

Advent Studies 2009

God's Covenant
with
Noah, Abraham, Moses and David.



Week 4: David

Conclusion

This Covenant looks forward to a descendent of David who would bring peace and justice to God's people through his reign. This Covenant represents part of God's plan for creation. Each covenant moves us forward into the ultimate covenant made in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As we are seeing as we progress through this Advent Study, each of the biblical covenants introduces new facets of God's revelation which become part of the multifaceted tapestry of biblical covenants.

Prayer before Discussion

Heavenly Father, you took David from leading the life of a simple shepherd and anointed him to be king over Israel; help us to see in the lives of others your Spirit at work, and to acknowledge that those you might call to lead your people may often be those we so easily overlook as insignificant. Guide our thoughts and discussions, help us to be respectful of each other's points of view and tender with each other's dreams.

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Questions for Discussion:

1. Many of us, when we think of the Bible stories regarding King David, remember him as a shepherd boy and a composer of Psalms: the delicate boy that killed the giant Goliath. What new insights has this study given to you regarding David's relationship with God?
2. How do you understand the fulfillment of this covenant God makes David in the person of Jesus Christ?
3. Our Jewish brothers and sisters still look forward to the day when this covenant will be fulfilled. Which part of the covenant is still waiting to be fulfilled by members of the Jewish faith?

How to Use This Study

These study notes may be used by individuals for private study but will be found to be more effective when used in combination of private study and group discussion. The questions are designed to help you reflect on the text under discussion as you draw from your own personal experiences and listen to the reflections and experiences of others within your group.

Become familiar with the text

Each week there is a passage of Scripture associated with the Covenant that we will be reflecting on for that week. Make sure you have opportunities to read, re-read and reflect upon the text with the assistance of these questions (reproduced each week) before you move on to the commentary provided and the group discussion. The questions to be used for individual reflection are:

- What is the covenant being made?
- Who is the covenant between?
- What can we expect as a result of this covenant?

A Change away from the Sunday Gospel

With the Advent studies over the past few years the focus has been to concentrate on the Gospel for each of the Sundays in Advent. This has necessitated either preparing for the Gospel for the Sunday to come or looking back on the previous Sunday's Gospel.

The Culmination of the Advent season in the great Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas) is in itself the celebration of the beginning of the bringing about of God's New Covenant which is sealed in the Death and Resurrection of Our Lord. A further study, for personal reflection or for use as a final group study is provided on this New Covenant.

The setting for the Study

There are no hard rules for this but it is important to ensure that a comfortable and welcoming approach is taken and that those attending are encouraged to bring others along. Notes about the setting and style from the previous Advent studies can be re-visited if you need help.

What is a 'Covenant'?

In Law: It is a contract drawn up by a deed; it can also mean a clause in a contract

In Theology: The word Covenant Speaks of an agreement that brings about a relationship of commitment between God and his people.

Central to the Jewish faith are the Biblical Covenants that God made with Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. Alongside these, there is the centrality of the Ark of the Covenant, dating from the time of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, being carried about under King David and finally being placed in Solomon's great temple. It contained the tablets of the laws of the ancient Israelites.

The phrase Old Covenant is used in Christian theology to describe the covenant between God and Israel as described in the Old Testament.

The phrase New Covenant is used in Christian theology to describe the covenant between God and all humankind made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In this series of studies we will look at some of the covenants God made with his people in the old Testament and then look at how these covenants find their fulfilment in Jesus and his church.

The Covenant with David and its relationship to those that preceded it.

Throughout the Old Testament God may be found weaving each new covenant into a framework that contains (and allows insertion in to) the preceding covenants God has made. W C Kaiser, in his book "the Blessing of David", has said that "What God has promised to David was not a brand new, unrelated theme".

In a paper on the Davidic Covenant, Professor Michael Grisanti speaks of our need to believe in God's "progressive revelation" and offers us the following:

"As God reveals His will of Mankind and Israel in particular, He repeats certain features already presented and introduces other brand-new elements. Students of God's Word must take great care not to ignore either side of that coin... The coherence of these covenants does signify sameness. Although each covenant addresses distinct issues in God's plan for His creation, they do not operate in a mutually exclusive fashion."

The Davidic Covenant: The Master's Seminary Journal 1999

A table of Parallel Themes between the Davidic Covenant and preceding Scripture passages

Theme Statement	Specific Phrase	2 Sam 7 Passage	Similar Statements in Preceding Scriptures
<i>International Reputation</i>	"I will make you a great name"	7:9b	Gen 12:2
<i>Land Inheritance</i>	"I will also appoint a place for my people"	7:10a	Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; Deut 11:24-25; Josh 1:4-5
<i>Descendants</i>	"I will raise up your descendants after you"	7:12b	Gen 13:16; 15:5; 16:10; 17:7-10, 19
<i>Sonship</i>	"I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me"	7:14a	Exod 4:22-23
<i>Intimate Relationship</i>	"My people"	7:7-8, 10-11	Gen 17:7-8; 28:21; Exod 7:7; 29:45; Lev 11:45; 22:33; 5:38; 26:12, 44-45; Num 15:41; Deut 4:20; 29:12-13

The Covenant with David

The Hebrew term for 'Covenant' (berit) does not appear in 2 Samuel 7, but other references (including 2 Samuel 23.5 and Psalm 89.3) make it clear that this is where the delineation of the Davidic covenant is initiated.

In the covenant that God makes with David two categories of promise are made; one category concerns things that will happen during David's lifetime and the second category concerns things that will find their fulfilment after David's Death.

Promises that David will see in his life-time

A Great Name: God promises to David that he will make his name Great. In 2 Samuel 8.13 David mighty deeds (some may say question the morality of this) make his name great, it is God who has been active in transforming this shepherd/poet/musician into the King over Israel.

A place for the People: With David's empire comes the realization of of the 'place' - or Promised Land - for God's people that formed part of God's covenant with Abraham back in Genesis 15.8. Attached to this and specially under David, a sense of permanence and security is established. Hence David's want to build a permanent resting place for the Ark of the Covenant.

Rest from Enemies: This had allowed David to move the Ark to Jerusalem, consider building it a home, whilst at the same time centralize his Administration. Along side this is the notion of a more permanent rest which is intimately associated with the land, 2 Samuel 7.11.

Promises that find their Fulfilment after David's Death

A House: In the telling of this story the writer/s want to establish the idea that God wanted first to establish the House of David before any building of a House for the worship of God and to house the Ark. The use of 'House' in both cases is deliberate and a connection between the two is rightly drawn.

A seed: The 'Seed' here - 2 Samuel 7.13 - can refer to a collective meaning of posterity and it refers to Solomon (David's son who would build the temple - the House for God) and all of David's decedents including Jesus the Christ.

A Kingdom: The Kingdom that God promises to David - 2 Samuel 7.13 & 16 - is not a move away from the Theocracy (rule of the people by God using God's agents) that had existed from the time of Moses up to the time of Saul becoming King, but an understanding that it was still God who chooses the King and thus directs the line. The writers in the New Testament see Jesus as the fulfillment of that line and as one who would rule eternally.

The Covenant with David

The Two Part Covenant

Along with the Abrahamic Covenant that we looked previously, the Davidic Covenant is one of the '*Grant*' Covenants that God makes. It is summarized in 2 Samuel 7. 8-16.

2 Samuel 7.8-16

Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

Psalm 72 is among a number of psalms, some say up to 10, that pre-suppose God's Covenant with David.

Psalm 72

- 1 Give the king your judgements, O God, •
and your righteousness to the son of a king.
- 2 Then shall he judge your people righteously •
and your poor with justice.
- 3 May the mountains bring forth peace, •
and the little hills righteousness for the people.
- 4 May he defend the poor among the people, •
deliver the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.
- 5 May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, •
from one generation to another.
- 6 May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, •
like the showers that water the earth.
- 7 In his time shall righteousness flourish, •
and abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
- 8 May his dominion extend from sea to sea •
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- 9 May his foes kneel before him •
and his enemies lick the dust.
- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall pay tribute; •
the kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring gifts.
- 11 All kings shall fall down before him; •
all nations shall do him service.
- 12 For he shall deliver the poor that cry out, •
the needy and those who have no helper.
- 13 He shall have pity on the weak and poor; •
he shall preserve the lives of the needy.
- 14 He shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence, •
and dear shall their blood be in his sight.
- 15 Long may he live; unto him may be given gold from Sheba; •
may prayer be made for him continually and may they bless him all the day long.
- 16 May there be abundance of grain on the earth,
standing thick upon the hilltops; •
may its fruit flourish like Lebanon and its grain grow like the grass of the field.
- 17 May his name remain for ever and be established as long as the sun endures;
• may all nations be blest in him and call him blessed.
- 18 Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, •
who alone does wonderful things.
- 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever. •
May all the earth be filled with his glory.
Amen. Amen.

You can see in this psalm the references that the writers in the New Testament will take up to refer to Jesus. As we are starting to receive Christmas Cards, specially those with scenes of the Magi on them, you can see how Matthew makes use of this psalm (in particular verse 10) in his Nativity story.

Some Commentators on 2 Samuel 7 have said of this passage and Covenant:

- “The centre and focus of ...the Deuteronomic history itself”
R F Youngblood
- It is the “dramatic and theological centre of the entire Samuel corpus... and the most crucial theological statement in the Old Testament”
R P Gordon
- “... receives more attention in the Hebrew Bible than any other covenant except the Sinaitic” *J Levenson*

Some Background Information

If you have time, read thorough 2 Samuel 6.1-23.

David has transported the Ark to Jerusalem and in so doing made Jerusalem the focus of Israelite worship. David governed the nation from his new capitol, centralizing administration and with no immediate external battles to fight, expresses a desire to build a structure to house the Ark of the Covenant.

Initially, David is encouraged by Nathan the prophet to proceed with his plan for a building, but God speaks to Nathan and instructs Nathan to tell David that this task - building a house for the Ark - will be given to one of David's descendants. God's plan for David was to establish David's lineage as the ruling line over God's chosen people.