

## David #4 • Covenant king - Part 2

### Reading

*Lord, remember David and all his self-denial.  
He swore an oath to the Lord,  
he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob:  
'I will not enter my house or go to my bed,  
I will allow no sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids,  
till I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.'  
We heard it in Ephrathah, we came upon it in the fields of Jaar:  
'Let us go to his dwelling-place, let us worship at his footstool, saying,  
"Arise, Lord, and come to your resting place,  
you and the ark of your might.  
May your priests be clothed with your righteousness;  
may your faithful people sing for joy.'"  
For the sake of your servant David,  
do not reject your anointed one.*

Psalm 132:1-10

In the previous talk we looked at 2 Samuel 7, and how it deals with the biblical theme of covenant, a promise, agreement or contract between two individuals or groups of people, and how God made a covenant with David, to bless him and his kingship and that through him would come a greater king who would bless the whole world.

As I said last time, we know from the history of the kings of Israel that while David's bloodline was preserved, David's earthly kingdom was destroyed many centuries ago.

But God's promises were not.

One of the aims of our look at the themes in David's life is to see how Bible passages are linked to other Bible passages, and so to deepen our understanding of how richly interconnected these themes are.

Today we're going to see how those promises of 2 Samuel 7 were picked up and spoken about in Psalm 132.

It is a Psalm of two parts. Today's reading started with a short prayer remembering David's faithfulness.

*LORD, remember David and all his self-denial.*

Psalm 132:1

It then goes on to remind us of how David made a promise to God to find a place for the Ark of the Covenant.

*He swore an oath to the LORD,  
he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob  
'I will not enter my house or go to my bed,  
I will allow no sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids,  
until I find a place for the LORD,  
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.'*

Psalm 132:2-5

The Ark of the Covenant was a symbol of God's presence among, and protection of the Israelites.

The Psalm continues...

*We heard it in Ephrathah,  
we came upon it in the fields of Jaar:  
'Let us go to his dwelling-place,  
let us worship at his footstool, saying,  
"Arise, LORD, and come to your resting place,  
you and the ark of your might.  
May your priests be clothed with your righteousness;  
may your faithful people sing for joy.'"  
For the sake of your servant David,  
do not reject your anointed one.*

Psalm 132:6-10

Ephrathah is another name for Bethlehem, David's (and another famous person's) birthplace.

And Jaar is another name for Kiriath-jearim where the Ark of the Covenant had been kept before being moved to Jerusalem.

This is a call for Israel to come into the presence of God that the Ark of the Covenant represents.

The Ark of the Covenant is not God, and it's definitely not something to be worshipped. And to make that clear it is referred to here, and elsewhere (1 Chronicles 28:2) as God's footstool.

The first half of the Psalm opened with David making a solemn promise to God.

*He [**David**] swore an oath to the **LORD**, he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob: 'I will not enter my house or go to my bed, I will allow no sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the **LORD**, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.'*

Psalm 132:2-5

The second half of the Psalm opens with **God** making a solemn promise to **David**.

*The **LORD** swore an oath to **David**,  
a sure oath he will not revoke:  
'One of your own descendants  
I will place on your throne.  
If your sons keep my covenant  
and the statutes I teach them,  
then their sons shall sit  
on your throne for ever and ever.'*

Psalm 132:11-13

The first half of the Psalm talks about going to the Ark of the Covenant, and calling on God to meet his people there...

*‘Let us go to his dwelling-place, let us worship at his footstool, saying, “Arise, LORD, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.”’*

Psalm 132:7-8

The second half has God assuring them that he will do this, not just now, but **for ever and ever**... for ever ever!

*For the LORD has chosen Zion,  
he has desired it for his dwelling, saying,  
‘This is my resting place for ever and ever;  
here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it.*

Psalm 132:13-14

The first half of the Psalm prays that God’s priests will be clothed with God’s righteousness (what a lovely image) and that his faithful people would sing for joy...

*“May your priests be clothed with your righteousness;  
may your faithful people sing for joy.”*

Psalm 132:9

The second half sees God promising that he will **answer** this prayer, not just now, but forever...

*“I will clothe her priests with salvation,  
and her faithful people shall ever sing for joy.”*

Psalm 132:16

The message of Psalm 132 is that God has promised to keep David’s descendants on the throne of Israel for as long as they keep the terms of his covenant.

It also assures us that David’s desire to build a temple for God is in line with God’s plans, even if the timing is not. In fact, ‘Temple’ is another Davidic theme that we will be looking at in the future.

However, David did not keep to the covenant he made with God. And neither did Solomon or his successors.

The editors of the collection of songs and prayers we call the Book of Psalms would have been aware of this. This Psalm would have been recited long after David's kingly line had failed, at a time when the temple was no longer the glorious thing that Solomon had built.

And this Psalm would have reminded its listeners of God's faithfulness, *despite* his people's unfaithfulness.

Psalm 132 ends with God once again making a promise about a future anointed one who will come from the line of David.

*'Here I will make a horn grow for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one. I will clothe his enemies with shame, but his head shall be adorned with a radiant crown.'*

Psalm 132:17-18

The word 'horn' is used in the Bible to symbolise strength, victory and even royal authority.

'Lamp' represents God's illumination, presence and guidance.

As God's people listened to and recited Psalms like this one, they reminded themselves of God's covenant with David, God's promise to provide an anointed one, the Messiah.

And God kept his promise, in the miracle of the incarnation.

The timeless, all powerful, all present creator of the universe born as a human child in king David's birthplace, Bethlehem.

Jesus, the fulfilment of God's promise to bring salvation to this world.

The anointed one, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. God becoming a human, growing, learning, loving. Healing and teaching. Suffering and dying in our place. And defeating death so that we might know eternal life through him.

We should never grow used to how amazing this is. Never ever ever!

As I've said before, one of my favourite Bible stories is found in Luke, when the resurrected Jesus joins a couple of his disciples as they are dejectedly trudging their way to Emmaus and

*...beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

Luke 24:27

The 'Scriptures' he explained are what we call the Old Testament, which Jesus claimed were written about him.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is explaining to the Jewish leaders that he has been given direct authority from God, and he tells them...

*You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me.*

John 5:39

Jesus spent over a month with his disciples after he was resurrected, and I'm sure that for some of that time he explained to them how and where the Scriptures were talking about him.

One of the reasons I think this is because the New Testament is filled with references to where the Old Testament is referencing Jesus.

The Book of Acts starts with Jesus instructing his followers to remain in Jerusalem and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which will empower them to take Jesus' message to the entire world.

Ten days after Jesus ascends to heaven, the promise is fulfilled.

The Holy Spirit fills the disciples, and Peter preaches the good news of Jesus Christ to a huge crowd.

And what does his talk consist of?

Scripture after scripture, especially the Psalms, that reveal how God's covenant to bring salvation to the world had been fulfilled in Jesus, and

was being revealed to them in that moment, through the message that Peter was delivering.

Peter starts out by quoting verses from the Book of Joel (Joel 2:28-32), opening with...

*In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy...*

Acts 2:17-18

and closing with...

*And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.*

Acts 2:21

Joel, hundreds of years before Jesus was born, looked forward to a day when **God the Holy Spirit** would be poured out on all nations. A time when ‘everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.’

And the name that Peter says they need to call on is **Jesus**. The man that humans had crucified, but who **God the Father** had raised from the dead. The first Christian sermon was trinitarian!

Peter goes on to quote from Psalm 16...

*David said about him:*

*“I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.”*

Acts 2:25-28 (cf. Psalm 16:8-11, Septuagint)

And then, like all good preachers, Peter goes on to explain the passage...

*Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 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. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.*

Acts 2:29-33

Thanks Peter, I really couldn't have said it better myself.

As David wrote Psalm 16, God was letting him catch glimpses of things that he could not fully understand.

The Old Testament is ambivalent on what happens to humans after they die, but there are a number of passages, including this one, where it seems that David believes there is life after death. (cf. 2 Samuel 12:23)

Like most of the Bible, Psalm 16 has layers of meaning. It was written by David as a song of praise for God's presence and protection. But it was also written to foreshadow David's supreme descendant, Jesus, and describe his resurrection and ascension.

And see how Peter also alludes to Psalm 132 (Acts 2:30/Psalm 132:11). Wonderful stuff.

Peter goes on to quote from the first verse of the New Testament's most quoted Psalm, Psalm 110...

*For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,*

*“The LORD said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’”*



*‘Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.’*

Acts 2:34-36

Matthew’s gospel records how Jesus had previously used Psalm 110:1 to demonstrate how the scriptures point to the Messiah being more than just a human descendant of David.

*While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ‘What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?’*

*‘The son of David,’ they replied.*

*He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him “Lord”? For he says,*

*“The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.”’*

*If then David calls him “Lord”, how can he be his son?’*

*No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.*

Matthew 22:41-46

The Pharisees knew that the Scriptures said the Messiah would be David’s ‘son’, a descendant of David.

What Jesus is pointing out is that David, Israel’s human king and lord, is talking about two ‘Lords’.

Peter has remembered this, and uses it in his preaching...

*For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,*

*‘The LORD [Yahweh] said to my Lord [Adonai]:*

*‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’*

*Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.*

Acts 2:34-36 (Psalm 110:1)

The first LORD is Yahweh, a name that many Jews consider to be so holy that they won't even say it out loud.

But who is the other Lord? A Lord that David refers to as 'Adonai', another name for God that is used throughout the Old Testament.

David didn't ascend to heaven, Jesus did.

And it's the resurrected/ascended/glorified Jesus who is now sitting at the right hand of the Father until the day that his enemies are defeated.

It's Jesus, the fulfilment of God's covenant with David.

Jesus, the promised Messiah who has beaten sin and death and who, through his followers, will take God's offer of salvation to Israel and beyond.

The Holy Spirit took the words of Peter and convicted many of those listening of their truth...

*When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'*

Acts 2:37

and...

*Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.'*

Acts 2:38-39

And so Joel's prophecy, centuries after he wrote it, is fulfilled.

And, nearly 2000 years later, it continues to be fulfilled. Right now there are over two-and-a-half billion Christians living on this planet.

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Years later Peter wrote these words to a group of Christians who were facing pressure to compromise their faith in Jesus...

*...in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

1 Peter 3:15-16

Notice that Peter's priority is that we 'revere Christ as Lord'.

The priority is making sure that Christ is at the very centre of everything we do, and that if he's not, asking him to help us correct that.

And while some are called to be evangelists, like Peter preaching to the crowd in Jerusalem, most of us are called to be God's ambassadors in our community, God's human presence in the place we live.

And as we go about our day, always being prepared, in fact eagerly praying for opportunities to share the good news with people we meet.

And when we get those opportunities, we must be careful to do so with gentleness, respect and honesty. Listen to what people have to say. Don't be defensive if they express contempt for the Christian faith.

If you don't have answers to their questions, don't pretend that you do, rather say you'll come back to them, do some research, and continue the conversation.

And don't exaggerate your Christian testimony. Keeping a clear conscience means being honest about who you are and how you live.

The good news is Jesus, not you. The good news is that God loves imperfect people like David. And me. And you. And the person you share the good news with.

What God wants is relationship with the people he has created. He wants people, who like David, longed to know their creator. Like us, David was imperfect. Like us, God loved him despite this.

Remember, ultimately it is God who is the good news.

Peter's sermon was good, but it was the Holy Spirit who convicted people that what he was saying was God's message to them.

As the closing words of verse 16 show, Peter was aware that not everyone is overjoyed to hear the good news. But let's go into this week determined to revere Christ as Lord, and asking him for opportunities to share his good news with the people around us.

Amen.