



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | [believerschapeldallas.org](http://believerschapeldallas.org)

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Eschatology

“The Davidic Covenant, part II”

TRANSCRIPT

Now, we are studying the covenants of Israel and, particularly now, the Davidic Covenant and Prophecy. We have been saying that the basic Biblical promises are those of the Abrahamic Covenant. The story of the Bible is the record of the path along which Israel moves toward their fulfillment. You will remember that we have also tried to point out that in those promises that God gave to Abraham, there was a promise of a seed, who ultimately is our Lord Jesus Christ. There was a promise of a land for the seed, and that land would be an everlasting possession for Abraham and his seed. And also, in the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Genesis, there was specific reference made to the fact that Abraham would be promised and was promised a royal line. In Genesis Chapter 17 in verse 6, we read: “And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.” So we see that in the Abrahamic promises, there was an ultimate promise of a royal line.

The other covenants are basically developments of the Abrahamic Covenant; the unconditional ones such as the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant are ones that enlarge upon the Abrahamic. The conditional ones, such as the Sinaitic and the Palestinian, regulate Israel’s possession and enjoyment, not her title, of the promises.

Now, let me repeat that, because I think it’s important that we bear this in mind. The other covenants are basically developments of the Abrahamic Covenant. The unconditional covenants -- the Abrahamic Covenant remember is an unconditional covenant, it depends upon the faithfulness of God for its completion. The unconditional covenants, such as the Abrahamic or such as the Davidic and the New Covenant enlarge upon the Abrahamic Covenant. That is, they expand the significance of the Abrahamic Covenant. They enlarge the promises and give them newer and further applications.

The conditional covenants, the Sinaitic and Palestinian regulate Israel’s possession and enjoyment of the promises that are unconditional. So that when we read of the “ifs” in connection with the Sinaitic Covenant and the Palestinian Covenant, we are not to assume that these “ifs,” these “ifs” mean that the covenant that God made with Abraham may be broken. The enjoyment of Israel’s promises, which are unconditional, do, however, depend on the human level, the faithfulness of Abraham and his seed to those promises given by God. So that the conditional covenants regulate the possession and enjoyment of the promises. They have nothing to do with the title to them. The title to them depends upon the ultimate faithfulness of God. And they shall be fulfilled.

In our last study we turned to a consideration of the Davidic Covenant, an extremely important one. It is the foundation of the belief that there shall be an earthly kingdom of God. I think I also commented upon the fact that many amillennialists have failed to understand the significance of the Davidic Covenant. In fact, Professor Berkoff, who has written an outstanding theology, has said, “The only Scriptural basis for the premillennial theory is Revelation chapter 20, verses 1 through 6 after an Old Testament content has been poured into it.”

And I tried to point out last time, that the doctrine of the kingdom of God upon the earth does not depend upon one text or Scripture. The length of the kingdom as one thousand years does depend upon that statement made in Revelation chapter 20. But I also commented upon the fact that there were five references to the term “one thousand

years” in that one chapter. So it is not fair, not correct to say that there is only one mention of the length of the time of the kingdom. And it is gross ignorance to claim that the doctrine of the kingdom of God upon the earth depends upon one passage, Revelation chapter 20. That passage has to do with the length of the kingdom, but it’s not the only passage that has to do with the fact of the kingdom. There are many passages throughout the Old Testament that let us know that there is going to be a kingdom of God upon the earth.

Now, last time we also looked at the Davidic Covenant in history and psalm. And you’ll remember, if you were here, about three weeks ago that I made reference to three accounts. And these three accounts of the covenant, I likened to first a floodlight. 2 Samuel chapter 7 is the passage in which the entire history of the development of the kingdom is set forth. And in that passage, the sacred writer throws a floodlight over the history of the development of the kingdom of God upon the earth. Then we looked briefly at the second passage -- or I referred to the second passage in 2 Samuel chapter 7, and I referred to that as a kind of spotlight -- I think I reversed that I should have said 1 Chronicles chapter 17, verses 11 through 14 for this second one and 2 Samuel chapter 7 for the first.

Now, in the three accounts, the first in 2 Samuel chapter 7, we have the floodlight, then, in 1 Chronicles chapter 17, verses 11 through 14, we have the spotlight. And in that passage, in the 1 Chronicles passage, the author of the Scripture focuses a spotlight primarily upon the Messiah. And that passage has a very expanded development of the significance of the coming Messiah and the kingdom.

And finally, we looked at Psalm 89, verse 19 through 37 in which we have our kind of searchlight or even we might say and x-ray light flashed over the Davidic Covenant. Remember in connection with that, we commented upon the fact that Rehoboam’s apostasy and capture had led to doubt of the validity of the covenantal promises that God had given to David. And so Ethan, who is responsible for Psalm 69,

has given us this magnificent Messianic Psalm in which the Davidic Covenant and its promises are confirmed as being unconditional and everlasting. Ethan’s name, you may remember, means perpetuity or strength, and so the very name of the individual responsible for the 89<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a support for the doctrine that the Davidic Covenant is an unconditional covenant.

The outstanding verse in that 89<sup>th</sup> Psalm which speaks of the permanence of the Messianic Covenant made with David is the 37<sup>th</sup> verse in which in our authorized version it reads: “It shall be established for ever like the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.” But I also I think referred you to a more accurate rendering of that 37<sup>th</sup> verse which goes like this: “It shall be established for ever, (that it is the Davidic Covenant,) it shall be established for ever like the moon, and the witness in the sky is faithful.” Now, that statement and the witness in the sky is faithful is a direct statement of the Psalmist to the effect that God who has given the Davidic Covenant is faithful to his promises.

Well, we are going to continue our study of the Davidic Covenant through the Scriptures, and I did not, unfortunately, make reference to the place where I stopped in our last study, and I’m afraid that I did not finish what I intended to finish. So if you don’t mind, I want to review something in connection with the Davidic Covenant in the gospels, just in case I didn’t say anything about it last time. We turned I believe to Luke chapter 1, verse 26 through verse 33, and I wanted to try to draw attention to several important facts.

First of all, that Jesus’ claim to the Davidic throne was incontrovertible. And this is seen in the fact that when the Lord Jesus was here upon the earth, you will discover that there was no question made or asked whatsoever about the validity of our Lord’s claim to the Davidic throne. It is assumed throughout in the New Testament Scripture. When the opponents of our Lord engage him in controversy, they do not question his right and title to be the inheritor of the promises that were made to David. Of course, they do not understand his divine human character, but they do not question the fact that he is the

heir of David. In fact, even the crowds and multitudes speak of him as the son of David. And so it was recognized that our Lord was the legal heir to the Davidic throne.

But of course, the Davidic throne and the Davidic dynasty was in ruins at this time, and the right and title to the throne did not seem to be such a great blessing. But no one questioned our Lord’s claim to the Davidic throne. They could easily have thrown over his entire claim to be the Messiah of Israel by simply saying, “You are not the heir to the throne.” That would have settled the question of the Messiahship of the Lord Jesus right at the beginning, but no one was able to do that, and in fact, we have no record of anyone attempting to do that on the basis of questioning our Lord’s genealogy.

Now, I don’t think I mentioned this, but I want to mention this, so I’m picking form here. If I did mention it, attribute it to old age, because I have forgotten it. Titus destroyed all the genealogical records that had been preserved in the temple. And so what we have at the present day is our New Testament which Matthew chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3 as the only valid genealogical records that give us a genealogy of the Messianic kingdom. So that the Lord Jesus is the only man with an incontrovertible genealogy from David, so that our New Testament records are, in fact, genealogies that let us know that the Lord Jesus is both son of David according to the flesh and the legal heir to the throne that God promised to David and to his seed. You might have wondered why we have a genealogy in the New Testament and why we have two of them. We have two witnesses to our Lord’s right and title to the Davidic throne.

There is an interesting passage in Jeremiah chapter 22 in verse 30 which we will refer to later on if we have time, and so I will save that for that time. But anyway the last time we took a look then at the Davidic Covenant in history and psalm, looking at 2 Samuel 7, 1 Chronicles 17, and Psalm 81, verses 1 through 52. We also looked at the Davidic Covenant and Prophecy. We saw that in Isaiah chapter 9, Isaiah chapter 11, and this should read Haggai, chapter 2, verse 20 through 24, Haggai chapter 2, verse 20 through 24 and Luke chapter 1 verse 26 through 33, and we saw that in all of these

passages, in prophecy as well as in the gospels, there is no indication of any change in the Davidic promises.

Now, we want to take a look at the Davidic Covenant in Acts, in the Epistles, in the apocalypse, and if we have time I want to deal with the Davidic Covenant in theology.

So with that rather lengthy introduction, I want now to read a passage or two of Scripture. Will you turn with me first to Revelation chapter 3 in verse 7, Revelation chapter 3 in verse 7: “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;” Notice particularly, he that hath the key of David.

Chapter 5 verse 5: “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose the seven seals.” Notice particularly the Root of David. Evidently it is regarded as of some significance that our Lord is the Root of David. Long after the Davidic Covenant had been consummated, in fact, over a thousand years probably since that time. Still the Scriptures regard that relationship as important.

Now, chapter 22 in verse 16. These are the three references to the Davidic Covenant in the Book of Revelation, that is, specific references, chapter 22 in verse 16: “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

These are the three references in the Book of Revelation, and they were the ones that I intended to read for Scripture reading. But we’re going to look now at the Davidic Covenant in the Book of Acts, so will you turn also with me to Acts chapter 13, and will you listen as I read verses 26 through 37, Acts chapter 13 verse 26 through 37. This is part of the speech, part of the sermon that the Apostle Paul delivered in Antioch in Pisidia.

And you can see from the texts that the apostle alludes to and the way in which he uses the Old Testament, the kind of preaching that he was accustomed to do.

Verse 26, he comes to the heart of the message: “Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.” Now, notice right here at the beginning we have a linking of the children of Israel with Abraham. They are children of the stock of Abraham. But in a moment he will speak of them receiving the sure mercies of David. And you can see in this the linking up of the two great covenants, the Abrahamic and the Davidic.

Verse 27: “For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. (That is they asked Pilate that he should be slain.) And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how the promise which was made unto the fathers, (Notice again the promise that was made unto the fathers.) God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said in this way, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not allow thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.”

It is very striking, of course, that the Apostle Paul, here in Acts chapter 13, does not preach the miracles of our Lord Jesus. He does not preach the teachings of our Lord

Jesus. He does not preach the good life that the Lord Jesus Christ lived. He does not even preach the love of Christ. He doesn’t of course preach about politics. He doesn’t preach about social reform. He doesn’t say that we need a great deal of public housing and inflation is terrible and we ought to do something about the energy problem. As a matter of fact, he doesn’t even speak about moral issues at all. Nor does he say anything about contemporary theological thought, shame on me. It is the death and burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus that forms the heart of the ministry of the Apostle Paul in Antioch in Pisidia.

In other words, the chief question that the apostle deals with is the question of human sin, of human life, of human destiny. It seems to me that we may learn some things from Paul’s preaching. And if our preaching is usually a *mélange* of things that I referred to a moment ago, we can surely say that it is not apostolic in Biblical preaching. One of the things that should characterize all of our preaching is the pointing out of Scriptural error as well as the positive development of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, and particularly, his ministry in dealing with sin in death, burial, and resurrection.

Augustine said, “We ought to love men, and we ought to slay errors.” Now, there is a great deal about that in the New Testament. We have a great deal of slaying of errors. That is done in books like Jude or 2 Peter or some of the others that have to do with apostasy. Evangelicals need not only pray together, but we need to slay together when it comes to heresies that are attacks on Biblical doctrine. But in the final analysis, the heart of preaching is the ministry of the Lord Jesus in his death, his burial, and his resurrection, and in his dealing with human sin and guilt and condemnation. That is why, it seems to me, that the heart of all preaching should be related to our guilt and our condemnation. Not, are you having a happy life, or is your life a happy and meaningful life, but is there the settlement of the sin, the guilt, the condemnation question in your life? That is the object of the apostolic ministry.



Now, you can see that the apostle first speaks about the rejection of the Messiah. He says in verse 27: “For they that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers because they knew him not nor yet the voices of the prophets have fulfilled him in condemning him.” So the word of salvation is sent to them because their fathers have rejected the Lord Jesus. And Paul begins by saying the reason that I’m here preaching to you men in Antioch is because those who dwelt at Jerusalem have fulfilled the Scriptures in condemning the Lord Jesus. The rejection of our Lord Jesus Christ, you will notice, is also related to their rebellion against God himself and his word.

There is a kind of preaching that is prominent today which in effect says that the trouble with men is that they are confused. And that if we should preach the gospel to them very plainly, then of course they will come into the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, I, of all people, wouldn’t want to get up and say that when we preach the gospel we should not preach it plainly and clearly. Obviously, we should preach the gospel plainly and clearly, and the more clearly we preach it, the better we shall be, but if there is any idea in our minds that the reason that men do not receive the gospel is because they don’t have a clear presentation of it, you should rid your mind of that false doctrine. The reason that men do not respond to the gospel is not because they do not have a clear presentation of it. The reason they do not respond to the gospel is because they are in rebellion against God.

Now, of course if there are by the Holy Spirit being turned from their rebellion to softness toward the ministry of the word, a gospel that is not plain and clear will not help them. But at the same time, our first responsibility is to recognize that men are in rebellion against God. They are not simply confused. They are rebels against God. They are under divine guilt and condemnation because they are rebels against God. So it’s a confusion of mind to think that the only problem is human confusion. It might seem to be an anomaly, but that is confused thinking. You’ll notice that the apostle does not say that the only thing that prevents men from receiving the gospel is a clear presentation of

it. Many of you have already had the experience, personal experience which I’m sure has taught you that. You’ve brought some of your friends to hear a clear presentation of the gospel, and you have discovered that a clear presentation of the gospel is not necessarily going to produce their salvation.

I’ve often heard people come to me afterwards when they think I’ve preached a clear message about the gospel. And they’ve often said to me, I don’t see how anyone in that service this morning could leave this auditorium and not be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, of course, to say that is to misunderstand the nature of the human condition. We are in rebellion against God, and the clearest presentation will not transform us into believers unless the Holy Spirit works and does his work of effectual grace. The proof of that is the fact that the Lord Jesus preached, surely you would say he preached a fairly clear gospel, but not everybody responded. I’m sure that you would say that the Apostle Paul preached a clear gospel, but not everybody responded. The apostles preached plain and clear messages, but men did not respond. Furthermore, we could say that the Lord Jesus loved people. Love does not bring people to Christ. Love may be helpful used by the Holy Spirit, but love does not bring people to Christ. Our Lord loved as no other man ever loved, but men didn’t come to Christ necessarily. The Apostle Paul was a loving apostle and preached the gospel in love, but men did not come necessarily.

So the apostle speaks about rebellion. Then he speaks about exaltation. He says, but God -- how often do we have in the Bible that little phrase, “but God”? We have talked about how the rulers at Jerusalem have crucified him, but then we read, *but God* raised him from the dead. These two words that are used in this context here, “raised” and then “seem” in verses 30 and 31, vindicate the saving purpose of God. You might have thought if you had been standing by the cross and you had heard the son of God cry out “My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me,” and then if you had seen wicked men plunge spears into his side and ultimately if you had seen him taken away and

placed in a sepulchre and that sepulchre closed above him, you might have thought that God somehow or other had lost control of things. But the resurrection is the proof that God has not lost control of things.

I remember reading a little story of a comment of a child who had just been going through one of those kinds of storms that we’ve been having every other night here in the city of Dallas. And in the midst of the lightning and the thunder and the blowing of the winds, the little girl said that God must have lost grip of his winds tonight. Well, God doesn’t lose control of his winds, nor does he lose control of his plan.

And so we read, “but God raised him from the dead.” And furthermore, these men who were witnesses of the resurrection are witnesses unto their death. Pascal said, “I readily believe those witnesses who get their throats cut.” And the apostles are men who gave themselves totally to the ministry of the resurrected Messiah, and we have no record of them turning from their word about his resurrection until the end of their days. They are witnesses of his resurrection.

And finally, having said this, the apostle turns to the dispensation of the Davidic blessing. We read in verse 34: “And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said, I will give you the sure mercies of David.” The reference to the sure mercies of David is a reference to the Old Testament, and so I’m going to ask you, if you will, to turn to the passage. It’s found in the 55<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Isaiah, Isaiah chapter 55. This is one of the great passages of the Old Testament, and particularly is it a passage which the salvation that is to come through the Messiah is expounded. All of you know, I’m sure, the first verse of Isaiah chapter 55:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why, why do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul

delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

The reference here in Isaiah chapter 55 is also derived from the 89<sup>th</sup> Psalm, so we have a kind of golden chain. We have the 89<sup>th</sup> Psalm which is a lyrical presentation of the Davidic Covenant, and that Psalm states, his seed also I will make to endure forever and his throne as the days of heaven. So in the 89<sup>th</sup> Psalm, we have a promise of an everlasting throne for David.

Then in Isaiah chapter 55, we have further development of it. And we are told through these promises that God has made to David, there will also come an abundant pardon. This is one of the most beautiful expressions in all of the Bible, an abundant pardon. Think of it for just a moment. God will abundantly pardon. It is an abundant pardon because, of course, it comes from an infinite fountain, and that fountain is the finished work of an infinite Savior. It is an abundant pardon because of the objects of this pardon.

There are some who think that because we talk about the doctrines of the distinguishing grace, and because we talk about the elect and because we talk about those who have been ordained to eternal life that the number of the elect is going to be very small. And we’re going to have a problem of loneliness in heaven. But that is not true at all.

The Bible is full of evidences to the fact that there will be a multitude in heaven which no man can number even out of the tribulation itself, just out of the tribulation itself there will come a multitude that no man can number out of every tribe and kindred and tongue and nation. Not to speak of the countless thousands of people, perhaps millions, down through the years that have come to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The pardon that God is responsible for is truly an abundant pardon because there are abundant objects of that pardon. And furthermore, in the Scriptures we are taught through the prophetic word that when Israel as a nation comes to the Lord, then we are going to see something like life from the dead. That is, there is going to be a worldwide salvation to the ends of the earth that will make the present countless thousands that have come to faith in Christ in this age appear to be a small number. So heaven must be a very large place and is going to be filled with multitudes of people.

Just because we believe that all of these people are elect, we are not to think that our God is some kind of little God who’s only going to allow a few people into heaven. There is going to be a great number of people in heaven. It is an abundant pardon when we look at the objects of it. And of course, when we look at the sins and the sinfulness of sin, then it is again seen to be a tremendously abundant pardon because it covers all of our sins, all kinds of sins, our little sins, our medium-sized sins, our great sins, our sins of the mind, our sins of our thoughts, our sins of our word, our sins of our deeds, all of these sins are covered by the abundant pardon of our great God. So this is no little Savior, no little sacrifice but a great Savior, a great sacrifice and abundant pardon.

I think we could also speak of an abundant pardon from the standpoint of the terms of the pardon, too. We are not told that in order to obtain this pardon we must walk from here to Mecca on our knees, or we are not told that we must pay a certain amount of money in order to obtain this pardon. The means for the obtaining of the pardon are the simplest means that could be imagined. It is to be received as a gift. It is to be received through faith. It truly is an abundant pardon.

We often sing around the Lord’s table, who is a pardoning God like thee? Or who has grace so rich and free? That statement is derived from Isaiah chapter 55 in verse 7: “And to our God for he will abundantly pardon.” This is the Davidic pardon, and it is a great pardon.

Now, you can see then from this passage in Acts chapter 13, that here long after the conclusion of the Davidic Covenant, the Apostle Paul regards that covenant as still being a valid covenant because he speaks of them receiving the sure mercies of David. So evidently, the unbelief of Israel in the Old Testament did not cancel the Davidic promises.

Let’s look on the chapter 15, verse 13 through verse 18 of the Book of Acts. This is a passage that we’ve referred to already; I want to read through it beginning at verse 13 through verse 18. In several of the churches in California about ten days ago in our prophetic congress, I spoke on this passage upon which I have spoken here in our studies: And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Now, remember the context in Acts chapter 15 they had come together to discuss the question of the manner of the Gentile salvation. The question of whether the Gentiles could be saved had been settled in Cornelius’ house because there Gentiles were saved. But now the question is how are the Gentiles to be saved? Are they first to become Jews in order to be saved, or is there a necessity for them to become Jews by being circumcised in order to be saved? And that is the question that is raised here in the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter in the Book of Acts. And of course, the answer which is very plain and clear through it, is that salvation is a work of grace. We believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they.

There are of course only three ways in which people could be saved. We could be saved by good works, but the Bible speaks very plainly about the fact that we are not saved by good works. Furthermore, how could we know when our good works were sufficient? Well, there are no texts in Scripture that tell us how many good works are

satisfying to God. And in addition if we were saved by good works then it would really not be God who is saving us, but we would be saving ourselves, and we would be robbing God of his glory. He doesn’t like to have people rob him of his glory because that is part of his Godhood, to have all the glory. People might think he ought to be tolerant. He ought to share some of what he has with others. But the very fact that he is God demands that he be kind of person.

Now, we could arrange then some work or conceivably some scheme of salvation by which we could do something and God could do something. We could kind of share the work. He would give Jesus Christ to die on the cross, and we would do a few other things. That of course is what many of our religious organizations have come up with. They talk a great deal about the saving work of Christ, but they also talk about being baptized or confessing one’s sins or doing good works or joining their particular church or observing the ceremonies of their particular organization, and so they have a kind of fifty-fifty or sixty-forty or seventy-thirty kind of arrangement in which both God and man do their parts. So of course in the Bible, salvation is by the Lord alone. In this way, he gets all the glory, and in this way the Scriptures are harmonized. For the Bible says that salvation is of the Lord.

Now, that question was settled, but this other question, the question of the manner of the Gentile salvation is the question that James gets up to speak to, and he says:

“Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how God for the first time did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again its ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the age.”

Now, this passage has three great movements. James first speaks about the outgathering of a people from the nations for the name of God. So he tells us that in the present age God is calling out of the nations a people for his name. Then he speaks about the regathering and restoration of the nation Israel: “After this I will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build it again its ruins.” So he says that he will restore Israel.

And finally, as a result of that, he says in verse 17 that the residue of men -- that is Jews -- might seek after the Lord in all the nations upon whom my name is called. In other words, there will be an ingathering of the Gentiles or the world. But the important thing that I want you to notice is the statement in verse 16: “After this I will return, and build again the tabernacle of David,” Just notice that little phrase, the tabernacle of David, for that is a reference to the dynasty of David. It is in effect a reference to the Davidic covenant. It is stated then that as a result of God’s purposes for the church being completed, then he shall turn to Israel, and he will restore Israel, and in the process of the restoration he will build again the tabernacle of David. That is, the dynasty of David is simply a reference that he will perform the Davidic Covenant.

Now, let’s look at the Davidic Covenant in the epistles. I want you to turn with me to Romans chapter 1, verses 3 and 4 first. The same story is found in the Epistles. Christ is the seed of David, and his seed will I make to endure for ever as the Psalmist had said and that is the way that the New Testament speaks of the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant in the seed the Lord Jesus. Romans chapter 1 verses 3 and 4, we read: “Concerning his Son (He’s talking about the gospel) concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;”

Now, why is there any reason for mention of the fact that the Lord Jesus is the seed of David according to the flesh? It is to identify him as the one to whom the Davidic promises are ultimately made, concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord who was made of



the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. The apostles evidently regarded it as a matter of importance that our Lord Jesus should be connected with the Davidic line. Evidently that was part of their apostolic preaching, to make reference to the fact that the Lord Jesus was the seed of David; for the Messiah was to be of the seed of Abraham and he was also to be of the seed of David, because the kingdom is to come through David. So that was part of their apostolic message. That was part of their preaching. How often do you have people preach in that way today? Very rarely, very rarely, because they are not biblical preachers? But this was an important line of teaching for the preaching of the word for the apostles.

Will you turn over to Romans chapter 15, verses 7 through 13 and will you listen again while I read these verses: “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:” In other words, he came in order that he may carry out his ministry that those promises might be established in the blood of his cross. The foundation laid for the fulfillment of them. “And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the nations, and sing unto thine name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye nations or Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye nations; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse,” Who is the root of Jesse? Well, the root of Jesse of course was David. “And he there shall be a root of Jesse and he shall rise to reign over the nations; in him shall the nations trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.” In other words it was the Davidic ruler who is to rule over the Gentiles, and the apostle affirms here that the Lord Jesus is the Davidic seed and is the ruler who shall rule over the whole of the earth.

The last passage in the epistles, 2 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 8; 2 Timothy chapter 2 in verse 8. The apostle writing to Timothy states: “Timothy remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” And again notice the reference of our Lord Jesus as connected with David and with his seed. By the way, this text lays a great deal of stress upon the manner in which the Lord Jesus is to be remembered. We never should have seen this translated, remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised. For the writing in the original text is designed to stress the manner in which we are to remember him, Timothy particularly.

Paul actually said to Timothy something like this: “Remember Jesus Christ as raised from the dead of the seed of David.” In other words, remember him in his character as a resurrected person. Think of him as a living Savior, Timothy. And think of him also as a person from the seed of David. So there is a very direct connection made with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus as being the consummation of our Lord saving work by which he is to become the Davidic ruler over the whole of the earth. So the resurrection is related specifically to our Lord’s rule over the earth. And notice it was according to my gospel. This is part of the gospel that I preach. That he died, that he was buried, that he was raised again, and because he’s been raised again, he’s the Davidic king, and he shall rule over the whole of the earth.

Finally, the Davidic Covenant -- or sixthly, the Davidic Covenant in the apocalypse. Now we have looked at these texts, so I’ll save just a little time by not referring to them. Remember in the passage in chapter 3 in verse 7, reference is made to the fact that the Lord Jesus has the key of David. Again, this is a reference to the Old Testament. It is a beautiful figure because in the ancient world they generally thought that heaven was closed by doors and that the access into heaven and the power to open and shut the doors was in the hands of certain angelic beings or deities. This was a general idea throughout the ancient near-eastern world. They had the power of access.

Now, the Lord Jesus, you remember, is said in the Book of Revelation to have the keys of death in Hades. That means that he has the disposition over death and the disposition over Hades, but he is also said here to have the key of David. And this statement that he has the key of David is taken from the Old Testament. It’s taken specifically from Isaiah chapter 22 in verse 22 where Eliakim is appointed treasurer of the royal palace in Jerusalem. And the key of David is laid on his shoulder in token of the fact that Eliakim is appointed the treasurer of the royal palace in Jerusalem.

And since it is the key of David that is put on his shoulder, it is in effect the reference to him as being the person who has control over the royal palace of David. Now, taking those phrases from the Old Testament the Lord Jesus in the message that he gave to the church at Philadelphia speaks of himself as the person who has the key of David. Now, what he means by that, of course, since the key of David typically was access to the royal palace in Jerusalem and anti-typically is a reference to the Davidic blessings the sure mercies of David, what our Lord is claiming is that he is the person who possesses the right and authority to bestow upon men, the sure mercies of David. That’s the effect of that statement. He is the Messianic ruler.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter in the 5<sup>th</sup> verse of the Book of Revelation, we learn how he obtained his right to rule and how he obtained his right to have the key of David. It is because he suffered, he is the lamb that was slain who is now seen in the mists of heaven standing. Have you ever noticed that that text says that after when John sees the vision and he hears the voice, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has prevailed to open the book? He turns to look at the lion of Judah and he sees a lamb standing as it had been slain.

Now of course, a lamb, if it is a lamb as having been slain would not be standing, it would be lying upon the ground, dead. But in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ of which that is a figure, he was in the sepulchre, but he rose again from the dead and

consequently, the lamb is pictured as having been slaughtered and sacrificed. But yet at the same time standing because he is the living slain lamb.

So that tells us how he obtains his right to rule. And you’ll notice also from that 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Revelation, since in that 5<sup>th</sup> chapter we are told in effect that the lamb has the right to take the book and open the seals. And the book is a kind of foreview of how the Messiah shall come to his kingdom through judgment, we are also taught there that that future kingdom, which is to be his, is a future kingdom. It’s not a present kingdom, but a future kingdom. And the rest of the Book of Revelation details how the lamb shall come to his possession.

And finally, in chapter 22 in verse 16 the final description that our Lord gives of himself links himself with David, although he’s the greater David. He says: “I am the root and the offspring of David.” He is the offspring of David because he’s David’s son, that speaks of his humanity. But he is also the root of David, the one from who David springs. And of course, that pictures him as the son of God, and the bright and morning star. He is both root and offspring of David.

Now, in about one minute I want to say just a word about the Davidic Covenant in theology. All agree of course, that Christ fulfills the covenant. All do not agree however, about how and when our Lord fulfills the Davidic Covenant. There are two principal answers. Amillennialists teach that Jesus Christ fulfills the Davidic Covenant in his present session at God’s right hand. He is there right now sitting upon the Davidic throne, and the Davidic Covenant is fulfilled in the salvation which we in the church of Jesus Christ possess. There is no ethnic future for Israel. Not all amillennialists have the same view; some combine this with an ethnic future for Israel, but no kingdom of God upon the earth.

Premillennialists, of course, have taught that Jesus Christ fulfills the covenant in his return and in his reign on the earth. Must the Davidic Covenant be fulfilled literally?

George N. H. Peters in his famous book *The Theocratic Kingdom* has listed 21 arguments

for the literal fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant under proposition 52 of his book. In the course of listing 21 arguments, he said these are not the main arguments. There are five or six others which will be presented later on, and they’re the main arguments. There are literally a score or more of arguments to the effect that the Davidic Covenant must be fulfilled literally. David and Solomon so understood it. You can read the Old Testament to that effect for yourself. The Jews obviously expected a literal fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. The coming of the king, the Lord Jesus, is literally accomplished and insisted upon in that passage that we read in Romans chapter 1.

Must partial historical fulfillment be followed by complete historical fulfillment? Since we have had partial historical fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah who has come, has died, has been buried, has been raised from the dead, must we expect a kingdom over the face of the earth as a literal historical kingdom? Well, I think that if we have had a partial fulfillment and it is literal and historical, it certainly is to be expected that the complete fulfillment shall also be an historical and literal fulfillment. Israel’s present, retained, national identity is a stubborn fact that points to the literal fulfillment of her promises. And Acts chapter 15, the passage that we read, is confirmation of that. We must stop. We will continue our study by turning next to the New Covenant in our next study next week. Let’s bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the assurance that the covenant made with David, it’s an unconditional covenant. We thank Thee, Lord, that the fulfillment of it rests not upon men ultimately but upon Thee. Accept our thanks.

In the name of the Lord Jesus and for his sake. Amen.

