



THE DAVIDIC
COVENANT
&
THE RETURN
OF THE LORD

BY PAUL & NUALA O'HIGGINS

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AUTHORS' NOTE

This essay on the relationship between the Davidic Covenant and the return of The Lord is an expansion of a Chapter in our book *The Four Great Covenants* and will be included in future editions of the book.

We trust that it will give a better frame of reference for believers to discuss the issue of the end times, the restoration of Israel and the return of the Lord in the light of today's events.

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

The fourth major covenant God made with Israel is the covenant He made with King David to establish his dynasty *forever*. This is known as "*The Davidic Covenant*." This covenant introduces elements of God's plan that we do not see in the other covenants. It reveals His plan to bring a golden age to Israel and to the entire world which Jesus calls "*The Kingdom Of God*."

Towards the end of David's life (ca. 970 B.C.) God spoke to Nathan, the prophet in a vision. In this vision God gave him a message for King David, promising that one of David's descendants would inherit his throne and that his kingdom would endure forever.

*"When your days are fulfilled
and you lie down with your fathers,
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 forever.
I will be his Father, and he shall be my son...
And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure
forever before me, your throne shall be established
forever."* (2 Samuel 7:12-14,16)

"And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you

*must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you.. And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established **forever**.” (1 Chron. 17:11-14)*

In Psalm 89 this promise is repeated and is described as a covenant.

*“I have exalted one chosen from the people
I have found my servant David;
with my holy oil I have anointed him, with whom My hand
shall be established...*

My faithfulness and My Mercy shall be with him....

*Also I will make him My first born,
the highest of the kings of the earth.*

*My mercy I will keep for him **forever**,*

And My COVENANT shall stand firm with

*His seed also I will make to endure forever, and his throne
as the days of heaven...*

Once I have sworn by My holiness;

I will not lie to David

*His seed shall endure **forever**,*

And his throne as the sun before Me.”

(Psalm 89:20-21; 24-29; 35-37)

These prophetic words are repeated and amplified in several of the Psalms and in the writings of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zechariah and Isaiah.

“Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the

mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all;

“David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.

(Ezekiel 37:21-23; 24-25)

Elements Of The Davidic Covenant

We can see from these two passages that there are four main elements to the Davidic Covenant:

- (1) The restoration of the throne of David.
- (2) The promise that one specific descendant of David will be the permanent occupant of the throne of David.
- (3) Jerusalem will be the center of His rule.
- (4) The anointed king will be “the highest of the kings of the earth”.

(1) The Restoration Of The Throne Of David

Through this covenant, God formally promises and guarantees to restore the Throne of David, and makes a solemn promise with David that his throne would endure forever..

Though the prophets foresaw and foretold the *collapse* of the House of David, they also foresaw its *restoration*. This Covenant guarantees its restoration. Just as the Covenant with Abraham guarantees the restoration of *the people* of Israel to their land, the Covenant with David guarantees the restoration of *the house and throne* of David.

In one sentence Jeremiah simultaneously foretold the scattering and regathering of Israel:

“Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,

*And declare it in the isles afar off, and say,
'He who scattered Israel will gather him,
And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.'* (Jer. 31.10)

Similarly in two brief sentences Ezekiel foretells the overthrow and reestablishment of the throne of David.

*"Thus says the Lord God:
"Remove the turban, and take off the crown;
Nothing shall remain the same.
Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted.
Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It
shall be no longer,
Until He comes whose right it is,
And I will give it to Him."* (Ezekiel 21:26-27)

The last descendant of David to sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem was Zedekiah. He was deposed from office in the year 586 BC. by the Babylonians. The rule of the House of David over Judah came to an end and has never been restored. BUT IT WILL BE!

(2) One Specific Descendant Of David Will Be The Permanent Occupant Of The Throne Of David

In the Davidic Covenant, David is promised that one specific son will be his heir and will become the highest of the Kings of the earth. This anointed son of David is referred to as "The Messiah" – "The Anointed One"

*And My COVENANT shall stand firm with
His seed also I will make to endure forever, and his throne
as the days of heaven... (Psalm 89.24)*

In this verse we are told that not only will the

throne of David's greater son endure forever, but *one particular king* will reign on it forever. The Messiah King will reign over the house of David forever.

The promise of one particular anointed king (Messiah) becoming the permanent King of Israel, was repeated and reinforced by the Angel Gabriel who visited Mary of Nazareth. She was promised that she was to conceive a son who would "*reign over the house of Jacob forever.*"

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:31-34)

According to the prophecies and promises that make up the Davidic Covenant one singular leader will restore the Throne of David. Furthermore he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will never end.

Solomon, David's son and first successor, achieved greatness but did not fulfill the promise of reigning over the house of David forever. His reign was a mere forty years.

Later prophets, prophesying long after the death of Solomon, gave further descriptions of identity of The Messiah King.

1. Micah foretold that he would be born in Bethlehem. (Micah 5.2)
2. Zechariah foretold that the Messiah would at first not be recognized by his own people. He would be "pierced by the inhabitants of Jerusalem before they would later recognized

- by him. (Zechariah 11:4-14, 12:10)
3. David foretold that after his death the Anointed One would be buried but would not decay in the grave. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. (Psalm 16.10)
 4. Isaiah says the gentiles will trust in Him and before he reigns on the throne of David, he will be “*despised and rejected*” (Isaiah 53.3)

There is only one person in history who fits these descriptions – Yeshua of Nazareth. He was announced as the Son of David. He was born in Bethlehem “pierced”, crucified and killed in Jerusalem, buried but resurrected before his body knew corruption as David prophesied (Psalm 16.10). He is alive forevermore and has promised to return to take the throne of David.

(3) Jerusalem Will Be The Center Of The Messiah’s Rule.

The scriptures are not silent about *the location of the future throne of David* – it is Jerusalem. The place from which the Messiah will rule is Jerusalem. It will not be in London, (the location of the greatest present day monarchy), Rome (the location of the largest centralized church authority), New York (the greatest center of international rule and banking) or any other place other than the place promised by God Himself.

“For the LORD HAS CHOSEN ZION(JERUSALEM) ;

He has desired it for His dwelling place:

“This is My resting place forever;

Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

I will abundantly bless her ^{le}provision;

I will satisfy her poor with bread.

*I will also clothe her priests with salvation,
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
There I will make the horn of David grow;
I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.
His enemies I will clothe with shame,
But upon Himself His crown shall flourish.”*
(Psalm 132: 13-18)

*“Thus says the LORD: ‘I will return to Zion,
And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth,
The Mountain of the LORD of hosts,
The Holy Mountain.’”* (Zechariah 8.3)

This was the faith and hope of the first followers and apostles of Jesus. They had witnessed Him inaugurate and seal the New Covenant through His death and resurrection but they had one major question to ask Him before He ascended to His throne in heaven. *“Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”* (Acts 1.6)

Jesus did not directly answer their question but told them that it was not for them know the times fixed by His Father. They were to set their hearts and minds on receiving the Holy Spirit who would give them ability to proclaim the reconciliation accomplished in the New Covenant to the ends of the earth. However, as they watched Him ascend into heaven two angels spoke to them saying: *“This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”*

This was the answer to their question about restoring the Kingdom to Israel. Yes Jesus will return

and this will be to claim the throne of David and restore the Kingdom of Israel and reign from Jerusalem.

Zechariah also supports these words in predicting that the Messiah will inaugurate his rule by coming to the Mount of Olives in great power and authority.

*“Then the Lord will go forth
And fight against those nations,
As He fights in the day of battle.
And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.*

*Thus the Lord my God will come,
And all the saints with ^[e]You.
And the Lord shall be King over all the earth.
In that day it shall be—
“The Lord is one,”
And His name one.” (Zechariah 8:3-4; 8-9)*

(4) The Rule Of The Messiah Will Be World Wide.

The Davidic Covenant promises that the rule of the Messiah will be centered in Jerusalem as we have seen but it will also extend to the whole earth. This introduces a whole new scale to the rule of the Messiah. The Davidic Covenant promises not just a golden age of peace and prosperity for Israel - it also promises a golden age for all nations. The failed and corrupt systems of human government will be replaced by the incorruptible rule of the Messiah.

According to the covenant promises God says that David's greater Son – the Messiah – will be “the

highest of the kings of the earth.”

*Also I will make him My first born,
the highest of the kings of the earth.*

My mercy I will keep for him forever. (Psalm 89:24-25)

Zechariah amplifies this covenant promise when he proclaims that the Messiah will not only be the greatest king on the earth but will rule over the entire earth.

*“And **the** Lord shall be King **over all the earth**. In that day it shall be “**The** Lord is one,” And His name one.”
(Zech. 14.9)*

Though the rule of David was limited to the land of Israel, the restored kingdom will be a kingdom over the entire world. The fact that the Messiah will rule over all nations is also clearly stated in Daniel.

*“I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, One like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!*

*He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.*

*Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a
kingdom,*

That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion,

Which shall not pass away,

And His kingdom the one

Which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

The Messiah’s kingdom will replace every other rule and authority. It will be a kingdom in complete harmony with God’s ways, God’s mercy and God’s will. It will extend all nations and replace every other rule and authority.

As John sees it: *“And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever!”* (Revelation 11.15)

The enthronement of the Messiah as the king over all the kingdoms of this world is the climax and goal of history. The words of the prophets show that God is engineering world history to a glorious conclusion. He has a wonderful plan to unite heaven and earth together under the rule of the Messiah.

“For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ (The Messiah King) as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (Ephesians 1:9-10)

The fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant and the establishment of his throne in Jerusalem will inaugurate this Golden age. The long era of man’s mismanagement of the earth come to an end. The earth will be delivered from its bondage to strife between nations and social injustice, spiritual darkness and oppression.

Isaiah emphasizes this aspect of the Messiah’s rule.

*“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the LORD’s house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.
Many people shall come and say,
“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;*

*He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning ^lhooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:2-4)*
This will be a golden age for all the earth.

The return of the Messiah is not simply the enthronement of a new righteous leader and king over Israel. It has much wider implications. It foretells a golden age over the entire of world when the blessings of Abraham will be enjoyed by Israel and all the nations under the benign rule of the Messiah.

This is what the New Testament calls “the Kingdom of God”. God will rule over the earth through His Son and curse and remove every rule and authority hostile to His rule of love and life. This includes the replacement of visible and invisible kingdoms and powers that are opposed the blessed and kindly rule of God. The failed systems of human rule will be replaced by the incorruptible rule of God through His incorruptible Son. The devil and his minions that brought corruption and bondage on the descendants of Adam will be bound and his influence removed.

This will be consummation of the prayer that Yeshua gave His disciples to pray: *“Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.”* The Messiah will return and will reign over all the earth. The devil will be bound

and removed. Weapons of war will be turned into weapons of productivity. Ideologies of hate, oppression and strife will be replaced and each one will learn to walk in the ways of love and kindness.

When Will The Davidic Covenant Be Fulfilled?

The question still arises when will the Messiah restore the throne of David and establish his rule over Israel and the nations?

Jews can be understood for not recognizing Yeshua as the Messiah, because when he came the first time he did not restore the throne of David nor rid Israel of its enemies. Instead His coming was followed by a time of destruction and humiliation of Israel. The question for Israel is when will the Messiah come to rule in victory from Jerusalem; and the question for Christians is when will Jesus (who we know to be the Messiah) come and rule over Israel and the world?

Believers of every generation have anticipated the restoration of the throne of David and the open rule of the Messiah from Jerusalem. They often inquire when this great event will take place.

The disciples asked Jesus *“What is the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”* (Matt. 24.2) They wanted to know when He was coming to take the throne of David and overthrow the enemies of Israel. He answered by foretelling the fall of the Temple and of Jerusalem. He concludes by foretelling the regathering and the restoration of Jerusalem once again to Jewish control.

“Jerusalem will be trampled down underfoot by the

gentiles UNTIL the times of the gentiles is fulfilled." (Luke 21.24) "Times of the gentiles" means the time of gentile domination over Jerusalem. Jesus' answer to the question, "What will be the sign of your coming?" is that it will come after the scattering and regathering of Israel when gentile dominion over Jerusalem comes to an end. Gentile dominion over Jerusalem came to an end in 1967. His coming to take the throne of David will come soon after the restoration of Israel and Jerusalem.

This agrees with the prophetic word of Ezekiel spoken 500 years before Jesus.

"Thus says the Lord God: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;

and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel;

and one king shall be king over them all;

they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.....

"David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. ' " (Ezek. 37:21-22; 24-25)

Here we can clearly see the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom and the enthronement of the Messiah as King of Judah comes after the restoration of the Jewish people from all the nations where they were scattered. It is evident that the present day

restoration of Israel is an exact fulfillment of these prophecies of Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Jesus and all the other prophets who foretold Israel's restoration.

This restoration of the throne of David is identical to the return of Yeshua. He came first to inaugurate the New Covenant through His death and resurrection and is coming again to take the throne of David.

The time line, that the throne of David will be reestablished when Israel comes back from its exile among the nations, is reinforced by prophetic words of Jeremiah:

*"Thus says the Lord:
'Again there shall be heard in this place - of which you say,
"It is desolate, without man and without beast"- in the
cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate,
without man and without inhabitant and without
beast, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of
the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those
who will say:*

of him who counts them,' says the Lord.

'In those days and at that time

I will cause to grow up to David

A Branch of righteousness;

He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

In those days Judah will be saved,

And Jerusalem will dwell safely....

*"For thus says the Lord: 'David shall never lack a man to
sit on the throne of the house of Israel.' "*

(Jeremiah 33:10,11,15-17)

The prophets Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Yeshua are in perfect harmony in predicting the establishment of the throne of David after Israel's exile to the nations

and the desolation of Jerusalem come to an end.

Because we are living in these days of restoration it is fitting that we should set our hearts and hopes on the coming of the Messiah to restore the throne of David and inaugurate the golden age of righteousness and peace for Israel and the entire world. Like the wise virgins in Jesus parable our hearts should be filled with eager anticipating of these great events which are being activated from heaven on the earth and this amazing juncture of history.

The Davidic Covenant & Jerusalem

It is clear that if the world wide rule of the Messiah is to be established He must replace and remove every other rule and authority. This is what is described in the images of the Book of Revelation. Here the struggle to replace Babylon with the New Jerusalem is depicted. (Babylon represents the systems of human independent government, with its governmental and banking systems making decisions based on humanistic principles without reference to God.) The systems that presently prevail over the whole earth will be replaced.

The establishment and fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant calls for the overthrow of Babylon. This is why in Revelation 21 the coming of the Lord is presented as the overthrow of Babylon and celebration goes up among the angels and saints.

"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ² And he cried ^[w] mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for

every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! ³For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the ^[b]abundance of her luxury." (Revelations 18.1-3)

Indeed the fall of Babylon is celebrated six times in the book of Revelation (Revelation 14.8; 16:19; 17:5: 18:2: 18:10: 18:21.

We know from the prophets and from Paul that the present ruling systems are heavily influenced and dominated by unseen demonic forces and spirits which Paul call the "*rulers of this present darkness and wicked spirits in the heavenlies*" (Ephesians 6.12.) Therefore to establish Messiah's throne in Jerusalem and over the whole world requires the removal of the rebellious spirits that oppress humanity directly and through ruling governmental systems of this age.

It Will Surely Happen!

God's word tells us that this will happen, and the word which He speaks He brings to pass (Ezekiel 12.25). David's Son will sit on the throne of Israel. According to the prophets this promise would be fulfilled by one who was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) and who would be called "Mighty God." (Isaiah 6:6)

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end." (Is 9:6-7)

The one who will occupy the throne of David will have victory over death, as His throne is

everlasting and will not be passed on to successors. He will not only be a descendant of David – He will be a direct Son of God.

As students of the scriptures we know that Jesus is the one who fulfills the Davidic Covenant. The angel who spoke to Mary told her that her son *'will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord will give to him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.'* (Luke 1:32-33)

The complete fulfillment of David's Covenant is promised after the Jews have come back to the land of Israel and to Jerusalem. (See Isa. 2) We know from the scriptures that the nations will 'rage' against Israel and Jerusalem (Psalm 2). A false Messiah will bring a false peace, but his rule will come to an end when Jesus returns. (2 Thess. 2:8) His return will fulfill the Davidic Covenant and bring peace from Jerusalem to Israel and the world.

'Now it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills and all nations shall flow to it.

Many people shall come and say:

'Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach of His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.'

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people;

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

Neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2)

The Davidic Covenant guarantees the restoration of Israel and the rule of the Messiah.

- The *Abrahamic Covenant* promises possession of the Land of Promise to Israel that will bless not just them but all nations.
- The *Sinai Covenant* foreshadows an eternal sacrifice to bear the sins of the world.
- The *New Covenant* brings forgiveness and emancipation from sin through a suffering servant and the impartation of righteousness by God coming to dwell *in us*.
- The *Davidic Covenant* promises a triumphant glorious Ruler who brings in a world order under the rule of His righteousness and peace.

The present flow of history is about to climax in the triumphant coming (return) of the Messiah to fulfill *the Davidic Covenant*. This will be the culmination of all four covenants for Israel and the nations.

When Jesus came the first time He inaugurated the New Covenant and atoned for the sins of the world. Many of the Jewish people failed to recognize Him as the Messiah because He did not at that time fulfill all the promises contained in the Davidic Covenant and assert Himself as the triumphant heir to David's throne ruling from Jerusalem. This is the reason for His Second Coming. *“This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”* (Acts 1:10) He will return again to occupy the throne of David and to rule the earth from Jerusalem.

Then, as the prophet foretold, *“the earth will be*

filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord'
(Habakkuk 2:14)

"Now when you see these things begin to happen, look up, and lift up your heads for your redemption draws nigh."
(Lk. 21:28)

The present world order was set in motion when Adam opened a gateway for man's independent and demonically influenced self-rule of the earth to be replaced by the union of heaven and earth by the Messiah. The Davidic Covenant promises the incorruptible rule of the Messiah over all the earth. God's plan is not just a plan for personal salvation but to redeem Israel and all the nations.

Conclusion

Ignoring this covenant has distorted Christian teaching. Traditional Christianity has for the most part not given a coherent vision for the destiny of the planet and many have been led to live without hope. Life on earth without a goal or a vision becomes meaningless and Christianity seemed to offer as its critics put it 'pie in the sky when we die' but no hope for the uplifting and healing of the nations.

Even when Christianity does address the issue of the return of the Lord it does so outside the framework of the Davidic Covenant with its marvelous promises. As a result the focus shifts from the coming golden age of the triumph of the Messiah to the tribulations, "birth pangs" and difficulties that precede it. The focus is often more on the problems that assail the earth rather than on the solution the return of the Lord will bring when He fulfills the Davidic Covenant.

The Davidic Covenant presents a glorious plan and sure promise to lift all nations from oppression and for God's wonderful future for mankind. This plan is inherently connected with the vision of the prophets and the destiny and calling of the Jewish people and the restoration to Jerusalem.

Because of this covenant we know that God has a plan and purposes for world history. Life on earth is not futile. History is being propelled forward by the hidden hand of God to a glorious conclusion and climax. As we glimpse God's extraordinary purposes for the earth and for mankind, we will no longer be tossed to and fro by every wind of political ideology but enter into lives of meaning and vision.