

# The Covenant with David Part 1: His Son's Eternal Throne

Scripture Readings: 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Acts 2:29-36

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**D**ear Congregation of Christ: Did you know that Queen Elizabeth II is now the second longest reigning monarch in modern history? She has been reigning for over 70 years. Who holds the record in modern history? It's King Louis XIV of France who reigned from 1643-1715 for a total of over 72 years. King Johann II of Lichtenstein also reigned for over 70 years (1858-1929).

One of the earliest known civilizations is Sumer, an area in present-day Iraq that existed around 5000 B.C. A Sumerian tablet discovered in 1906 contains an astonishing list of eight kings who ruled for 385,200 years before the flood! The shortest reign was 18,000 years by King Ubara-Tutu, and the longest reign was 43,200 years by Enmen-lu-ana. Compare this with Methuselah, the Bible's longest-living man, who lived only 969 years before the flood. We know this to be real, for the Bible is inerrant. But we will never know how the Sumerian writer figured out the stupefying tens of thousands years reigns of his kings.

These reigns of Sumerian kings are an ocean compared to a drop in the bucket of 55 years of King Manasseh of Judah or 41 years of King Jeroboam II of Israel, or even King David's 40 years. But even these tens of thousands of years of Sumerian kings will be dwarfed by the reign of King David's covenant Son. The Son of David will reign—not for 72 years or 43,200 years—but for eternity! His reign cannot be measured by time because eternity is timeless.

As in God's covenant with Adam in Genesis 2, the word "covenant" is not present in 2 Samuel 7. However, in this covenant, we find the most important elements in God's covenants with man. The first is that the two parties are God and David. Second, David is the covenant head who represents all his descendants. Third, God set forth the terms: David's son will build God's house, but God would discipline him when he sins. Fourth, David's throne is the sign that ratifies the covenant. Fifth and last, the ratification of the covenant is celebrated with a feast in Psalm 23:5, "[The LORD] prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies...."

In this covenant, God stated four promises to David. First, he would have an heir to his throne, Solomon his son. Second, Solomon would build a temple for God. Third, God would be a Father to him, and Solomon would be his son. And fourth, David's throne would be an everlasting throne. So today, we will meditate on **The Covenant with David: His Son's Eternal Throne**, under these four headings.

## "I Will Raise Up Your Offspring After You"

In verse 12, God promises David, "*When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.*"

Like all kings and all human beings, David will eventually die. But God promises him that his own son would inherit his kingdom. For a long time before he became king, this promise seemed

to be far from being fulfilled, even after Samuel anointed him as king after King Saul violated God's laws. When Saul heard of David's anointing by Samuel, Saul pursued David all over the place to kill him. Finally, as God's judgment against him, Saul killed himself in a losing battle against the Philistines. His son Ish-bosheth became king, and a seven-year civil war ensued between him and David. The civil war ended when Ish-bosheth was assassinated by his fellow Israelites.

David's dynasty consisted of 22 kings of the northern kingdom, beginning with him in 1010 B.C. and ending with Zedekiah in 586 B.C. when Babylon conquered the kingdom. Thirteen of these 22 kings were evil, but nine were considered "good" kings for most of their reigns, including David and Solomon. So David's throne lasted 424 years. Compare this with the House of Tudor, with the famous Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, ruling England for just 118 years. All totalitarian rulers and political parties want to be in power for the longest time through their children. Just look at Stalin and the 70-year tyrannical rule of his Communist Party, or Ferdinand Marcos who was the dictator of the Philippines for 20 years. This year, his son also became President.

But we do not have to look far, because this totalitarianism is just around the corner in our own nation. We have Senators and Representatives who have been serving for over 40 years and counting. There are several Senators who are well over 85 years old. Why do they hang on to power even when their physical and mental abilities are failing? Because, as British philosopher Lord Acton said, "absolute power corrupts absolutely." During and after their terms, these politicians amass hundreds of millions, if not billions. But most Americans should remember that all nations who tolerate, condone and even advocate corruption, greed, idolatry, lawlessness, sexual immorality, violence, and murder end up being like the Jews who were destroyed by a more wicked power sent by God—Babylon—and became slaves in a foreign land.

Therefore, because of its wickedness, the House of David was ended by the Babylonians. However, we will later learn that David's line continued after the exile of the Jews to Babylon.

### **"He Shall Build a House for My Name"**

David always wanted to build a *"house of rest of the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the footstool of our God."* In many Psalms, David expresses his desire to build the temple where he would worship and praise God. In Psalm 5:7, he sings, *"But I... will enter your house. I will bow down toward your holy temple in the fear of you."* When he is in his palace, he longs to enter God's house, so he bows down toward the temple. When he prays, he prays towards God's temple, *"Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy... when I lift up my hands toward your most holy sanctuary"* (Psa 28:2).

But his reign was marked by constant wars against other nations, so God told him, *"You may not build a house for my name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood"* (1 Chr 28:2-3). This is because God's house is a house of peace, justice, holiness and righteousness. For God himself is a God of peace, justice, holiness and righteousness. His temple is his footstool, which means that there, he would find rest from all his works. His house is a house of Sabbath rest, where all his people gather together to praise and give thanks to him and find rest for their souls.

This desire to build a temple for God is the desire of all people, believers and unbelievers alike. Unbelievers know in their hearts that there is a Creator God to whom they are accountable. This is why in all societies and civilizations, there are temples and altars of sacrifice to all kinds of idol-gods (Rom 1:18-23). In Acts 17:22-23, Paul saw in Athens all kinds of idol-gods, even to an unknown god, with the inscription, "To the Unknown God." The Greeks wanted to cover all their bases, even the unknown ones.

But Christians as well desire to build a house of worship for their own congregation. The bigger the better and the more attractive to unbelievers. So, all megachurches build big buildings or even use sports arenas that could seat tens of thousands of members. And the motivation is the same as that of unbelievers: power and money. Most of these megachurch pastors have multi-million-dollar homes, yachts, jets and limousines.

God did not want David to build a luxurious megachurch on the backs of his people. He wanted a house where peace, justice, holiness and righteousness would reign. And this would only be completely fulfilled after David's dynasty ended in the Babylonian exile.

### **"I Will Be to Him a Father, and He Shall Be to Me a Son"**

God's promise of a son to King David who would rule after him was fulfilled in Solomon, David's son by Bathsheba. Before his death, David gave wise instructions to the next anointed king, Solomon, "... *Keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn*" (1 Kgs 2:2-3).

God's covenant with David is now passed on to Solomon. If he was obedient to God's law, he would prosper. And during most of his reign, he did, and he prospered. God even made him the wisest man who ever lived on earth (1 Kgs 3:12). With this wisdom, God prospered his kingdom so that it became the richest kingdom in the ancient Near East (1 Kgs 10:23-25).

Tragically, this wisdom and prosperity made Solomon forget God's laws, including God's law against marrying outside the covenant people of Israel. He had relationships with many pagan women: an unbelievable 700 wives and 300 concubines! He excelled, not only in wisdom and riches, but also in immorality. Because his women were pagan idolaters, Solomon also became an idolater, worshiping both Israel's God and his women's pagan gods. He built temples and altars for these idol-gods in many places in his kingdom. In summary, 1 Kings 11:6 says, "*So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done.*"

Because of this evil, God raised enemies who continually attacked Israel all the days of Solomon's reign (1 Kgs 11:14-26). These enemies included Jeroboam, a mere servant in his own palace, who led a rebellion against Solomon's son Rehoboam. This civil war ended in the division of Solomon's kingdom into the northern kingdom called Israel, and the southern kingdom called Judah. Israel included ten of the twelve tribes, while Judah included only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. There were two main grievances against Solomon and his son: high taxation and

forced labor amounting to slavery. They imposed high taxes upon the people to finance his ostentatious living. And he also did not treat and pay his workers well and oppressed their own people.

This turn of events fulfilled God's warning to David about Solomon in verse 14, "*I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men.*" Solomon sinned against God, so as a Father, God disciplined him severely. But God also promised that he would not take his kingdom away from him while he was king. It was his son Rehoboam's part of the kingdom, ten tribes, that God took away. Only two tribes were left. Again, this is another warning to all powerful leaders who do evil against God's moral laws.

### **"Your Throne Shall be Established Forever"**

David's dynasty that lasted 424 years was one of the longest—if not the longest—dynasty in the history of the world. This was God's gracious gift to David who was known to be a man after God's own heart. But like all earthly kingdoms, it also came to an end. In the genealogy of Matthew Chapter One, our Lord Jesus Christ is called "the son of David" (verse 1). In verse 11, Jechoniah is listed as the king at the time of the deportation to Babylon. We know that Matthew omitted Zedekiah the son of Jechoniah, the real last king of Judah, for literary symmetry of three periods of 14 kings each. So the kingly line of David continued through Jechoniah and Zedekiah all the way to Jesus.

This is why Jesus is called the Son of David by the New Testament writers, including Paul, who said that Jesus "*descended from David according to the flesh*" (Rom 1:3). In his first sermon on Pentecost Sunday, Peter declared that David foretold in Psalm 16:8-11 that God promised him that one of his descendants would inherit his throne. And God would not "*let [the] Holy One see corruption,*" referring to Jesus' resurrection from the dead. This Jesus is now sitting on his eternal throne in heaven at God's right hand interceding for his people.

Therefore, although David's dynasty was broken off by Babylon, it resumed with Jesus as the eternal King.

**B**eloved brothers and sisters in Christ: All of God's covenant promises to King David in 2 Samuel 7 were fulfilled in the Old Testament through King Solomon who was David's own son. He built an earthly temple for God. When he sinned, God disciplined him as an earthly father would do, but it was Solomon's son who lost David's kingdom to a palace servant. Even so, God promised that David's throne would last for eternity.

But these promises would only be completely fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ alone. He is David's greater Son. He started building God's house, his church, during his earthly life, and continues to build God's temple with the preaching of the true gospel. His kingdom will never be taken away from him, for he was perfectly holy and righteous. And the last promise to David—an everlasting throne and kingdom—would have to wait for about a thousand years until Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. Next Lord's Day, we will know the rest of the story of our Lord as David's greater Son. But today, "*know for certain that God has made him Lord and Christ.*" Therefore, repent of your sins and believe in him who was crucified, and you will be saved!