

DOCTRINE OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

July 10, 1996

I. Preliminary considerations.

A. Scripture: 2Sam.7:12-16; cp. Ps.89:3,4,19-37.

B. Historical background.

1. David had established his authority over his enemies (2Sam.7:1).

2. He lived in a house of cedar and desired to build God a house (2Sam.7:2).

3. David was not permitted to build this house, but was promised a "house" that would endure forever (2Sam.7:11).

4. The prophet Nathan was informed of the details by a vision 2Sam.7:4; Ps.89:19).

C. Key terms defined.

1. "House" refers to the Davidic royal dynasty (2Sam.7:11,16).

2. "Seed", or "descendant", refers to the male heirs, beginning with Solomon and ending with Jesus Christ (2Sam.7:12; Ps.89:4a,29a,36a). "Covenant" refers to the binding contract between God and His servant, David (Ps.89:3a,28b,34a).

3. "Throne" refers to the right to rule over the kingdom defined by the land grant of the Abrahamic Covenant (2Sam.7:13,16; Ps.89:4b,29b,36b).

D. The Abrahamic Covenant is centered in "land" and "seed".

E. What the Covenant requires for fulfillment: it demands that a biological descendant of David occupy his throne forever.

II. Reasons why David was selected.

A. He was a member of the chosen people (Ps.89:19c) and of the tribe destined for royalty in Israel (Ps.78:68; cp. Gen.49:8-10; Pss.60:7; 76:1; 108:8).

B. He was in the line of Christ (Rom.1:3).

C. He was anointed king by the prophet Samuel to replace the renegade Saul (1Sam.16:13; Ps.89:20).

D. He was spiritually qualified to inherit such Ph2 blessing (2Sam.7:8,9; Ps.89:26).

E. And he was physically endowed to be a warrior-king (Pss.89:19b; 18:32-34).

III. Promises associated with the Covenant fulfilled in David's lifetime. David was promised:

A. An heir who would succeed him and who would build the Temple (2Sam.7:12,13).

B. Continued success over his enemies (Ps.89:21-23).

C. A great name among the peoples of the earth (2Sam.7:9).

D. An expanded kingdom according to the Abrahamic mandate (Ps.89:25; Ex.23:31; Deut.1:7,8; 11:24; 1Kgs.4:21,24).

E. Elevation to the highest rank of kings (Ps.89:27; cp. 2Sam.7:14).

IV. The eternal provisions of the Covenant are centered in two spheres: "*seed/descendants*" and "*throne*" (Ps.89:3,4,28,29,35-37).

A. There is the promise that there will always be a Davidic descendant (Ps.89:4a; 2Sam.7:16).

B. There is the promise that the throne of David would last forever (Ps.89:4b; 2Sam.7:13).

V. The problem associated with the interrupted rule of the house of David.

A. The problem stated.

1. An uninterrupted succession of kings ruled over the house of David between 1010BC and 586BC.

2. But with the fall of the Southern Kingdom, the throne of David has remained unoccupied to this present day.

3. Furthermore, God placed a curse upon the line of descent through Solomon during the reign of Jehoiakin/Jeconiah/Coniah (Jer.22:30).

4. This curse means that no man in the David/Solomon line of descent could ever prosper as ruler over Israel, no matter how great he was spiritually.

5. Yet the promise to David was that the throne of his son Solomon would remain forever (2Sam.7:13,16).
6. Clearly, the promise does not require an uninterrupted succession of rulers, but it does require the throne to be established forever.

B. The solution.

1. The line of unbroken male descendants continued from the time of the Babylonian captivity to the birth of Christ (cp. Mt.1:12ff).
2. Because of the "Jeconiah curse", the individuals of this line could never occupy the throne of David.
3. So God established another unbroken line of descent from David through his son Nathan; this line links Jesus to David biologically; this line is Mary's genealogy (Lk.3:23ff).
4. The virgin birth enabled Jesus to side-step the Coniah curse and still retain the legal right to the throne since Joseph was His legal link to the throne, while Mary was His biological link to David.
5. Jesus Christ is, in every way, the legal heir to the throne of David.
6. He will re-establish David's throne in connection with His Second Coming (Act.15:16).

C. Conclusion: The Covenant did not guarantee uninterrupted rule by David's descendants, but did require that the right to rule would always remain with David's dynasty.

VI. In the person of Jesus Christ, God established the Covenant.

- A. The virgin birth enabled Jesus to be the physical descendant of David and not come under the "Jeconiah curse".
- B. The resurrection of Christ eliminated the need for a continuation of the genealogy (since Jesus died childless), and provided the Covenant with an indestructible heir.
- C. The doctrine of the Second Advent establishes the promise of an eternal throne for David occupied by his greater son, Jesus Christ (Lk.1:32,33).

VII. The security of the Covenant.

- A. It was not affected by the sins of the Davidic kings (2Sam.7:14,15; Ps.89:30-37).
- B. It is seen in the repeated use of the term "*forever*" or its equivalent (Ps.89:4,28,29,36).
- C. It was confirmed by a divine oath, thus giving the strongest possible assurance to its fulfillment (Pss.89:3,4,33; 132:11; 2Sam.7:13,16).

VIII. The Covenant demands literal fulfillment.

A. Portions of the Covenant fulfilled literally.

1. David had a son, who built the Temple, and who was disciplined for his sins (2Sam.7:12-15).
2. There is an unbroken line of descendants from David to Christ, thus fulfilling the "seed" promise (Matthew 1 and Luke 3).
3. Jesus Christ is a descendant of David according to the flesh (Act.2:29,30; Rom.1:3; 2Tim.2:8).

B. The Jews of Jesus' day expected literal fulfillment (cp. Mk.11:10; Jn.7:42).

C. David so understood that the Covenant was being fulfilled literally (2Sam.23:5).

D. Solomon, likewise, held this conviction (2Chr.6:14-17).

E. The unfulfilled portion has to do with the "*throne*" promise (2Sam.7:16).

1. Amillennialism (denial of the doctrine of the literal 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth) teaches that the throne in heaven is David's throne.
2. It is true that Jesus Christ is seated on His Father's throne in heaven in session (Heb.12:2); however, the throne of God in heaven and the throne of David are not one and the same.
3. God has promised through the prophets that the throne (political rule) of David would be restored after long centuries of non-existence at the Second coming of Christ (Lk.1:31-33; Act.15:14-17; cp. LXX of Amos.9:11,12).
4. The centuries since the fall of the kingdom of Judah and the dispersions of Israel have not

- rendered the promise void, even though it may appear to be the case (cp. Ps.89:38-49).
5. Whatever the changing form, temporary interruptions, or chastisements, the line of David will always retain the right to rule over Israel and will, in fact, exercise this privilege.
 6. The right to rule will never be transferred to another family, and the Covenant's blessings are designed for eternal perpetuity (cp. Ps.89:34-36 "*My covenant I will not violate, Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness/integrity; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me*").
 7. It is confirmed in such passages as Isa.9:6,7; Jer.23:5,6; 30:8,9; 33:14-17,20,21; Ezek.37:24,25; Dan.7:13,14; Hos.3:4,5; Amos.9:11; Zech.14:4-9.
 8. David's throne was temporarily vacated due to the disobedience of his descendants, but the promise to rule forever stands because of the faithfulness of his greater Son, Jesus Christ.
 9. Again, the only necessary feature of the Covenant is that the lineage is unbroken, not that the throne be occupied continuously.
 10. The kingdom on earth to be established by Christ be an eternal kingdom, since the "throne/house/kingdom" were all promised to David in perpetuity.
 11. According to the established rules of interpretation (hermeneutics), the unfulfilled "throne" promise must be fulfilled literally, as were the fulfilled portions (as is the case with the "seed" promise).

Isa.55:3 "*Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant (New Covenant with Israel) with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David.*"

Rev.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:*"

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

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