THE FULFILLMENT OF THE

DAVIDIC COVENANT

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Andrew Samuel Byers

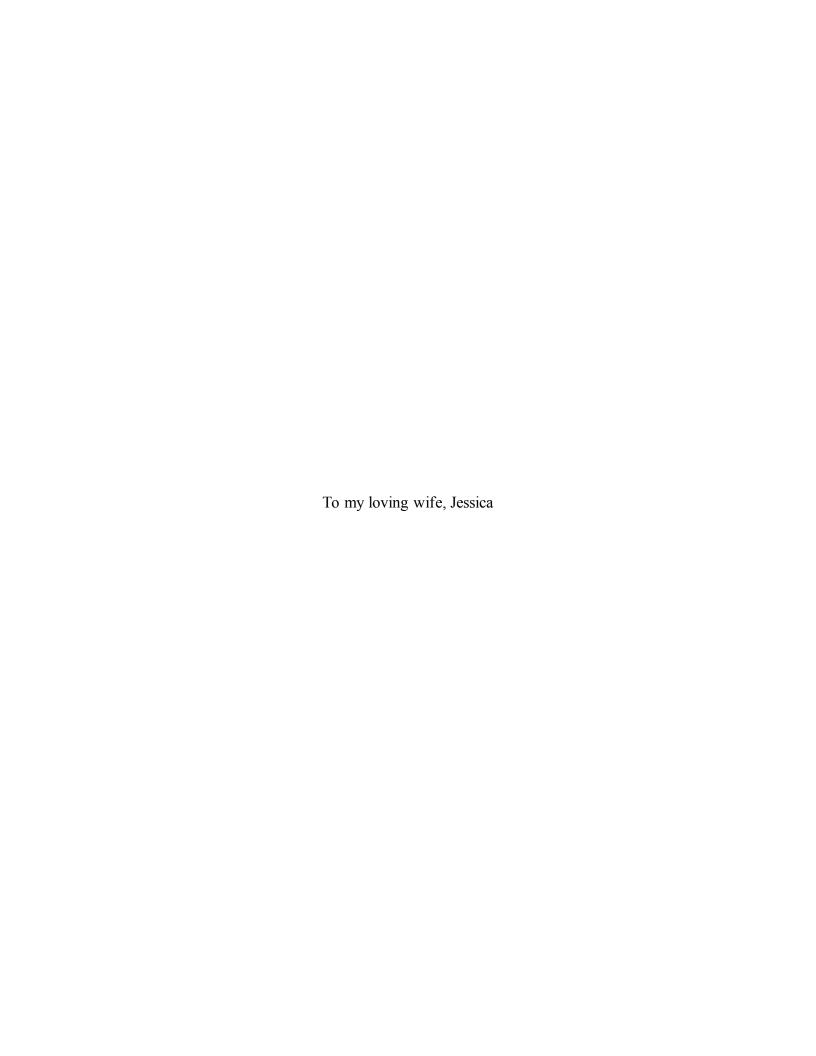December 2020

APPROVAL SHEET

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE

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Andrew Samuel Byers

Read and Approved by:

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Peter J. Gentry (Chair)

Date_____

To my loving wife, Jessica

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PREFACE

This task of research and writing has been possible only by the faith, love, and support of Creekside Fellowship, the flock I have the joy of pastoring. The leadership and membership have greatly supported my study and education. I am deeply grateful to Peter Gentry for his thoughts and insights concerning this work and have been very glad to have him as an advisor for this project. I am also thankful for Roberto Carrera's insight as a thesis fellow. I'm grateful to Southern Seminary for the opportunity to pursue this project. Above all, I am grateful to my wife, Jessica, for her constant support and encouragement and to the Lord for all his faithfulness and steadfast love towards me in Christ.

Andrew Byers

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the discipline of biblical theology, there is much discussion about the nature and application of the Davidic covenant. In fact, of all the major covenants of Scripture, the Davidic covenant appears to be the most difficult to interpret rightly.[1] While it is certainly noted throughout Scripture that the Davidic covenant is significant in its relationship to Jesus' kingship, the exact implications of the covenant in regard to the church seldom seem to be explained thoroughly or extensively applied.

As any serious student of Scripture will readily affirm, all the promises and covenants of the Old Testament find their ultimate fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ (2 Cor 1:20). However, the Davidic covenant involves more complexity than the other covenants mentioned throughout the Old Testament. Both covenant theologians and dispensationalists disagree about the exact implications of such a covenant. Is the covenant unconditional or conditional?[2] Is it a separate covenant altogether, or merely a different administration of the covenant of grace?[3] Is it fulfilled ultimately in Jesus

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[1] Ronald Youngblood notes the difficulty surrounding the conditional/unconditional nature of the covenant as it plays itself out in Solomon's life and in the coming of Christ as the fulfillment. Ronald F. Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, in vol. 3 of *Expositors' Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 386-87.

[2] There is emerging scholarship that these distinctions are broadly unhelpful. See Peter Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 148-49. Also see Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 333-34.

[3] Michael Horton notes that the primary distinction between covenant rheology and other biblical theological systems is the difference between administrations of the covenant of grace and the covenant of works. He argues from the covenantal perspective that the Davidic Covenant is a different administration of the covenant of grace. This is a related concept to the conditionality of such covenants. Michael Scott Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 55-56.

Christ, or does the Davidic covenant point forward to a day where King Jesus will reign on a literal throne in a geopolitical, ethnic Israel?[4] The questions and implications are not easily answered with mere summary statements.

With much attention in biblical scholarship being given to the fulfillment and implications of the Abrahamic,[5] the Mosaic,[6] and the New Covenant,[7] it seems that the Davidic Covenant simply exists in biblical scholarship as a historical and biblical fact, but whose fulfillment does not actively influence the life of the Christian.[8] In treating the Davidic Covenant as a mere historical or literary fact, the Christian is missing a full picture of how Christ has fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament. While theologians have often sought to explain the exact nature of the other major covenants of Scripture to the New Covenant people of God, the application of the Davidic Covenant to the New Covenant people has not received the same attention.

For example, in the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, the New Testament teaches that the sign of circumcision has passed away. Therefore, the Christian is not required to be circumcised as Abraham's descendants were, but they are circumcised in

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[4] Three differing viewpoints of this observation can be clearly seen in the following works. For a dispensationalist understanding, see Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Bridgepoint Books, 2002), 181-87; contrasted against a covenantal approach in Earl M. Blackburn, *Covenant Theology: A Baptist Distinctive* (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013), 47-49; and also a third way between the two is Steven Wellum and Brent Parker, *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Mediating Position between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016), 265-66.

[5] Christopher J. H. Wright, *Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2006), 243-64.

[6] John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Christian Life: A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2008), 200-236

[7] George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 107-22.

[8] Graeme Goldsworthy notes that not enough attention is given to the Davidic Covenant by the Reformed tradition of Vos and Clowney as it relates to understanding the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham in Gen 15. Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), 168-69.

the heart by the Spirit (Rom 1:21, Gal 6:15, Eph 3:3). Likewise, in the fulfillment of the Mosaic covenant, the laws of the Old Covenant have passed away, for Christ has fulfilled them perfectly (Heb 10:4, Acts 15:1-21). By implication, the ritual laws and sacrifices of the Mosaic era are no longer necessary for holy obedience to Yahweh. Rather, we obey the commands of the New Covenant as an affirmation of the rule of Jesus Christ in our lives. Similarly, since the Davidic Covenant has been fulfilled in Christ, it has implications for the New Covenant people of God.

To understand the implications of the Davidic Covenant's fulfillment, one must understand the typological function of both the monarchy and the temple promised in the Davidic Covenant and developed in the grand story of Scripture. From Adam, to Abraham, to David, there is significant development of both the covenant head functioning as a king and this covenant head ruling over a covenant people. It is the intention of this work to demonstrate that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises to David in the Davidic Covenant by fulfilling both the promise of an eternal king and the promise of a true temple. By understanding this fulfillment, one can see how the typology that is present in the Davidic Covenant corresponds to the church in the New Covenant. The monarchy in Israel leads one to expect the Messiah to be a king ruling over a covenant people in faithful obedience to Yahweh in order to secure the blessings of the covenant. Additionally, the church established by the person and work of this king, Jesus Christ, is a typological feature of God's Kingdom and God's covenant with David, functioning as a kind of eschatological temple. Understanding this typological function causes the church to understand its nature and purpose in God's sovereign plan of salvation for all the nations.

While the Lord tells David that he will build Him a house in 2 Samuel 7, the New Testament bears witness to the fact that this house is not a physical place, but a people with whom Christ dwells and rules over (1 Cor 3:9;16-17; 1 Pet 2:5). Jesus is the true temple who establishes the church as an eschatological temple for all the nations.

This is both literal and typological fulfillment. This New Covenant people is born of the Spirit and washed in the blood of Christ. While Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Davidic King who rules and reigns perfectly for all eternity, the fact that Jesus has fulfilled the Davidic Covenant also has implications for the church. The temple is a type pointing to Christ and the church is a result of this fulfillment, demonstrating that both the house of Yahweh and house of David are fulfilled in Christ and these themes are recapitulated in the church. Therefore, the church, instituted by Christ, is both an eschatological temple for the people of God and a foreshadowing of the coming Kingdom of God. The primary importance of understanding the Davidic Covenant is to demonstrate how Christ is the fulfillment of the promises to David, and how those fulfilled promises are realized in the New Covenant people of God.

The promise of a Davidic King does not simply end with Jesus's reign, but extends to the people Jesus reigns over. Since the language of 2 Samuel 7 involves a word play on the Hebrew word *house*, there is a unique focus in mind for this particular covenant. Gentry and Wellum comment, "The 'house' that David wants to build for Yahweh is a sanctuary or temple. The 'house' that Yahweh will build for David is a dynasty or royal family line. This play on words is taken up again in both the Old and New Testaments."[9] There is a focus on the lineage of David which is fulfilled in Christ, but there is also a secondary focus on those over whom the Christ reigns. This is demonstrated in several places in the New Testament (Rev 11:15; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21).

Jesus's fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant also fulfills the other covenants of the Old Testament. Bruce Waltke notes that when the Lord promises to give David a secure place and rest from oppressors that the Lord is fulfilling the promises made to

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[9] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 448.

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Abraham.[10] The Mosaic covenant is certainly in view as well, as it is the faithful king who will help the people of God to obey God's decrees. When looking for a fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, at some level one is looking for a fulfillment of some of the promises of previous covenants as well. Holding this framework aids in canonical interpretation. Christ is the King of the Davidic Covenant; the church is an eschatological expression of the Kingdom ruled by this Davidic King. In this way, the church as an eschatological temple points forward to the day when Christ will rule over all the earth (Phil 2:10). Contrary to Old Testament Israel, the church is not a geo-political entity but is made up from people of every tribe, tongue, and nation. This is a major distinction between the Old Covenant anticipation and the New Covenant fulfillment. This idea is clearly taught by the New Testament, but vaguely seen as a type in the Old Testament. To make sense of these realities in the texts, we must seek to apply the principles of both biblical theology and typology.

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[10] Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 687-92.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND
TYPOLOGY IN THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

In order to rightly understand the nature of the church described by the New

Testament, there is a necessary reading of the whole Bible as God's final revelation to his

people. Any interpretation of the New Testament without a robust understanding of

biblical theology is not being faithful to the Scriptures. Biblical theology is notoriously

difficult to define, as D.A. Carson has written, "Everyone does that which is right in his

or her own eyes, and calls it biblical theology."[1] Understanding the difficulty of this task,

biblical theology has been described as "…the study of how every text in the Bible

relates to every other text in the Bible."[2] This definition by Goldsworthy is instructive for

all readers of the Bible because it takes seriously the simultaneous unity and diversity of

Scripture. This means that the Bible must be interpreted according to the Bible's own

terms. Given his commitments as an evangelical, he expands upon this idea as it relates to

fulfillment in Christ. He writes, "Biblical theology, then, is the study of how every text in

the Bible relates to Jesus and his gospel. Thus, we start with Christ so that we may end

with Christ; he is the Alpha and Omega (Rev 22:13)."[3]

Moreover, biblical theology attempts to take Scripture on its own terms as

God's Word. Gentry and Wellum note that there is an overall unity and coherence

between the Old and New Testaments. However, this unity does not discount the reality

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[1] D. A. Carson, "Systematic and Biblical Theology," in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2000), 91.

[2] Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), 40.

[3] Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, 40.

of the human authors of Scripture.[4] This means that as Old Testament authors wrote, there was an understanding that what they wrote was perfectly true but not always entirely understood. In other words, Old Testament authors wrote truly that God would keep His promises without being entirely certain how His faithfulness would come to pass. With this perspective in view, we see that correct application of the text of Scripture cannot be accomplished without an understanding of the greater context of Scripture.

To understand biblical theology rightly, one must first understand what biblical theology is not. For example, to say that one has biblical theology does not simply mean that one uses the Bible to inform theological convictions. Biblical theology is also not an antonym for systematic theology, for biblical theology cannot be pitted against systematic theology. Both disciplines are seeking to use the text to inform their positions about the text. Geerhardus Vos writes,

> The fact is that Biblical Theology just as much as Systematic Theology makes the material undergo a transformation. The sole difference is in the principle on which the transformation is conducted. In the case of Biblical Theology this is historical, in the case of Systematic Theology it is of a logical nature. Each of these two is necessary, and there is no occasion for a sense of superiority in either.[5]

Vos' comment is helpful in beginning to understand what biblical theology is. When seeking to make assertions from a biblical theological perspective, one is trying to make sense of the history of the Bible by understanding the content of Scripture as something that is able to be interpreted more clearly based on later progressive

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[4] Peter Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 109-11.

[5] Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 23. Vos' use of the word "historical" is likely more akin to "redemptive-historical" rather than history as a discipline. The charge of this comment is to see that biblical theology is a way to make sense of the story of Scripture in its redemptive, canonical context. Biblical theology is not a historical tool as much as it is an interpretive tool.

revelation.[6] James Hamilton has summarized these aspects by stating that biblical theology is an "interpretive perspective reflected in the way the biblical authors have presented their understanding of earlier Scripture, redemptive history, and the events they are describing, recounting, celebrating, or addressing in narratives, poems, proverbs, letters, and apocalypses."[7]

Goldsworthy notes that one's presuppositions concerning the nature of Scripture influences how biblical theology is actually practiced.[8] Clearly, there is a complexity to understanding biblical theology, for the canon of Scripture is massive in its scope, content, and message. However, by taking Scripture on its own terms and understanding the nature of redemptive history, one can establish some helpful categories to rightly understand and interpret Scripture while upholding the historicity, inspiration and intent of the authors of Scripture.

In any attempt to interpret Scripture, the presuppositions of the reader undeniably show themselves. Without identifying the presuppositions of the interpreter of a text, there is a vast number of possible interpretations. Because of this reality, there are a wide variety of individuals who claim the inerrancy, unity, authority, and inspiration of the Scripture but come to strikingly different conclusions about the same text. It is a variety of presuppositions and commitments that yield such a wide variety of opinions amongst different contemporary theologians.

Peter Gentry has noted several presuppositions he holds as an evangelical seeking to engage in the discipline of biblical theology. He briefly notes them as the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Word of God, the Canon as the limit of inspired Scripture, the arrangement of the canon, the unity of the canon of Scripture, the human

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[6] Vos argues that a better name for the discipline is "History of Special Revelation." However, "biblical theology" was already popularized so Vos employs the existing term. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 23.

[7] James Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 16.

[8] Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology,* 40.

problem and God's response, the role of story in worldview, and the story of Scripture as worldview.[9] Each of these aspects influences the way one reads and interprets Scripture and guides the way one does biblical theology. This understanding would affirm that biblical inerrantists wishing to do biblical theology must to hold a particular view about God, Scripture, sin, and worldview before they begin the task of interpretation. This illustrates the point that exegesis and hermeneutics are never done in a vacuum. They are always influenced by a variety of factors, and therefore it is important to recognize the various presuppositions that are held when stepping into the realm of biblical theology. While not all presuppositions carry the same weight in interpretation, a difference in presuppositions most likely will involve a difference in interpretation.[10]

One way to assess a personal presuppositional commitment involves understanding the nature and function of history as it applies to reading Scripture. The individual who reads Scripture as a biblical inerrantist believes that Scripture speaks truly when it speaks of history, though never speaking comprehensively. There is much a Christian can learn from the discipline of history, but history is not the ultimate authority; Scripture is. When understanding how the Bible is related inter-canonically, the nature of progressive revelation through history becomes significant. The Bible is a book of progressive revelation, not instantaneous revelation. This fact alone should cause the student of Scripture to delicately approach Scripture with historical presuppositions in open hands.

Goldsworthy writes,

God's revelation is embedded in history and involves an historic progressiveness . . . biblical theology involves the quest for the big picture, or the overview, of biblical revelation. It is the nature of biblical revelation that it tells a story rather than sets

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[9] Peter Gentry, "The Significance of Covenants in Biblical Theology," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 20, no. 1 (2016): 9-33. Many of these presuppositions are shared by Goldsworthy as explained in *Christ Centered Biblical Theology*, 42-49.

[10] Gentry illustrates in *Kingdom through Covenant* that he comes to similar terms with other biblical scholars but uses a different method to arrive at these conclusions, demonstrating the role the presuppositions play in interpretation. See Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 151-58.

our timeless principles in abstract. They are given in an historical context of progressive revelation."[11]

It is not simply the exegete who holds a presupposition, but the author of each particular text held presuppositions as well. It is the attempt of biblical theology to employ the same presuppositions as the authors who penned the original text.

Contemporary biblical theology has at least five different schools of thought that have been well catalogued by Edward Klink and Darian Lockett in their work *Understanding Biblical Theology*.[12] The method employed in this work's attempt to describe the Davidic Covenant uses most of the elements of what Klink and Lockett call the "History of Redemption."[13] Their summary of this method of biblical theology notes that the Bible is a coherent recounting of reality. Klink and Lockett write, "The biblical story stands over against other versions of reality and thus serves as a clear warning against living out the values and culture of the surrounding culture."[14] This is significant because the Bible uses the cultural and historical context of its original audience to formulate its message, but also to speak a message about God back into the existing culture.

The authors of Scripture used that which was familiar in their context to speak a message about God to a particular people. Similarly, different geographical regions express ideas in diverse ways. The same is true for all cultures throughout human history. A familiarity with the culture and context of the contemporaries of those in Old Testament times will aid in the right interpretation of Scripture. The authors of Scripture

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[11] Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 22.

[12] For a detailed analysis of the contemporary issues concerning biblical theology, I consulted Edward W. Klink and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

[13] Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 59. This theory is popularized by Carson, Vos, and Goldsworthy.

[14] Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 63.

were divinely inspired but used mostly common expressions to communicate this divine message.

It is this message that careful exegesis seeks to understand. Upon doing careful exegesis, one must understand how one text connects to other texts even across historical and cultural lines. As a New Covenant believer, then the task is to understand how a selected text applies personally. This is the task of a Redemptive Historical hermeneutic that is also driven by a biblical worldview.[15] Biblical theology is one of the necessary means to find the answer to the question, "What does the Bible have to say to me?" In this way, biblical theology acts as a bridge discipline. Biblical theology helps the reader understand and interpret Scripture as a history of God's work through humankind and how to apply a specific text to one's own life, both directly and indirectly.

In speaking of biblical theology primarily as a history of redemption, there are some guidelines that should be firmly established. A history of redemption view of biblical theology is not subject to the tactics of the historical-critical method.[16] Anyone attempting to do biblical theology on the grounds of the historical-critical reading of the Bible does not hold Scripture as God's self-revelatory Word. Using the historical-critical method as the authority in biblical theology is much more like an understanding of history or religion than the reading of the Word of God for the people of God. In addition to this category, the individual employing this type of presupposition will go beyond the canon of Scripture held by evangelicals to make assertions about the period of the Bible

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[15] Klink and Lockett note that the categories of biblical theology are not firmly delineated. In seeking to place scholars like D. A. Carson and N. T. Wright into two different spectrums, what they call BT 2 and BT 3 respectively, there has been a misidentification of the two systems. Gentry argues that his exegetical method is not merely a redemptive historical hermeneutic but also employs a biblical worldview story. In applying Klink and Lockett's categories, this would be a combination of BT 2 and BT 3. It is incredibly difficult to locate a hermeneutical method on such a spectrum, but the distinction is worth noting. See Gentry, "The Significance of Covenants," 9-33.

[16] Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 33. This method of biblical theology as historical description is described by Klink and Lockett as BT1.

on its own terms.[17] The historical-critical method does not allow the Bible to speak authoritatively because it views history as ultimately authoritative. The historical-critical method seeks to interpret the Bible while appealing to an additional external authority, namely the historical method.

One of the necessities of an evangelical understanding of biblical theology is allowing the Bible to interpret the Bible. Defining biblical theology as merely historical activity does not allow canonical interpretation to be authoritative. Gentry notes that the issue of historical criticism is one of the main problems with three of the five methods of biblical theology mentioned by Klink and Lockett.[18] In making Scripture subject to the historical-critical method, the interpreter or the historical construction becomes the arbiter of truth, rather than allowing the inspired Word to convey objective truth. The presupposition held by the historical critical method inclines individuals toward subjective statements rather than eternal, objective truths.

Rightly understanding biblical theology is directly tied to interpretation in the church. The Bible is a historical document but it is not merely historical in its scope. Biblical theology discipline applies a hermeneutic concerned with a "what it meant/what it means" mentality, understanding the message of Scripture is still relevant to the church today.[19] This means that Scripture had a definite meaning to its original audience, sometimes called "authorial intent," but that Scripture also continues to speak to people today. Seeing authorial intent as foundational to a text's meaning is one of the most helpful tools to doing biblical theology rightly. Vos writes that Scripture "has not completed itself in one exhaustive act, but unfolded itself in a long series of successive

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[17] Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 37.

[18] Gentry, "The Significance of Covenants," 12. Though one can learn things through the study of history, the historical-critical method attempts to make the historical method superior to the Word-Act revelation of Scripture. Though the discipline of history has taught biblical scholars much, it is an imperfect tool when it comes to ascribing authority.

[19] Klink and Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*, 23.

acts…because special revelation does not stand alone by itself, but is inseparably attached to another activity of God, which we call *Redemption*."[20] In this definition, Vos ties together the ideas of God's progressive revelation with His progressive redemption of mankind. He continues "redemption could not be otherwise than historically successive because it addresses itself to the generations of mankind coming into existence in the course of history. Revelation is the interpretation of redemption; it must, therefore, unfold itself in installments as redemption does."[21]

The unfolding of Scripture amongst the various stages of redemption is a source of debate amongst Evangelical scholars. Among Bible believing evangelicals, the two major camps of interpretation are Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism.[22] What any student of the Bible must readily affirm is that whenever you begin to look at the major covenants of Scripture, you are dealing with the conversation that surrounds Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism. Though the differences between the two systems are stark, both theological systems are seeking to be faithful to interpret Scripture with God as its author, and for that there is much to celebrate. However, the differences propose an exegetical, hermeneutical, and theological problem for Bible believing Christians.

This is significant as it relates to the Davidic covenant because David was a real king, who ruled over a real people, who had been saved by real acts of God at real moments in history. The promises to David in 2 Samuel 7 are fulfilled in real time, but not in the way the people who received the promise imagined. Rather than David's dynasty remaining forever through his direct biological heir, the kingdom itself is broken apart and exiled. One reading the story of Scripture with an eye for the covenant with

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[20] Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 14.

[21] Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 14.

[22] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 51-105. This excellent discussion exposes root issues in both covenant theology and dispensationalism.

David to come to fulfillment is hopelessly disappointed unless he sees the connection between the promises of the Old Testament and their fulfillment in the New Testament. In short, through the discipline of biblical theology one can see how the historical realities of the Scriptural story are interconnected to the canon as a whole and are then applied to the context of the Christian living today.

In interpreting the scenario of the Davidic Covenant, one of the most helpful tools is typology. Typology is rooted in the promise and fulfillment motif of Scripture and helps make sense of the story of Scripture. Gentry and Wellum write, "as we trace out the storyline of Scripture, as we move from promise to fulfillment through the biblical covenants, we are better able to see how Scripture hangs together and reaches its fulfillment in Messiah Jesus."[23] To understand the typological elements seen the Davidic Covenant is to understand how the implications of this covenant can be applied to the church.

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[23] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 128.

CHAPTER 3

TYPOLOGY AND THE FULFILLMENT OF
OLD TESTAMENT PROMISES

When speaking of fulfillment, every Christian must affirm what Scripture says in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "for all the promises of God find their yes in him." While Jesus is certainly the fulfillment of all the promises of God, readers of Scripture should seek to understand *how* Jesus is the answer. Understanding typology can help clarify how Jesus is the answer to all the promises of God.

Richard Lints gives a helpful starting point for a definition of typology. He writes, "Typology is simply symbolism with a prospective reference to fulfillment in a later epoch of biblical history. It involves a fundamentally organic relation between events, persons, and institutions in one epoch and their counterparts in later epochs."[1] Lints helps us with his definition, stating that typology has to do with referents in one part of Scripture that are fulfilled in a later part of Scripture. However, typology is not simply haphazard and random. Beale would expand on this definition by stating that typology is "the study of analogical correspondences among revealed truths about persons, events, institutions, and other things within the historical framework of God's special revelation, which, from a retrospective view, are of a prophetic nature and are escalated in their meaning."[2] This definition gives clarity by noting that typological construction should not be pursued on the basis of the interpreter's perspective, but because of Scriptural warrant.

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[1] Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 304.

[2] G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 14.

Ardel Caneday has helpfully contributed to the discussion surrounding typology in modern hermeneutics. He notes that typology as a category is not really about the interpretation of Scripture but is directly associated with the nature of revelation.[3] He notes that if biblical types are prophetic in nature, then they are authoritative by nature as biblical revelation. This is different than simply observing typology retrospectively because the types are *in* the prophetic texts, not merely discernable in said texts.

Furthermore, Caneday notes that biblical types do not call for typological interpretation. To engage in typological interpretation is to see types where there are none. What Caneday calls for is identifying the types that exist in Scripture and allowing Scripture to guard our interpretation of such types.[4] S. Lewis Johnson notes that typology is necessary to an understanding of the use of the Old Testament in the New and an understanding to the biblical doctrine of inspiration.[5] By allowing the Scripture to guard our use of typology, one can appreciate typology without abusing it.

Gentry and Wellum assert that there are four specific points typology must adhere to. First, typology is a correspondence between people, places, and events of one time and people, places, and events of a later time. Second, there is an aspect of escalation from type to antitype so that a later event or person which is said to be the fulfillment is better and greater than the preceding type. Third, there is biblical warrant and exegetical evidence for a typology to be assumed.[6] Fourth and finally, the

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[3] Ardel Caneday, "Biblical Types," in *God's Glory Revealed in Christ: Essays in Honor of Tom Schreiner*, ed. Denny Burk, James Hamilton, and Brian Vickers (Nashville: B & H, 2019), 141.

[4] Caneday, "Biblical Types," 142-43.

[5] S. Lewis Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New: An Argument for Biblical Inspiration*, Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 66.

[6] Gentry notes that Goldsworthy sees the value of typology but allows for an unlimited number of types in a macro-typological construction. Following this trend leads to an allegorical interpretation of types and antitypes, similar to the allegories of the church fathers, who had no control of their typological constructions. Peter John Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 29.

progression of the covenants throughout the narrative plot-structure of the Bible creates, controls, and develops the typological constructions across the canon.[7] In order to see these factors most clearly, each will be addressed in turn.

Typology as a Person, Event, Place, or Institution

First, typology involves a correspondence of a person, event, place, or institution. The typological connection of Adam is the most easily identified typological connection in Scripture. Adam, as the first human in Scripture, is clearly meant to be viewed as a type of Christ in Romans 5:14. The repetition of an Adamic figure throughout Scripture leads the reader to understand that the authors of Scripture are looking for a typological fulfillment of Adam as a representative head for all of humanity.[8] Adam is seen as a representative covenant head for all humanity. In Eden, Adam serves as a priest-king before the Lord. Similarly, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David serve as covenant heads in later covenants. Each serves as another Adam. The Biblical authors present Adam as a type of representative in the Old Testament that is ultimately fulfilled in the New Testament antitype of Jesus Christ.

Typology and Escalation

Second, typology possesses a quality of escalation, meaning that one would expect that the promises fulfilled in the second Adam would be greater than the promises made to the first Adam. The beauty of the Adam typology in Scripture is that it runs through all of the main covenantal recipients in Scripture. Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David all serve as covenant heads reminiscent of Adam. In this process of escalation, each new Adam involves greater prophetic anticipation than the previous. Each time God makes a covenant with another covenant head, the expectation escalates until it

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[7] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 28-29.

[8] John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2013), 66.

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culminates in Christ. For example, Adam is to fill the earth, but fails. Abraham, as another Adam, God will cause to become a nation. This nation, Israel, is to be like a son to Yahweh but rebels breaking the covenant. David, as the king of Israel, is to be King rule over the nation in righteousness but the nation is divided because of the rebellion of his son, Solomon. However, this sets up the expectation for the New Covenant of a king who will obey God, establish a people, and rule and reign over them in justice. The one (Adam) becomes many (Israel) who is reduced to one (Christ) who then brings about the redemption of many (the church).

With the coming of Christ and the establishment of the New Covenant, the promises of God are fully realized by the redeeming of all those elected for salvation.[9] The typological construction never works backwards, from greater to less, but always forward, from least to greatest. Therefore, the promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ as the antitype of Adam are greater and more specific as a culmination of all promises of previous covenants. Wellum notes that while a type has significance in its own time, its greater significance is directed toward the future. This is a reminder that a greater type is yet to come.[10]

It is instructive to note at this point in the discussion that typological patterns can also be events or institutions. The flood of Noah as an event and the tabernacle or temple as an institution serve as helpful ways of understanding some other kinds of typological structures seen throughout Scripture. In stating that Christ fulfills these events or institutions, we must understand that though the person of Christ who fulfill these types, Christ also commands or initiates a new system. Therefore, although Christ is the

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[9] Gentry notes that the New Covenant in Isa 65 is given to a new people in a new place to worship God. This structure falls in line with the covenantal progression seen from Adam through Abraham to Moses and David. The New Covenant draws upon the covenant with Adam to create a people of God in the place where God dwells. This new revelation builds upon the existing realities of the older revelation. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 520-25.

[10] Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology Series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 98.

fulfillment of the event of the flood, having endured God's wrath and survived, the institution of baptism corresponds with the flood event typologically (1 Pet 3:21).[11] It is important to see that Jesus is the focal point of Scripture, but that the institutions of Christ can be the typological correspondent of a previous institution.[12]

However, simply saying that Jesus is the fulfillment of every typological function in Scripture does not accurately correspond to what Jesus expected His followers to believe. This will be an important concept as one looks at how the church corresponds typologically to the temple promised in the covenant with David. While Jesus was the fulfillment of the promises to David as a new and better King, there is also a correspondence between the institution David was promised. Namely, a house or dynasty. There is no true political dynasty in the New Covenant, but the reality of the church holds a place of prominence as a New Covenant institution. This aspect of escalation helps one understand how these patterns are described in the Old Covenant and then instituted eschatologically in the New Covenant.

Typology and Biblical Warrant

Third, typology must be pursued through biblical warrant. Contrary to Goldsworthy, the typological constructions have limits, in that they must be intended by the biblical authors.[13] The author's intent limits typological construction. A clear example to note is the development of Adam as a typological construction intended by Paul in

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[11] Though Peter clearly states that baptism is the new "event" inaugurated by the typology of the flood, he notes that only through Christ is this event actually instituted for the Christian.

[12] A prime example of this Jesus as the true passover Lamb and his institution of the Lord's supper as a New Covenant institution corresponding, in some extent, to that Old Testament pattern (Luke 22:14-23).

[13] Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), 185. Goldsworthy seems to give priority to types seen as intended by the biblical authors but allows for a typological construction that uses a "macro-typology," stating that there must not necessarily be exegetical warrant for a typological construction. This view is inconsistent with the position of typology explained in this paper.

Romans 5:14. Paul is noting that Christ is the antitype of Adam, showing that there is a typological structure in Christ's person and work that extends all the way back to Genesis.[14] Christ is the last Adam, and in Christ the blessings of God come to the nations. This is a key typological function of Christ throughout Scripture.

It is instructive to note that the presence or absence of the exact Greek word or cognate τύπος is not sufficient evidence to determine whether a typological construction is present or not. As Gentry notes, "For something to be considered a type, there must be exegetical evidence in the original text that indicates that what the text is dealing with is intended to be a model or pattern for something to follow in history."[15] In stating this, Gentry notes that exegetical evidence does not necessarily require an exact formulaic expression. While the presence of the word τύπος certainly can signal a typological construction, the absence of the word does not necessarily negate such a construction.[16]

This means that a typological function can be found where the reader least expects it, but is never found where the author does not intend it. The author of Hebrews employs typology throughout his writing, yet the connections are not always identified as typological constructions, but simply as the reading of Old Testament Scripture with Jesus as the fulfillment.

Typology and the Progression of Covenants

Fourth and finally, typology is developed, controlled, and developed throughout the narrative plot structure of the covenants. This means that as the covenants

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[14] Davidson notes that the typological structures of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in the eschatological realities of the New Testament. Therefore, the old covenant types are looking forward to their eschatological fulfillment begun by Christ's institution of the New Covenant. See Richard Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structure* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 398-99.

[15] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 29.

[16] Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology*, 170-86; James Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 77-85; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 129-37.

progress throughout the story of Scripture and the history of God's people, types become more developed. Biblical types are controlled through the progression of the covenants. Through the institution of each covenant, the idea of a covenant head is established and elaborated upon, but awaits Jesus Christ for its culmination.[17]

In Genesis, Adam is portrayed as a king-priest who must be an obedient son in relation to God and a servant king in relation to creation. As the covenants of Scripture unfold, this Adamic office of priest-king is held by Noah, Abraham, all of Israel, and is seen in the monarchy and the covenant with David. This Adamic office culminates in Christ. Each covenant developed the Adamic office as it was instituted, so that this type progressed as covenants were established with God's people.

While this sounds similar to escalation, what differentiates the two factors is the necessity of covenantal progression. After God's covenant with Abraham, there is no going back to Adam. In the Abrahamic covenant, God sets in motion the plan that He intends to complete through Abraham's line. If anyone wishes to relate to God, he must do it through Abraham, and eventually Abraham's seed. The covenants of Scripture reveal the progression of the typological structures.

Another way to understand this is to view typological constructions through the biblical time periods to which they belong. The time periods of Scripture are governed by the establishment of covenants in Scripture. Therefore, it is easier to see how the distinct types seen in Scripture find their fulfillment or antitype as they are compared with typological structures existing in different biblical time periods. This viewpoint helps keep all of Scripture in view when doing the task of interpretation. Seeing that covenants reveal typology will help make sense of how typological constructions function in the history of redemption.

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[17] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 136.

These criteria will be applied to Scripture to produce a typological construction involving the text of the Davidic Covenant and the unfolding of the New Covenant. The question of how the Davidic Covenant relates to the biblical theological and typological landscape of the New Testament is the overall goal of this discussion. Through examining the text of 2 Samuel, the prophets, and the New Testament writings, it will become clear how the Davidic Covenant anticipates a typological pattern that is seen clearly in the New Covenant. This pattern is seen through the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant in the person and work of Christ and Christ's institution of the church as an eschatological temple constructed by Christ.

CHAPTER 4

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT FULFILLED

Second Samuel 7 contains the details of a highly anticipated promise. Since the fall of man in Genesis 3, there has been a longing and a waiting for a promised one to come and lead people back to Yahweh. Throughout the narrative of the Old Testament there is much anticipation that this promised one will have a role like Adam without the obvious failures of Adam. When David is crowned king over Israel, it would seem as if the promises are bound to come true under his rule. However, 2 Samuel 7 tells us that this is not true, but that it will be through David's line that people's hearts are drawn back to Yahweh.

The obvious question that is raised in 2 Samuel 7 is the question of fulfillment. The Lord makes a promise to His people through David's rule, and yet the promise remains unfulfilled. There is a tension in the text that demonstrates that David's line will be the one to bring about the return of the people's hearts to Yahweh, but when will it happen? Furthermore, as one reads the history of Israel and learns of the unrighteous characteristics of the line of David, it seems as if hope is lost. From where will the fulfillment come?

It is no surprise that the New Testament answers this question very clearly. The promises given to David are fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Peter acknowledges this at Pentecost (Acts 2:34-36). Similarly, the writers of the gospels often refer to Jesus as the Son of David (Matt 12:23; Mark 10:47; Luke 18:38). Paul and John both use similar language (Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8; Rev 22:16), as does the author of Hebrews (Heb 4:7). All this evidence leads the reader of Scripture to understand that Jesus is the true fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. The question then lies not in the

fulfillment of the promise, but in the nature of the fulfillment. David reigned over a

physical kingdom and was promised an eternal dynasty in 2 Samuel 7, but Jesus is not

presently sitting on a throne in Jerusalem. Likewise, the temple is a significant motif in

the Old Testament and in the Davidic Covenant. What is the significance of the

monarchy, Davidic dynasty, and temple for Christ's reign?

The New Testament affirms that Christ is the true fulfillment of the Davidic

Covenant, but it does not stop there. Rather, it reshapes and retools Old Testament

images like the Kingdom of God and the temple as true realities in the New Testament

age. There are clear glimpses of this truth when we consider the prophetic nature of the

Davidic covenant and the structure of Samuel as a whole.[1] This will be demonstrated

from the text of Samuel. It is the goal of this project to demonstrate how Jesus Christ is a

better Israel, temple, and priest-king from the texts of Scripture. In doing so, the

Scriptures will demonstrate with new clarity the significance of the Davidic Covenant to

Biblical Theology.

The Prophetic Nature of the
Davidic Covenant

When examining the Old Testament book of Samuel, one must understand the

role of prophecy in this narrative book. Samuel is a unique historical account. The

unfolding of the office of prophet is critical to the development of Samuel's storyline. To

this point in Israel's history, most declarations were made directly from God or from a

mysterious angel of the Lord (Gen 6:13; 12:1-3; 19; Exod 20-24; Judg 6:11-18).[2]

Prophecy is one of the common means that God used to communicate with people

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[1] Given that 1 and 2 Sam were originally one writing, the two books will be referred to as Samuel when speaking of the canonical whole.

[2] Many other examples could be given, but these examples address prophetic addresses given in different points along the covenantal timeline, and in the time of the judges. There was no absence of prophets or prophecy during earlier Old Testament times. However, these earlier instances of prophecy functioned differently than the prophecy during the monarchy of Israel.

throughout biblical history, and the office of a prophet is one that is not recognized until the book of Samuel. Even though prophets and forms of prophecy can be found in the Pentateuch, especially in connection to Moses, it is not until the later historical books that the office of a prophet is established.[3]

J. Rutherford Alexander has written about the literary structure of Samuel and gives attention to the idea of prophecy and the office of a prophet being an important development in the narrative. He contends that there is a prophetic expectation present in Samuel in 1 Samuel 2:27-36 and 2 Samuel 7:1-17. He writes that a prophetic expectation is "a device used in prophetic oracles to make implicit prophecies concerning the future by creating unresolved tension or describing the present in a way that requires a resolution yet to appear."[4]

This is a helpful development as we consider the office of a prophet in the development of the monarchy. This office is one that keeps the King accountable to Yahweh's rule. The presence of a prophet among the kings of Israel is given provision in the Mosaic Covenant (Num 12:6-9; Deut 18:15-22). There is an expectation that prophets will be a part of Israel's life as they live under Yahweh's gracious rule. Gentry and Wellum write, "For every David there must also be a Nathan who can come directly into the king's presence and confront his decisions and actions by the authority of the Word of God."[5]

Therefore, the unfolding of the office of prophet is significant when seeking to understand the monarchy in Israel. Therefore, the beginning Samuel with the birth of Samuel is significant since he was a prophet of God. As Samuel was a prophet to Saul, so

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[3] Wayne Grudem, "Prophecy, Prophets," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 2000), 701-10.

[4] J. Alexander Rutherford, *God's Kingdom through His Priest-King: An Analysis of the Book of Samuel in Light of the Davidic Covenant* (Vancouver, BC: Teleioteti Publishing, 2019), 105.

[5] Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 446.

Nathan was a prophet to David, and so on. The office of the prophet allowed the voice of the Lord to be heard by the king, even if that voice was not always received.

This is significant because the Davidic Covenant is the only major covenant of Scripture that is given in the form of a prophetic word from a prophet and not in an audible or straightforward word from God.[6] Therefore, if one is to rightly interpret the Davidic Covenant, there is a necessity to understand how prophets communicate and how a prophetic word in the Old Testament is different than the historical narrative surrounding it.

Though the role of the prophet is a new and important office in the books of Samuel, the prophecies contained within the books themselves are distinct from the forms of what we would call the Major or Minor Prophets of the Old Testament. Many of the prophecies in the books of Samuel are not conveyed as Hebrew poetry, as is common in other prophetic writings. Therefore, some of the characteristic functions of prophetic writing are difficult to apply to the prophecies in Samuel. To chart a course forward, however, a few key characteristics of prophecy must be given priority.

First, though the prophetic prose of 2 Samuel 7 is not structured like other Old Testament prophecies, the prophet still uses figurative imagery. The prophets often use a paronomasia to highlight a specific feature in the prophecy.[7] This figurative speech is clearly seen in prophetic speech, whether poetic or prosaic. A key example from 2 Samuel 7 is the repetition of the Hebrew word *house*. Initially, David uses the term to mean one thing, while Nathan uses the term in a different way. This is a fine example of prophetic prose using a figurative image which gives an interpretive complexity to the passage. The precise meaning of the house as a figure of speech will be addressed below.

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[6] The Mosaic Covenant is an exception, as Moses certainly performed the function of the office of a prophet, yet in a way distinctly different from the prophets during the monarchy. Furthermore, the Israelite Covenant Moses mediated is much different in form and structure than the Davidic Covenant.

[7] Peter J. Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 41-45.

A second characteristic of prophetic prose is the function of repetition. This means that the prophets intentionally use and reuse words to paint a word picture. Gentry writes that the normal pattern in Hebrew literature is to consider topics in a recursive or progressively repetitive manner.[8] This attribute of prophetic speech is true across both poetic and prosaic forms, and therefore must be given special attention when interpreting 2 Samuel 7. Just as the Hebrew word "house" becomes a figure of speech through the prophets use of it, the repetitive use of the term causes its meaning to undergo a slight transformation.

Third, and finally, there is the issue of describing the future based on the prophecy. Merkle and Bandy have summarized the problem well by stating that there are two different hermeneutical approaches when it comes to predictive prophecy. One is that the literal reading is primary while the symbolic reading is secondary, and the other is that the symbolic reading is primary while the literal meaning is secondary.[9]

This can quickly become confusing as individuals attempt to pit a literal meaning against a symbolic one. However, there is reason to contend that interpreting prophecy literally is to interpret it symbolically. Greg Beale argues that the symbolic nature of prophecy is central in interpreting it. In his commentary on Revelation, Beale argues that the background of the Old Testament should be the primary guide in interpreting Revelation as a literary whole. Since the genre of Revelation is prophetic apocalyptic literature, the way one should interpret the genre is symbolically. Beale's argument for the symbolic interpretation of Revelation is grounded in his understanding

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[8] Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets*, 41.

[9] Alan Bandy and Benjamin Merkle, *Understanding Prophecy: A Biblical Theological Approach* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015), 57. These two perspectives delineate between the hermeneutical methods of covenant theologians and dispensationalists. Dispensationalists often read predictive prophecy literally with a secondary interpretation being symbolic while covenant theology would tend to employ a symbolic reading as primary with the secondary application being literal. This is a vast oversimplification as prophetic speech is more complex.

of the function of prophecy in the Old Testament, which is primarily symbolic.[10] A literal reading of prophecy will cause one to interpret it symbolically because that was the author's intention all along.

Given the nature of prophecy as a distinct form of speech that is foretelling the works of God, it seems wisest in most cases to give priority to a symbolic reading, as symbolism is a major part of prophecy on the whole. A prophetic speech is different from a recorded decree from a King because the decree does not deal in imagery and symbolism. While there are some prophecies that are straightforward (Jonah 3:4), this appears to be the exception in prophetic speech, not the rule.

Biblical scholars could spend great effort to attempt to delineate between these two approaches to interpreting the future described by prophecy. However, as Gentry notes, "The debate between literal interpretation and spiritual interpretation is entirely bogus."[11] The way forward seems to be employing the guidelines of genre to rightly interpret the prophetic text. Genre allows importance to be given the historical dimension of prophecy, but also allows for the interpretation of the historical reality as a beacon pointing to something greater. When one understands prophecy according to its appropriate genre one can interpret prophecy appropriately. In the case of 2 Samuel 7, this means interpreting persons, events, and institutions typologically.

This is essential to the argument at hand for 2 Samuel 7 and the Davidic Covenant. What is being described in Nathan's prophetic speech is actually a typological construction that finds its fulfillment in Jesus' person and work and His institutions. This is a function unique to the prophetic speech of the Old Testament and is essential for the Christian to understand. Typology is unique to Scripture because of the canonical unity of the Bible. Therefore, typological interpretation is really a result of the revelation of

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[10] G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1999), 50-54.

[11] Gentry, *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets*, 124.

Scripture and does not exist merely as a hermeneutical category.[12] As a New Testament believer, it is plain that the Law and the Prophets bear witness to Jesus, as attested to in Luke 24. Understanding these dimensions of prophecy will help the reader understand the meaning of the text that places Jesus as the way to a right interpretation of that text.

The Structure of Samuel

Though the Davidic Covenant is the target of this discussion, it is important to understand the canonical context in which this covenant occurs. The structure of the books of Samuel are organized and arranged in such a way that the Davidic Covenant appears as the climax of the story. There are several reasons to understand this to be the case.

First, Samuel was originally intended to be one piece of literature in the Hebrew Bible. The 55 chapters of text have been subdivided in our English translations. This is significant because there are clues that aid in interpreting 2 Samuel 7 that are intended to be remembered from 1 Samuel. The two books are meant to be read together, and not separate. A logical separation of the material between Samuel is likely because of the death of Saul, the first king, in 1 Samuel 31.[13] The intention of the author is not that attention would be drawn to Samuel, or even to the first king in Israel. Rather, the importance of the book stretches beyond its organization in our English Bibles.

Second, the introduction of the office of a prophet is integral to the narrative of Samuel. Though the book functions as a historical narrative, the prophetic sections of the

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[12] Ardel Caneday, "Biblical Types," in *God's Glory Revealed in Christ: Essays in Honor of Tom Schreiner*, ed. Denny Burk, James Hamilton, and Brian Vickers (Nashville: B & H, 2019), 141. Caneday makes this point to help readers understand what is at stake when speaking of typological constructions. If typology is everywhere, then it is nowhere. However, if typology is tightly controlled by the revelation of Scripture, then it is essential to interpret it correctly because it is a part of God's final revelation to His people. To misunderstand typology is to misinterpret Scripture. The goal is to identify types and interpret them, not to invent them.

[13] Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel,* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 10, 2nd ed. (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), xxv.

book warrant significant attention. The primary prophet of the book is the prophet Samuel but the prophet Nathan and even Samuel's own mother play significant roles in the prophetic structure of the book. Through seeing the newness of the office of the prophet, one can understand the significance of Davidic Covenant as prophetic speech. VanGemeren notes that the office of the prophet is essential in the monarchy of Israel. He writes, "Court prophets were God-directed advisers to and critics of the king."[14] The office of prophet is directly tied to the monarchy.

Third and finally, the newness of the monarchy in Israel bears an outsized influence upon the structure of the books. The goal of Samuel from a literary standpoint seems to be the introduction and installation of a monarchy in Israel, but the monarchy maintains a questionable stereotype throughout a portion of the book.[15] Though the monarchy is blessed by God through Samuel the prophet, the author of Samuel records the installation of Saul as the King as a rejection of His rule over Israel (1 Sam 8:7). At the same time, the book records a favorable view of the monarchy in both the introductory song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:9-10), and concludes with a picture of peace and prosperity gained by David's reign (2 Sam 23:2-5). The key to understanding the role the monarchy plays in Israel's history is undoubtedly the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7, but without understanding the mixed opinion of the monarchy alluded to in Samuel, there is no interpretive aid to this climactic prophecy. Alexander writes, "There is therefore a dramatic gap between the historical embodiment of kingship in Israel and God's ideal for a king, first expressed in Deuteronomy 17 and related again in Samuel."[16]

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[14] Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 47.

[15] Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 8 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 17-20.

[16] Rutherford, *God's Kingdom through His Priest King*, 76.

These features help us govern the interpretation of the message of Samuel. Though these features are not exhaustive of the literary genre, they paint a broad picture that is helpful to interpreting the message of the book. David Tsumura writes, "The message of the literary structure of Samuel is how Yahweh, the Lord of history, through the human institution of monarchy guides his covenant people providentially in various aspects of life by his gracious and sovereign hands."[17]

There is no clear consensus among scholars how Samuel should be structured on the whole, but there is a clear consensus that the structure of the book is an integral part of its interpretation.[18] Alexander's structuring of the book around 2 Samuel 7 is the most helpful given the discussion about the centrality of the Davidic Covenant.[19] Though there is complexity and beauty in the many suggested variations of the book's structure, it is unlikely that a satisfactory consensus will be agreed upon unanimously. Rather, what is of importance to the discussion of the Davidic Covenant is that the covenant is the climax of Samuel, which leads other interpretive aspects to point towards this prophetic word, rather than suggesting another focal point.

Since it will be maintained throughout this discussion that 2 Samuel 7 is the narrative climax of the books of Samuel, it is instructive to note the texts in Samuel that most clearly influence the interpretation of 2 Samuel 7. Below, it will be the intention of this analysis to provide the appropriate comments necessary to interpret 2 Samuel 7 according to the structural pattern of the books and the literary features that will help exegete the passage appropriately.

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[17] David Toshio Tsumura, *The Second Book of Samuel*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 15.

[18] Peter J. Leithart, *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003), 30-31; Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 49-52; Klein, *1 Samuel*, ix-x; Tsumura, *The Second Book of Samuel*, 14-16.

[19] Rutherford, *God's Kingdom through His Priest King*, 76.

The Structure of Samuel and the
Development of Monarchy

Since prophecy demonstrates a unique function in the narrative of Samuel, it is instructive to consider how the prophecies of the book hold the narrative structure together. If the Davidic covenant is truly the climax of the narrative, then it will be instructive to see how the various prophetic words prior to 2 Samuel 7 aid in interpreting the promise accurately. Given the unique functions and attributes of biblical prophecy already discussed, the examination of the Davidic covenant considering the prophetic words of Samuel's narrative will give interpretive clarity to the covenant. It is this prophetic sequence that gives anticipation of the true King of Yahweh who will rule His people in justice and righteousness.

Hannah's Prayer and Prophecy

Hannah's prayer for a son sets the stage for the books of Samuel. Hannah's song, canonically, comes after the horrors of the book of Judges. It is instructive that the Lord uses a woman to announce the prophecy of a King that will arise to judge the people of God in righteousness. This prophecy has echoes of the promise in Eden (Gen 3:15) as a son is promised who will rule with strength and have his horn anointed (1 Sam 2:1,10).

To understand the importance of this song, one must note the prophetic role of Hannah.[20] Hannah's song serves as an *inclusio* for Samuel overall as David's song in 2 Samuel 23 develops the same themes as Hannah's prayer.[21] This is instructive for the reader as the unique nature of prophetic speech is seen on full display and carried out throughout the narrative of Samuel. Though Hannah plays a small role in the narrative overall, her prayer is heard by Yahweh and is like a summary of the period of the Kings.

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[20] Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 63. There is a unique nature to the function of Hannah as a prophet, but to deny her prayer as a prophetic word is to misconstrue the authenticity of the text and the interpretation of the book on the whole.

[21] Ronald F. Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, in vol. 3 of *Expositors' Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 55-57.

The Lord will exalt the horn of a ruler to establish His rule among the people.

The series of three bicola in verses 4-5 demonstrate a reversal of the ways the kingdoms of men are often thought to triumph.[22] These word pictures demonstrate a point that it is not the strength of men that necessitates the success of a kingdom, but the purposes of the Lord. Seeing that this prayer is prayed at a time when the people of Israel desire to be like other nations, this is a fantastic proposition. It is not the strength of Israel's army that will provide victory for them, but the strength of the Lord through his servant, the King (1 Sam. 2:10).

Significantly, the repetition and development of the horn of Hannah and the King serves as an *inclusio* for Hannah's prophecy. It is the Lord who has exalted Hannah's horn (2:2) and it is the Lord who will raise the horn of a king who will rule in Yahweh's strength (2:10). The message is that the Lord exalts people in His strength so that the name of the Lord may be exalted. Dempster writes, "There will be a new world order (2:8b), based not on human strength (2:9), but on divine power. Yahweh will impart that power to his Messiah to rule the world and thereby raise *the Messiah's horn* over his enemies."[23]

As demonstrated above, the unique features of Hannah's prayer are threefold. First, Hannah serves in a prophetic function in a period where the office of a prophet is only recognizable based upon the deuteronomic stipulations. There have been few true prophets in the Old Testament to this point. Second, the prophecy serves as a foretelling of the reversal of the abusive power that has plagued God's people during the time of the judges. Third, the prophecy announces the uniqueness of the Lord raising a "horn" in order to strengthen and establish his people. Dempster comments on the importance of this song for understanding the narrative of the Old Testament. He writes, "This song

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[22] Klein, *1 Samuel*, 16.

[23] Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003), 136.

functions as a hermeneutical bridge for previous and subsequent narrative. It has significance not only for its local context but also for the larger context of the book, and for the previous and succeeding books."[24] Establishing the importance of Hannah's song aids in rightly interpreting the Davidic Covenant appropriately. It reframes the conversation about the line of David and the horn of David away from a spatial, geographical location and towards a particular individual who the Lord will exalt.

Prophecy against Eli

The conclusion of 1 Samuel 2 contains another prophetic word, though this word is primarily a word of judgment. Just as we have a little biographical introduction to Hannah's situation in 1 Samuel 1, the writer of Samuel gives us just enough biographical information about Eli in verses 12-26 to understand the importance of the prophecy against Eli in 1 Samuel 2:27-36.

The prophecy against Eli is important because of the wickedness of the Eli's offspring. The worthlessness of Eli's sons is demonstrated by the fact that they steal from the Lord (v17), sleep with women at the entrance of the tabernacle (v22), and disobey the voice of their father (v25).

Suddenly, a man gives a prophetic word to the priest concerning his family (v27). The man is not given a name, which is seen occasionally in the Old Testament when the man is an angel sent from God, though most often it refers to a prophet.[25] This man prophesies over Samuel as a foreshadowing of the office Samuel will assume over against the sons of Eli. Samuel will hold an office that Eli's sons should rightfully hold. Similarly, David will become King in Israel though he is not from Saul's line. The office of prophet and the promise of King are intertwined in this way.

The prophecy against Eli serves as a direct fulfillment of Hannah's prophetic

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[24] Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 135.

[25] Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, 62-63

word. The priests in the house of God have become fat and wealthy by scorning the sacrifices intended for the Lord. The text demonstrates that Eli himself is guilty before God, as he has honored his own sons more than he has honored Yahweh.[26] In Hannah's song, the Lord promised that a messiah would come whose horn would be exalted. In the prophecy against Eli and his sons, there is a direct reversal. Eli and his offspring will not be exalted but cut down and removed from the service of the Lord altogether. In fact, there will be no old man in Eli's house (v31).

Contrasting this prophetic judgment, the man of God also gives a prophetic promise. The Lord will raise up for himself a faithful priest who will serve the Lord faithfully for all of his days (v35). The most interesting part of this prophecy is that some of the language is identical to that in 2 Samuel 7. Just as the Lord promises to build a house for a David, the Lord also promises that there will be a priestly house that will be established forever. Commentators identify the recipient of this promise as Zadok, who serves as a priest during David's reign.[27] However, this is a reading of the text that does not consider the prophetic features of the oracle. A straightforward reading of the narrative may produce Zadok as the candidate of the one who ministers before the Lord forever, but this reading does not consider the shape of the narrative as dictated by its prophetic contexts.

Rutherford has contended that the one in mind in this prophecy against Eli is not Zadok or a Levitical descendant, but David himself. His argument rests on the fact that the phrase rendered "forever" in verse 35 is better understood as "all of his days," meaning that the anointed of God will serve as a priest before God for all his life.[28] This is an interesting concept, as this would liken the promised Messiah to be one who serves

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[26] Klein, *1 Samuel*, 27.

[27] Klein, *1 Samuel*, 27; Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 67; Youngblood. *2 Samuel,* 64.

[28] Rutherford, *God's Kingdom through His Priest-King*, 34.

as both a priest and a king. This prophecy against Eli holds a curse for him and his line, but a blessing for the line of the Messiah. In this way, the book of Samuel anticipates a priest-king who will faithfully serve the Lord forever. Reading the narrative with this shape, the promised priest-king of Samuel is something like Melchizedek of Genesis 14.

Space does not allow for the treatment of all the prophetic speech of Samuel. Regardless, examining these preliminary prophecies helps one understand the significance of Nathan's prophecy concerning David and his house. The prayer of Hannah and the prophecy against Eli allow the narrative be shaped in a way that causes the readers to look for fulfillment. To summarize, the expectations of Saul's monarchy fall desperately short of the description in both prophecies. He is the tall man rather than the lowly man that will be exalted.[29] Furthermore, he is a poor shepherd, unable to keep control of his own father's donkeys (1 Sam 9) and relying on others to find the animals for him. This is indicative of Saul's reign as king, especially when contrasted against David, the faithful shepherd. This is significant when one reads Hannah's prayer as a prophetic projection of the rest of the book. Though Saul is the people's king, he does not fit the description of the anointed one who will have an everlasting dynasty.

The dynasty of Saul is broken when David is anointed as King. Though Saul is still the reigning monarch after David's anointing, there is a time limit to his dynasty that cannot be overturned. The monarchy of David reaches its climax in 2 Samuel 6 where the king brings the ark of God back to dwell with His people.

This is an interesting scenario, for David is noted to be wearing a linen ephod. This is the same type of garment that Samuel's mother brought for Samuel to wear each year (1 Sam 2:18). Why would the king wear a priestly garment? And why was the King the one to bring the Ark back to its rightful place? It seems the king is doing priestly work during his reign, hinting at the fact that the king is not merely a king, but also a

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[29] Rutherford, *God's Kingdom through His Priest-King*, 36.

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priest.[30]

One must not support the assumption that David is a true priest to agree that it is strange for a king to partake in priestly duties like bringing the Ark to its rightful place and sacrificing before the Lord as David does in 2 Samuel 6. This is what Rutherford calls a prophetic expectation.[31] The prophets of Samuel have told us that there is coming one who will be raised from the lowly place to a high place to rule over God's people and that there will be a priest who will serve God's anointed forever and ever. David begins to be the realization of this prophetic expectation until 2 Samuel 7, where the Lord gives a different prophetic word through Nathan the prophet.

The Covenant with David

Though the word covenant is missing from this text, Scripture itself attests that the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7 constitutes a Davidic covenant (2 Sam 23:5; Is. 55:3; Ps. 89:35; 132:12.)[32] This speech from Nathan the prophet involves the longest speech from God since Sinai, which should draw the reader to understand its significance.[33] Furthermore, this speech slows the narrative down to a crawl in comparison to previous chapters. The significance of the speech cannot be understated, which is why 2 Samuel 7 functions as the climax of this narrative selection.

The key term used in the Davidic covenant is the word house. This word bears a range of meaning, including things such as a physical home, a temple, or a place where

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[30] Youngblood disagrees with this sentiment. Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, 370. Tsumura does not note any significant interest in the priestly garment. Tsumura, *The Second Book of Samuel*, 118. Baldwin notes that the reason David was allowed to wear the priestly garment was because he was the King of the "kingdom of priests" that was Israel, alluding back to the covenant at Sinai. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 224.

[31] Rutherford, *God's Kingdom through His Priest-King*, 105.

[32] Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 143.

[33] Leithart, *A Son to Me*, 216.

a family lives.[34] The promise of Yahweh comes to the King of Israel proclaiming that there is a unique status that his line will hold in the purposes and plans of God. However, as is common with prophecy, the ambiguity of the text leaves the reader to question how exactly the promises will come to fruition.

The structure of 2 Samuel 7:1-17 is composed of three main parts with an introduction. Verses 1-3 serve as the introductory statement.[35] Verses 5-7 contain an oracle rejecting David's desire to build a house, verses 8-11a contain a concise summary of promises to occur during David's life and verses 11b-17 contain promises to be fulfilled after his death. Gentry notes that the promises to be fulfilled in David's life are threefold: a great name, a firm place for Israel, and rest from his enemies. After his death, there is another a threefold promise. God will grant to David an eternal house, a kingdom, and a throne.[36]

The House of Yahweh (Second Samuel 7:1-7)

The exchange between David and Yahweh begins with the desire to build for Yahweh a house that befits his majesty. The contrast between David and Yahweh is stark. David has been brought from nothing into a beautiful palace, while Yahweh does not have a home suitable for his majesty. The desire to build a house for Yahweh is birthed out of a desire to worship the Lord for all He has done for His people.

The scene is strange because David asks Nathan the prophet if he could build a house for Yahweh, to which Nathan responds affirmatively (v3). However, before the

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[34] Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew-English Lexicon* (repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 1082.

[35] A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 11 (Waco, TX: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 112. Anderson notes the poetic content of parallelism in the promise itself, which is significant given the prophetic origin of the promise.

[36] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 479.

night is over, Nathan returns to tell David a different course of action is desired by Yahweh (v4). The confusion here can be resolved in a few ways.

First, the fact that the victorious king's good intentions were not finally approved by the Lord demonstrates to the reader who was really in charge in David's monarchy. The defeat of the Philistines and the prosperity of David were simply effects of God's word coming to pass. Therefore, the redirecting of David's intentions for God's temple demonstrates a desire for the king to be ruled over by Yahweh, not the other way around. If a house is to be built by the Lord as a symbol of his presence among His people, he will be the one to build it.[37]

Second, this exchange differentiates the monarchy of Israel from the monarchy of the surrounding nations. The Canaanites would have seen the building of a temple to their deity as the duty of the king, given that the king had been given victory by God.[38] Going about building the temple in this way highlights the distinction between the Canaanite kings and the king of Israel. There is a distinction amongst even the process of constructing a place for the people to worship the Lord.

Significant in this narrative is the fact that Yahweh does not seem to be too concerned about having a house. Rather, the Lord seems to be concerned with moving about with a people. The physical location takes the backseat in this oracle as the desire to be present among His people is placed in the forefront of Yahweh's response to David (2 Sam 7:4-7).

Baldwin notes that the moveable tent would have been a more powerful symbol of Yahweh's dwelling amongst His people than a permanent temple, for wherever the people wandered the presence of the Lord was with them in the

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[37] Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, 382.

[38] Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 228. Baldwin cites F. M. Cross stating that the fact David had not built a temple testifies to his acceptance of a limited kingship, unlike Canaanite concepts of kingship.

tabernacle.[39] The absence of a desire to build a permanent dwelling for the Lord causes what follows to be a unique expression of the purposes of God in the lives of His people. Tsumura notes that the Lord is content to dwell in a tent with His people while the god Baal covets a house, one bigger and better than those of the other gods.[40]

The interesting thing to note in this introduction to the Davidic promise in verses 8-17 is that the word house begins to be used with regularity and will be used seven times in this discourse.[41] Understanding this text as prophetic speech, the use and reuse of the word causes the reader to understand the word as a symbolically loaded term, taking shape and meaning from the intended repetition. The way to rightly understand the loaded term is to examine how Nathan uses it in the remainder of his prophecy.

The House of David (Second Samuel 7:8-17)

The house of David is intentionally loaded in this prophetic speech to indicate a unique figurative reading. To read this pronouncement in a straightforward manner without considering the prophetic context misses the ultimate point of the passage. Several key points must be denoted to rightly understand how these verses both summarize the former kingship and foreshadow the future kingship in Israel.

The prophet summarizes the kingship of Israel by appealing to the miracle of David's kingship as it were. David was not a king chosen by the people, like Saul, but was a king chosen by the Lord. It was not David's stature that made him a fitting candidate, but the Lord's gracious selection of David independent of his kingly qualities. Verse 8 captures this idea succinctly. David is a different kind of King than Saul. Youngblood compares David's office as king to his office as a shepherd. He notes that

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[39] Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 229.

[40] Tsumura, *The Second Book of Samuel,* 130.

[41] Leithart, *A Son to Me*, 220.

David is a useful king to Yahweh because David was first a faithful shepherd.[42] Contrasted with Saul's inability as a shepherd for his Father's donkeys and as his failure as a king, we see the qualitative difference between the two monarchs.

The significance of Yahweh's choosing of David is heightened by an appeal to the Abrahamic Covenant in verses 9-11a. Youngblood notes three elements. David will have a great name, Israel will have a place provided for them, and the people will have rest from their enemies.[43] The echo of the Abrahamic covenant in the Davidic covenant is significant because the story of Israel is now no longer traced solely through Abraham's line, but through David's line as well.

Of interest to the prophetic nature of the speech is that it is not merely a place that is promised to David but also a people.[44] So as David promises to build a house for the Lord, meaning a temple, the promise that Yahweh will build a house for David is tied closely to a people or a dynasty. Rather than separating these ideas into two distinct and separate ideas, there is merit to interpret both the people and the dynasty as one thing that God will do. Just as the prophecies of a new priest and a new king in the opening chapters of the book are seen fulfilled in the kingship of David, both the promises of temple and dynasty are fulfilled in Christ.

This is further understood by the continued use of the word house to describe Yahweh's covenant with David. The prophet uses the word in verse 11, 13, and 16. The initial promise in verse 11 is understood to be a house that comes after David is laid to

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[42] Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, 385.

[43] Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, 385.

[44] Anderson notes that there is a significance to the verbs "plant (נטע)," "dwell (שכן)," and "tremble (רגז)." These verbs are used to talk about the people in particular, but an argument could be made to make מָקוֹם the subject or object of all these verbs in v. 10. Anderson follows a typical interpretation, but the ideas of place and the people are closely intertwined in this promise. The people are not much good without a place, and the place is not much good without a people. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 121. Tsumura similarly argues that the place is a way to talk about a space for a people, making the people the primary target of the language. See Tsumura, *The Second Book of Samuel*, 137.

rest. The promise of a son who will be the one to realize the promises is language like that of the Abrahamic covenant. An unborn offspring will be the one who will see these promises realized.[45]

This is significant because when one thinks of the line of Abraham, he does not merely think of Isaac but of all of Israel. As one reads the Davidic Covenant as a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, there is anticipation for a King to rule over a people. The Davidic dynasty is not divorced from the Abrahamic one, but is a fulfillment of it. Youngblood writes, "The trajectory from the Abrahamic covenant through the Davidic Covenant to the new covenant in Christ is strengthened by the repetition of words such as "seed" used in a messianic sense."[46] While the Abrahamic Covenant was corporate in nature leading to the nation of Israel, the Davidic Covenant highlights the importance of the obedience of the singular, the King of Israel.

The next use of the word house bears with it a clear connotation of a place of worship. This promise is realized in a close relationship with the dynastic promise of verse 11. However, even the building of a temple is not divorced from the communal nature of dynastic language. The building of a temple is more like a concession to the people than a command from the Lord. It does not appear that Yahweh really desires a house like other pagan gods, but that He desires to dwell in the midst of His people.

In a sense, Yahweh is using something familiar to the cultural context and reshaping that familiar idea into something different to get his point across.[47] Beale notes that the purpose of temples in ancient Assyria and Egypt was to fill this temple with

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[45] Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, 387.

[46] Youngblood, *2 Samuel*, 387.

[47] Gentry notes an example of this phenomena in the Covenant at Sinai. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 394-95.

images of gods, and that typically kings were viewed as images of a god.[48] Gentry notes that ancient Near Eastern societies viewed their pagan kings as sons of God and that they bear his likeness. The word "image" in Hebrew focuses on the majesty and power of the kind in relation to his subjects as he rules on behalf of the deity.[49] This idea shapes the viewing of the temple in Solomon's day. As Scripture teaches us, it is an offspring of David who will build the temple. However, the importance of the temple is only seen insofar as it is the place where God dwells with His people.[50]

The promise of a temple being built for Yahweh's name is coupled with the importance of the Davidic king being a Son to Yahweh. While the temple is in view in verse 13, of equal importance is the status of sonship that Yahweh grants to the temple builder. To be a son to Yahweh holds special privileges but also requires a special obedience. The son will be disciplined by a loving father when he commits iniquity, but unlike Saul's monarchy, the steadfast love of Yahweh will not depart from the son.

This future promise is important because it highlights that the offspring of David will be both a son of David and a Son of Yahweh. Moreover, in verse 16, it is both the house and the kingdom that will be established forever. The use and reuse of the word house makes it a loaded prophetic term at this point in the narrative. Given the prophetic nature of this speech, the word picture is not merely a house, but both a house and a

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[48] G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 83. Beale's discussion is centered on Adam's being a priest king in the garden of Eden.

[49] Peter J. Gentry, *Biblical Studies* (Peterborough, Canada: H & E, 2020), 1:14. Gentry notes that the discovery of the Tell Fakhariyeh Inscription that dates back to the 9th century BC, denoting substantive support to understanding how ancient Near Eastern societies understood kingship and the language of image. The relationship of kings to deities in the ancient Near East is strikingly similar to the understanding of human beings and their relationship to Yahweh. Therefore, the conversation surrounding the Davidic Covenant is closely identified with the conversation surrounding the Covenant at Creation. Both involve the language of sonship and kingship.

[50] Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 231. Baldwin asserts that the idea that God dwells in heaven and on earth and meets with his people in the temple is a necessary but irreconcilable concept.

kingdom that are in view in this covenant. Therefore, the priority is not just a people or a place, but a people and a place.

Gentry notes that the entire nation of Israel is called Yahweh's son in Exodus 4:22-23.[51] This is significant for the discussion about the dynasty of David because when one thinks of Israel in the historical context of Samuel, he thinks of both a people and a place. Likewise, the promise of the Davidic Covenant echoes the same functions. The goal is for a people and a place to represent the reign of Yahweh among the whole world. Just as this was the goal and design in Eden (Gen 1:28), this goal will now be realized through the work of a Davidic offspring who establishes a people and a place for God's rule to be fully realized.

The Lineage of David

As O. Palmer Robertson notes, one of the most interesting aspects of the Davidic covenant is the relationship between the concepts of dynasty and dwelling-place.[52] What one sees prophesied in the Old Testament comes to light as the New Testament unfolds. Both the dynasty of David and the dwelling place of God become one entity in the person of Jesus Christ. This is one reason Matthew begins his gospel by saying Jesus is the son of David and the son of Abraham (Matt 1:1). At the same time, John begins his gospel by speaking of Jesus as the one who dwells among his people like the Spirit of God dwelt in the temple (John 1:14).

When one sees the ideas of the house of David and the house of God from a prophetic perspective, the search for two different fulfillments in Scripture, one for a place and one for a person, is replaced with one. The fulfillment of this promise is Jesus, the anointed one, who is both king and priest before God. The Davidic promise fulfilled in Christ leads one to understand that the dwelling place of God is not a geographical

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[51] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 455.

[52] O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1987), 232.

place but a place where Christ rules and reigns over His people perfectly. Understanding this promise helps one understand that the New Testament describes the fulfillment of the temple as an institution by Jesus's initiation of the church.

CHAPTER 5

CANONICAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

Scripture bears witness to the fact that a majestic temple was built by a Davidic King. Solomon's construction of the temple and the filling of the temple by the Spirit of God is undoubtedly a climactic moment in the Old Testament narrative. Since the Garden of Eden and throughout the wanderings of the people of God with the tabernacle, there has been a longing for God to dwell with his people. It seems that the construction of this temple in Jerusalem is the culmination of such a purpose.

It is important to understand how the other canonical writers understood this covenant to be fulfilled. It is essential to survey several pivotal texts in both the Old Testament in their context, these texts being interpreted by New Testament authors, and New Testament texts themselves in order to see the canonical development of the Davidic Covenant. Upon doing so, the typological function of the temple in the New Testament will be clearly demonstrated as the fulfillment of God's promise to David and constituted by the Church.

Psalm 2

Psalm 2 is a psalm written to recount the promises that the Lord has made to David. The psalmist, who is unidentified in this particular psalm, reflects upon the importance of God's covenant with David as the means by which God himself will rule over all the nations.

First, the psalmist speaks of the Lord setting His own King in Zion (Ps 2:6), upon the holy hill. This is likely a reference to the fact that David had brought the Ark to Jerusalem prior to 2 Samuel 7. This points forward to the rest Israel will now have from

the surrounding enemies when the Davidic King reigns on the throne. Though the nations rage, the Lord has set his chosen one on the holy hill to rule over his people (2 Sam 7:10).

The second feature worth noting in this Psalm is the language of sonship. Yahweh has told David that he is His son. The psalmist uses the language of begetting. This language of begetting and sonship is closely tied to an understanding of those who rule as God's representatives rule as his sons.[1] Certainly, this is applicable to Christ, but even in the Old Testament it would have been accurate to speak of David himself and his offspring to be "sons of God." Scott Hahn notes that there is a significance in the drama between a father and a son as a covenantal relationship.[2] David is a son of God who rules in the place of God (Zion).

The third feature of this Psalm that aids in interpreting the Davidic Covenant is the language of David's inheritance. The inheritance that the Lord is giving to the Davidic king is not simply the Jews, but all the nations (Ps. 2:8). In this context, one must remember that 2 Samuel 7:19 promises that the Davidic king will teach all mankind the instruction of God. The way that this Davidic king will acquire the nations as a possession is through conquering the kings of the earth. Moreover, the he only way to avoid being crushed by the wrath of the Davidic king is by seeking refuge in Him (Ps 2:12).

Psalm 2 expands on the promises to David in the Davidic Covenant. His heir will reign as the Son of God in the place of God over the people of God, which will one day include all of the nations as his heritage (*naḥălâ*). It is significant to note that the Hebrew word *naḥălâ* is often used of property as inheritance in the Old Testament.[3] This

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[1] Peter J. Gentry, *Biblical Studies* (Peterborough, Canada: H & E, 2020), 120-21.

[2] Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 198.

[3] Francis Brown, Samuel Driver, and Charles Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1977), 635.

word is used to describe a place but here is used to describe a people. Moreover, this people is not of Jewish descent but is comprised of all the nations. While the context of Psalm 2 describes the nations as being judged for their offense against Yahweh, in light of the Davidic covenant this language bears unique meaning.

The New Testament invokes the language of Psalm 2 in Acts 13:33. Paul and Barnabas refer to the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant by referencing this Psalm.[4] There is some discussion about what the begetting language refers to in this text but the idea of Sonship is clearly in view. Jesus is the Son of God and also the Son of David. The language is about Kingship.

Interesting to note is what happens after Paul's appeal to Psalm 2 in Acts 13. The scenario begins by Paul appealing to King David to convince a Jewish audience about Jesus' divinity. In verse 48, Luke notes that the Gentiles heard the word, believed in Jesus, and received eternal life. It is no coincidence that an appeal to David in Psalm 2 provoked a fulfillment of the promise made to David, fulfilled through Christ, that the Gentiles would be made his inheritance and his possession. Gentry notes that, "A covenant that makes the Davidic king son of God is the instrument of bringing Yahweh's Torah to all the nations."[5] Again, one must note the connection between the Apostle's teaching and 2 Samuel 7:19.

Psalm 2 is a clear depiction of David as a type of Christ. Though the author of Psalm 2 is unknown, the Davidic Covenant is clearly in view as referring to a davidic king, whether David himself or one of his descendants. The typological construction between the two texts is clearly seen by an appeal the king under the Davidic Covenant

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[4] Howard Marshall, "Acts," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker; Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2007), 585. Marshall notes that it is difficult to locate precisely which Psalm is referenced in this speech. Regardless of the fact that there is a precise location given in some textual variants (Acts 13:33 says, "it is written in the second psalm"), Marshall notes that there is definitely an appeal to the Davidic Covenant by reference to the Psalm.

[5] Peter Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 23, no. 2 (2019): 111.

and Christ as the true and literal fulfillment of the promises to David as he establishes himself as the king of a New Covenant, fulfilling the promises made to David. The typological structure brings clarity to the literal fulfillment seen in Jesus Christ. The Davidic Covenant leads one to expect a future Davidic Servant King who will bring about an everlasting covenant (Isa 53-54).[6] Christ is the Davidic King who is the true Son of God. By nature of his being Son of God, he is ruling as God's only Son over God's people, which includes both Jews and Gentiles. The interpretation of the Apostles in Acts gives certain clarity to this distinction. Understanding Psalm 2 as it directly correlates to the Davidic Covenant aids in the explanation of the Psalm as it relates to the New Covenant.[7]

Psalm 110

Another key text in understanding the Davidic Covenant is Psalm 110. This Psalm is divided into two occurrences of Yahweh's speech. In verse 1, Yahweh speaks to establish that the enemies in view will be vanquished by Yahweh's might. This is a clear allusion to the rest promised to David in 2 Samuel 7:11. In verse 4 of Psalm 110, the Lord swears that the Davidic King will be a priest like Melchizedek. Gentry notes that Psalm 110:1-3 serves as an extrapolation of both 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 2.[8]

What this means is this Psalm can only be rightly understood, interpreted, and applied by reading it alongside the covenantal context of 2 Samuel 7. The two sections of this Psalm must be examined in turn.

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[6] Peter Gentry, "Rethinking the 'Sure Mercies of David' in Isaiah 53," *Westminster Journal of Theology* 69 (2007): 279.

[7] William S. Plumer, *Psalms: A Critical and Expository Commentary with Doctrinal and Practical Remarks* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 37-52. Plumer discourages the use of typology in his remarks on Ps 2 stating, "It is not well to needlessly make types. So it is best not to say that there is a type here."

[8] Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique," 111. It is significant to note that the only other time Melchizedek is referred to in the Old Testament is in Gen 14. Hebrews bears the only other allusion.

In verses 1-3 of Psalm 110, Yahweh speaks to one who is the psalmist's lord (presumably a king in Israel) and instructs this individual to wait for Yahweh to vanquish his enemies (v1). In doing so, Yahweh will send forth from Zion the Davidic rule over all the earth (v2). The result of this rule is that people will come and offer themselves before this Davidic king. The text says that the people who come to worship this King will be clothed in holy garments (v3).[9] There is discrepancy about the interpretation of the last clause in verse 3, as the Hebrew is difficult. Sam Emadi makes a case that the last clause of verse three should be translated, "Go forth! I have begotten you as the dew."[10] This interpretation causes a reader to imagine that those who serve the Davidic king will be prepared, strong, and numerous.[11] Those who come to truly worship God because of the Davidic Messiah's work will be like a priestly army serving before his throne.

Verses 4-7 expound upon verses 1-3. In verse 4, the Lord promises to bring about a priest who is after the order of Melchizedek (v4). This priesthood will also be eternal. Furthermore, this priest will work to establish a kingdom by defeating the nations (v5) and will execute judgment by ruling like a king over all the nations (v6).

To put this all together, in Psalm 110 the psalmist is drawing attention to a Davidic king, who functions like a priest-king, by referring to the covenant that God made with David. In that covenant, Yahweh promised to give to David an eternal throne where he would rule over a people in God's place. All of David's enemies would be

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[9] The Hebrew of verse 3 is "concise and obscure," as Plumer puts it. The garments worn by the people portray a kingly or regal kind of garment. Perhaps it is helpful to think of attire worn at a king's coronation. See Plumer, *Psalms*, 974-75.

[10] Matthew Emadi, "You Are Priest Forever: Psalm 110 and the Melchizedekian Priesthood of Christ," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 23, no. 1 (2019): 61. Emadi notes that the language of begetting in Ps 110 is important to establish the idea of a king-priest that is prominent throughout the Old Testament and highlighted in the Davidic Covenant. This begetting language helps to tie together the ideas of priest and king but does not give much help when considering why the Davidic King would beget his army of priests and what significance that holds seems to be more conjecture than exegesis. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the development of this theme throughout the psalm.

[11] Willem A. Vangemeren, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 815.

crushed, and God's people would find rest. Through this Davidic king, the Lord will reign over the whole world.

Though there is no reference to the man outside of Genesis 14 and Psalm 110, there is a constant reference to Melchizedek as a key to understanding Christ's priestly office by the author of Hebrews. In fact, the author of Hebrew's mentioning of Melchizedek contributes helpfully to our understanding of David, Jesus, and the nature of the Davidic Covenant.

Melchizedek is a royal priest whose presence in Genesis is surrounded by covenant heads. Matthew Emadi again notes that "the point is that Melchizedek's royal priesthood finds its meaning and purpose in a story that, until Genesis, has been centered on Adam and Noah, two major covenantal figures and fathers of humanity. Several literary and thematic observations tie Melchizedek's royal priesthood to Adam and Noah."[12] Once we see the tie between Melchizedek, Adam, and Noah, the fact that Melchizedek appears in Genesis 14 is a foreshadowing of the covenant between God and Abraham in Genesis 15.[13] However, now this Melchizedekian priesthood is applied to Jesus Christ in Hebrews by reference to the covenant with David. This is because David functions as a Melchizedekian priest-king. He was not a priest after Levi, but he served the priestly function of the Levites by returning the Ark of the Covenant in 2 Samuel 6 and by his wearing of a linen ephod. David was a Melchizedekian priest-king, but he was not the one who would ultimately rule over God's people in God's place.

Hebrews tells us that it is a son of David who will fulfill the promise of an eternal house, a kingdom, and a throne. Since David is a Melchizedekian priest, the Son of David must also be such a priest. Therefore, the author of Hebrews refers to the Melchizedekian priesthood frequently. Moreover, the fact that the Lord swears that the

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[12] Emadi, "You Are Priest Forever," 63-64.

[13] Emadi goes on to note that the development of the Abrahamic Covenant is the broader context in which the Melchizedek episode appears. Emadi, "You Are Priest Forever," 67.

Son of David will be a Melchizedekian priest *forever* (Ps 110:4) contributes to the discussion concerning the conditionality of the covenant with David.[14] This is a typological construction clearly intended by the clear revelation of Scripture. Hebrews describes the typological pattern of Melchizedek to understand who Jesus Christ will be and what he will do in establishing the New Covenant. Jesus is the literal fulfillment of the promises to David. The typology of the Melchizekedian priesthood helps readers of the New Testament see how his high priestly work is better than the priests of the Old Testament.

Gentry notes that the biblical authors base their thinking on the divine revelation of the Davidic Covenant and that later texts pick up earlier texts in order to become a canonical text.[15] Furthermore, because God's character is consistent and He controls history, certain events, people, places and institutions are predictive and prophetic of future events and people.[16] The author of Hebrews reveals something about the nature of Jesus's priestly ministry by making the reader think back to the reality of Melchizedek's priestly ministry. These offices can be traced directly through the Davidic Covenant and therefore clearly demonstrates how Jesus is a fulfillment of the promises God made to David in 2 Samuel 7.

Amos 9

A final Old Testament text that develops the typological functions of the Davidic Covenant is Amos 9. Amos 9 begins with a call to strike the capitals of the temple so that the temple falls.[17] The destruction of the temple is really a precursor for

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[14] George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker; Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2007), 960-67.

[15] Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique," 118.

[16] Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique," 118.

[17] There is some discussion as to whether the temple in view here is Solomon's temple in Jerusalem or another temple in Bethel. One could imagine the temple in Israel since Amos' prophecy is to

what will happen to the whole nation of Israel. The temple being destroyed is a clear indicator of Yahweh's judgment on this sinful people.

As Amos develops this theme, it seems clear to identify the temple with the kingdom. As the temple is destroyed in verse 1, the kingdom is also destroyed in verse 8. There is a parallelism present in this passage for which the promise of a restored Davidic house is the focus.[18] In order for the fallen hut to be restored, the sinful people of Israel must be dealt with. They must no longer worship a false deity but be devoted to the one true God.

Amos 9 also demonstrates the importance of understanding the temple worship with the identity of Israel. What it meant for Israel to be Israel is to worship the Lord according to their law at the temple. To profane the temple was to break the covenant that Israel had made with Moses.[19] Because of this covenant breaking, the Lord is going to judge Israel. Amos 9:9 says that the Lord will shake Israel like one shakes a sieve, likely to strain out those who are evil and preserve a true remnant.[20]

All of these factors are integral to understanding the way James interprets this passage in Acts 15. James calls to the Jerusalem council to accept the Gentiles into the church by appealing to the Davidic Covenant.[21] Beale notes that the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant in Acts 15 is tied to the understanding of Jesus as the true temple because of the resurrection. This understanding makes sense of the Davidic Covenant in

Bethel. Given the relationship to the Davidic Covenant, it makes sense to interpret the temple in view in v. 1 as the temple in Jerusalem. However, the context makes either reading possible. See Thomas E. McComiskey, *Amos*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 414-15.

[18] Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 448.

[19] Greg Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 232.

[20] McComiskey, *Amos*, 417.

[21] Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 233-34.

that the temple God was building for David was not built with human hands, but built by God himself.[22]

Furthermore, the appeal to Christ's deity points not only to a new temple for the people of God but to a new people of God! The Davidic Covenant has a scope that is directed towards the nations, not merely Israel. Because Jesus is the promised Davidic King, there is no need for a new temple. The new temple is Jesus himself. This revelation also involves the folding in of Gentiles from every tribe tongue and nation. Acts 15 is where the entry of the Gentile people into the Kingdom of God becomes explicit.[23]

Significant to note is that when the Davidic Covenant is mentioned or alluded to in the Old Testament, it has very little to do with the temple that seemed to be the prominent theme in the immediate context of 2 Samuel 7. Rather, the focus is on a king (Psalm 2), a priest (Psalm 110), a people (Amos 9), or a combination of a *king-temple* (Dan 9:24). Psalm 2 speaks of a Davidic King who will rule over the nations by making them his heritage. Psalm 110 speaks of a priestly rule of one who is after the order of Melchizedek. Likewise, this ruler will cause his people to come before him wearing holy garments. Finally, Amos 9 tells us that though the temple be destroyed, the Lord will raise up the house of David in order to draw the nations unto himself. Daniel 9:24 speaks of a promise to rebuild a holy city but uses language of anointing to describe a holy place (or thing). What is in view is more complex than just a temple but bears in mind the rule of the King in conjunction with temple language.[24]

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[22] Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 233-34.

[23] Charles K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Shorter Commentary* (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 231-32.

[24] Dan 9:24 speaks of "anointing a most holy place." It is interesting to note that the Hebrew verb *mšh* is used to speak of individuals. The ambiguity leads one to believe that what is being anointed in Daniel is not a place, but a person or a group of people. The vision of a priest-king who will bear away the sins of the people of God is likely the focus of such language.

As the New Testament authors reference these same texts, it becomes readily apparent that the Davidic Covenant is not fulfilled in the way Israel had expected, but through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ rules over the people of God as the king from the lien of David. Through his faithfulness to Yahweh, Jesus establishes a New Covenant and institutes a New Covenant people he calls the church. In this way, the institution of the church becomes a new kind of eschatological temple for the people of God. This will be evident as one examines the New Testament.

Matthew

Matthew's account of Jesus begins with a unique genealogy. Much ink has been spilt making sense of the genealogy of Jesus, but a few points are worth mentioning explicitly as one relates this genealogy to the Davidic Covenant.

First, genealogical constructions are commonplace in the book of Genesis. Blomberg notes that this construction in Matthew is no coincidence but that Matthew is attempting to connect his writing with that of the Old Testament.[25] Therefore, one should read Matthew as an explanation of things alluded to in the Old Testament writings. Particularly, if major covenants are the way in which the Scripture hangs together, then the New Testament should be placed in this covenantal framework.

Second, the primacy of the title "Son of David" throughout Matthew is seen at the very beginning of Matthew's gospel. The identification of Jesus with David demonstrates a fulfillment of the prophecy given to David in 2 Sam. 7. Carson writes, "In Jesus' day Palestine was rife with messianic expectation. Not all of it was coherent, and many Jews expected two different 'Messiahs.' But Matthew's linking of 'Christ' and 'son of David' leaves no doubt of what he is claiming for Jesus."[26]

[25] Craig Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker; Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2007), 2-3.

[26] D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, D. A. Carson, Walter W. Wessel, and Walter L. Liefeld (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 61.

Third, and finally, the moniker "Son of David" is also tightly connected to "Son of Abraham." This is a further explanation that the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant depended upon the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. Therefore, one could say that the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant are partially fulfilled through the Davidic King. It was necessary for a Davidic King to conquer, rule, and reign for the promises made to Abraham to be fulfilled.

In this genealogy, we have a fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ literally fulfills the Davidic Covenant because he is the antitype of King David. Beale writes, "Matthew's point is to make clear that the narrative is the record of the new age, the new creation, launched by the coming, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ."[27] The emphasis on Christ is undisputed, but his work as a Davidic King and the antitype is broadly undefined. As noted earlier, the fact that Jesus is a Davidic King is certainly upheld when one studies the Scripture, but exactly *how* Jesus functions as the Davidic King is often left unstated. It is clear that Matthew portrays Jesus as the fulfillment of the Davidic promise as a Son; therefore, when one reads his gospel this fulfillment should be prominent.

Numerous examples could be demonstrated from Matthew about the Davidic Covenant's fulfillment in Jesus 'ministry, but Matthew 9 holds special prominence. In Matthew 9, Jesus heals a paralytic and forgives his sins. The outrage of the religious leaders is evident because no one is able to forgive sins except God alone. For the Jews, however, access to the temple and forgiveness of sins were tied together. Sins were forgiven at the temple. When Jesus forgives this paralytic's sins, he is demonstrating that he is the new temple. Forgiveness of sins was an act that was reserved to only those who held the priesthood. Therefore, Jesus is operating as a priest, calling himself the Son of

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[27] Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 171.

Man who has authority, and demonstrating there is no need for the Jerusalem temple.[28] Rather, a new and better temple is available in Jesus Christ himself.

Luke–Acts

The revelation of Jesus as a new and better David and his institution of a new and better temple is seen throughout Luke and Acts. Acts 15 is mentioned briefly above as a fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, but Luke presents Jesus as a fulfillment of the promises of the Davidic Covenant and the church as a typological new temple throughout the entirety his work. Space does not allow for a full treatment of the two books, but a treatment of the following texts should suffice.

In Scott Hahn's work, *Kinship by Covenant*, he notes that "Luke identifies the restoration of the Davidic constellation with the person and work of Jesus Christ, who, in turn, bestows it upon his Apostles in order that they may maintain and rule over it after his ascension."[29] The first indicator of this reality is the fact that Jesus is spoken of like the Son of David in Gabriel's prophecy to Mary. Gabriel's prophecy is a reestablishment of the promise to David.[30] In short, Luke is a story about the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant through Jesus.

In this way, it is important to note that the typology of the Old Testament leads us to understand that Jesus is the literal fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. The correct way to read Jesus as a fulfillment of Old Testament promises through employing

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[28] Nicholas Perrin, "The Temple, A Davidic Messiah, and a Case of Mistaken Priestly Identity (Mark 2:26)," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 163-78. Perrin's example is tied to his understanding of Mark 2:26. The same themes are present in Matthew's gospel. The presentation of Jesus as a Davidic King is present in his miracles because both becoming ceremonially clean and acquiring forgiveness of sins was done through a priest at the temple. Jesus shows that because He is a great high priest dwelling with His people, there is no need for a temple.

[29] Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 217.

[30] Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 218-19. Hahn notes that this foundational speech about Jesus prefaces everything else in the book.

typology in order to understand what is literally accomplished in Christ's person and work. Therefore, what David has done, Jesus will do in a greater way. Moreover, there is a clear covenantal progression from the Davidic Covenant to what we will see is now the New Covenant in Christ.

To demonstrate this fulfillment, Luke 22 is the place one establishes the explicit connection between Jesus' ministry and the New Covenant promise. This is a clear indication of a new institution to be commemorated by the Apostles.[31] Whereas the Passover belong to the Old Covenant, this new meal is to be a fulfillment commemorating something new. The apostles will eat and drink with Jesus in a new Kingdom, the one that was promised to David by the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7.

Scott Hahn notes this supper as a new institution as a covenant renewal meal similar to the Passover. He writes, "By identifying the cup with the new covenant, Jesus makers this meal — the eucharistic 'breaking of bread' that is to be continued 'in remembrance' of him — as a covenant renewal meal for the new covenant, just as the Passover was the covenant renewal meal par excellence of the Mosaic Covenant."[32]

The importance for eating to proclaim the Davidic Covenant seems nonsensical, as the Davidic Covenant says nothing about eating or drinking. However, Jesus is instituting something as a Davidic King that is to be passed down to all those who are a part of His Kingdom. The goal of the meal is to extend the rights and benefits of the eternal Kingdom of David, which Jesus is now establishing by his atoning death, to the Apostles in order that they might take make known this Kingdom to the ends of the earth. According to 2 Samuel 7:19, the Davidic King is giving instruction to the nations through the Apostles. Gentry notes that David understands the covenant made with David includes Yahweh's instruction for humanity. Moreover, the rule of the Davidic King will

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[31] John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 20th anniversary ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 69-74.

[32] Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 226.

have repercussions for all the nations, and not just for Israel.[33] Jesus has commissioned the apostles to teach the nations the ways of Yahweh as His specially commissioned New Covenant agents. Furthermore, one sees in Isaiah 55:4 that the new David is a commander of the Kingdom who would witness and command the peoples. The Apostles are charged with teaching the people the ways of Yahweh by Jesus Christ.

In the Davidic Covenant, it was the king who was to keep the Torah before him at all times to obey Yahweh. Throughout the Old Testament, these kings who descended from David fared poorly in this challenge. However, Jesus was a true Son of David. He kept the law of Yahweh and taught others to obey this law. In the New Covenant, Jesus continues to teach people to obey Yahweh through placing the furtherance of the kingdom first into the hands of the apostles and by nature of the Apostles also to the church. This is helpful in clearly understanding how the Davidic Covenant is fulfilled in the book of Acts.

Acts 1:6 begins with apostles asking the risen Lord Jesus, "Will you now restore the kingdom to Israel?" These men are thinking the one who will bring about the kingdom is going away before restoring the kingdom when in all reality he is leaving in order to send the Spirit to restore the kingdom. If the people of Christ's kingdom are truly Davidic heirs, then one should expect that the Spirit who dwelt upon David (1 Sam 16:13) and upon Jesus (John 3:34) would also dwell upon those who comprise this new kingdom (Joel 2:28-29; Ezek 36:22-28; Jer 31:31-34).

This is how the Davidic Covenant relates specifically to the New Covenant people of God. Jesus establishes an ἐκκλησία. By Christ's sacrifice, Christians, as a part of the ἐκκλησία, are ushered into Christ's Kingdom as those who reign on his behalf by the Holy Spirit through the exaltation of His person and work and proclamation of the Kingdom. The apostles were given authority from Christ by the coming of the Holy Spirit

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[33] Gentry, "Rethinking the 'Sure Mercies of David,'" 287.

to dwell upon them. By the Spirit's indwelling, Christians are united to the person of Christ. Union with Christ through the indwelling of the Spirit is the foundation for all the benefits of the Christian life. Therefore, just as Adam, David, and Jesus served as priest-kings before God in the place of God, the new Covenant believer now serves as a priest-king before God in his new covenant dwelling place, the church.[34] The Kingdom established by God is a result of the Covenant he made with David; the covenant was for a kingdom.[35] This is seen in the temple language used to describe the Church by both Paul and Peter.

First Corinthians 3

A short treatment of two additional key New Testament texts is necessary. In 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Paul tells the Corinthian church, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple." What does calling the church in Corinth God's temple truly mean?

Beale argues that this is an inaugurated form of the latter-day temple.[36] Beale notes that in verses 10-15, Paul is working like a skilled master builder to lay upon a cornerstone, who is Christ, the makings of a building that will be faithful to Jesus Christ. Beale notes, "To build on the foundation with precious metals is not to build up the Corinthians in their faith in 'worldly wisdom 'but in Christ, by instructing them in God's wisdom from the Scriptures."[37] The construction of this temple is performed by men and women hearing, believing, and acting upon the Word of God. This is similar to New

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[34] Jonathan Leeman, *Don`t Fire Your Church Members: The Case for Congregationalism* (Nashville: B & H, 2016), 33-59. Leeman makes this argument by appealing to Adam as a priest King but does not trace the office through the Davidic Covenant.

[35] Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 236.

[36] Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 245.

[37] Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 248.

Covenant prophecies we see in Major Prophets (Jer. 31:31-36; Ezek. 37). The Word of God will be written on the hearts of New Covenant believers by the Spirit.

Temple language in 1 Corinthians 3 (and in 1 Cor 6) is typological language. There are a few reasons one should understand this to be the case. First, the Spirit dwells in this temple like the temple of the Old Testament. Second, there is a foundation laid in this temple that involves skillful labor, similar to Solomon's building of the temple. Third, the destruction of this temple is accomplished by covenant people defiling it. In the Old Testament, this was done by worshipping false Gods. In the New Covenant, it seems this destruction or defiling of the temple occurs by not heeding Christ's commands through the witness of Scripture and the apostles. Fourth, and finally, the notion of temple and Spirit combined indicates the reality of the Kingdom of God. In 2 Chronicles 7, when Solomon dedicates the temple, the glory of the Lord fills the temple, symbolizing Solomon's obedience to the Lord and the might of the Davidic Kingdom. What Paul has in view is that the church is a New Covenant fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant and represents a latter-day temple, indicating God's presence with His people in the New Covenant age.

Beale notes that some argue that the use of temple here is simply a metaphor.[38] This conclusion might be probable if one also understood the dwelling of the Spirit of God to be metaphorical as well. Paul's insistence upon the church being the temple is predicated by his understanding of the church being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is unlikely that Paul sees one assertion as metaphorical while the other is literal. As one interprets this text typologically, the explanation of the church being a latter-day temple makes canonical sense.[39]

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[38] Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 253.

[39] Paul's use of temple language elsewhere in his letters confirms the same themes demonstrated here in 1 Cor 3. The omission of these passages is simply for the sake of space.

First Peter 2

  A final text that demonstrates the importance of the Davidic Covenant in the New Testament is 1 Peter 2:4-5. Peter writes, "As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Ignatius wrote to the early church, "You are stones of a temple prepared beforehand for the building of God the Father, housed up to the heights by the crane of Jesus Christ, the cross, using the Holy Spirit as a rope."[40] This expression of the church being a temple is not a new one. Peter uses the same analogy to encourage the church during a time of persecution.

  Peter's encouragement to the church in this text is similar to Paul's. The use of the terminology of the church being a holy priesthood alludes to Exodus 19. In Exodus 19, God tells Israel he is to be His representatives on earth. As royal priests and as a holy nation, they will represent Yahweh's rule before the nations.[41] However, as Gentry and Wellum note, "Nowhere in the Old Testament is Israel as a people described as the temple of God in which God's Spirit dwells. Instead, Israel as a nation had a physical temple in their midst."[42]

  It is this reality that Peter is reiterating for the church. The church is the temple built upon Jesus Christ. It is important to note the shape of the building of the temple throughout the canon. In the Old Testament, the covenant promises beginning with Abraham caused God's holy people to grow and grow. Eventually, Abraham was a great nation. God redeemed this great nation out of slavery in Egypt, and in doing so the nation continued to grow. This nation received its own land and established rest from its

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  [40] Ignatius of Antioch, "Epistles of Ignatius," Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed September 23, 2020, https://ccel.org/ccel/ignatius_antioch/epistles_of_ignatius/anf01.v.ii.ix.html.

  [41] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 356-65.

  [42] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 757.

enemies. At this time, the promise narrows from the nation to the king specifically. The king becomes representative of the nation. Just as Israel began as one man, their representation before God is reduced to the faithfulness of one man, the King of Israel.

Highlighting this distinction is crucial because while Jesus was Jewish, salvation does not come through Jewishness but through the fact that Jesus is the one true Israel. Peter makes this point particularly clear when speaking of the church as the temple built upon Jesus. It is only through Jesus Christ that the church has any claim to know, understand, love, or trust God almighty. The christological centrality of the New Testament cannot be overstated.[43] Allowing the canon to shape our understanding of what is being described in 1 Peter 2 will allow us to rightly interpret this passage. The temple language in Peter is again meant to be typological, evoking images familiar to Old Testament readers and applying them *through Christ* to the church. The spiritual house of God is where the reign of King Jesus is fully displayed.

To that end, Beale notes the similarities between 1 Peter 2 and Revelation 11. He notes that both descriptions conceptualize a temple that is comprised of God's saints denoting God's presence and that this temple extends to the end of the earth by the witness of the saints.[44] This expression has its roots in the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, where the typological function of the temple is first alluded to as a house for Yahweh. The New Testament authors interpret this description of the Temple as being fulfilled by Christ through His person and work and then given to the Apostles through Christ giving His authority to them as His representatives on the earth.

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[43] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 156-57. This is a distinction between both Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism. Covenant Theology moves too quickly from Christ to the church without understanding the typological constructions present in Christ's person and work, while Dispensationalists herald Christ as the prophetic fulfillment of most prophecies of the Old Testament, except when it comes to the land promises made to Israel. Oren Martin's excellent work answers this objection correctly. Oren R. Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land Promise in God's Redemptive Plan*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 34 (Nottingham, England: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015), 161-71.

[44] Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 332.

This has been an exercise looking at various Old and New Testament texts to be able to say with confidence that the New Testament writers understood the church to be a result of that which is promised to David in the Davidic Covenant. There is a typological connection that exists between the promises of the Davidic Covenant and the church in the New Testament. Because of Christ's literal fulfillment of the Davidic Convent and his establishment of the New Covenant, the shadowy realities of what God promised in the Old Testament are clearly seen through the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, the church.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS OF THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

It is instructive to understand the Davidic Covenant in over the entire canon of Scripture. Therefore, one must see the relationship between the Davidic Covenant and other Old Testament covenants. When God creates a covenant with Adam, he coronates Adam as a priest-king and commissions him to rule over creation on behalf of the creator. When Adam fell, God's plan to redeem fallen humanity was demonstrated through his covenant with Abraham. God was about to bring about a nation through one man, Abraham. This nation, Israel, was to be many individuals serving God as a faithful covenant community. At Sinai, God charges the many members of this covenant community to obey His statutes. The Old Testament shows Israel failed miserably at this task.

In the Davidic Covenant, God is bringing about a new representative head. As the Davidic covenant is made, the Lord no longer judges the whole covenant community (Israel) for its crimes but looks primarily to the covenant head (the king). If the king is obedient, the people with flourish. If he is disobedient, the people will suffer. Therefore, when Solomon sinned, the many people of Israel were punished for the sins of the king.

In the New Covenant, there is a covenant head who is faithful, Jesus Christ. The Lord has brought mankind from one man (Abraham) to many who were unfaithful (in Israel) and from the many down to one who is finally faithful (Jesus Christ). In the New Covenant, we see the one bringing salvation to the many who are then called to be faithful. The difference between the two is that the covenant community of the New Covenant has Jesus Christ as its head. This true king, who is perfectly obedient, is the fulfillment of all God's promises to His people throughout the Old Testament.

Jesus has instituted a new covenant community, the church. The church is the fulfillment of the promises to Israel in the Abrahamic covenant as it is through the church, with the man Jesus as the true Adam and true Davidic King, who brings about the blessings of God to the nations by teaching them the truth of the gospel and through obedience to God's laws. The typological shadows that are seen in the Davidic Covenant are brilliantly revealed through Jesus as He is the true, obedient Son of God and through the church as the covenant community instituted by Jesus in the New Covenant.

To conclude these thoughts about the Davidic Covenant, it will be instructive to note how the reading of the Davidic Covenant described in this work differentiates between a dispensational and covenantal reading. There are three areas where a difference is clearly perceived between the proposed canonical reading of the Davidic Covenant and the readings of both dispensationalists and covenant theologians. This canonical reading of the Davidic Covenant differentiates from these majority biblical theological systems in terms of its hermeneutical method, its ecclesiological applications, and the conditionality of the Davidic Covenant commonly articulated by both dispensationalists and covenant theologians.

Hermeneutics

There is much that the hermeneutical method of both dispensationalists and covenant theologians have in common. First, they have high views of the Bible in terms of inspiration and authority. For this, there is much more in common than separates the two. Furthermore, both attempt to do justice to the grammatical-historical readings of the text in their appropriate context. However, when it comes to the Davidic Covenant, both views seem to have insufficient hermeneutical methods.

First, the dispensational view of the Davidic Covenant is not tenable because the hermeneutical method is inconsistent. Bruce Ware, as a progressive dispensationalist, notes that his presuppositions lead him to a hermeneutic informed by four key factors. They are the plain sense of Scripture, progressive revelation, human and divine

authorship, and inaugurated eschatology.[1] Most students of the Bible would applaud these factors, but Ware's interpretation has some inconsistencies when compared to those of the canonical authors.

The main distinction is a literal reading of Israel for all Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel. Therefore, Ware would read the Davidic Covenant as applying to ethnic, national Israel at a later date in its final fulfillment. While a dispensationalist might assert that the church benefits spiritually from this promise, the final fulfillment must come through a literal king in Israel. The issue with this interpretation is illustrated by the fact that many biblical authors, both Old and New Testament, seemed to understand the fulfillment to David in the fact that the nations were becoming the people of God.[2] Ware contends that the promises made to Israel must not be understood as being fulfilled unless they are fulfilled to national, ethnic Israel.

However, the way one understands and interprets prophecy holds enormous sway over such a hermeneutic. Jesus institutes a New Covenant at the Lord's Supper, indicating he was fulfilling Jeremiah 31, which appears to be a promise made to Israel and Judah.[3] It seems clear from the New Testament that the New Covenant was not intended to only Jews but to all nations. Similarly, we see the same kind of scope as we see the Davidic Covenant fulfilled throughout the Bible. The Davidic King rules over one people of God, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles.[4]

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[1] Bruce A. Ware, "A Progressive Dispensational Understanding of Scripture as a Whole," in *God's Glory Revealed in Christ: Essays in Honor of Tom Schreiner*, ed. Denny Burk, James Hamilton, and Brian Vickers (Nashville: B & H, 2019), 6-15.

[2] The discussion of Pss 2 and 110 describe this interpretation.

[3] Ware counters this claim by stating that the author implied the Covenant only to Israel and Judah but that the Gentiles experienced a new covenant reality nonetheless. He restricts the meaning of the human author while stating God can certainly do beyond what the human author originally penned. This promotes a disconnect between a literal interpretation and a more spiritual interpretation as is common in understanding prophecy in Dispensationalism. Ware, "A Progressive Dispensational Understanding," 13-16.

[4] Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1994), 127-28. Poythress notes that dispensationalists want to establish that all people are saved by grace

Alternatively, the covenantal view is insufficient when it comes to a reading of the Davidic Covenant and specifically a Davidic Kingdom. O. Palmer Robertson notes the importance of the Davidic Messiah being Christ as he counteracts the erroneous claims of the throne of David being distinct from the throne of Christ.[5] However, he fails to trace the story of the people of God through Christ and through David. While the covenantal view is certainly christological, the covenantal view of the Davidic Covenant serves to prove a Davidic King in Christ without establishing a clear declaration about the people over whom this Davidic King rules. Covenant theologians trace the covenant community primarily through Abraham without noting the benefit that would be had by tracing their lineage through King David.[6] As Gentry and Wellum note, "Covenant theology views Christ as the 'true Israel,' but it moves *too quickly* from Israel to the church without first thinking how Israel as a type leads us to Christ as the antitype, which then has important ecclesiological implications."[7] The hermeneutical system imposed upon the Bible by looking at different covenants as administrations of the covenant of grace is admirable and internally consistent. However, it is an external framework applied to the Bible and not a framework that arises from the Bible itself.

Ecclesiology

The Davidic Covenant, read canonically, shapes the way one understands ecclesiology. From the dispensational perspective, there is a distinct hermeneutical

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and through one means but still hold the truth that both Israel and the church are two distinct people. However, if the two entities are saved through the same means, how can they comprise two distinct entities? This is the dispensational problem defined.

[5] O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1987), 252.

[6] At the center of the viewpoint here is the primary covenantal view of the Abrahamic Covenant, wherein the sign of circumcision is applied to the church via infant baptism. The objections to this are strong from other perspectives and a right understanding of the Davidic Covenant aids in the attempt to have New Covenant baptism without infants being unnecessarily baptized.

[7] Peter Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 156-57.

commitment to having two people of God. One group of people is ethnic Jews while the other is the church established by Jesus Christ. On the other side of the spectrum, Covenant Theology removes the distinction between Israel and the Church and thereby incorporates a mixed community approach to their ecclesiastical commitments. Both positions are in error. Understanding the Davidic Covenant's contribution to the whole story of Scripture helps one establish a firmer ecclesiology, zeroing in on the people over whom the Davidic King rules.

The problem in Dispensationalism is one of fulfillment. Vern Poythress has noted that dispensationalists often use the word fulfillment when describing a literal fulfillment of prophecy, while maintaining that foreshadowing or application are the preferred terms when prophecies are related to the church.[8] The aversion to using the term fulfillment to describe Old Testament prophecies applied to the church is unfortunate. The clearest explanation of this error comes from what the apostles see as the fulfillment of God's promise to David in Acts 15.

Acts 15 demonstrates that the Apostles understand the prophecy of Amos 9 concerning the rebuilding of David's booth has been completed by Christ's inclusion of the Gentiles into the promises of Israel. The Davidic King has done something new. He has raised up the fallen booth of David, and this booth includes Gentiles who are fellow heirs of the promises made to Abraham fulfilled by the establishment of a New Covenant.

The dispensational hermeneutic recognizes, to a varying extent, two peoples of God. One is Israel while the other is the church.[9] This runs counter to the understanding

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[8] Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, 34-35. It is important to note that Poythress's work is entitled *Understanding Dispensationalists* and not Understanding Dispensationalism. Not all Dispensationalists are created equal. There is no codified standard for dispensationalism like there is for Covenant Theology. Because of that, the fluidity in dispensationalism is often hard to categorize.

[9] Blaising and Bock note that progressive dispensationalism does not affirm the hard distinction between Israel and the church as classical dispensationalism, but there is still a sense in which the church is not seen as the fulfillment of Old Covenant Israel. There are a variety of nuances to this position, but the major complexity still arises from this recognition of two peoples of God in dispensationalism. Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 46-51.

of the Davidic Covenant proposed in this work. It is now through the church, comprised of Jews and Gentiles believing in the Messiah, Jesus, through whom God will bless the whole world. Dispensationalists assert that while this is true, there are still promises that God will fulfill to national, political Israel. Bock and Blaising note that the Apostles never interject that the national blessings to Israel have been abandoned.[10] The issue here is in applying a literal hermeneutic to that which is not meant to be interpreted as such. Amos is prophetic literature. While a Jew reading Amos might assume a restoration of the throne in literal Jerusalem, the Apostles clearly understand this prophecy to be fulfilled in a different way. The Davidic Kingdom is fulfilled by Christ, who has raised up the booth of David by drawing both Jews and Gentiles to salvation through his priestly and kingly work.

This applies ecclesiologically because the New Covenant has created a new people of God. The desire for strict discontinuity between covenants in Dispensationalism has yielded incorrect readings of the Davidic covenant. The church has been established by Christ to be built with Jews and Gentiles who repent of their sins and believe in Him. Through this new people of God, the Kingdom of God is seen on the earth. The house promised to David in 2 Samuel 7 is the church of the New Covenant. Each member of this house is adopted as an heir of the Davidic King, Jesus Christ (Rom 8:14-15). There is no distinction or division between Jew and Gentile in the Kingdom of God, for they all know the Lord.

Dispensationalists do reject the "mixed community" approach that Covenant Theology ascribes to in its practice. While there is a distinct misunderstanding about the church and its relationship to Israel in Dispensationalism, the ecclesiological errors in Covenant Theology are more apparent. The practice of infant baptism is inconsistent with

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[10] Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 267-70. Blaising and Bock seek to fairly apply the two peoples of God hermeneutic throughout their description of dispensationalism.

a right interpretation of the Davidic Covenant because it applies signs of the New Covenant to those who are not members of that New Covenant. Michael Horton notes that, "All those who belong to the covenant of grace may be said to participate in the semi-eschatological life, even those who fall away."[11] This explanation is dependent upon different administrations of the Covenant of Grace. In this view only thing different between the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant is the way that the covenant is administered.

Again, the newness of the New Covenant is not adequately explained by this position. According to Horton, it is appropriate to apply the sign of the New Covenant to someone who is not a part of that covenant because that is how circumcision was practiced in Abraham's day. By tracing the people of God through the Davidic Covenant, one understands that to be a part of the people of God, one must be ruled over by the Davidic King, who we know as Jesus. The problem with Covenant Theology's reading of the Davidic Covenant is that they affirm Jesus as the Davidic King according to the prophecy of the Old Testament but does not clearly identify those over whom Jesus rules and reigns in faithful covenant love. This practice is reflected in Reformed ecclesiology by the baptism of infants into the Covenant.[12]

Covenant Conditionality

One of the significant issues in interpretation of the Davidic Covenant is the issue of covenant conditionality. The idea behind this claim is that some covenants are unconditional and cannot be broken while other covenants are conditional and bear with it the curses associated with breaking the covenant. For dispensational theology, it is

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[11] Michael Scott Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 152.

[12] One must understand more than the Davidic Covenant to arrive at the conclusion put forward that infant baptism is incompatible with appropriate ecclesiology. However, the resulting practice can be seen in part by tracing a theology of the people of God solely through the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants without likewise understanding the Davidic Covenant.

explained that the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional while the Mosaic Covenant is conditional. The covenant curses of breaking the Mosaic Covenant warrant the expulsion of the people of God from the land of Canaan but the reality of the Abrahamic Covenant leads dispensationalists to believe the land promise will be restored.[13] The Davidic Covenant is complicated because it appears to hold in contention both conditional and unconditional elements. However, Blaising and Bock note that the Davidic Covenant is ultimately a grant type of covenant, indicating that it is unconditional in its promised fulfillment.[14]

Covenant Theology deals with this problem by appealing to various administrations of the one overarching covenant of grace. Meredith Kline argues that the covenants of the Old Testament are different administrations of God's Kingdom which fall under one overarching Covenant of Grace.[15] Because of this, all the covenants are unconditional insofar as their spiritual fulfillment is concerned, though there can be temporal consequences for covenantal disobedience as seen in the violation of the Mosaic Covenant.[16]

How does one reconcile these two positions? It must be noted that both positions offer much help in terms of seeking to take the Bible on its own terms. The dispensationalist view argues that human beings are responsible to keep God's laws but that God works in spite of human unfaithfulness. The covenantal view places God's sovereignty and gracious character as the primary characteristic in His covenant making

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[13] An excellent discussion of the land promise fulfillment is seen in Oren R. Martin, *Bound for the Promised Land: The Land Promise in God's Redemptive Plan*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 34 (Nottingham, England: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015).

[14] Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 210.

[15] Richard Belcher helpfully summarizes Meredith Kline and the idea of kingdom throughout the Old Testament from a covenantal view. Richard P. Belcher, *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2020), 165-80.

[16] Belcher, *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God,* 93-95.

and keeping activity. Both of these views have profound biblical support. However, both viewpoints employ a view of covenantal conditionality that is foreign to the Scripture.

Much scholarship has been devoted to seeing the difference between a conditional covenant as a treaty covenant and an unconditional covenant as a royal grant covenant.[17] Scott Hahn proposes that there is a third way of viewing covenants that seeks to deal with both the conditionality and the unconditionality of a covenant. He calls the third category a kinship covenant. Rather than seeing everything as conditional, unconditional, grant, or vassal type Hahn writes, "The manner of oath-swearing serves as the primary empirical mark by which to differentiate the covenant types: which party or parties swear the oath determines the type of covenant. If both swear, a kinship covenant is formed; if only the inferior, the vassal-type; if only the superior, the grant-type."[18] Hahn's approach seeks to find a third way between the two self-imposed systems of Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism but does not sufficiently answer all the questions raised by the biblical text.

Gentry and Wellum note the problem of covenantal conditionality in *Kingdom through Covenant.*[19] Their consensus is that the elements of conditionality and unconditionality are blended together. This is especially important for the discussion surrounding the Davidic Covenant as both Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism

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[17] Belcher, again, succinctly describes Kline's view on this idea. The term *royal grant treaty* is consistently used to refer to an unconditional covenant while the designations of vassal treaty, suserian-vassal treaty, or simply treaty style covenant all refer to a conditional kind of covenantal agreement. Belcher, *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God*, 166.

[18] Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 334. Ultimately, Hahn's view is interesting but unsatisfactory. It is more helpful to refrain from a strict distinction of covenants as conditional or unconditional. Adding a third way does not alleviate the issue because all conditional covenants still have unconditional elements because of the unchanging character of God. It would be tempting to make all covenants to be categorized as kinship covenants by adopting this view.

[19] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant,* 662.

have struggled to do justice to defending their views on the conditional nature of this particular covenant.

Romans 1 is one of the clearest places in the New Testament to see how the blending of the conditional and unconditional natures of the Davidic Covenant are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

First, Romans 1:3 tells us how Jesus was David's son. He was David's son according to the flesh and the son of God according to the Holy Spirit manifested by His resurrection from the dead. In this way, both the patterns of conditionality and unconditionality are shattered because Jesus had to accomplish something in order to truly be proclaimed the Son of God. Namely, he secured the eternal throne of David through His substitutionary work on the cross and His glorious triumph over the grave. The apostle Paul notes that Jesus was literally descended from David by the flesh and was the true and greater David by His establishment an eternal throne. Both the conditional and unconditional elements are seen in this verse.

Second, Paul notes that the apostles are given authority through Jesus Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith (Rom 1:5). This appears to be a direct fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7:19 where the King of Israel is to bring the instruction of God to all mankind. The apostle Paul is again demonstrating the nature of the Davidic covenant as he prepares to explain how believers in Christ are saved by the grace of God alone and yet are to obey the Lord in all He commands.

Third, Paul reaffirms that the Kingdom is not simply for Israel but for all the nations (Rom 1:5). It is all of the nations that will come to be obedient to King Jesus. Ultimately, every knee will bow to the Lord Jesus (Phil 2:10). Gentry notes that the rule of the Davidic King will have repercussions for every nation, not just the nation of Israel.[20]

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[20] Peter Gentry, "Rethinking the 'Sure Mercies of David' in Isaiah 53," *Westminster Journal of Theology* 69 (2007): 288.

There are six things that the Lord promises to David in the Davidic Covenant. Three are to be accomplished in his life and three to be accomplished in his death.[21] The three promises to be accomplished in David's life are a great name, a firm place for the people of God, and rest for David from his enemies. The three to be accomplished after his death are an eternal house, a kingdom, and a throne. While the former promises are accomplished very plainly throughout the Old Testament account of David's life the promises to be fulfilled after his death are here referenced in Romans 1 having been fulfilled in Jesus, his establishment of the apostle's ministry, and the formation of the church.

Typologically, one can see how the New Covenant reality of the church as the Kingdom of God on earth over whom the everlasting Son of David rules corresponds to the Old Covenant people of Israel. The church functions as a typological pattern, as an eschatological temple being built by the living God, and a testament to the faithfulness of God who always keeps his promises to His people.

To press the Davidic Covenant into a conditional or unconditional mold distorts the beautiful canonical picture that we see in the New Testament and even in Paul's most thorough theological treatise, Romans. If the church does not ground her identity in the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant as the New Covenant people of God, then the understanding of her role in teaching obedience to the nations as servants of King Jesus will be misunderstood. Therefore, it is best to allow Scripture to be the guide on and interpret the biblical covenants with a blending of both conditional and unconditional elements.

Conclusion

Understanding the Davidic Covenant helps readers of Scripture perceive and appreciate what God has done in the past and what God is doing in the present. A

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[21] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant,* 479.

misunderstanding of the Davidic Covenant could allow churches to run in all kinds of different directions that are unhelpful for the people of God. When one understands what is described when the Davidic covenant promises a king and a house, one can praise God that he has provided a king in His son Jesus and is building a house for His name through the Church bought by King Jesus.

The various levels of continuity and discontinuity between the covenants of Scripture cause many to scratch their heads and wonder what God is really doing throughout the annals of history. This contribution has attempted to find a way between rigid discontinuity and complete continuity between the covenants. However, wherever one falls on the spectrum of discontinuity and continuity, we can render praise to our risen Lord Jesus for the great works he has done in and amongst us by his Spirit through His church to the praise of his glory.

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ABSTRACT

THE FULLFILLMENT OF THE
DAVIDIC COVENANT

Andrew Samuel Byers, ThM
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Peter J. Gentry

The Davidic Covenant is a high point of the Old Testament as it sets up an expectation for a Davidic King that will rule over God's people. In addition to these promises, the Davidic Covenant anticipates the Church of the New Testament to be a typological fulfillment of Old Testament promises. This work intends to reflect on the implications of the Davidic Covenant for the church. Chapters 1 and 2 explain the unique features of biblical theology. Chapter 3 details canonical features that are imperative to rightly understand biblical typology. Chapter 4 seeks to understand the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7 in light of these typological features and the canonical whole. Chapter 5 explores the Old and New Testaments for traces of these typological fulfillments. Chapter 6 provides some applications and charts a path between a covenantal and dispensational reading of the Davidic Covenant.

VITA

Andrew Samuel Byers

EDUCATION
        BS, Bryan College, 2014
        MDiv, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017

ACADEMIC
        Distance Education Instructor, Bryan College, 2017-2018

MINISTERIAL
        Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church, Athens, Tennessee, 2013-2019
        Lead Pastor, Creekside Fellowship, Castalian Springs, Tennessee, 2020-