

The Davidic Covenant

I. Introduction

1. David's kingship was arguably the most important development in the salvation history as it saw the prototypical fulfillment of God's kingdom designs as covenanted to Abraham – *designs that reflected God's creational intent as revealed in the Genesis account.*
2. With Yahweh's ark now settled in Jerusalem, David's thoughts turned to the construction of a permanent house for Him, which was an entirely predictable and expected development.
 - a. David understood that his reign was the administration of Yahweh's kingship. And so, when he made Jerusalem the "city of David," he was effectively making it the seat of the Lord's throne. And since Yahweh was symbolically enthroned between the wings of the cherubim, it was necessary that the ark and its sanctuary be situated in Jerusalem.
 - a. So David was aware of the Lord's instruction regarding a fixed sanctuary (Deut. 12:1-11), and so desired to build a permanent temple for Him in Jerusalem. * 2 Sam. 7:1-3

II. The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7)

David wanted to build the Lord a house, but He had other plans, which He disclosed through Nathan: *David would not build Yahweh's house; rather, He would build a house for David.*

A. The Historical and Scriptural Framework for the Covenant (7:1-9)

1. Yahweh fully established His kingdom through David, giving him "rest on every side" (7:1). He had promised this rest before Israel entered the land, as the context for establishing His own dwelling place (ref. Deut. 12:10-11). *Thus David's desire wasn't personal or arbitrary, but was grounded in the Lord's own stated intent.*
 - a. David sought to fulfill Yahweh's intent, and His response – *in the form of a covenant and its promises* – showed that His designs transcended David's vision. * cf. 7:1, 10-13
 - b. The Lord's covenant with David revealed that the true fulfillment of His intent for a permanent sanctuary would come in connection with a "house" He would build for David – *not a physical dwelling, but a royal dynasty associated with a chosen descendent.*

Moses' words to Israel regarding Yahweh's dwelling were to find their true fulfillment beyond the Israelite theocracy in an enduring "house" built by one of David's sons.

2. Thus the writer has bound together three crucial considerations respecting Yahweh's kingdom as it implicates the recovery and consummation of sacred space.
 - a. The first is the key feature of a *fixed, enduring sanctuary* where the sons of the kingdom meet and interact with their Father-Lord. Thus the emergence of the *Zion* theology.
 - b. The second is the indication of a near-term fulfillment in the *Jerusalem temple*.
 - c. The third regards the ultimate fulfillment in relation to *David's house* (his *dynasty and dominion*) and the royal seed through whom it was to be constructed.

3. And as this covenant forms the transition between the two segments of David's reign – its *rise* and *decline*, so it looks backward to the revelation of Yahweh's kingdom in the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants, and forward to the ultimate realization of that kingdom in a future son of David (which itself suggests that the present Israelite (Davidic) form would not endure – a fact that would soon become evident).

*Thus from the issuing of the Davidic Covenant, the perpetuity of David's house and kingdom was the focal point of God's ongoing promise concerning His kingdom and its ultimate realization. **The hope of the kingdom lay in Yahweh's enduring faithfulness to David.***

* cf. Psalms 89 and 132; Isaiah 7-12, 49-55; Jeremiah 30-33; Ezekiel 34-37; Hosea 1-3

B. The Components of the Covenant (7:10-16)

1. The central feature of the covenant was Yahweh's pledge to build a house for David (v. 11). *This "house" implicated David's **dynasty** and his **dominion**: a kingly line and a kingdom.*
 - a. God promised David a *son* in whom his own reign would continue after his death. Like David, this seed would be Yahweh's beloved son (v. 14); he might have to be chastened, but the Lord would never withdraw His lovingkindness (*hesed*) from him.
 - b. But Yahweh also pledged to establish this son's *throne* and *kingdom* forever. In this way Yahweh would grant to David an everlasting dominion (ref. vv. 13, 16). *The covenant pertained to David's kingship and kingdom, both centered in a particular regal son.*
2. Yahweh would build David's house, but David's longing would not go unsatisfied. *The son promised in the covenant would build a house for the God of Israel.*
 - a. This declaration, too, is layered in meaning. First of all, the promise looked to Solomon and the Jerusalem temple. * cf. 1 Chron. 28:1-10 with 1 Kings 5:1-5; 2 Chron. 6:1-11
 - b. But David also understood that God's pledge looked ultimately to the *distant future* (vv. 18-19, cf. vv. 10-11). Thus it looked to a regal son beyond Solomon (cf. Acts 2:22-31), *and so perhaps even beyond the sanctuary that he would build.*
3. Lastly, Yahweh's promise to permanently establish David's house, throne and kingdom in the context of peace and rest was set within His designs for His own house and kingdom.
 - a. The Davidic Covenant commingled David's reign and kingdom with the Lord's, so that the perpetuity of David's house and kingdom is the perpetuity of His own. *Yahweh would establish His kingdom and see His own house built by establishing David's house, throne and kingdom in a regal descendent covenanted to him.* * vv. 13-16; cf. also vv. 21-26
 - b. At the same time, this commingling had a crucial point of *discontinuity*: Solomon was the initial referent of the covenant (1 Chron. 22:1-11), and his rule and kingdom were Yahweh's (1 Chron. 29:23). And yet Solomon's kingdom – as the extension of David's kingdom – was deeply unsettled and destined to failure and dissolution (note vv. 10-13).

The promise of perpetuity, set alongside the decline and demise of David's kingdom, held out the sure hope of a future restoration of David's house and kingdom in another son – a son in whom all of Yahweh's promises would be "yes and amen." * cf. Isa. 9:1-7; Amos 9

Thus the promise of a Davidic seed embraced both sides of the covenant: *In and through this seed, the Lord would build David's house, but this seed would also build Yahweh's house.*

This son would build and secure the perpetuity of David's house, throne and kingdom, but in so doing also secure for Yahweh a royal dynasty of image-sons ruling His enduring kingdom.

- David recognized at the time that the covenant looked beyond Solomon, but eventually the Lord would disclose that it looked beyond Solomon's *regal line*. * Jer. 22:24-30
- So Solomon later constructed the Jerusalem temple, but not an everlasting "house" (dwelling, dynasty and kingdom) for the Lord. This awaited another regal son of David, *who would accomplish these things in a most unexpected and astonishing manner*. * cf. Jer. 33:14-26 with John 1:1-14; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; Eph. 2:11-22; 1 Pet. 2:1-10; Rev. 5:1-10

Conclusions

1. An important summary observation is that the Davidic Covenant was entirely *unilateral*. It was a covenant between Yahweh and David, and yet it required nothing of him.
 - a. It entailed only what Yahweh had determined to do in relation to David and his house and kingdom – *and not in the abstract, but with regard to His purposes in and for the world*.
 - b. Hence the Davidic Covenant was set within the Sinai Covenant, which itself advanced the goals of the Abrahamic Covenant. *In this sense, the Davidic Covenant gathers up into itself all that God had revealed and covenanted to that point in the salvation history*.
2. Accordingly, the Davidic Covenant made David the new focal point of God's pledge of a human "seed," so that David and his reign added significantly to the revelation of this person.

Indeed, David was to find his own destiny and significance in God's purposes in the son promised in the covenant, so much so that this descendent is sometimes referred to by David's name. * cf. Ezek. 34:1-24, 37:15-25; Hosea 3:1-5

3. The covenant pledged an everlasting "house" for David – not a physical structure, but a royal dynasty, throne and kingdom that would endure forever in the context of unending peace and rest. *Yahweh was going to build this house in connection with a regal son from David's line, a son who, in turn, would also fulfill David's desire to build Yahweh a house*.
 - a. Solomon was the first referent of this promise, but not the ultimate one. He built the temple, but it would not endure, even as Solomon's regal line would be severed and his throne and kingdom overthrown. *Indeed, Solomon's troubled "house" was headed toward dissolution before it even began*. * cf. 2 Sam. 12:1-10; 1 Kings 11:1-13
 - b. The ultimate referent of the covenant pledge was a son in whom Yahweh would *Himself* establish David's regal dynasty and dominion forever. The Lord intimately associated Himself with this promised "seed," even designating him *His* son, which reflected both Israel's covenant sonship and the fact that Yahweh's king was preeminently His son, administering His reign in His name. So Israel's prophets later connected this son of David with Yahweh's personal return to restore His kingdom, *but the exact nature of this relationship would remain veiled until the angel's announcement to Mary*.