples' presupposition of its immediate fulfillment (Acts 1:6-7). In the future Tribulation period, the offer of the kingdom will once again be extended to Israel as well as globally (Matt 24:14). Unlike at the First Advent, this time the offer will be accepted leading to Christ's return (Matt 23:37-39) and subsequent earthly kingdom (Matt 25:34; Rev 20:1-10). During this glorious one-thousand year era, everything that was promised in the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants will find a literal fulfillment when Christ will rule the world from David's Throne (Matt 25:31) in Jerusalem (Zech 14:16-18). This earthly kingdom will then merge into the Eternal State (1 Cor 15:24-28; Rev 22:1-5) thereby fulfilling the Davidic Covenant's eternal requirement (2 Sam 7:16).