

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT – PART 3

REVIEW OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

- God promised to give David a great name, and, under David’s leadership as king, to provide a secure place for the nation of Israel to dwell, in accordance with the original promises of the Abrahamic Covenant
- God also promised that a descendant of David would build the Temple that David himself had wanted to build, and that the Davidic dynasty would endure forever
- David would never lack a man to sit upon God’s throne in Jerusalem
- The key passage on the Davidic Covenant is 2 Samuel 7
- The royal psalms (especially Psalm 2, 72, 89, and 110) presuppose the Davidic Covenant and reflect back upon it, longing for the Davidic king to rule on God’s behalf

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT IN THE LATTER PROPHETS

- The Latter Prophets confirm this hope of a future Davidic ruler who will rule the people in perfect righteousness

Isaiah 9:6-7 ~ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, **On the throne of David and over his kingdom**, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Jeremiah 30:7-9 ~ ‘Alas! for that day is great, There is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s distress, But he will be saved from it. 8 ‘It shall come about on that day,’ declares the LORD of hosts, ‘that I will break his yoke from off their neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them their slaves. 9 **But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king**, whom I will raise up for them.

Jeremiah 33:14-17 ~ ‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 15 In those days and at that time I will **cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth**. 16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.’ 17 For thus says the LORD, **‘David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel’**

Jeremiah 33:20-21 ~ “Thus says the LORD, ‘If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, 21 **then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne**, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers.’”

Ezekiel 34:23 ~ **Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David**, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd.

Ezekiel 37:24 ~ **My servant David will be king over them**, and they will all have one shepherd; and they will walk in My ordinances and keep My statutes and observe them.

- These texts in the Latter Prophets demonstrate the hope Israel had in the fulfillment of the DC and point to the One who will be the rightful heir to David’s throne and will inherit the promises of the DC
- These writers constantly looked forward to a coming Davidic kingdom
- The Messiah, the greater David in David’s dynasty, ultimately fulfills these promises when He becomes Israel’s king

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- The New Testament identifies Jesus Christ as the perfect ruler who comes as the greater David
- Both Matthew (tracing the genealogy of Christ through Joseph) and Luke (tracing the genealogy of Christ through Mary) trace His lineage through the line of David
- The royal line is passed through Jesus' legal father, and His physical descent from David is established by Mary's lineage

Matthew 1:16-17 ~ Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

Luke 3:31-32 ~ the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, 32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon,

- Gabriel's prediction to Mary before the child was born proves that He would be the fulfillment of the DC

Luke 1:30-33 ~ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 **He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.**"

- Zacharias' prophecy after his tongue was loosed pointed ahead to the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who would ultimately and completely fulfill the DC

Luke 1:68-69 ~ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, 69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us **In the house of David His servant**

- Jesus is recognized as the Son of David throughout His earthly ministry

Matthew 9:27 ~ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Matthew 12:23 ~ All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"

Matthew 21:9 ~ The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David; BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Hosanna in the highest!"

Matthew 22:42 ~ "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "The son of David."

- God testified that Jesus was the ultimate Davidic Messiah when He raised Him from the dead

Romans 1:1-4 ~ Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, **who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead,** according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord

- Christ has been given full authority over the Davidic Messianic Kingdom

Revelation 3:7 ~ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, **who has the key of David,** who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:

Revelation 5:5 ~ and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, **the Root of David,** has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

Revelation 22:16 ~ I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. **I am the root and the descendant of David**, the bright morning star.

- Many in the NT anticipated that the Messiah would sit on David’s throne and rule the house of Jacob when He came
- Thus, it is obvious...in Jesus Christ the “house,” “kingdom,” and “throne” promises of the DC find their fulfillment

HAS THE DAVIDIC COVENANT BEEN FULFILLED?

- While scholars generally agree that Christ is the fulfillment of the DC, there is significant disagreement on when these promises are fulfilled and how they are fulfilled in Christ
- There is considerable disagreement regarding the timing of the DC fulfillment

Various Positions

The Amillennial Position	The Progressive Dispensational Position	The Classic Dispensational Position
Christ is Ruling on David’s Throne in Heaven; No Future Literal Kingdom on Earth	Christ is Ruling on David’s Throne in Heaven Presently Which Serves as an Initial Fulfillment of His Future Reign on Earth in the Future	Christ is Not Ruling on David’s Throne in Heaven Presently; Christ Will Rule on David’s Throne on Earth in the Future After His Return

The Amillennial Interpretation of the Fulfillment of the DC

- The generation of Jews at the time of Christ rejected its Messiah
- Therefore, the nation of Israel lost its privileged position with its Messiah
- Christ therefore is fulfilling the DC within the church
- Christ sits today on the throne of David in heaven, ruling through the church over a spiritual kingdom
- This spiritual kingdom is the rule of Christ from heaven in the hearts of believers
- There will be no future literal millennial kingdom here on earth

The Progressive Dispensational Interpretation of the Fulfillment of the DC

- Jesus is presently ruling in heaven, enthroned as the Davidic king; however, this present ruling does not negate the future, final fulfillment of the DC
- According to this view, Jesus began this aspect of His Davidic kingship as a result of His resurrection and ascension
- The apostles insist that Christ’s resurrection was the fulfillment of the covenant promise to “raise up” David’s descendant
 - For example, Peter argues in Acts 2 that David predicted in Psalm 16:10 that this descendant would be raised up from the dead and in this way seated be upon His throne

Psalm 16:7-11 ~ I will bless the LORD who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. 8 I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. 10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. 11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Acts 2:30-31 ~ And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY...Therefore having been exalted to the right hand

of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

- Peter then argues that this enthronement has taken place upon the entrance of Jesus into heaven in keeping with the language of Psalm 110:1 which describes the seating of David's son at God's right hand

Psalm 110:1 ~ The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

- Peter then declares in Acts 2:36 that Jesus has been made Lord over Israel

Acts 2:36 ~ Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.

- Thus, the enthronement at the right hand of God is the position promised to the Davidic king in Psalm 110:1

- Thus is it claimed that Jesus is now reigning from David's throne in heaven
- Additionally, the following texts show that Jesus is reigning now

Ephesians 1:20-23~ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. 22 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

1 Corinthians 15:22-29 ~ For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

Revelation 1:5 ~ and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

The Classic Dispensational Interpretation of the Fulfillment of the DC

- Christ, the ultimate Davidic king, came offering the Millennial Kingdom to Israel
- The generation of Jews at the time of Christ rejected its Messiah
- Therefore, the Davidic kingdom was postponed to a future day
- Christ sits at the right hand of God in a place of authority today
- But Christ is not sitting on the Davidic throne
- The Davidic kingdom is not in existence, but waiting for a future time when a generation of Jews will accept its Davidic king, Jesus Christ
- This will occur when Christ returns at His second coming, is received by Israel, and rules on this present earth for 1000 years over Israel
- It is during the Millennial kingdom that all the physical, political, and spiritual aspects promised in the DC will finally and completely be fulfilled
- After the Millennial kingdom, the rulership of Christ will continue as His reign on earth blends into the eternal state on earth

Reasons Christ is NOT Presently Ruling from the Davidic Throne in Heaven

- It is true that a number of Scriptures in the NT state that Jesus is presently sitting at God's right hand

Acts 7:55-56 ~ But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Romans 8:34 ~ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Colossians 3:1 ~ Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

1 Peter 3:22 ~ who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Hebrews 8:1 ~ Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

Hebrews 12:2 ~ fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- However, is this the fulfillment of the DC? → For a number of reasons, it is not

Literal Fulfillment of the DC

- The promises of the DC must be interpreted literally
- There was an expectation both within the OT and the NT of a literal, earthly kingdom ruled over by a son of David
- The fact that some parts of the DC were historically and literally fulfilled (David having a great name, Israel having rest from their enemies) points to a literal fulfillment of the “throne, house, and kingdom” promises (i.e. an earthly throne with an earthly King ruling over an earthly kingdom in Israel)
- Thus, we cannot assume that some of the promises of the DC were fulfilled literally and some are to be fulfilled spiritually

Unconditional Promises of the DC

- The DC is an eternal, unconditional covenant
- Since it was made with the physical descendants of Abraham, it must be fulfilled with them and cannot be transferred to another people (i.e. the church)
- “Since God swore on oath, based on His holiness, that His zeal would bring these things to pass, we can be certain that Israel must be preserved as a nation, eventually return to the land of promise, and be ruled over by Jesus Christ, the great son of David.”¹

Distinction Between the Throne of God and the Throne of David

- The throne of God and the throne of David are not the same thing!
- There are many thrones mentioned in Scripture (throne of Satan – Rev 2:13; throne of God – Rev 4:2; throne of godly elders – Rev 4:4) so we must not automatically conclude that the throne of God and the throne of David are the same
- There are a number of evidences for their distinction:

1. God’s throne is eternal, but David’s is not
 - God’s throne has existed from eternity past

Psalm 93:2 ~ Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.

¹ Paul Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy*, 61.

- But David’s throne began in the lifetime of David
 - “Since God’s throne in Heaven was established long before David’s throne, and since God’s throne certainly was established forever (Lam. 5:19), then it was unnecessary for God to promise to establish David’s throne forever (2 Sam. 7:16) if they are the same”²
2. God rules over the entire universe, but David ruled over a specific area on earth
 - They exercise authority over different realms with different boundaries
 - Although Jesus may occupy both thrones, that does not mean they are the same throne
 3. The two thrones are located in different places
 - God’s throne is in heaven

Psalm 11:4 ~ The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD’S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

Psalm 103:19 ~ The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.

- However, David’s throne is located on earth and nowhere does the Scripture indicate that the earthly throne of David has been transferred to heaven
- Jesus even makes a distinction between His throne (i.e. the throne of David) and God’s throne in heaven in Revelation 3:21

Revelation 3:20-21 ~ Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 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.

A Right Understanding of the Timing of the Davidic Covenant Fulfillment³

- Many who espouse an “already/not yet” view of the DC believe that Jesus’ Davidic kingdom reign was inaugurated with His first coming, but the full fulfillment of it awaits His second coming (i.e. the progressive dispensational view above)
- Allegedly, David’s reign from David’s throne is “already” and “not yet”
- Yet “[t]he fact that certain matters predicted in the OT have been fulfilled with Jesus’ first (i.e. spiritual blessings of the New Covenant) does not mean the Davidic kingdom is fulfilled in this age. It is quite possible for eschatological promises to be inaugurated in this age without holding that Jesus is sitting upon and reigning from David’s throne.”⁴
- “Our view is that Jesus’ resurrection and ascension mean Jesus is now fulfilling the promise of Psalm 110-1-2 that David’s Lord, the Messiah, would be seated at God’s right hand for a time *until* the Messiah reigns over His enemies from Jerusalem. In other words, Jesus currently is exalted and shares the throne of deity with the Father in heaven until the time comes for Him to assume the Davidic throne and rule the world from Jerusalem (Matt 19:28; 25:31; Rev 3:21). An exalted position at God’s right hand will one day lead to a reign of the Messiah on earth. So Jesus fulfills the promise of a Davidic King who is at the right hand of God (already), but His messianic kingdom reign from David’s throne on earth is future (not yet). This view affirms an ‘already/not yet’ perspective, but differs from many ‘already/not yet’ proposals that view Jesus as reigning currently from the throne of David...Our proposal contains an ‘already/not yet’ scenario, but it is

²Renald E. Showers, *There Really is a Difference!*, 89.

³ Adapted from Michael Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 569-579.

⁴ Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 570.

that of Jesus experiencing a session at the right hand of the Father now (Ps 110:1) with His Davidic reign being not yet (Ps 110:2). The Davidic kingdom reign of Jesus the Messiah is future.”⁵

Many Already/Not Yet Proposals	Our Proposal
Jesus reigns from David’s throne now in heaven and culminates this reign at His return	Jesus, as the ultimate David, possesses all authority at the right hand of the Father now in heaven, but His reign from David’s throne in Jerusalem awaits His return to earth

- It is best to view the fulfillment of the DC as occurring in 3 phases:

Historic Fulfillment of the DC

- Some elements of the DC were fulfilled shortly after it was given:
 - David’s name became great – 2 Sam 7:9
 - Israel received a place to dwell in safety – 2 Sam 7:10
 - David’s son, Solomon, built a temple for God – 2 Sam 7:12-13
 - Solomon was punished for his sin – 2 Sam 7:14
 - Kings ruled Israel after David died – 2 Sam 7:16

Jesus’ First Coming (Already) Fulfillment of the DC

- Some aspects of the DC were fulfilled with the first coming of Christ
 - The “David” to come arrived in the person of Jesus...the One at the center of this covenant – Matthew 1:1
 - The miracles Jesus performed were connected with the DC in that they verified he was the promised Son of David (Matthew 12:22-23) and demonstrated what the kingdom and restoration of all things would look like (Isaiah 11, 35)
 - Jesus has been exalted to a session at the right hand of God, something Psalm 110:1-2 predicted would happen before Messiah’s reign from Jerusalem. This current session at the right hand of God fulfills what David predicted in Psalm 110:1 (not part of the original DC but related to the ultimate Son of David himself). The resurrection and ascension do not mean the Davidic kingdom is inaugurated but it does mean that Jesus’ session at the right hand of God is occurring.
 - Jesus’ present session in heaven involves receiving kingdom authority; this authority is demonstrated in Revelation 5 when Jesus takes the book from the hand of God and shows He has authority and power rule the earth
 - Christ’s first coming extended salvation to the Gentiles, something promised in the DC as a “charter for mankind” (2 Samuel 7:19); now Gentiles can be saved without becoming Jews
 - The message of the kingdom (the Gospel) is being proclaimed today (Matthew 13:19)
 - When people believe the kingdom message (the Gospel) they become “sons of the kingdom” (Matthew 13:38) and are related to the kingdom even before its establishment on earth
 - Those who believe in Christ should exhibit kingdom righteousness (Matthew 5-7)

Jesus’ Second Coming (Not Yet) Fulfillment of the DC

- There are still significant parts of the DC that await fulfillment with Jesus’ second coming
 - Jesus will assume His Davidic throne at His second coming. This is clear from two NT texts:

Matthew 25:31 ~ But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, **then** He will sit on His glorious throne.

⁵ *ibid.*, 571.

Matthew 19:28 ~ And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

- The “regeneration” here refers the earthly kingdom described in Revelation 20:1-15 when believers will sit on thrones with Christ, the times of restoration of all things (Acts 3:21)

- Jesus will reign over the earth after His second coming...an actual area of land

Jeremiah 23:5 ~“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When **I will raise up for David** a righteous Branch; And **He will reign as king** and act wisely And do justice and righteousness **in the land.**

- Permanent peace and protection for the people of Israel awaits Christ’s second coming. This was promised in the DC (2 Samuel 7:10-11) but has not occurred yet. It awaits the return of Jesus:

Luke 21:24 ~ and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

- Prosperity for the land of Israel awaits Christ’s second coming (Amos 9:11-14)
- Christ’s reign over the nations awaits the second coming

Isaiah 2:2-4 ~ Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

Revelation 19:15 ~ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron...

- The reign of the saints upon the earth awaits the second coming

Revelation 5:10 ~ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and **they will reign upon the earth**

Historical Fulfillment	Jesus’ First Coming Fulfillment	Jesus’ Second Coming Fulfillment
David’s name became great	Jesus, the Son of David, is manifest	Jesus assumes/sits upon Davidic throne
Israel given a place to dwell	Jesus performed kingdom miracles	Jesus reigns over the earth
Solomon builds temple	Jesus exalted to session at the right hand of God	Permanent peace and protection for Israel
Solomon punished for sin	Messianic salvation extended to Gentiles	Prosperity for Israel
Kings in line of David	Message of kingdom proclaimed today	Jesus’ reign over the nations with international harmony
	Believers in Jesus are “sons of the kingdom”	Reign of the saints on the earth
	Believers are to evidence kingdom righteousness	Prosperity for the world
	Messiah provides atonement	