

Digging Deeper into Biblical Covenants: The Covenant with David

1. Introduction/Review.

a) *Why the biblical covenants?*

- i) *Primary* means by which God's plan unfolds across redemptive-history.
- ii) Triune God is a promise-maker/keeper and he makes promises via covenants.
- iii) God's plan of redemption/Scripture does *not* come all at once – it unfolds over time. See Heb 1:1-2 (=idea of progressive revelation). *The entire plan culminates in Christ.*
- iv) To understand God's plan properly—how all of it relates to Christ and how it now relates to us, we must carefully think *through the biblical covenants.*
- v) Covenants *tell/reveal* a story – a story of God's glorious salvation in Christ. Step-by-step, we come to know *who God is, who we are, what our problem is, what the solution to our problem is via the covenants, and how Christ is the solution.*
- vi) Tracing out the biblical covenants is another way of thinking through the Gospel *and* how all of Scripture finds its Yes/Amen in Christ. By so doing, we grow in our knowledge of God and Scripture; grow in our confidence in God's promises; learn to trust God more in the midst of this fallen world; lead to greater worship/obedience.
- vii) It also enables us to handle rightly the Bible and apply *all* of it to our lives – 'to think God's thoughts after him' and 'to bring all of our thought/lives captive to Christ.'

b) *As we trace out the biblical covenants, it is crucial to follow context, context, context.*

- i) There is only *one* plan of God – hence all of the covenants are *organically* related.
- ii) Yet, because of *progressive revelation*, we must do justice to each covenant in its own immediate context, what preceded it, how it reaches its fulfillment in Christ.

c) *SO FAR...*

- i) *Creation Covenant*
- ii) *Noahic Covenant*
- iii) *Abrahamic Covenant*
- iv) *Old Covenant (=Israel).*

2. The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7; 1 Chron 17).

a) *There are 2 main parts to the Davidic covenant.*

- i) *1st: Promises concerning the establishment of David's house* (2 Sam 7:12-13, 16; 1 Chron 17:11-14; Ps 132:11; 89:1-3, 14, 24-28, 33-35).
- ii) *2nd: Promises concerning the close relationship between God and David's descendant* (1 Chron 17:13; 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:26-27; Ps 2) – 'Father-son.'

b) *What is the context of the Davidic Covenant? What has come 'before' it?*

- i) *Father-son.* Links it back to Israel, Abraham, and Adam.
 - a) David/sons are representative figures, stand-in for the nation – 'true Israel.'
 - b) This is why in Isaiah, the 'Servant of the Lord' can sometimes be the nation but also epitomized in an individual.
 - c) **Key:** Adam (individual son) → Israel (corporate son) → David (individual son).
- ii) *David + sons become means by which Gen 3:15 is fulfilled.*

- c) **Are there clues that this is how David understood it? Yes. Note the universal role (cf. 'Adam') of Davidic kings. See David's prayer.**
- i) **2 Sam 7:19b.** "This is the charter (*torah*) by which humanity will be directed."
 - ii) **David understands that the covenant has implications for the entire human race.**
 - a) His role as covenant mediator would effect the divine rule in the entire world as God intended it for humanity in the original situation.
 - b) The Davidic king as the 'divine son' is to effect the divine instruction or *torah* in the whole world – all nations will be impacted, not just Israel.
 - iii) **Is this developed in other texts?**
 - a) *Yes! See Psalm 2, 72, etc.* What we see in the Psalter is already in 2 Sam 7.
 - b) 2 Sam 7 is the key to the universalization of the Messianic vision in the prophets. It makes sense if you see the unfolding nature of the covenants.
 - c) *Implication:* The faithfulness of the Davidic son will effect the divine rule in the entire world, *as God intended for humanity in Adam*, as indicated by the divine image in Gen 1:26ff. Here the 'Adamic role' is picked up by the King!
 - d) *The Davidic Covenant is the EPITOME of the previous covenants.*
- d) **Unconditional/Unilateral-Conditional/Bilateral Nature of the Covenant.**
- i) **Unconditional** – God promises to David an eternal kingdom. God's intention to fulfill the promise is repeated in the subsequent history of the Davidic kings despite many acts of disloyalty on their part (see 1 Kgs 11:11-13, 34-36; 15:4-5; 2 Kgs 8:19; 2 Chron 21:7; 23:3).
 - ii) **Conditional.** 2 Sam 7:14-15 clearly emphasize *the need for obedience on the part of the son*, yet it is undergirded primarily by the promises of God (=Father).
 - a) **Tension.** See 1 Kgs 3:6; cf. 2 Chron 6:12ff (=appeal is made to Ps 132).
 - b) **Isaiah 55:3** (=‘the faithfulness performed by David’). Yhwh performs his covenant obligation, but David performs his too, thus the promise is fulfilled.
 - c) *Upshot: Yhwh must keep his promises + provide an obedient son!*

3. Growing Tension in the Biblical Covenants Leading to Two Truths.

- a) **1st:** *LORD himself must come and save his people (Ezk 34, 37; Isa 59:14ff; 40-48).*
- b) **2nd:** *The LORD will save us through his servant David (Ezk 34; Isa 6-12 [7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1ff]; 52-53, etc). But the LORD himself must provide the Servant.*
- c) **Everywhere is the linkage between the LORD + King (=Psalm 2, 110).**
- d) **All of this sets us up for the New Covenant Promise/Hope/Anticipation.**
 - i) *All of this becomes the seedbed for the NT's presentation of Christ.*
See Ps 2, 22, 45, 72, 110; Ezk 34. See Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1ff, etc. See Heb 1:4-14; 5:5-6; Rom 1:3-4; Mt 22:41f; John 5:16-30.
 - ii) *Other themes that are now linked.*
 - a) Promise of a new priest-king (Ps 110) → hence the arrival of a 'new covenant.'
 - b) Isaiah – 2 Servants.
 - c) David is idealized in the Prophets (=Chronicles).
 - (1) Jerusalem, the city of David, is idealized (Isa 2, 4)
 - (2) Jerusalem is linked with the new creation (Isa 56-66).

4. Concluding Reflection.