

God's Covenant With King David

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Introduction

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The story of David slaying a giant has stirred the hearts and minds of Christians for over two thousand years, and the Jews for around three thousand years. However, as we will soon see, there is more to this story than David slaying a giant.

God's Promise to King David

God gave this promise to King David, "Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me, your throne shall be established for ever." (2 Samuel 7:16). See also 1 Chron. 17:10-12, 23-24).

We could very well ask at this point, "Why should God be interested in establishing the throne of David for ever?" The answer becomes clear when we discover that God has determined that just one person should reign for ever. One psalmist wrote, "'The Lord swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: 'One of your own descendants I will place on your throne.'" (Psalm 132:11).

There is a very clear link between King David and Jesus Christ. Jesus is seen as the fulfilment of God's covenant promise to David that he would put one of his descendants upon the throne.

Speaking of David, we read from the book of Acts, "But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne." (Acts 2:30). As we look closely at Scripture, we discover that the life of the descendant (Jesus), is very similar to the life of King David. The divine purpose in this is to show for a certainty that Jesus is the fulfilment of the covenant promise to David.

Gaining an overall picture of David is not difficult because the Bible gives more information on King David than any other biblical person. We know for instance that he was a tall man because he tried on the armour of his predecessor, King Saul (1 Sam. 17:38). Saul was a tall man, "...a head taller than any of the others." (1 Sam. 9:2). We even know that David was handsome (1 Sam. 16:12).

The reason for the detailed record of King David's life, is that by his life, he was pointing to a far greater King; the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and for that reason, his life was very important. David was a shepherd; he became king; he saved Israel from her enemies, and gave her peace and security. Likewise, Jesus is the great Shepherd-King, who has won a spiritual nation to himself, and he has given that nation (spiritual Israel - the Church), peace and security.

Spiritual Empowerment

God was determined that King David be successful in his mission, so he was anointed with the Holy Spirit in order to ensure his success (2 Sam. 8:6, 14). Likewise, when Jesus was baptised at the river Jordan, the Spirit of God came upon him in a powerful way to ensure the success of the task God gave him to fulfil (See Isaiah 9:7b & Matt.3:16). Some of the many similarities between King David and Jesus Christ are outlined below.

Similarities

DAVID

1. Born in Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16:18).
2. Appointed king by God (1 Sam. 16:1).
3. He was rejected by his own brothers (1 Sam. 16:11).
4. Shepherd, became king (1 Sam. 16:11).
5. Starts overthrow of enemy by defeating the chief of the enemy forces; Goliath (1 Sam. 17:37, 51, 54).

JESUS

1. Born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-7).
2. Born king was sent by God the Father (Matt. 2:2, Acts 2:34-36).
3. Jesus was rejected by his own people (John 1:11, Isaiah 53:3).
4. King and Shepherd (John 10:11).
5. At the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus starts overthrow of the kingdom of darkness by doing spiritual

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| | battle with the chief of the enemy forces; Satan (Matthew 4:1). |
| 6. King Saul seeks to kill David (1 Sam. 19:1-2). | 6. King Herod tries to kill Jesus (Matt. 2: 13). Furthermore, the Scribes and the Pharisees seek to kill Jesus (John 11:53). |
| 7. Refuses to be made king before God's time. (1 Sam. 24:4-7, 18, 26:8-9). | 7. Refuses to reign as king before God's time (John 6:15). |
| 8. He is victorious over all of his enemies (2 Sam. 8:6, 14). | 8. He is victorious over all of his enemies, sin, Satan and death (Eph. 1:19-23). |
| 9. David and his army lost their families and possessions to the enemy, but David fought and brought everything back. Nothing was lost (1 Samuel 30: 1-19). | 9. Jesus rescues all that the Father gives to him, not one is lost (John 6:37-39). |
| 10. He brought peace and security to physical Israel (2 Sam. 8:6, 14, 1 Chron. 8:6). | 10. He bought peace and security to spiritual Israel (Rom. 5:1, Eph. 2:14-15). |
| 11. A king with whom God is well pleased (1 Sam. 13:14). | 11. A king with whom God is well pleased (Matt. 13:17). |
| 12. David gathered the low and despised into his kingdom (1 Sam. 22:1-2). | 12. Jesus gathers the low and despised into his kingdom (1 Cor. 1:27-28). |
| 13. David's own son Absalom rebels against David, Absalom flees and is hanged in a tree (2 Sam. 18:9). | 13. A familiar friend of Jesus, Judas; betrays Jesus, and later hangs himself (Matt. 26:48-50). |
| 14. When the enemy pursues David, few of his people follow him (2 Sam. 15:14). | 14. When Jesus is taken, his friends scatter (Matt. 26:56). |
| 15. David had to bear the cursings of Shimei. He forbids his followers to take revenge (2 Sam. 16:5-10). | 15. Jesus forbade his followers to take revenge. (Matt. 26:50-52). |
| 16. David is 30 years old when he became king (2 Sam. 5:4). | 16. Jesus began his public ministry at 30 years of age (Luke 2:23). |
| 17. David reigned from Jerusalem over all Israel for 33 years (2 Sam. 5:5). | 17. Jesus was king from birth (Matt. 2:2), and lived for 33 years. |
| 18. David overthrew the impostor to his throne and all rebellion (2 Sam. 18:7, 14-15, 20:1-3, 22). | 18. Jesus will overthrow the anti-Christ and all who rebel against him (2 Thess. 2:8, Rev. 17:14, 19:11-16). |

There are three things which stand out in the life of David in foreshadowing the work of Christ.

- The battle he fought with Goliath.
- His work as priest and king.
- The foundation material he prepared for the temple.

The Battle with Goliath

The first battle which David fought was against a giant of a man named Goliath, the chief of the enemy forces (the Philistines). Goliath said at that time of the person who was to fight him, "If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." (1 Sam. 17:9).

This is true of the battle between Christ and Satan.

Satan in like manner is the chief of the enemy forces. If Christ had lost the battle, God's people would have become the servants of Satan. Christ in fact won the battle on behalf of all of his people, releasing them from slavery to Satan.

It is interesting to note that Goliath challenged the people of Israel for forty days before the battle took place (1 Sam. 17:16). It was for forty days and nights that Christ fasted before doing spiritual battle with Satan (Matt. 4:1-3).

Some time after David killed Goliath, "David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem..." (1 Sam. 17:54). Taking the skull of Goliath to Jerusalem was not an easy matter. David was not king at this time, nor was Jerusalem his possession. That came several years later (2 Sam. 5:6-7). Given that David spent years on the run from Saul, followed by a period of over seven years reigning as

king from Hebron (2 Sam. 5:5), it is surprising (humanly speaking) that David still had possession of the skull of Goliath. However, in the plan of God, it was important that David get the skull to Jerusalem, and that it would ultimately be buried at a prominent position.

Around one thousand years after the time of King David, Jesus is led by Roman soldiers to the same location for his crucifixion, "They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull)." (Matt. 27:33, also see John 19:17).

According to Hebrew tradition, it was called "the place of the skull" because the skull of Goliath was buried there. It is significant that Jesus finally and completely dealt with Satan (chief of the enemy forces) at the same location. As foretold in the Bible, the heel of Jesus was struck, however, the head of Satan was crushed (Gen. 3:15).

Regarding the name 'Golgotha' (Matt. 27:33) it is derived from the Aramaic word, *gulgulta* (skull). Aramaic was the main language spoken by Jesus.

The Continuing Fight

When David defeated Goliath, the battle against the Philistines was won (1 Sam. 17:9). David won the battle and the men of Israel continued the fight against the defeated enemy (1 Sam. 17:51-52). This is true of Christ, he has won the battle, the Christian continues the fight against a defeated enemy, "... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7).

David As Priest and King

In 2 Samuel chapter twenty-four, we see that King David is commanded by God to take on the role of a priest, in addition to his role as king. The role of priest is normally forbidden to all, except the sons of Aaron (Num. 3:10). The kingship was taken from Saul because of several sins, one of which was his taking on the role of a priest (1 Sam. 13:8-14). King Uzziah was struck with leprosy for taking upon himself the role (2 Chron. 26:16-21).

David; in his work as priest and king, is pointing to the far greater priest and king; the Lord Jesus Christ. The parallels which we should note between the type, David, and the antitype, Jesus, are as follows:

- (a) David's role as priest is necessary because of the sin of the people of Israel. "Again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, 'Go and count Israel and Judah.'" (2 Samuel 24:1).
It was because of the sin of all mankind that Jesus had to come as priest and king to offer up himself as an atoning sacrifice in order that spiritual Israel, (the invisible Church) might be saved.
- (b) David is obedient to the command of God to build an altar and offer sacrifices (24:18-19).
It was in obedience to his heavenly Father that Jesus came into the world to die as the sacrificial lamb for sinners (John 3:16).

- (c) Through the sacrifices which David offered as priest and king, the people of Israel are saved. "David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped." (2 Sam. 24:25).

It is through the sacrificial work of Christ as priest and king that sinners are saved from the just judgement of God to come. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ." (Eph 2:13). See also Heb. 9:11-14.

- (d) The foundation for the temple was established through the sacrifices by King David as both priest and king. David was commanded by God through Gad the prophet to build the altar for the sacrifices at a particular location. "'On that day Gad went to David and said to him, 'Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.'" (2 Sam. 24:18). The Temple was later built on that very spot.

The Foundation Laid

David gathered the material for the temple, he said, "...the house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands; I will therefore make preparation for it.' So David provided materials in great quantity before his death." (1 Chronicles 22:5). See also 29:2-3. David provided Solomon with a written plan of the temple, a plan which was inspired by God (1 Chron. 28:19).

Jesus laid down a foundation for the temple of God (the Church) through the shedding of his blood (his life), "Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole structure, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;" (Eph. 2:20-21). See also 1 Cor. 3:11.

The Descendant of David

God told David that he would put one of his descendants upon the throne, and that he would reign forever. He not only told David of this plan, he also told the people of Israel through the prophets. This information is not given for the benefit of satisfying idle curiosity, it is given to reassure the people that God will one day place a king on the throne who will be in the likeness of King David, i.e. He will never know defeat. In regard to the covenant promise, the psalmist says, "'You said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, I will establish your line for ever and make your throne firm through all generations'" (Psalm 89:3-4).

The promise that there would be only one dynasty in Judah - the line of David - is humanly speaking, all the more remarkable when it is remembered that the northern kingdom had nineteen kings and no less than nine dynasties. The royal line of David was under threat on several occasions. On one occasion, all of the royal seed except Joash were killed (2 Kings 11:22).

The Holy Spirit revealed to the prophet Isaiah the fact that "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse: from his roots a Branch will bear fruit..." (11:1-5).

At the time of this prophecy (around 700 B.C.), the royal line of David was very much alive and strong; like a large tree. Isaiah tells of a time when the special line of kings will be dead. The picture which is given is not that of a tree with the top lopped off; nor is it of a tree with all of the branches cut off. A more hopeless picture is given; that of a stump.

The last of the kings from the line of David was Zedekiah who finished his reign in 586 B.C. With the Roman empire under the command of General Pompey invading Israel in 63 B.C., it was clear to everyone (humanly speaking) that there was no hope of a king from the line of David arising to bring God's people peace and security. However, it was precisely at this time that God sent the King of kings into the world, a shoot arising up out of a hopelessly dead stump (Is. 11:1-5).

Speaking of the glorious reign of this king, the prophet Isaiah said, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders ... Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom..." (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Messiah

The long awaited messiah is from the line of David. The term, 'the Christ' is equal to 'the messiah'. Those looking for the messiah said, "Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David's family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" (John 7:42). It is significant that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, not only because David once lived there, but because the area supplied the lambs needed for the sacrifices. Jesus is the Lamb who takes away sin by his own sacrifice.

The Covenant Promise Fulfilled

The fulfilment of the covenant promise to King David is found in the person of Jesus Christ. The priest Zechariah speaking of this fulfilment and the saving work which was about to commence said, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." (Luke 1:68-69).

The angel in his message to Mary said of Jesus, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." (Luke 1:32-33).

There are many passages of Scripture which tell us that although Jesus came from heaven, his human ancestry is of the line of David:

Romans 1:3 "regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David."

The New Testament begins and ends with the declaration that Jesus Christ is the son of David.

Matthew 1:1 "A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David..."

Revelation 22:16 "...I am the Root and the Offspring of

David, and the bright Morning Star."

Some of the people at the time of Jesus understood that he was the special son of David and called out to him for healing. "A Canaanite woman ... came to him, crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!...' (Matt. 15:22). See also Matt. 20:30.

Coming as the special son of David implies kingship. In the crucifixion of Jesus a clear testimony was given to his kingship. "Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." (Matt. 27:37). This was in the face of objections from the religious leaders. They did not believe he should be called 'king of the Jews' (John 19:21-22).

When the people of Jerusalem witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the apostle Peter explained that the outpouring was evidence of the resurrection and rule of Jesus Christ. A rule which had been promised to the descendant of King David. "God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne." (Acts 2:30). Peter further explains, "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36). See also Acts 13:32-38.

The Greater David

King David was a type of the messiah to come, he foreshadows Jesus Christ so closely that Ezekiel uses the name David when prophesying of Christ coming as the conquering messiah and bringing peace. "My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes ... and David my servant shall be their prince forever." (Ezekiel 37:25). Naturally, only Jesus can be king of the Jews forever (Matt. 27:37).

This is not the only case in Scripture where one person's name is used in place of another. For instance, the name 'Elijah' is used to foretell the coming of an important person at a future date. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." (Malachi 4:5).

The fulfilment of that prophecy is given to us in Matthew 11:11-15. Jesus states, "...there has risen no-one greater than John the Baptist; ... For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John; and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come." The meaning of this being that John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah. See also Hosea 3:5.

The prophet Amos also pointed to the greater David. He said, "In that day I will restore David's fallen tent. I will repair its broken places, restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be," (Amos 9:11).

This promise of the future restoration of David's fallen tent is fulfilled with Christ taking up the throne of David and bringing Gentiles as well as Jews into his kingdom. James proved this to be the case by quoting the Amos passage, he says "After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, 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 15:16-17).

David's Sin

There are two accounts of the life of David in the Bible. 1 & 2 Samuel and that of 1 Chronicles. It is interesting to note that 1 Chronicles omits any mention of the sins of David - a necessary omission if we are to have a clear picture of David as being a type of the messiah. Jesus came as the messiah and completed his mission without sin.

In 2 Samuel we see that David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered Uriah. This sin occupied a small time in his life, however, it is important that the sin be recorded for it shows that David was a sinner, and a vile sinner at that. If the full weight of the law had been carried out, he would have received the death penalty. So we see David in one account as a saviour of Israel, a type of the messiah; in the other account, we see him at one stage as being typical of the worst of sinners, one who plots, schemes, commits adultery and murder.

Jesus took the sins of his Church upon himself, and paid the penalty. David repented of his sins. Likewise, Jesus repented. He repented in his baptism by John the Baptist, not for his own sins, but for the sins of his people. He is our substitute, performing a perfect repentance at the baptism of repentance on our behalf (Matthew 3:13-17).

Looking for the King of Kings

Ever since the period of King David, the Jews have longed for another king like David. One who will conquer the enemy and give their land peace, but they look in vain because the king they need has already come. Jesus, by his righteous life and death has conquered man's worst enemies; Sin, Satan and death. He has also given those who put their trust in him inner peace. The exploits of King David were great, he was a legend in his own time, but even the great King David bows the knee to Jesus and calls him Lord (Acts 2:34-35).

God's Man for the Battle

King Saul, when faced by the threats of his strong enemy knew that he had to choose the correct man for the battle. His natural instinct told him to choose the most seasoned warrior from amongst his best soldiers. God however, had already chosen a man for the fight. Saul at first despised David, "...you are only a boy..." (1 Sam. 17:33). Saul heard evidence from David that God had been with him in past battles so that he was able to kill both a lion and a bear (1 Sam. 17:34-37). Saul now places his faith in David, saying "... Go, and the Lord be with you." (v.37).

Saul chose correctly, he chose God's choice for the battle. We too must be careful to choose correctly the man to fight for us. We dare not choose a weak man to release us from the power of sin and the judgment to come. We dare not choose ourselves. There is only one person we can trust for the battle; that person is God's choice, Jesus Christ. "...Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed..." (Rev. 5:5).

An amazing period of Time

While many of the events which point to Christ are quite remarkable, there is one other thing which must not be overlooked, and that is the huge time-scale between the one pointing to Christ; David, and the one to whom he points; the Messiah (the Christ). The fulfilment to the life of David did not come fifty years after he died, not one hundred years later, not 200 years later, nor 300, nor 400, nor 600, nor 800, but rather, around one thousand years later. Our God is the God of *huge* time scales.

Men can make plans, only to find that they are destroyed within one generation. Hitler's plan for his *Third Reich* was for it to last one thousand years. What was known by Nazi officials as the *Thousand-Year Reich*, came to an end in May 1945 after only twelve years!

The plans of God on the other hand never fail, "... he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand..." (Dan 9:2-4).

Regarding time, the Psalmist says of God, "A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night" (Psalm 90:4).

"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." (2 Peter 3:8). It is no wonder that God is able to put events in place, and then bring about the fulfilment of the events one thousand years later. We worship an awesome God!

Some minor points

The height of Goliath

The Bible records that he was over nine feet tall (1 Sam. 17:4). In Hebrew, six cubits and a span (about 3 metres). It was this giant of a man who was shouting threats to Israel. It is not surprising the Bible reports, "... Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified." (1 Samuel 17:11).

The battle

The battle between David and Goliath took place in the valley of Elah, located about twenty-four kilometres (15 miles) west of Bethlehem.¹

The width of the valley varies, however, where the battle is believed to have taken place, it is fairly narrow so that Goliath was able to stand on one side and shout out his demands to his opponents on the other side. Both sides were easily able to see and hear what took place in the middle of the valley before them.

Archeological Evidence

Some atheists did not believe in the existence of King David, until 1994 when excavating in Tell Dan, a black basalt pillar (stela) from the 9th century BC with Aramaic inscriptions was found. The inscription is by an Aramean king (presumably Hazael). He "claims to have killed Joram, son of Ahab, king of Israel, and Ahaziah son of Jehoram of the 'House of David'"²

A Devotional

Now for a devotional from the life of David regarding his son Absalom.

The Bible says of Absalom, "in all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him." (2 Samuel 14:25). Absalom would let his hair grow long. Scripture reports that, "... he used to cut his hair from time to time when it became too heavy for him ..." (14:26).

There was trouble in David's family - as predicted. Ammon, half brother of Absalom, raped Tamar the beautiful sister of Absalom. Absalom was furious and plotted his revenge, particularly as the rape crime was not adequately dealt with. It is not surprising that David dealt lightly with the sin of Ammon. After all, he had committed a sexual sin himself, plus murder, all of which was well-known. There can be many consequences of sin, as this sad case reveals.

Absalom had Ammon assassinated (13:22-29), then he fled from the presence of his father, David. It is with this background that we understand there was ill-feeling between David and his son Absalom.

Absalom decided to take over the kingdom of his father. He used his fine appearance and smooth talking to win the hearts of the people. Absalom got up early in the morning and positioned himself on the road leading to the city gate. He would strike up a conversation with those who had justice issues to be heard. He would state, "Look your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you." also Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who had a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he receives justice." (2 Sam. 15:1-6).

Many turned their allegiance to Absalom because he told them what they wanted to hear instead of what they needed to hear. They forgot that it was King David who had fought so bravely for them in many battles to establish the kingdom which they now enjoyed, so they put their trust in an impostor. They went for the superficial; the fine appearance of the impostor, and his smooth-talking. They took little interest in substance.

The situation is similar today, there are many who prefer to put their trust in a superficial grand appearance, and in a message which flatters them, even when they are in terrible danger. They feel that they are secure, because those who have joined with them are larger in number than those who have joined with the true king.

In attacking King David, Absalom and his men confidently followed the advice of Hushai who said, "... Let all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba - as numerous as the sand on the seashore - be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle. Then we will attack him wherever he may be found, and we will fall on him as dew settles on the ground. Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive." (2 Samuel 17:11-12).

This battle plan was very impressive, how could they lose. They had the numbers and a grand battle plan. They forsook God's anointed and placed their trust in the one who flattered them, and in a numerically superior force. When the day of battle came, it was David's army that won, and with a

convincing victory. "There the army of Israel was defeated by David's men, and the casualties that day were great - twenty thousand men." (2 Sam. 18:7). All additional rebellion was also thoroughly put down (2 Sam. 20:1-2, 21-22).

Jesus Christ will also be victorious. All rebellion will be overthrown even when the number of those who rebel is very large (Revelation 17:14). The Bible says of Jesus, "On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:16).

Jesus declares, "I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the Bright Morning Star." (Rev. 22:16).

"Come, Lord Jesus"

Revelation 22:20

End Notes

1. Carl G. Rasmussen, Zondervan Atlas of the Bible, © 2010, p. 134.
2. David, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Eds. J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenny, 2011, revised by Moises Silva, p. 338.

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