

With Yahweh's ark now settled in Jerusalem, David's thoughts turned to the construction of a permanent house for Him. This was a predictable development for several reasons. David surely knew of the Lord's instruction to Moses regarding a central sanctuary and His intention to appoint a permanent dwelling place for His name. David believed Jerusalem to be that sacred site, and Yahweh's permanent residence there would naturally lead to the notion of replacing the tabernacle – which was specifically designed to be portable – with a fixed sanctuary. Since the day of Israel's departure from Egypt, the covenant nation had been anticipating the day when the Canaanite kingdom promised to Abraham would be fully realized, and now that day had arrived.

- As promised through Jacob, the scepter had come to Judah in the person of David. Under his rule, the twelve tribes had been bound together in genuine unity and Israel's dominion over Canaan was at last firmly established (ref. 7:1).
- More than that, Yahweh's chosen king had symbolically established His throne in Jerusalem – the city bearing his own name – in fulfillment of His ancient promise of a settled dwelling place. The royal image-son was now exercising his Father's sovereign rule in the context of intimate communion.
- As previously observed, these developments within the Israelite theocracy had profound salvation-historical significance in that they reflected God's original kingdom structure as revealed in the creation and forfeited by the fall. *In this way the Scripture indicates David's kingdom to represent a kind of fulfillment of the promise of recovery and restoration in Genesis 3:15.*

The Israelite kingdom was the administration of Yahweh's kingship, and nothing more testified to His sovereign, enduring reign than locating the ark of His presence in the kingdom's new capital. His reign fully established, David had built his own royal house in Jerusalem. But David understood that he ruled in Yahweh's name and on His behalf; if Jerusalem was the seat of his personal dominion, then it was equally the seat of Yahweh's. For that reason it was appropriate that David's royal throne should be overshadowed by a fixed sanctuary-throne for Israel's true King. So it was that David's desire was met with eager approval even by the Lord's own prophet (7:2-3).

But Yahweh had other plans, and He made them known to Nathan that very night. In God's wise providence, David's longing to build a house for Him provided the occasion for His disclosure of His own intent regarding His anointed king. David would not build Yahweh's house; to the contrary, Yahweh would build a house for David, which determination He certified by covenant – the so-called *Davidic Covenant*.

- f. The Davidic Covenant is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:5-16 and 1 Chronicles 17:4-14 and is notably situated at the apex of David's kingship. On the one side, it is preceded by David's long ascent to the throne and the consolidation of his reign. On the other, it is followed almost immediately in the narrative by the account of David's great failure with Bathsheba – the singular event that initiated the decline and eventual demise of his kingdom.

Coming at the pinnacle of David's reign, the text importantly associates David's desire to build a sanctuary-throne for Yahweh with the fact that He had "*given him rest on every side from all his enemies*" (7:1). This statement appears problematic at first glance, for David would continue for some time to expand his kingdom through warfare with surrounding nations (ref. 8:1-10:19). Some have concluded that the text only means to indicate Israel's *relative* rest from enemies, while others view the statement as a prolepsis – a backward projection into the present of a future fulfillment. But these conclusions (as so many others), miss the point precisely because they fail to consider this statement within the larger salvation-historical storyline. The narrator's concern wasn't the state of David's conflict with other nations as such; he intended his statement to provide the larger context for David's desire to build a permanent sanctuary for Yahweh and the covenant that followed upon it.

- These words repeat a portion of Moses' instruction to Israel just prior to the nation's entrance into Canaan (Deuteronomy 12:10-11). Acting as Yahweh's prophet, Moses spoke of His intention for a central sanctuary in connection with Israel's settled presence in the land and the future appointment of a specific dwelling place for His name (ref. vv. 1-28).
- By introducing the chapter in this way, the writer of Samuel was explicitly connecting David's desire to build the Lord a permanent dwelling with the fulfillment of Moses' prophetic directive concerning a central sanctuary and the localizing of Yahweh's worship in that one place. The reader of Samuel is expected to make this connection in his own mind and thereby understand that the Lord's word to Israel through Moses was to be fulfilled in the Jerusalem temple that David sought to build. In essence, Yahweh's instruction concerning a central sanctuary was His promise to dwell permanently – in the context of peace (*shalom*) and rest (*shabbat*) – with His covenant son in His sanctuary-land, and the temple signified His faithfulness to that promise.
- Thus David's aspiration to build a temple in Jerusalem drew upon God's promise of a central sanctuary. But David's personal intention served as the springboard for Yahweh's disclosure of His own determination regarding David's house and kingdom. And at the heart of that disclosure was the revelation that the central sanctuary, which was a core feature of the promised kingdom, *was not to be ultimately realized in a physical temple in Jerusalem*. At that time, David may have thought that it would, but the Lord was about to reveal to him that the true fulfillment of the promise of a permanent sanctuary would come in connection with a "house" He would build for David – not a physical dwelling, but a royal dynasty associated with a chosen descendent. Moses' words to Israel were to find their true fulfillment beyond the Israelite theocracy in an everlasting kingdom ruled by one of David's sons.

In the span of a few verses the writer of Samuel has bound together three crucial considerations respecting Yahweh's kingdom as it implicates the recovery of sacred space. The first is the centrality within the kingdom of a fixed and permanent sanctuary where the sons of the kingdom encounter and worship their Father-King; the second is the indication of a near-term fulfillment in the Jerusalem temple, while the third regards the ultimate fulfillment in relation to David's house and the royal seed through whom it was to be constructed.

In summary, as the Davidic Covenant conjoins the two segments of David's reign (its rise and fall), it provides the crucial point of connection between the prior salvation history and that which followed it leading up to the coming of Christ.

- God made His covenant with David within the larger context of the Mosaic Covenant, which itself served to administer at the first, typological level the kingdom promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. In this way the Davidic Covenant presupposed and built upon the covenants and revelation that preceded it. It took up in itself all that had gone before it. Thus the Samuel writer connects the Davidic Covenant with Moses' instruction regarding the central sanctuary and its worship.
- At the same time, the Davidic Covenant was preeminently forward looking. It took the promise of the kingdom and its historical realization under David and projected them out into the future. David's dominion represented the fullness of the promised kingdom to that point in time, and, by His covenant with him, Yahweh was promising both the perpetuity and the aggrandizement of David's kingdom.

As all of the prior salvation history had come to a convergence in David, so everything beyond him would have reference to him and Yahweh's covenant with him. *From the issuing of the Davidic Covenant, the perpetuity of David's house and kingdom stands as the focal point of God's ongoing promise concerning His own kingdom and its ultimate realization.* The hope of the kingdom lay in Yahweh's enduring faithfulness to David (cf. Psalms 89 and 132 with Isaiah 7-12, 49-55; Jeremiah 30-33; Ezekiel 34-37; Hosea 1-3; Amos 9:11-15; etc.).

This is the all-important biblical framework for considering the Davidic Covenant; without it it's impossible to grasp the full significance of what God was pledging to David. But with this framework in place, the meaning of the particular features and components of the covenant become clearly evident.

- 1) In context, the Davidic Covenant reflected back on David's desire to build God a permanent dwelling – a *house* – in Jerusalem. So the central feature of the covenant was Yahweh's declaration that He was going to build a house for David (7:12). The content of the covenant shows that God intended two meanings by this use of the term *house*: It includes the ideas of **dynasty** and **dominion** – a kingly line as well as a kingdom.

In vowing to build a house for David, God was first promising him a son in whom his own reign would be continued after his death. Like his father before him, this regal seed would be Yahweh's beloved son (7:14); his actions might demand chastening, but the Lord would never withdraw His lovingkindness (*hesed*) from him as He had done with Saul.

But God's promise of a house also meant that He would establish this son's throne and kingdom forever (7:13). In this way Yahweh would grant to David an everlasting dominion (cf. 7:13, 16). *Thus the covenant's central promise of an enduring house for David – as it regarded both dynasty and dominion – was bound up in this promised descendent.*

- 2) At the same time, David's desire to build a house for the Lord would not go unsatisfied. The same son in whom God would build David's house would, in turn, build a house for Yahweh (v. 13a). This declaration, too, is layered with multiple meanings. First and most obvious is its reference to Solomon's later work of building the Lord's temple in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Chronicles 28:1-10 with 1 Kings 5:1-5; 2 Chronicles 6:1-11). But just as David's "house" involved both dynasty and dominion, so it was to be with Yahweh's house. Though the covenant itself was not specific in this regard, David understood that God's promise looked ultimately to the *distant future* (7:18-19), and therefore to a seed beyond Solomon (ref. Acts 2:22-31) and, by implication, to a house beyond the Jerusalem temple (cf. Zechariah 6:9-15; 1 Peter 2:1-10; Revelation 21:1ff).
- 3) Continuing the covenant's overall emphasis on perpetuity, God also promised to establish David's seed in *His* house and kingdom forever. The most notable feature of the Davidic Covenant is the way it commingles David's reign and kingdom with the Lord's, and here the perpetuity of David's house and kingdom is the perpetuity of Yahweh's (cf. 2 Samuel 7:16, 1 Chronicles 17:14). Again it's crucial to note that the Davidic seed is the point of connection between the two. At the same time, the issue of perpetuity presses the notion of the seed beyond Solomon. Solomon did indeed reign over God's kingdom (1 Chronicles 28:5, 29:23), *but in the context of the failing theocracy*. It can never be said that he reigned over God's house and kingdom in the true sense, and certainly not forever.

Thus the promise of a Davidic seed embraced both sides of the covenant: ***In him Yahweh would build David's house, but he would also build a house for Yahweh.*** The perpetuity of David's royal house, throne, and kingdom were to be realized in this son, but he would likewise secure for Yahweh a royal dynasty and everlasting kingdom. According to God's word, Solomon constructed for Him a physical sanctuary in Jerusalem; the true referent of the seed promise would first build a dwelling for the Lord in Himself (John 1:1-14), and then through himself in an innumerable multitude of royal offspring (cf. Jeremiah 33:14-26 with 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:11-22; 1 Peter 2:1-10; Revelation 5:1-10).

The content of the covenant left no doubt that it looked beyond Solomon, but it equally looked beyond Solomon's line of descent. Though David couldn't know it at the time, the fulfillment of the covenant was to take place outside of his own royal line. For within a few centuries, the Lord would forever sever that line during the reign of David's descendent Jehoiachin (ref. Jeremiah 22:24-30).

- 4) Another crucial aspect of the covenant was its association with the core kingdom principles of peace and rest. The text presents this state of affairs as the historical context for the giving of the covenant (7:1), but also as a key feature of the covenant's fulfillment (7:10-11). The implication is that, when Yahweh fulfilled His promise to build an enduring house for David by establishing his throne and kingdom in his son, it would be in connection with the everlasting peace and rest of His covenant people. *Yahweh's securing of David's throne and kingdom would effect the securing of the peace and well-being of the sons of the kingdom. This whole program, in turn, would be the ultimate realization of Yahweh's own kingdom and reign* (cf. again 2 Samuel 7:16 with 1 Chronicles 17:14).

This association of the Davidic Covenant with the kingdom themes of peace and rest explains why God wouldn't allow David to build the temple but gave that privilege to Solomon. The Lord was pleased with the idea of a permanent sanctuary; He just wouldn't permit David to build it (1 Kings 8:12-19). The reason God gave was that David was a man of war who had shed blood (1 Chronicles 28:2-3), leading some to conclude that the Lord was displeased with him. But nothing could be further from the truth: David had taken men's lives, but always in God's name and on His behalf. *Yahweh refused David's desire, not because he had blood on his hands, but because of the typological significance of the building of the temple.*

Solomon – whose name is derived from the Hebrew noun *shalom* (“peace”) – ruled over the kingdom secured by his father. David had brought the kingdom to its fullness through military conquest; Solomon ruled that kingdom in the context of peace and rest just as the covenant had stipulated. Because of what the Davidic Covenant promised, and because Solomon's role in relation to it prefigured another son of David, it was necessary that Solomon build Yahweh's house in a time of tranquility and well-being secured by the defeat of the enemies of the kingdom. Otherwise, the typological connection between these two Davidic sons would be lost. For, like his predecessor, David's latter and greater son would build the Lord's true dwelling, not by means of conquest, but by virtue of it; not as a warrior king, but as a priest-king (Zechariah 6:9-15).

As the one to whom David's own person and reign looked, this son would secure God's kingdom through patient suffering leading to the overthrow of His enemies. But having thus ushered in the kingdom, He would then build Yahweh's house as a new Solomon in the context of peace and rest.