

How the Davidic Covenant Connects

The Davidic Covenant & the Abrahamic Covenant

RELATIONSHIP OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT TO THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The relationship between the Davidic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant is described by various texts in two ways.

- First, God will use David to bring rest to his people and give them a place.
 - Compare for a moment Genesis 15:18–21; Deuteronomy 11:24, and 1 Kings 4:20–21
 - The borders of the land as envisioned in Genesis 15:18–21 are defined in Deuteronomy 11:24 as Israel’s “place.” 1st Kings 4:20–21 indicates that this geographical “place” belonged to Israel during the time of Solomon, David’s son.
 - So the covenant with David was a means to fulfill the promises in the Abrahamic covenant.
- Second, God will use David to bring blessing to the nations
 - Isaiah 55 shows how the future king will, by his acts of lovingkindness, be a witness, commander and leader of the peoples as he brings the divine instruction, or Torah, to all the nations.
- See Psalm 72 for a summary of the promises in 2 Samuel 7:19
 - Either “by” or “for” Solomon, it begins in verse 1 as a prayer to God to give his judgments and righteousness to the king.
 - In verse 2 the result is that the king will judge with social justice. In such a kingdom the cause of the needy and weak are given justice. His rule is extended to universal space and time.
 - In verse 10, kings from the ends of the world pay tribute, and in verse 11, all nations serve him.
 - In Psalm 72:12–17, the same theme is developed in another “round of discourse” on the same topic. The needy and weak receive help. The psalmist prays that many will offer prayer all day long for this king so that his name and the prosperity of his rule continue. Verse 17 fits appropriately into this flow of thought, praying that his fame will endure and that individuals of all nations will declare themselves blessed by him and will call him happy. The Davidic covenant narrows the mediator of blessing to the nations from the nation of Israel as a whole to the king, who represents and stands for the nation.

The Davidic Covenant and the Davidic King in Isaiah: The Faithful Kindness of David in Isaiah 55:3

Isaiah 55:3–5 is an extremely important text in relation to understanding both the Davidic covenant and the new covenant.

- Scholars have debated the interpretation of the phrase ḥasdê dāwīd in verse 3, a phrase rendered in the King James Version by “the sure mercies of David.”
 - Extended discussion and treatment in our larger work (Kingdom through Covenant) demonstrated two things: (1) the most natural interpretation of the phrase in Hebrew is not “acts of mercy/loyal love” shown to David, but “acts of mercy/loyal love” performed by David; and (2) the name David is not a reference to the historical figure who was a great king of Israel, but a way of referring to the coming king or Messiah.
 - The figurative language in which the Davidic king and kingdom are portrayed as a majestic tree cut down (Isa. 6:13) and the reference to the shoot and root in Isaiah 53:2

clearly connect this text to the vision of the future king who is the shoot and root of Jesse in Isaiah 11:1, 10.

- As Motyer notes, “the reference to Jesse indicates that the shoot is not just another king in David’s line but rather another David.” This kind of use of the name David occurs in the chronologically earlier prophecy, Hosea 3:5, and is a usage similar to those in Jeremiah (30:8–9) and Ezekiel (34:23, 24; 37:24, 25).
- Remember the sonship language (the expected obedience in 2 Samuel 7)

Tracing the thread through Isaiah

- The first vision of a future restored Zion is found in Isaiah 2, where Mount Zion becomes the highest mountain in the new world and all the nations stream to it to receive instruction (tôrâ) and the word of the Lord.
 - This vision, along with the one in chapter 4, shows that the future Mount Zion has inherited the role of both Eden and Sinai and that the city, once a whore (1:21), is now characterized by social justice (1:26), as the term “holy” (4:3) indicates.
- The vision in 9:6–7 and 11:1–10 brings a new twist.
 - A future king, a new David, will arise. He will delight in the fear of the Lord, here a synonym for Torah as in Psalm 19.
 - Thus he will fulfill the command of Deuteronomy 17:18–20 and as a result will implement the social justice of the Torah (Isa. 11:3b–5).
 - According to verse 10, the King himself will become a banner for the nations.
 - Here we see that the nations who stream to Zion in 2:1–4 will receive the Torah of Yahweh through the Davidic King.
 - The servant of Yahweh—already connected to this future king—will bring justice to the nations (42:1, 3–4; 49:1, 6).
 - Also, in the context of a Servant Song, the fact that a banner is raised to the nations is repeated in 49:22. In short, as the Son of God, a future David, will bring God’s instruction and rule to all the nations, as indicated in 2 Samuel 7.
- What acts of ḥesed on the part of the future David can constitute an eternal covenant?
 - The arm of Yahweh is part of the new exodus theme that permeates all of Isaiah.
 - The occurrence in 50:2 initiates a focus on the arm that reaches a climax in the Fourth Servant Song, 53:1 (cf. 51:5, 9; 52:10).
 - Nevertheless, when Yahweh rolls up his sleeves and bares his arm, no one would have believed it.
 - The future king does not crush his enemies and rid the land of evil (11:3–5) by military force, prowess, and strategies, but simply by his word (11:4; 49:2; 50:4) and by offering himself as a reparation offering (’āšām 53:10).
 - Thus the means and manner in which Yahweh’s Torah is brought to the nations and in which his kingship is effected among them (a commander and leader of the peoples) is detailed by the four Servant Songs, and in particular by the Fourth Song (52:13–53:12).
 - It is the acts of ḥesed on the part of the servant that establish and initiate the discussion on the eternal covenant in chapter 54, of which 55:3 continues the thread.
 - It is because the servant is the “covenant of the people” in himself (42:6; 49:8) that the apposition of mercies of David and eternal covenant in verse 3 makes sense.
- Isaiah 55:4–5 speaks of the future David being a witness to the nations and a leader and commander of the peoples.
 - This speaks far more of fulfilling the human obligations in the Davidic covenant than of a specific focus on fulfilling the divine obligations.
 - The central function of the king is to effect the instruction of Yahweh in the lives of the people and even to the nations: “this is the instruction for humankind” (2 Sam. 7:19).
 - This is what is prominent in Isaiah. The servant of Yahweh brings Yahweh’s Torah to the

distant islands.

- A lexical study of 'ēd, the word for “witness,” shows that a witness functions in covenant relationships, especially with a view to restoring broken relationships.
 - Moreover, the background of Isaiah 19 is significant. David is to the nations what the altar is to Egypt in Isaiah 19:20.
 - He speaks to the nations of their covenant disloyalty, of their broken obligations to the creator God, and he brings about the restoration of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and the nations.
 - As stated earlier, the means and manner in which Yahweh's Torah is brought to the nations and in which his kingship is effected among them is detailed by the four Servant Songs, and in particular by the Fourth Song (52:13–53:12). And this is why a nation that does not know Israel, and also one that Israel does not know, comes running to her (55:5) through the work of her king as witness.
- The king is also a “leader and commander of peoples.” These words emphasize the king as a person under divine authority who acts strictly under the orders of Yahweh for the benefit of Yahweh's people, and not someone who uses absolute power for his own aggrandizement. In other words, these terms show that the coming king will implement the rule of God in the lives of his people. Isaiah employs leader because the future David fulfills the role of obedient son in the framework of the Davidic covenant.

CONCLUSION

- “the faithful kindnesses of David” mentioned in Isaiah 55:3 are kindnesses performed by David—a rubric for the future king in this text.
 - The faithful or obedient acts of loyal love are those of the servant king in Isaiah 53, whose offering of himself as an 'āšām and whose resurrection enables him to bring to fulfillment the promises of Yahweh in the Davidic covenant, and who is at the same time the basis for the new or everlasting covenant.
 - This future king then fulfills the roles required for the king in Deuteronomy 17 and 2 Samuel 7 by bringing the divine instruction or Torah to Israel (Deuteronomy 17) and, indeed, to all the nations (2 Sam. 7:19).
- He is therefore a leader and commander of the peoples and becomes a covenant witness in himself to the nations. This is exactly how Acts 13:34 interprets Isaiah 55.

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.