



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Lessons from the Life of David

2 Samuel 7; Acts 15: 13-18

“The Davidic Covenant New Testament Fulfillment and Prophecy”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're going to be reading a number of passages from the New Testament in the message that will follow, which will be something like the message last Sunday in that we will look at a number of places in the New Testament that have to do with the Davidic Covenant that we are seeking to develop in this three-part series in the midst of our longer series on themes from the life of David. We will go back to David's life next week, finishing up chapter 7 of 2 Samuel 7.

But for the Scripture reading, I'd like to pick out one of the passages that we will look at briefly, and it is Acts chapter 15, verse 13 through verse 18. And in the light of the fact that we will be making a few comments about it, let me just, for a few moments, remind you of the context of Acts chapter 15. The Lord is doing through Paul and Barnabas and others the work of salvation in Antioch and in the area. And the result has been the rise of a bit of disagreement over the question of how Gentiles are to be saved. Are they to be saved in the same way and on the same grounds as those who belong to the nation Israel?

Now, since an Israelite was required to be circumcised on the eighth day as a sign of belonging to the Abrahamic Covenant, the question arose in the midst of the Gentiles, are they required to be circumcised in order to be saved? And there was discussion over it, disagreement over it, reflected in one of our New Testament Epistles, the Epistle to the Galatians. And so at Antioch, there arose a controversy over that point. As a result of it, Paul and Barnabas, after dissension and dispute over the question, with certain others went up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders in order to discuss the question. And they were sent on their way by the church and they passed through Phoenician and Samaria and they described as they went along the conversion of the Gentiles, which was the occasion of the problem; in what way are they to be received into the Church of Jesus Christ? And when they came to Jerusalem, they were received by the Church and the apostles and the elders, and they told them the things that had been happening among the Gentiles. But there were there in Jerusalem some believing members of the sect of the Pharisees who, as in Antioch, said it is necessary to circumcise the Gentile believers and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.

So the apostles and the elders came together to consider the question and there was a great deal of dispute and discussion. And, finally, Peter arose and gave the conclusion of their discussion, which for the sake of time I'll just mention is found in the 11<sup>th</sup> verse in which Peter says, “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they. And it is, therefore, not necessary to lay upon them a yoke, the yoke of the law, which we were not able to bear, nor our fathers.” Well, at that point, the multitude fell silent because that question had reached its conclusion. And Barnabas and Paul stood up and began to simply describe the blessings that had happened as a result of their ministry among the Gentiles. And after they had finished, the multitude became silent again. And at that point James, the brother of our Lord, stood up and said, “Men and brethren, listen to me.”

Now, if we'll remember, that lying back of this was the question of Jewish or Israelite-ish predominance, you can understand how it might be that those who felt that the Gentiles should be circumcised in the light of the Old Testament teaching might have been a little disturbed, perhaps, in their misunderstanding. The apostles might have been suggesting to them that the great promises of the Scriptures, and remember, the Scriptures to them were our Old Testament, were somehow negated by what Peter and others were now saying. And so James stood up at this point, perhaps to soothe the multitude a bit, and to remind them that the predominance that Scripture sets forth in Scripture in the last days is something that is not set aside by the fact that at the present time, the gospel is going out to the Gentiles, and they are responding in the ways in which they are responding.

So in verse 13, we read.

“And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, ‘Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon [That is, Simon Peter.] has declared how God at the first [He refers to Cornelius’ house where the gospel was preached to Gentiles by himself.] God for the first time [or at the first] visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this [he adds] the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written.’”

In other words, Peter says if you carefully consider the prophets of the Old Testament, you will see that the present day of Jewish rejection largely, not entirely for there is a remnant of believers, is found in the Old Testament and specifically in the Book of Amos in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter. So he says, “With this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written. After this.” Now, in the New Testament, the expression literally is *meta tauta* which means “after these things.” In the Old Testament Hebrew text, the expressions are “in that day” which is usually a reference to the future day. In the great translation of the Old Testament, the expression is *entay hemera ay kaynay* which means

“in that day.” So James has made a slight change. It probably has no great significance and we’re not going to underline it too much except that it does harmonize with what is following. “After these things.”

Well, what is today? Today is the day of Jewish disavowal, Jewish rejection. They have rejected our Lord. The vast majority are unbelieving. A remnant remains according to the election of grace. And so James says.

“After this [Amos, and he’s citing from Amos, Amos says.] I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up; so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.”

Now, it is clear that James wants to remind all who are there that the promises to Israel are not cancelled by what has happened. They still hold. The covenants are unconditional. And then he concludes, “Known to God from eternity are all His works.”

Now, we’ll discuss that briefly and some other passages in the message that follows, but let’s bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are indeed grateful to Thee for the blessings that are ours through the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants and the New Covenant, which our Lord has ratified in the shedding of his own blood on Calvary’s cross. We thank Thee that these covenants are unconditional covenants that depend for their complete fulfillment upon Thy faithfulness, Lord, to Thy word. And, therefore, we know that we have a sure foundation for the promises that Thou hast given that come, ultimately, from those covenantal statements that Thou hast made.

We thank Thee for the day in which we live. We know that this is within the eternal purpose of the Lord God that there should be, as the apostle writes in Romans

chapter 11, a disavowal and then a return to the Lord by thine own people, Israel. And in the day in which we live, Lord, help us to understand and appreciate what Thou art doing through the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel to the four corners of the earth. Enable us, if it should please Thee, Lord, to have a part in the bringing of the Gentiles into the family of God. We are indeed grateful and thankful for that that Thou hast done in our lives and we pray, Lord, that this work may continue as in accordance with the divine purpose.

We remember, Lord, too, our President, today. And we remember his exhortation to us that we make this a day of prayer for the things that are happening in the Near East. And we pray for the President give him wisdom and guidance, and those who are associated with him, give them, Lord, guidance and direction as well. Deliver them from the kinds of weakness that often happen in situations like this that, ultimately, leads to the detriment of the purposes that the coalition is seeking to accomplish.

We pray for our soldiers from the United States of America and for other solders who are fighting in the coalition with them. We pray for each one of them and we ask, Lord, that if it should please Thee that Thou wilt give them victory and give them victory in a short time and return them safely to us. We pray that the purposes for which they are there may be accomplished and that Thou mayest be pleased in those purposes. We commit all of those who are directing them, especially our generals of the Army, of the Air Force, of the Navy, of the Marines. We ask that Thou wilt give the kind of wisdom that only comes from Thee, Lord, and bless them richly. And for those of the other nations who are with them, we pray for them, as well and for their leaders. And we ask, Lord, that Thou will so work that there may be, soon, a measure of peace in that part of the world.

We thank Thee for the church of Jesus Christ and ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon the whole body, and upon Believers Chapel and its ministries, O God. Glorify Thy name in the blessing that Thou dost shower upon us. We thank Thee for the past, we look

forward to the future and, especially, to the coming again of our Lord. We pray that in the meantime, we may be faithful in proclaiming him, who loved us, and has loosed us from our sins in his own precious blood.

We pray for the sick and especially for the bereaved. Give answers, Lord, to the petitions that they have requested that we pray for them. And may Thy name be honored in the answers that Thou dost give. We pray for our young people and for our adults, as well. May this work continue by Thy grace to have blessing from the Triune God in heaven, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Be with us as we now sing, as we listen to the word of God preached.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Because of the importance of the Davidic Covenant for understanding Scripture, we've hesitated in our studies in the Life of David to spend one message on the covenantal promises as found in 2 Samuel chapter 7, about verse 12 through verse 16 or 17. And then, last week, we looked at the Davidic Covenant in the Old Testament, primarily, reading a number of Scriptures in which the details of the covenant were expanded by the promises found in the Old Testament. And today, continuing that, and this will conclude our study, I know that it's rather brief, but for purposes of the Sunday morning ministry, it's probably desirable.

Returning to the New Testament and the subject is, “The Davidic Covenant in New Testament Fulfillment and Prophecy.” What we have been trying to say is that the cornerstone of the plan of salvation lies in the divine covenants, the promises, and the prophecies with which the Bible is filled in the Old and New Testaments are promises and prophecies that lie in the covenant and are, actually, derived from the covenants.

It's very much like the marriage covenant. When two young people covenant together to be married and to live together as husband and wife, the marriage covenant is the ground upon which the promises that flow out of that arrangement is found. And so

when two young people covenant together, the blessings of the covenant are things that lie within the covenant itself. And all of the promises with reference to marriage, for both parties, lie in the essential covenant that is made, so likewise the covenants of the Old Testament.

Now, the Abrahamic Covenant we said is the fundamental covenant of the word of God. The Davidic Covenant promises that we have been looking at the last couple of Sundays, these are covenantal promises that testify to the coming of a theocratic king ruling over a restored theocratic kingdom. In effect, they expand the Abrahamic Covenant, giving us more detail. God told Abraham that kings should arise out of him and he confirmed that to Jacob. But in the Davidic Covenant that is expanded and, consequently, we are told about an eternal seed who shall have an eternal throne and who shall rule in an eternal kingdom. And we have pointed out in the exposition of 2 Samuel 7, that God told David that his posterity would last forever. But we learned, thinking about it, that the posterity of David can only last forever by running out in a person who lives forever.

Solomon was the first of the line of the sons of David who were inheritors of the kingdom. But, ultimately, if there is to be an eternal kingdom that covenant must run out in a person who lives forever, if there is to be an eternal kingdom. And the Scriptures tell us that those promises culminate in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, the son of David, and we'll see great stress is laid upon that in many passages in the Bible. And, of course, he is one who lives forever. And, furthermore, in our Lord's case, as the legal heir to the Davidic throne, there is no one who follows him, for Jesus Christ had no seed. And so, consequently, the promises that God gave to David, ran out in the eternal Messianic King, the Lord Jesus Christ. How important it is for us to recognize those things.

Now, we've looked at the Davidic Covenant in the Old Testament, and we're now turning to the New Testament and, I'm afraid that it's going to go rather rapidly for you, and I hope that you will, at least, realize that what we're trying to do is, perhaps,

impossible. But maybe if you will go home and open up the Scriptures and go through it yourself and reflect on some of the passages that we look at, you will obtain some profit from what I'm going to try to say.

I want to, first of all, look at the Davidic Covenant in our Lord's teaching then the Davidic Covenant in the book of Acts and then the Davidic Covenant in Paul's teaching, and, finally, the Davidic Covenant in the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse. And, of course, this is, I hasten to underline, a survey.

Now, we'll only note a few of the important points. You remember that the angel who came and gave the annunciation of the birth of our Lord to Mary had said to her.

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” And now, reading from Luke 1:31 through 33, you need not look up this passage, “The angel said, ‘Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a son, and shall call his name, Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of his kingdom there will be no end.’”

Now, in our Lord's teaching, just to sum up what is said, first of all, our Lord, clearly, in the New Testament and in the Gospels, makes it very plain that he regards himself as David's son. I'll ask you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 22, and we'll read together verse 41 through verse 46, and I'll just make a few comments upon it. If you are interested in more of an exposition and fuller detail, you can always go in the tape ministry and get out the messages that are given on these specific passages. There are lengthy expositions of each one of them, I believe.

Now, in verse 41 of Matthew chapter 22, we read, “And while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them.” And, incidentally, this is the day of questions, a few days before our Lord is crucified. Called the day of questions because the Herodians



have asked him a question and he has replied to that. The Sadducees have asked him and he has replied to that. The Pharisees and he has replied to them. And now, since they've asked him questions, he turns and asks them a question. And, to put it very simply, what he does is trump their ace. They've given their best questions to disprove he is what he claims to be. Now, he, from the Scriptures, trumps their claims, their aces.

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them saying, ‘What do you think about the Messiah? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him Lord, saying, [Now, he cites a passage in the Old Testament, Psalm 110 in verse 1.] ‘The Lord said to my Lord, [David is speaking.] ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool?’ If David then calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?’”

And you can see, when he asked the question, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” and they say, “Son of David.” You can understand, now, how they must have felt when Jesus turns to the text and says, “But David said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of my feet.’” In other words, the Lord said to the Messiah this. So Jesus then says, “If David calls him Lord” and they had no doubt about whether that was a reference to the Messiah. “David calls him Lord how can he be his son?”

Now, of course, the question that our Lord wanted to give them and the answer that he wished that they would give, humanly speaking, was, “Oh, but he is both Son and Lord.” In other words, the Messiah is both Son and Lord. That was, of course, the exposition that would have, I'm sure, caused the Lord Jesus to say, I'm astonished at your faith. But as the result was that they, not understanding, were forced to admit that they couldn't answer it.

“And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.”

And I can imagine because they didn't want any more of those kinds of questions that embarrassed them, but Jesus gave them. But the point that is important is this; that it is plain from what our Lord does here that he regarded himself not simply as David's son but as David's Lord. But we are not talking so much about David's Lord as we are about David's son. He regarded himself, truly, as the son of David. Now, that is so important for this reason; that that means that he regarded himself as the heir of the Davidic throne promises. That's the important point.

Now, there are other things that Jesus says with reference to the kingdom. In Matthew chapter 4 in verse 17, repeating the message that John the Baptist preached when he began his preaching, he said, “Repent! For the kingdom of the Heavens is at hand.” In other words, the eternal kingdom promised to David is a kingdom that is at hand in his ministry. So he believed he's the son of David, he believed, furthermore, that the kingdom set forth in the Old Testament is at hand. And, remember, he does not give any new definitions of the kingdom. He gives the term kingdom the meaning that it had in Old Testament language and literature, which was the glorious Messianic kingdom of the future.

Later on when it becomes very evident that Israel has reacted negatively to the ministry of the Lord Jesus, and when we say “reacted negatively,” we do not mean that everyone has reacted negatively, that is obviously not true, but we mean by that that the mass of the people and the leadership have reacted negatively. The Lord Jesus, in Matthew chapter 21 in verse 43, in the concluding word or so of the Parable of the Land Owner, makes this statement, “Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of heaven will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” So we can sum up by

saying, Jesus regarded himself as the son of David, but also David's Lord, the divine Son. He regarded himself with his presence pronouncing that the kingdom was near, he also taught that Israel had rejected the kingdom as a whole, but that did not mean that the kingdom was, therefore, to come.

Those promises, we remember, are unconditional promises. So around the Lord's Supper in the promises that were given there, we read in chapter 26 in verse 29, “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.” So he has said, in effect, I'm the promised son, I'm the son of David, I've inherited the kingdom promises, that kingdom is near because I am near, then he has, after the ministry has reached nearly its conclusion, he says, as a result of Israel's disobedience, the kingdom is taken away from them and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof. But, he does not say that that kingdom is not going to come to pass as promised. As a matter of fact, after that statement, he says that the time will come that he will drink in his Father's kingdom with them.

And that is a simple statement of what our Lord taught with regard to the kingdom. The kingdom came with him, it was rejected by the nation, but the rejection leads to the discipline of Israel, but the kingdom promises are unconditional and they are still to come. He is the son and he is also the Divine Son.

You can understand, then, how blasphemous it is for an individual to speak of our Lord Jesus in this way. “The accepted Savior of Christian nations,” someone has said, “Is the theologic Christ, a strange Hebraic hybrid, half God and half man, a church monster, shapen by the old ecclesiastical fathers and Roman bishops, from the most worthless portions of the cast off drippings of Pagan tradition.” How different from what our Lord and the apostles say with reference to him.

But now, let's turn over to the Book of Acts. And, first of all, we'll turn to Acts chapter 13, and make a simple reference to the apostles preaching in Antioch in Pisidia. Paul's sermons are interesting sermons because, generally speaking, what he does is to

review history. Now, you must remember, that for the apostle preaching in the synagogues, the New Testament was not something that they had in hand. The only thing that they had were the Old Testament Scriptures. And so what he generally did was go through the Old Testament Scriptures, point out the things that were said concerning the Messiah, and then, in light of the events that happened in Jerusalem, he pointed out that the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ met perfectly and fulfilled the prophecies that were given in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, who was to come, prophecies that arose out of the covenants of the Old Testament.

So in Acts chapter 13, Paul reviews history, he reviews the Messiah’s ministry. He talks about his rejection, he talks about his exaltation, he talks about the dispensation of Davidic blessing, which is characterization of our day. Let me just sum up, reading from about verse 29 of chapter 13.

“Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tiding that that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ [So, Paul says that Jesus is the son of David.] And then He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus, ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’ [The blessings that lie in the Davidic Covenant. That’s a citation from Isaiah chapter 55 in verse 3.] Therefore, He also says in another Psalm, ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption, Psalm 16, verse 36 ‘For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.’”

In other words, it's very plain what Paul is saying is that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God, but he is also the one who, by virtue of the fact of his resurrection, has been demonstrated to be David's son, and, thus, the heir of the mercies of David which are preached through him.

Those are remarkable things, as you look back and consider the ministry of the Lord Jesus; it might have seemed something that was very doleful, like a dirge, to read, for example, they didn't find any cause of death in him. They asked Pilot that he should be put to death, when they had fulfilled that was written concerning him; they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. Everything looks very bad.

Years ago, I was preaching on this and Peggy Lee had just made popular a song, which was something like “If that's all there is” and she talked about how if that's all there is, if for example, you've fallen in love with someone, and as a result of that the falling in love with this boy, he leaves you. She sang, if that's all there is, and then, I think, also, about a twelve-year-old boy's enjoyment of a circus, and then ‘if that's all there is’ and then, finally, she concluded with something like, I've forgotten exactly how this went, but something like, at the end of life, if you think about the end of life, and ‘if that's all there is’ then she added, ‘then break out the booze and have a ball, if that's all there is.’

Well, one might have looked at the death of our Lord Jesus Christ in a similar way, if you simply looked at it from the human standpoint because what they did to him appeared to be just exactly the negation of everything for which our Lord stood. But, lying in the background is the mighty power of God and the promises of the Old Testament. And so while men are doing all of these things, these blasphemous things to our Lord Jesus Christ, God is working and when, finally, he has uttered the words, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” And, “It is finished! Into Thy hands, Father, I commit my spirit.” Then, God acts and raises him from the dead.

So behind all of the things that were happening, God was working and the result was that the dispensation of the verses of David flows out of the finished work of the

Lord Jesus Christ and we are living in that day, so the apostle says, by virtue of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's one reason why we read or why we sing, “Who is pardoning God like Thee, or who has grace so rich and free.” Words that are built on the same passage in Isaiah chapter 55, for in that chapter in which the sure mercies of David are referred to, the prophet calls upon the children of Israel to seek the Lord, while he may be found, call upon him while he is near, let the individual return to the Lord. “He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Those are pardoning promises that flow out of the covenants that God has made with the children of Israel.

I wish it were possible to speak for a time on the abundant pardon that we truly have, in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is abundant because it's an infinite fountain. It's abundant because the objects to which pardon is extended are an abundant number of people, people often say, I have to say this over and over again, because it's difficult for some to understand that if you believe in the sovereign grace of God and if you believe God has elected a people and has passed by others, then what you are suggesting is that heaven is a limited place. Scripture says just the opposite. Heaven is a place in which there are so many people who have received the blessings of God that no man can number them, they are from every kindred tribe, tongue and nation, as a result of the plenteous, abundant grace of the Lord Jesus, grounded in the shedding of the blood of the Redeemer on Calvary's Cross.

It's startling to me that one can be so wrong, in light of the plainness of the Scriptures. As I say, it would be nice to talk about other ways in which God's pardon is abundant. That's for another time, in fact, if you want to look at the series on Acts and look at the message there, I do go into that a little bit more.

But, turn over with me now to Acts chapter 15, I'd like to say a few more words about the Davidic Covenant as it is found here in the words of the Old Testament, cited by James, the brother of our Lord.

Now, remember the flow of the argument, there has been discussion and dispute over the question of whether Gentiles must be saved as Jews; that is, the men must be circumcised. And, the result of the discussions of the earlier part of the chapter reach their conclusion in verse 11 when Peter says, “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” In other words, the Gentiles do not have to be circumcised in order to have the confidence that they belong to the family of God. Circumcision belongs to the Law of Moses and, therefore, has been done away with.

Now, at this point, because of the debate, there may have been some feeling on the part of the Jewish people involved, the Pharisees that believed that what is suggested by this is that the Old Testament promises, therefore, no longer prevail, and we are not to pay attention to them. Well, fortunately, at this point, the multitude fell silent after Peter’s great statement in verse 11. “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved in the same manner as they.” Reversed, incidentally, you would think they shall be saved in the same manner as “we Jews,” but in order to show that in an individual who would like to lay that burden on the Gentiles, doesn’t really understand grace perhaps as well as he should. He says, “We believe that we shall be saved in the same manner as they,” as if, the Gentiles have truly been saved in a way that glorifies the mercy and grace of God.

Well, they began to discuss the things that have been happening among the Gentiles and Barnabas and Saul stood up and spoke about the many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. And then after that period of time, it’s at this point that James stands up. And I suggest to you that the reason that he does is because he wants to make very plain that, though Gentiles are to be saved precisely as the Jews, and the Jews precisely as the Gentiles, and Gentiles don’t have to become Jews in order to be saved in this age, the promises that were made to Israel still prevail, the promises that lie in the future. And so James, after these things have taken

place says, “Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon hath declared,” and he’s talking about Peter, “how God for the first,” or, at the first, and this was in Cornelius’ house, “visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written.” And here, he cites from Amos chapter 9, and it’d be nice if we had time again to go back there, but we don’t have time to do that, in order to show that those promises still hold for David’s compatriots and people.

Now, it’s important to understand the opening words of James. He says, “Peter has declared how God has visited for the first time the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.” And then he says, “And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David.’”

Now, I’d like for you to remember the context. He has just said, Gentiles are being saved freely. Peter has been the one who, in a sense, opened the door for the Gentiles, freely, in Cornelius’ house, but he says to this, “The words of the prophets agree,” in what sense?

Well, citing from Amos chapter 9 verse 11 and following, it’s important to go back to Amos chapter 9, verses 7 through 10. And in Amos 9, verses 7 through 10, I’m going to read these words. We might have to declare an intermission for some of you to find Amos on the spur of the moment so I will read it for you. In verse 7 through verse 10, Amos had written.

“Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me, O children of Israel?” says the Lord. ‘Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, The Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir? Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom, [Notice ‘the sinful kingdom,’ and he’s telling them that they are no different from these other peoples.] And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; [The sinful kingdom.] Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of David, [In other words, discipline rests upon the children of Israel. Discipline, we pointed out last week and the week before was not



contrary to unconditional promises. Verse 9.] For surely I will command, and will sift the house of Israel among all nations, [I'm going to send them to the four corners of the earth.] As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. [In other words, Israel is under discipline. They'll be sent to the four corners of the earth. It's a sinful kingdom. However, the elect among them shall not fall to the ground.] All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us. [Now] On that day, [And if you read anything much in the prophets you'll know that this is frequently, the Messianic day, and that is what this is here.] "I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And rebuild it as in days of old." [Verse 15:] I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them, says the Lord your God.”

So turning back now to Acts chapter 15, when James says, “After this,” he means after this time of Gentile blessing that we've been talking about in our meeting. “After this time,” literally, “after these things,” or “in that day” in the Masoretic text, or “in that day” in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, “After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David.”

Now, this is the important thing. I have lots of Christian friends who like to say that the promises made to the nation Israel no longer pertain, for various reasons. That is, the promises are transferred to the Church of Jesus Christ, is one way. One individual, who is a Christian man and a fine Christian man, taught at one of our fine institutions at one time, affirmed that when James says, “After this I will return and rebuild the tabernacle of David,” he's talking about the Church of Jesus Christ. Now, we don't have time to deal in detail with this. I just want to point out a few things with reference to that.

In the first place, the term “David” is found approximately fifty-nine times in the New Testament. It never refers to anything but David the person. Tabernacle of David, then, can hardly be the Church. Furthermore, we read here, “I will return and will rebuild the Tabernacle of David.” Now, if this is a reference to the Church, Jesus said, in Matthew chapter 16, “I will build my church upon this confession” that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. The Church is built, but the tabernacle of David is “rebuilt.” In other words, there is a time of desolation and ruin. And that is true, to Amos chapter 9, verse 7 through verse 10, the words that precede these verses here.

So what he says then is that we are talking about a rebuilding and, furthermore, the rebuilding is “after this,” that is, after Gentile salvation, in other words, a time order is set up. And the rebuilding is the rebuilding of ruins. And as Amos says, he’s going to rebuild it as in the days of old. “As in the days of old.” It is truly a rebuilding, then, that we are talking about.

I must say, and I recognize, this is a cursory treatment of Professor Alice’s comments, but I must say, that this is a perfect illustration of one of the authors of the Economist magazine, who once impaled his opponent in his article by saying, “The author proceeds from an unwarranted assumption to a forgone conclusion.” [Laughter] Because that is precisely what we have in this case. What this text says simply is that the dynasty of David is to be rebuilt. “I will rebuild the Tabernacle of David.” That still lies in the future. You see, James is trying to comfort those who thought, well, maybe since we have Gentiles’ salvation now, the Jewish promises no longer prevail.

Look, my Christian friend, the Bible, the Bible, for every one present at that Jerusalem conference was the Old Testament, not the New Testament, the Old Testament as interpreted by the apostles and our Lord. That was the Bible.

Now, look at the time, let me sum up a few comments from Paul without turning to the passages. In Romans chapter 1, verses 3 and 4, the apostle mentions the Davidic son-ship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he mentions specifically the fact that he is the

Davidic son and a son with power, by virtue of the resurrection. What a magnificent thing the fact of the resurrection is.

W. E. Sangster, one of the best-known British preachers of a generation ago, near the end of his life on Easter Day, wrote a note to his daughter, and it said this. “It’s terrible to wake up on Easter morning and have no voice with which to shout, ‘He is risen!’ But, it would be still more terrible to have a voice and not want to shout.” How true! The resurrection has definitely shown us that Jesus Christ is the Son of God with power.”

Paul, in Romans chapter 11, reminds the Romans that the time is coming when the Redeemer shall come and Israel shall be saved, not every Israelite, but Israel as a whole. And he cites lines that have to do with the Davidic Covenant. You can look at it yourself in chapter 11, verse 26.

In 2 Timothy chapter 2, he reminds Timothy of the way in which he should think of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I’m going to turn to this passage. 2 Timothy chapter 2 in verse 8, the apostle says to his young, apostolic legate, he says, “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead, according to my gospel.” In the Greek text, the participle “raised from the dead” is *anastasis*. It does not have the article, and so he’s suggesting this is the way that Timothy should remember our Lord. He should remember Him in his resurrected character. So remember Jesus Christ of the seed of David as raised from the dead, according to my gospel. But notice, it’s “Jesus Christ of the seed of David.” It’s very important for the apostles to acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God as well as the son of David, and son of David in the flesh because it is in that sense that David’s promises were given to him.

In Romans chapter 15, verse 7 through 13, the apostle reminds his readers in Roman that the Lord Jesus Christ’s ministry was a ministry, first of all, to the circumcision. Notice what he says in verse 7 of Romans chapter 15, “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a

servant to the circumcision, to Israel,” he ministered to them. That’s why he told men not to go into the way of the Gentiles but to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It was important, as he says, “To confirm the promises made unto the fathers,” and as a result of that, “that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written.”

And in the 12<sup>th</sup> verse, he quotes again, a statement about the Lord Jesus, as the root of David. In other words, the Abrahamic Covenant promises were the primary aim of our Lord Jesus and his ministry, to confirm them. And that, of course, included the Davidic expansion. The Gentiles have no direct promise. The promises to the Gentiles come as a result of promises made to Israel, to Abraham, and to David. And that is why “we are grafted into the olive tree,” as Paul puts it, in Romans 11, and we inherit as adopted children, as in grafted children in, and enjoy the promises that are covenantal for the nation Israel. Never forget that. And when we are called the children of Abraham, we are called the children of Abraham by faith, never called the children of Israel, called the children of Abraham by faith, because we have been grafted into those promises and we shall inherit them on that ground.

In the final book of the Bible in the Apocalypse, we have three references to David, at least. You would expect that in the consummation of our redemption. In Revelation chapter 3, verse 7, speaking to the church in Philadelphia, the Lord Jesus, the resurrected Lord Jesus, speaks of himself as one “Who has the key of David.” Isn’t that an interesting expression? It’s derived from Isaiah 22 in verse 22. It’s a reference to the fact that he has authority to open the doors into Davidic promise blessing.

Yokum Aramis , one of the great New Testament scholars has pointed out that in the ancient world, “They thought of heaven as closed by the doors into it, but that certain deities or certain angelic powers had the power of access. In Babylon, for example, Chumash had the power, the key to heaven, in his left hand, and he could introduce people into heaven. In Greece, Dekay had the key to heaven. In Italy, Jonas had the key to heaven, just as in Baghdad, Saddam has the key and so, [Laughter – that’s a joke]

So our Lord is said to be the one who has the “key of David” to open up, he has authority, to bring us into the promised blessings that were given to David.

In Revelation chapter 5 in verse 5, we are told how the Lord Jesus has gained this power. And as you know in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter, one of the great chapters of that book, it is specifically stated that he is “the Root of David” and he has gained that power by virtue of the fact that he has shed his blood and, as a result of it, he has redeemed to God, by his blood, some out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation and has made them kings and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. “Shall reign” on the earth. This is something in the future.

And finally, in Revelation 22 in verse 16, the final description, which our Lord himself gives of himself in the Bible, this is what he says as the revelation concludes.

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

In that claim, there is the ground for the possession of your individual salvation. He is the promised son of David, who inherits all of the promises and the line runs out in him, for he has authority to rule forever.

I know that, occasionally, people ask the question, “Will then the promises be fulfilled?” Let us remember, they are unconditional. The prophecies support also the fulfillment because they say the things that are found in the Davidic Covenant, long after the Davidic Covenant was first unfolded. The Lord Jesus Christ’s first coming in which it was a literal first coming, he came in David’s flesh, further confirms the intention of the Lord God to fulfill it, literally.

As a matter of fact, the Remnant’s inheritance has already begun, for as Paul says in Romans chapter 11, “The remnant according to the election of grace, have entered into the covenantal blessings. The mass will come at a later date and the leaders.”

There is a fundamental error that the Jews made at the first coming of our Lord, which, occasionally, I wonder is not being repeated by some in the light of our Lord's promise of the second coming. The Jews at the first advent believed the covenant and the covenantal promises, but they refuse to support the idea that the Messiah must come and shed his blood before those promises become theirs. So they receive the promises; they rejected the seed, the seed of David who came.

We, today, as the professing Christian church, tend to receive the seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, but reject the promises of the Old Testament that have to do with him. Again, I repeat, the Old Testament is the Scripture for the apostles. Well, now, someone says, “What about the land promises?” The New Testament doesn't say anything about the land promises. Well, I would suggest to you, that if the apostles were sitting over here, Peter, Paul, and a few others, and I were to say to them, “I understand what you have said, but I do not find anywhere in the New Testament that the promises to the land are confirmed to Israel.” I just know that the apostles would look at me with the blankest of blank looks because the question, itself, would have seemed singularly strange and even perverse to them, because the Scriptures were the Scriptures of the Old Testament. They would say to me, “Lewis, have you not read the Scriptures, as Jesus said to the people in his day. The Scriptures unfold those promises. And for you to say, they have to be in the New Testament that's disparaging to the Old Testament Scriptures, the prophets and their writings to affirm that they must be.” As a matter of fact, the New Testament is not even written and the Scriptures are for them, the Scriptures of the Old Testament. So they would have been mystified. For them, the Old Testament was Scripture.

Furthermore, I'm going to take another minute, furthermore, Peter in his second epistle says, “Beloved,” verse 1, “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and by the commandment of

us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior.” So, in other words, Peter tells us, we need to pay attention to the Old Testament and we need to pay attention to the New Testament, the things the apostles have written. Both are valid. And, if they are in the Old Testament, it's the word of God for us. The apostles wrote as if the word of the Old Testament were living and vital and applicable to us. Read the Epistle to the Hebrews.

So I reject the idea that something is not true unless it is repeated in the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, that is false. The correct principle is that we should not consider anything invalid and worthy of discard in the Old Testament, unless we are specifically told to do so by the New Testament. Otherwise, we believe the Scriptures.

Now, I kind of get excited every now and then, as you understand. I think this is so important. I don't think you can understand the Bible, really understand the Bible, and truly glorify God for the word and for the great purpose that he has set forth in Scripture, unless you understand that those promises are going to be fulfilled; they are unconditional and the faithfulness of God in his other blessing to us depends upon his faithfulness to those words. I'm not going to say that if you deny what I've said about this that you are not a believer. But I think you have disparaged the Scriptures as the apostles understood it, and I think you've lost a lot of the joy of understanding the purpose of God. I hope that you'll consider carefully and read and ponder the things that are said with reference to the Davidic Covenant.

Next week, the Lord willing, we'll go back to dealing with the great principles found in the Life of David, and we'll let the Davidic Covenant lie quietly for a little while.

If you are here today and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we ask that you remember, as the Lord Jesus stated in the Book of the Revelation, he is the one who has come as the root of David and has offered the atoning sacrifice by which you and I may be saved from our sins. Come to Christ! Believe in Him! Trust Him! And enjoy the salvation that he has provided for us.

Let's stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for Thy word and we thank Thee for these great promises that gather round the great king of Israel, King David. We recognize his many faults, but we thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast in sovereign grace determined that he should have those great promises of the eternal kingdom, that the greater son of David shall enjoy with us. If there shall be someone who never believed in our lord Jesus Christ, O God, work in their hearts. Draw them to him who offered the sacrifice by which they may be saved.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.