



Lesson 6 | The King Like David | 1/13/2021

The reason we study these Old Testament Messianic promises is because God revealed portion by portion to humanity the great plan of which now we are sharers (c.f. Ephesians 3:4-5). Jesus Christ, even in His personal ministry, made certain to show the links between His identity and purpose to these Messianic or Regal hopes (e.g., Matt 22:44-45; cf. Luke 24:44-45). Therefore, *since we must share the good news story of what Jesus is to us*, a study of these ideas in the Old Testament is sure to give us a better understanding of Jesus.

Before we get to the most common prophecy that the Messiah will be like David, look at these pre-Davidic promises of the royal nature of the Messiah

First there is the “I see him, but not now; I look at him, but not near; A star shall appear from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel” in **Numbers 24:16-17**. Is this Messianic?

- Justin Martyr (ca. 100–165) argued: “And that He [Christ] should arise like a star from the seed of Abraham, Moses showed beforehand when he said, ‘A star shall arise from Jacob, and a leader from Israel’” (Dialogue With Trypho CVI; ANF 1.252).
- Irenaeus (ca. 130–200) associated the star of Balaam’s prophecy with that which the wise men from the East followed to Bethlehem (Against Heresies IX.2; ANF 1.422–423).
- Origen (ca. 185–254) contended it probable that the Magi (also from the East) were familiar with Balaam’s prophecies and the text regarding the star. He said, “Moses also wrote,” then he cited the text from Numbers (Against Celsus 1.LX; ANF 4.422–423; cf. 5.519; 7:112, 239).
- C. F. Keil wrote: ‘The fulfillment of this prophecy commenced with the subjugation of the Edomites by David (2 Sam. viii.14; 1 Kgs. xi.15, 16; 1 Chron. xviii.12, 13), but it will not be completed till “the end of the days,” when all the enemies of God and His Church will be made the footstool of Christ’ (Ps. cx.1sq.) (1980, III.194).

Then there is **Deuteronomy 17:14-20**. In this brief passage, the Jewish conception of their King was shaped and connected to the promise God made for the land. He was to be an Israelite of God’s choosing, independent of the military for his success, and free of the vice of wealth or polygamy; he must trust wholly in God expressed in obedience to God’s Law and as one under the authority of YHWH he is to regard himself as equal to his fellow Israelites.

There is also Abigail’s comment on David’s “enduring house” before he is enthroned in 1Samuel 25:28, 30; 2:35 because he was fighting the battles of the Lord (28). Evil would not be found in him all his days (28) and he would be appointed by the Lord as ruler over Israel (30). David demonstrates his wisdom in his treatment of Abigail and Nabal.

However, is the promise in 2 Samuel 7:6-16 upon which much of the Messianic promises are connected to the Royal seed of David and can hardly be overstated in terms of its importance for shaping Israel’s understanding of who Messiah will be. The picture that we have here of David himself is one of complete submission to and love for God, YHWH. That David both brought the ark to Jerusalem and also desired to build a “house” for YHWH indicates that in him is the idea that David as King would have access to God through worship (cf. Ps 2:7-8; 110:1; Jer 30:21). This is brought out in the “sonship” language of the promise. However, it also notes that David, and his heritage, will have darker moments yet to come but they will not annul the promises made to him and his house. Obedience on the part of the king and nation was central to the covenant. Solomon and the nation was to remain faithful to the Law of God, and if so, they would not fail to have a man on the throne (1 Kings 2:1-4; 9:4-6; 11:11-13).

The fact that God was pleased to give Solomon wisdom in order that he might reign well, is evidence that wisdom is integral to the continued fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, lest the king walk in foolish and sinful ways that would



THE PROMISE OF MESSIAH: WHAT THE BIBLE REVEALS

jeopardize his reign in the eyes of the Lord (1 Kings 3:1-28; cf. 2 Sam 7:14-15). The evil of certain kings in the Davidic line could not render the covenant immediately void which means that implicit in the covenant is God's willingness to humble kings and either forgive sins or overlook them for a time. The Lord was not willing to destroy Judah despite the evil of king Jehoram in Judah. He did this for the sake of his servant David since he had promised to give him a lamp for his descendants always (cf. 2 Kings 8:19; cf. 1 Kings 11:36; 15:4). Further, God said he would put his name, as he told David and Solomon, in the Temple in Jerusalem even though Manasseh had placed Asherah poles there (2 Kings 21:5-7).

But who would that king be? This prophecy, like many others, has a near and a distant fulfillment. On the near end is Solomon. It is he who will take David's place and reign over Israel after his death. However, unlike Saul, whose dynasty was taken away, David's "house" (his descendants) will be a dynasty, and will reign over Israel. And David's seed or descendent is ultimately pointing to the Messiah.

God said, "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain... I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession'" (Psalm 2:4-9).

This is exactly what happened: God calls our Lord His "Son" at His baptism (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22) and at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). Peter makes mention of these words, linking these words to the transfiguration (2Peter 1:17). The writer to the Hebrews also makes use of these words as proof that Jesus was the promised Jewish Messiah (1:5; 5:5). In 5:5, the author of Hebrews specifically refers to the promise from Nathan in 2Samuel 7:14 as having been fulfilled in Christ. In Acts 13:33, Paul turns to these words in Psalm 2 as having been fulfilled in Christ, particularly in relationship to His resurrection from the dead. It is in this "Son" that all of David's hopes, all of Israel's hopes, all of our hopes are fulfilled. And this is the essence of the Davidic Covenant. God will give David sons who rule in his place, but God's promises will be fully and finally fulfilled in that special "Son" who is yet to come.

These words, spoken by Nathan, are the very word of God. They are given to Nathan in the vision, which necessitates a "revision" of the permission he has given David to build a house for God. God thus speaks to David through Nathan. These are the sure word of God.

The writer of Hebrews says: "But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" (1:8-9) and "To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet" (1:13)?

When Mark's Gospel draws to a close and the centurion who witnesses Jesus' death exclaims, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15:39), whatever pagan notions the centurion presupposes by the expression, Mark's readers recognize that Jesus is, at very least, the promised Davidic king, the Messiah. Jesus supremely enters into this kingly role by his resurrection from the dead (Rom 1:3 – 4). When Hebrews 1:5 ties Jesus to the promise of 2 Samuel 7:14, it is not confusing Jesus with Solomon but connecting him through this verse with the trajectory of Davidic kings that finds its promise and culmination in him. This makes him superior to the angels, for only he reigns perfectly in the name of his heavenly Father.

Next Week | Lesson 7 | The Priest Like Melchizedek.