

The Father -Son Relationship in the Davidic Covenant and it's implications

The Father - Son Relationship anticipated in the Covenant

- A literal, physical family relationship is clearly contrary to the context. Nonetheless, bēn, the term for “son” in Hebrew, has a much broader field of meaning than “son” in English.
 - In an agrarian, preindustrial economy and society, trades were normally transmitted within a family setting. In this way, sons customarily did what their fathers did, in addition to displaying common characteristics passed on from family setting, upbringing, and genetics.
 - Thus the term “son” can be used to mean “possessing the characteristics” of something
- In Egypt, from at least 1650 B.C. onward, people perceived the king as the image of god because he was the son of god. The emphasis was not on physical appearance. For example, a male king could be the image of a female goddess. What is stressed is that the behavior of the king reflects the behavior of the god. The king as the image of god reflects the characteristics and essential notions of the god.
 - Similar examples are found throughout the Ancient Near East
 - Also see our Sunday School notes on the term Image and Likeness from Genesis 1:26-28
- 2nd Samuel 7 must also be read according to the arrangement of the books in the Hebrew Canon. A canonical reading indicates that the Davidic king is inheriting the role of both Adam as son of God and Israel as son of God, according to the instructions of Deuteronomy 17.
 - As Genesis 2:4–25 shows, the Adamic son is like a priest in a garden sanctuary. He must first learn the ways of God in order to exercise the rule of God as God himself would.
 - Second, Israel inherited this Adamic role. Yahweh refers to the nation as his son in Exodus 4:22–23.
 - The divine purpose in the covenant established between God and Israel at Sinai is unfolded in Exodus 19:3–6.
 - As a kingdom of priests, they will function to make the ways of God known to the nations and also to bring the nations into a right relationship to God. Since Israel is located geographically on the one and only communications link between the great superpowers of the ancient world, in this position she will show the nations how to have a right relationship to God, how to treat each other in a truly human way, and how to be faithful stewards of the earth’s resources. This is the meaning of Israel’s sonship.
 - Third, Deuteronomy 17 intimates that the king will be the leader in this role. Verses 16–20 describe the manner in which the future king is to exercise his responsibilities.
 - After three negative commands in verses 16–17, verses 18–20 specify three positive commands, all relating to Torah:
 - (1) the king shall copy the Torah;
 - (2) the king shall have the Torah with him;
 - (3) the king shall read the Torah.
 - In other words, the only positive requirement is that the king embody Torah as a model citizen. This is exactly the point of the father-son relationship set out in 2 Samuel 7.
- [A]s the divine son, the Davidic king was to effect the divine instruction, or tôrâ, in the nation as a whole and was, as a result, a mediator of the Mosaic Torah.
 - However, since the God whom the Davidic king represented was not limited to a local region or territory, but was the creator God and Sovereign of the whole world, the rule of the Davidic king would have repercussions for all the nations, not just for Israel.
 - This is developed in Psalm 2 and many other psalms, but is already suggested in 2

Samuel 7.

- Thus, faithfulness on the part of the Davidic son would effect the divine rule in the entire world, much as God intended for humanity in the covenant of creation as indicated by the divine image in Genesis 1:26ff.
- This, [the authors of our book] submit, is the logic behind David's response in 2 Samuel 7:19, and this is why he claims that a covenant that makes the Davidic king son of God is the instrument of bringing Yahweh's Torah to all the nations. David's own understanding of divine sonship is clearly indicated by his statement in verse 19 that the covenant is God's charter or instruction for humankind.
 - The parallel text in 1 Chronicles 17:17 is problematic textually, but instructive.
 - The clause in verse 17 corresponding to zô't tôrat hā'ādām in 2 Samuel 7:19 is ûre'îtanî ketôr hā'ādām hamma'ālāh.
 - The best proposal for the meaning of the noun tôr (= form; not an error for tôrâ) in 1 Chronicles 17:17 is in the translation "you see me according to the rank of the man placed high."
 - This is equivalent to the last words of David in 2 Samuel 23:1, where he refers to Nathan's oracle as a bĕrît and calls himself "the man set on high."
 - The statement in Psalm 89:27 (v. 28, Hebrew version) is similar:
 - I will also appoint him my firstborn
 - the most exalted of the kings of the earth. (NIV)
 - The second line explicates the meaning of the Davidic sonship as being "the most exalted of the kings of the earth."
- All of these texts represent interpretations of verse 19 of 2 Samuel 7, and show that since the god who is represented by the Davidic king is both supreme and universal, the Davidic king has the highest rank among human kings.
 - Despite critical textual problems, 2 Samuel 7:19 is the key to the universalization of the messianic vision in the Psalms and Prophets.

This entire outline was copied and pasted from our book. I merely cut and reformatted the material.

Gentry, Peter J., Wellum, Stephen J.. God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical Theology. Crossway.