

eDevotions for Growing Christians

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2 Samuel 7:12-16

The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.

Psalm 89:3-4, 33-37

³You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, ⁴I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations."

³³ "...but I will not take my love from David, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness. ³⁴ I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness, and I will not lie to David, ³⁶ that his line will continue forever and his throne endure before me like the sun; ³⁷ it will be established forever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky."

A CONTINUING COVENANT

The Bible contains a number of covenants that were made by God with mankind. It is important to study and understand the biblical covenants -- not only to understand their proper place in God's overall program, but also because some of them are still valid today.

The Noachic Covenant (Genesis 9:1-17), for example, made by God with Noah and the entire human race (which would descend from Noah's three sons and their wives), is an important biblical covenant which forms the basis for human government. The Noachic Covenant gives mankind the authority and responsibility to set up governments that will protect the health and welfare of their citizens--even to the point of capital punishment for murder, because of the sanctity and value of human life. The Noachic Covenant has never been revoked or lifted, and it is verified by God in Romans 13:1-4. The stipulations of the Noachic Covenant will continue until the Lord returns.

On the other hand, the Mosaic Covenant, or the Old Testament Law, was not made with all of mankind and is not in effect today. It was a conditional covenant, made with Moses and the Jewish people, and the conditions of the covenant were dependent on whether or not the Jewish people would obey its laws and stipulations. We all know what happened! Because God's people, the nation of Israel, broke the covenant, the Mosaic Covenant ended with Christ. (See Romans 10:4.) Even though God's moral stipulations of the Old Testament Law continue today under the Law of Christ, the Mosaic Covenant with all its ceremonial and civil laws ended with Christ. So we see from these examples that

there are significant differences in the biblical covenants made by God with mankind, and it is important for us to determine not only the "what?" and the "with whom?," but also the "how long?" of any biblical covenant.

What about the Davidic Covenant? 2 Samuel 7 gives us the account of a covenant that God made with King David and his descendants. David had wanted to build a "House" for the Lord, but God said that He had chosen Solomon, David's son, to build the Temple to house the Ark of the Covenant. However, the Lord told David that He would build David a "house," that is, a dynasty. And God said that David's dynasty, throne and kingdom would last **forever!** (See 2 Samuel 7:13 & 16.)

Question: Is the Davidic Covenant still valid today? Answer: Yes! There is no king sitting on the throne of David today because the nation of Israel has temporarily been set aside from the place of God's particular blessing. (See Romans 11.) However, the Lord Jesus Christ was born into the royal lineage of David (Matthew 1 and Luke 3), and He will literally reign over this earth from the His throne in Jerusalem when His kingdom is established on earth in the future.

In Psalm 89, Ethan the psalmist raised a question about the validity of the Davidic Covenant in his day. Did Israel's defeat in battle mean that the Davidic Covenant, made by God with David and the Davidic line of kings, was somehow no longer in effect? Psalm 89 assures us of the permanent validity of the Davidic Covenant. Before looking further at the teaching of Psalm 89, let's consider a few other key Scriptures concerning the Davidic Covenant for more background.

Background Notes:

The prophet Hosea outlined God's program for Israel from the captivity of the nation until their restoration in the future: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days." (Hosea 3: 4-5)

There is no king or prince or temple or priesthood in Jerusalem now (nor is there idolatry, as in her past). But in the last days, Israel will be restored to the Lord. The Davidic throne will once again be established when the Lord returns to reign forever as King, in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. In the words of Amos 9:11, the fallen dynasty of the house of David will be reinstated and rebuilt as in the days of old. James, the brother of the Lord, quoted this prophecy at the first church council in Jerusalem. "After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent...that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear My Name, says the Lord, who does these things..." (Acts 15:16-18). The question before the council was whether or not Gentiles who had become believers in the Lord Jesus must be circumcised and keep the Mosaic Law. James was not saying that the prophecy of Amos was being fulfilled at that time, and the Davidic dynasty was somehow being established in the church. No! His point was that Gentiles should be included in the church because the Davidic Covenant, which was still valid, included blessing for the Gentiles--even though

it was made with Israel. God had not rescinded or abandoned His covenant with David and His program for Israel by incorporating Gentiles into the Church.

Background Notes for Psalm 89:

In this royal psalm the Davidic Covenant is reviewed. The psalmist reiterates that it is an everlasting covenant, although there may be temporary delays before its complete fulfillment.

The title describes Psalm 89 as a maskil, or a contemplative poem, by Ethan the Ezrahite. We learn from 1 Chronicles 15:19 that a singer named Ethan, with Heman and Asaph, was appointed by King David to the ministry of music. However, the "Ethan" who wrote Psalm 89 was probably a descendant of the "Ethan" of David's time, because the defeat of the king mentioned in verses 38-45 apparently took place some time after David's reign.

Verses 41-45 indicate that the destruction and plunder was the result of a major defeat suffered by a king of the Davidic line. God was angry with His people. Judah's strongholds were breached and plundered, many people were killed, and the king was removed. In biblical history, the only defeat in which all these disasters took place at the same time was the Babylonian conquest of Judah, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the resulting Babylonian captivity.

Ethan had a problem. He was unable to reconcile the provisions of the Davidic Covenant, in which God had promised that David's dynasty would last forever, with this awful defeat and the removal of a king of David's line. But first, before he discussed his problem, Ethan praised the Lord for His loving kindness and faithfulness to His people (v1-2)! The fact that the early verses of the psalm are characterized by praise shows us that Ethan was not angry with God, nor was he a critic or a doubting skeptic of God's Word. Ethan did the right thing. He brought his problem to the Lord---and he came to the Lord with the right attitude!

In verses 3-4, Ethan moved on to remind the Lord of the covenant He made with David. As he introduced the subject of the Davidic Covenant, notice that Ethan used the very words that God spoke to David. "I have made a covenant with My chosen one; I have sworn to David My servant; I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations" (v3-4). 2 Samuel 7:8-17 gives us the account of the making of the Davidic Covenant, when God sent the prophet Nathan to King David to declare His covenant.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points:

1. The Davidic Covenant rests on the character of God.

In Psalm 89:5-18 the poet Ethan moved on to praise the Lord for his holy character. What is the connection between the Davidic Covenant and the character of God? The validity of God's covenant with David rests on the solid foundation of the character of God. Some of the attributes of God are given in verses 5-8. The "holy ones" and "sons of the mighty" mentioned in these verses are the holy angels who praise the Lord for His faithfulness, His might, and His supremacy. In verses 9-14, the Lord is praised for His works---His mighty work of creation and His mighty works of victory for His people. As in Psalm 87:4, the term "Rahab" (v10) is another name for Egypt. The victory mentioned here is the Lord's victory over Pharaoh, and the victorious exodus of His people Israel from Egypt. Verses 15-18 extol the wonderful character of God for the blessings His people experience, and the joy they experience as a result.

"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Love and faithfulness go before You" (v14). This verse sums up four wonderful aspects of the character of God -- His righteousness, His justice, His love and His faithfulness. These attributes form the unshakable foundation upon which God's covenants are firmly based. The Lord's love and faithfulness are mentioned seven times in this psalm! What a great section of Scripture we have here in Psalm 89, describing the perfect character of our God!

2. The Davidic Covenant remains, in spite of the character of man.

Ethan reviewed the promises of the Davidic Covenant in verses 19-37. First, he mentioned the Lord's selection of David to rule over His people and God's promises of power, success and blessing for David. God promised that David would be the "firstborn" --the royal son of highest privilege, position and honor above all the kings of the earth (v27). Finally, the promise that David's dynasty would last forever is reiterated in verses 34-37. This promise of an eternal dynasty is, of course, fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in the royal line of David.

If the promise of an everlasting earthly reign of David's descendants is to be fulfilled literally (as intended in the Davidic Covenant), the Davidic throne must be reestablished here on earth. Our Lord's present heavenly throne and spiritual reign over the hearts

of believers in the church is **not** a fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant! The throne of David will literally be reestablished on this earth when the Lord Jesus Christ returns!

Verses 30-37 are very important. The Lord has sworn that the David's lineage and throne would continue forever (v36)--and the Lord does not lie (v35)! The present dependable faithfulness of the sun and moon are used as pictures of the faithfulness of God to His covenant with David and his descendants. The Lord promised that the Davidic Covenant was everlasting and unconditional. It would not be canceled out, even if the descendants of King David turned away from the Lord, as many of them did. Although the Lord would have to discipline the offenders, the covenant would remain--for the Lord will never betray His faithfulness! The Davidic Covenant remains in effect today and will be completely fulfilled when the Lord returns. The Davidic Covenant is a continuing covenant.

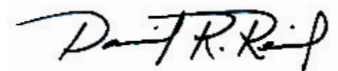
Practical Application:

Keep praying, even when you don't fully understand.

Ethan the psalmist had a problem understanding why God had allowed a humiliating defeat of a king in the line of David, especially in view of the promises of the Davidic Covenant. Ethan did the right thing--he brought his problem before the Lord in prayer! And he kept on praying, even when he didn't understand all that God was doing.

And so should we. Do you have questions about life and death (v46-48)? Do you have questions about God's promises (v49)? Do you have questions about what God is allowing to happen in your life (v50-51)? Do you have any questions along these lines?

Bring your questions before the Lord in prayer, with praise and thanks to Him for the blessings he has given. And keep on asking! Like Ethan, we can trust the Lord to be true to His promises, and thus we too can close our prayers with the doxology of verse 52: "Praise be to the LORD forever and ever. Amen and Amen."



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Last Sunday of month: 6PM seminar, Terrill Road Bible Chapel, Fanwood, NJ.

Wednesday evening: Bible study in our home.

Tuesday: 7:15AM breakfast Bible study for men, Central Baptist Church, Westerly, RI.

Contact us at gcm@growingchristians.org for more information.

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Feedback from the Ministry:

From Southeast Asia:

"I've read through your article entitled 'Critical Mass' and have an inquiry regarding some church-related issues..."

From Michigan:

"Thank you for your comments on Habakkuk 2:20 and its proper contextual interpretation... Your reminder to remember that it is a call to stop mouthing off to God about His sovereign decisions deserves a hearty 'Hear, hear!'"

From the Philippines:

"We have three cell fellowships here in our town with about 20 members in each cell. We were looking for some materials to train our cell brethren for evangelism and the proper interpretation of Scripture. Your Hermeneutics course was a wonderful find for me. Thanks and we'll pray for your ministry."

From California:

"This site was helpful in doing an essay on euthanasia"

From Sierra Leone:

"...these materials will help with the youth program that I am doing in the church"

From South Carolina:

"I listen to you on the radio out of Florence, SC every morning. Does it matter whether one takes the pre-tribulation position or the post tribulation position? I trust your opinion."

Family and Ministry News:

Ministry News:

Dave and Margie just returned home from a week of ministry at Park of the Palms, a retirement community in northern Florida. The residents are actively involved in missions and evangelism, and they appreciate the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. We enjoyed the warm sunny weather,

and visiting with friends from many parts of the country. We also toured historic St. Augustine, the oldest city in the country.

This month Dave will lead a "Golf and Grow" retreat with his brother, Paul, and our son Ron in South Carolina. The ministry will be from 2 Timothy. They're hoping for good weather!

Family News:

In January Dave and Margie spent an excellent week in California with Margie's sister, Marnie. It was great to soak up the warm sun of southern California and also enjoy the beautiful scenery in the Sierra Nevada mountains. We had fun visiting with our three nieces -- Dave and Coco skied/snowboarded together at Mammoth Mountain!

During spring break Callie (Catherine and Kirk's daughter), who is now a junior in high school, will be traveling to look at several colleges and universities. She would like to find a college in a **warm** location! Her brother Connor, age 13, will start practice with the high school ice hockey team this spring. He and Callie enjoyed snowboarding and skiing in the Adirondack Mountains in February. Connor and a friend built a ramp for practicing X-treme ski jumps!

In February Ingrid, age 12, and Kirsten, age 10 (David and Kari's daughters), did extremely well in the Illinois Music Association contests. Ingrid played a difficult sonata on the piano and the judges couldn't find any area in which to subtract points, so she earned a **perfect score!** In the cello contest she scored a 1+ (1=top score). Kirsten, who has been studying cello for less than 2 years, and was performing in her first state contest, achieved the excellent score of **1** for her piece! We're so glad they're already using their God-given gift of music in church. They play in school orchestras and string ensembles, and occasionally in a local nursing home.

Our grandson Jonathan, age 9, (Ron and Erica's son), entered a "Math Olympics" in March, competing with students from schools in several states. Jon phoned us just as we were getting on the plane to Florida with the exciting news that he won the **Gold Medal!** We have had a snowy winter, and Jon and his brother David, age 6, took snowboarding lessons in New Hampshire during their school break in February.

Hope you don't think we're bragging too much about our (awesome) grandchildren! Accomplishments aside, we are most thankful that all six of them are growing up in Christian homes where they are learning to love the Lord and getting life lessons from His Word - right from the start!