

David: The Covenant of the Kingdom II Samuel 7:8-17

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To prove we are making progress, let me show the list of covenants again.

1. The Covenant of Creation (Adam)—foundation for all that is to follow
2. The Covenant of Noah—the earth is preserved in preparation for the coming Saviour
3. The Covenant with Abraham—the gospel is declared for the first time (Gen. 15:6)
4. The Covenant of Law (Moses)—Gospel worship is instituted and gospel holiness is revealed
5. **The Covenant of the Kingdom (David)—Christ's kingship and lordship foreshadowed**
6. The New Covenant, or the Covenant of Consummation (Christ)—Everything lost in Adam is finally restored in Christ! Everyone who comes to Christ, who by the Spirit is baptized into Christ (I Cor. 12:13-14), finds that he or she is included in all the covenants.

David the Great

Let's begin by taking a look at the man with whom God made this covenant of the kingdom. Among the world's great leaders of men, David stands supreme. To begin with, no other man ever possessed David's combination of positive attributes: attractive appearance, personal courage, and military prowess just begin to describe him. To this day among kings and leaders he remains unsurpassed in his love for the God of Israel. His walk with God was personal and intimate, but not effeminate. Quite the opposite; he was a mighty warrior precisely because he walked with God. Of course I have to mention that from his youth he was markedly above all others in his zeal for God, his profound Bible knowledge and spiritual understanding, his musical and literary talent, his grace under pressure and his moral purity and ethical sensitivity.

He hated hypocrisy and self-centred behaviour in others, but his servant spirit and humility toward those who outranked him was unmatched, along with his genuine love and sympathy for his inferiors and his ability to make and hold friendships. Unlike many powerful men, David had a genuine confidence in his own powers but at the same time a deep appreciation for other powerful people—and so on, and so on. More than any other man who ever lived it could be said of David—without irony—that every woman wanted him and every man wanted to be him.

Even when he sinned David was amazing. For most of his life he kept all ten of the commandments, and not just the letter of the law, but the spirit of it. However, the Bible records one particularly serious sin in his life, or rather, two closely related sins—adultery with Bathsheba followed by orders to kill her husband. This was an awful moment in an otherwise unblotted life, but when he was confronted, David's sorrow was thoroughgoing and sincere. He lived in continual repentance for the rest of his life. It is safe to say that just as he was the greatest leader the world has ever known, and one of the godliest, he was at the same time one of the greatest repenters. In all things, even in the aftermath of sin, he was truly a man after God's own heart (I Sam. 13:14).

This is the man God made the king of Israel—Israel’s greatest earthly king—and this is the man with whom God established a personal covenant, promising that the line of David would never end because from that line the Messiah would be born to reign forever. God’s promise was made a thousand years before its fulfilment, but when Christ was born as David’s greater son, the promise was fulfilled. Of course Jesus died on the cross, but His reign is eternal because when he was raised it was with “the power of an indestructible life” (Heb. 7:16).

Bible Text

To get into today’s text it is important to remember that after David became king he spent some time consolidating his authority and getting himself organized. But once he was settled, he realized that he was neglecting the symbol of God’s presence, the Ark of the Covenant—that he was living in a cedar house while the ark sat inside a tent. He mentioned this to Nathan the prophet one day, and knowing David’s heart Nathan blessed him and encouraged him to do whatever he had in mind. But that night God came to Nathan with a different message. In this message God declared he would establish a covenant with David. And at the heart of this covenant an astonishing fact was revealed. Rather than David building a house for God, God would build a house (dynasty) for David.

Now I’m about to read God’s message to David, commenting along the way, but as I read it I have to warn you that it is a very confusing message for one reason. From God’s point of view David’s kingdom is so closely aligned with Christ’s kingdom (at least in outline), that line by line it is almost impossible to discern exactly which kingdom is being described. Is God talking about David and his ordinary sons? Or is God talking about the Messiah? Or is God talking about both? It’s really difficult to tell.

The Bible clearly calls II Sam. 7:8-17 a covenant

Psalm 89:3 The Lord said, “I have made a covenant with My chosen one; I have sworn an oath to David My servant: 4 ‘I will establish your offspring forever and build up your throne for all generations.’”

II Samuel 7

8 “Now this is what you are to say to My servant David: ‘This is what the Lord of Hosts says: I took you from the pasture and from following the sheep to be ruler over My people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. **(Notice the emphasis God places upon Himself as the principle actor in all that takes place in David’s life.)** I will make a name for you like that of the greatest in the land. 10 I will establish a place for My people Israel and plant them, so that they may live there and not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not afflict them as they have done 11 ever since the day I ordered judges to be over My people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies.

(Now, in all that follows it is almost impossible to know where God leaves off talking about David to speak directly about David’s greater son, the Lord, Jesus Christ!)

“The Lord declares to you: The Lord Himself will make a house for you **(read “house” as**

dynasty). 12 When your time comes and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom (**Could be Solomon, could be David's greater Son, Jesus**).

13 He will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. **(Again, this could be a reference to Solomon, who did build the temple in Jerusalem. But it could just as easily refer to Christ. In fact, the word "forever" almost guarantees that God is speaking more about Christ than Solomon.**

This thought that God will build David an eternal house and throne is repeatedly brought forward into the New Testament and applied to Jesus, David's greater Son. In Acts 15, the disciples gather in Jerusalem to discuss a most interesting phenomenon. Many Gentiles were becoming believers in Christ, and many Gentile churches were springing up throughout the Roman empire. The question the disciples faced was, what does this all mean? It is James, the Lord's half-brother, who explains what is going on by quoting from Amos and Isaiah.

"After these things I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. I will rebuild its ruins and set it up again, so the rest of humanity may seek the Lord—even all the Gentiles who are called by my name, declares the Lord who does these things known from long ago" (Acts 15:16-18, quoting Amos 9:11-12; Isa. 45:21).

Do you see the significance of James' words? The growth of the church is the fulfilment of God's promise to build David's house (tent) and establish his throne forever. Of course it's a spiritual fulfilment—God always had a spiritual kingdom in mind, and David's eternal throne is really a reference to David's Son Christ sitting on a heavenly throne. To read God's promises as primarily referencing a literal Jewish kingdom was always a mistake. Remember when the disciples got all worked up in John 6 about having to eat Christ's body and drink his blood? What did Jesus say to them? Paraphrasing John 6:63: "The flesh doesn't help at all; the words that I speak to you are spiritual words, living words. they have nothing to do with actual flesh"

Do you not also hear the echo of II Samuel 7:13 as Jesus speaks with His disciples in Caesarea Philippi? Mat. 16:18: "On this rock I will build my church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it." And what about Hebrews 3:3,6? "For Jesus is considered worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder [of the house] has more honour than the house. . . . Christ was faithful as a Son over His household. And we are that household if we hold on to the courage and the confidence of our hope."

I'm also reminded of Paul's explanation to Corinth regarding what was going on with the church at Corinth. In I Corinthians 3 Paul explains that God is building His house through the labours of himself and other Christians. "For we are God's coworkers," Paul says. "You (church members at Corinth) are God's field, God's building" (I Cor. 3:9b). Then Paul says, "For no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ: (I Cor. 3:11). Finally, "Don't you yourselves know that you are God's sanctuary

and that the Spirit of God lives in you?" (I Cor. 3:16).

Finally, what about I Peter 2:5 where he affirms of Christians, "you yourselves, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." All of this New Testament truth is like the fruit of seeds planted in God's promise to David. No wonder Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann has called II Samuel 7 the "the most crucial theological statement in the Old Testament.")

Here's a fascinating thought, from this 13th verse Jesus made three claims concerning Himself.

1. That He would build a temple (Mat. 26:61, 27:40; John 2:19)
2. That He possessed an eternal throne (Mat. 19:28-29)
3. That He possessed an imperishable kingdom (Luke 22:29-30; John 18:36)

Now back to our text.

14 I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to Me. When he does wrong, I will discipline him with a human rod and with blows from others. **(At first glance this passage must seem to refer only to David's ordinary sons, Solomon, Rehoboam, and the rest. Like David, all of his sons sinned against God in various ways and God did discipline them.**

But even this verse can be interpreted as referring to the Messiah. First of all, does God not say that He is the true Father in this story? And does he not speak of David's son as actually being His Son? And did God's son not become sin for us? And when He did take our sin upon Himself, did He not have to endure the wrath of God that we deserved?

There's a very interesting passage in Hebrews 5 that seems to relate directly to this verse. "Though He was God's Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. After He was perfected, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him. . . ." Heb. 5:8-9.)

Finally, in this passage God says . . .

15 But My faithful love will never leave him as I removed it from Saul **(Is God referring to David?, the Messiah? Both? Does it matter?)**; I removed him from your way. 16 Your house and kingdom will endure before Me forever, and your throne will be established forever."**(Those two forevers mean that ultimately these covenantal promises can only be fulfilled in Christ.)** 17 Nathan spoke all these words and this entire vision to David.

We've seen the connection between David and Christ. Now let's close with a thought about our connection with Christ. I Chronicles 12 describes the men who aligned themselves with David.

1. They followed David in exile. (12:1)
2. They helped David in battle (12:1)
3. They chose David over their kinsmen (12:2)
4. They dedicated their lives to David (12:8ff)
5. Their love for David made them heroic (12:14-15)

6. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit to publicly commit themselves to David (12:18).

We are yours, David,
We are with you, son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
and peace to him who helps you,
for your God helps you.

7. Their dedication was so complete, and so pure, that the Scripture says, they were “like an army of God.” (12:22)