

## The Covenant of Descent

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**The Covenant of Descent is about the Plan of God.** It particularizes the promise to Abraham to a descendent of David. The New Testament authors are explicit that the promises are fulfilled by Jesus Christ. **David, like Abraham, moved on in faith with imperfect knowledge to accomplish the Work of God.** (2Sm7:13b,16, Ps89:3-4,27,35-36, Rv5:5, 3:21, 22:16)

**The Life of David:** David's life story is very complicated, and it is documented in great detail in the Bible: 1 Samuel 16-31, 2 Samuel 1-24, 1 Kings 1-2, 1 Chronicles 2,3,11-29, and 73 Davidic Psalms. **The Covenant of Descent is the high point of his life.**

**The Messages from Nathan:** Once David was established in Jerusalem, he brought the Ark to Jerusalem, then he wanted to build a Temple. At first Nathan supported David's desire, but God quickly reversed the message (2Sm7:1-7, 1Chr17:1-6). **It was NOT according to God's plan for David to build the temple** because he had "blood on his hands" (1Chr22:7-8).

**The Messages from YHWH:** YHWH starts off with a brief **historical prologue** (2Sm 7:8-9, 1Chr17:7-8); then, YHWH deals with the nation, **Israel** (2Sm7:10-11a, 1Chr17:9-10a); next, YHWH describes **David's "offspring"** (2Sm7:11b-15, 1Chr17:10b-13); finally, YHWH summarizes the **"perpetuity" of David's throne** (2Sm7:16-17, 1Chr17:14-5). The Promise contains three types of information:

- Promises about David's physical dynasty (2Sm7:9b,11b-12,14b)
- Promises about the "offspring", the Messiah (2Sm7:13b,16)
- Dual promises which relate to the physical dynasty of David, but also to the life and work of the Messiah (2Sm7:10-11a,13a,14a,15a)

**Messianic Descent:** David had no way to know the identity of the "offspring" or how he could sit on the throne "forever"; but the **Messianic nature of the promise became common knowledge** (Ps89:3-4,27). The **New Testament authors are clear about the descent of Jesus** (Lk1:30-33, At2:29-31a, 13:22-23, Rm1:1b-4). Similarly, Abraham could not know how "all nations would be blessed" through him. Again, the **New Testament authors are clear that the blessing is through the Messiah**, the descendant of David (Lk1:54-55, 72-75, Gl3:14,16). The Covenant of Descent particularizes the Covenant of Promise by showing that the "blessing of all nations" would be through the descendant of David.

**David's Prayer of Gratitude to YHWH:** David is overwhelmed – he can clearly see the significance of the promise is far beyond his physical dynasty (2Sm7:18-22, 1Chr17:16-20). **David had no way to understand how God would fulfill the promise** (2Sm7:23-25, 1Chr17:21-23). David looked for the fulfillment of the promise through the ancient Nation of Israel.

**The Covenant of Performance:** **The covenant is a simple promise by God that he will use Israel to teach The Way of God to "all the peoples", i.e., the whole world** – Israel will succeed as the example nation. This possibility was open to ancient Israel right up until the time that God made the decision to terminate the nation; at which time, the Plan switched to the New Israel – but **David had no way to know about the New Israel** (Ex34:10). The stipulations of the covenant comprise a reiteration of strict avoidance of all forms of idolatry and living by the Way of God as taught by the Sabbath and Holy Days (Ex34:11a,12-15,18a,21-22,27)

**The House of David in Perpetuity:** David expresses his deep gratitude to YHWH for the promise; he is very clear that he understands the significance of the promise, but **he is equally bewildered as to how it can be carried out** (2Sm7:26-29, 1Chr17:24-27).

**Teaching the Way of God:** Given the understanding that he had, that God would accomplish his purpose through the physical nation of Israel and through the human dynasty of David, **David set about to ensure the people of Israel understood the Way of God.** This **one of the main themes of the Davidic Psalms** – David is frequently explicit about his desire to teach the Way of God. See, for example, Psalms 22:22-28, 34:11, 32:6a,8-9, 40:3-5,8-10, 51:13-17, 145:4-7,10-13:

- "congregation" is from קָהָל - qahal, it is the official assembly of the "People of the Land", the "elders", the leadership group who were responsible to teach the general population
- "who fear the LORD" is almost a "technical term" that David uses for "True Worshipers"
- "fear" is from יָרָא - yare', better translated "reverence"
- "the afflicted" is from עָנִי - 'ani, "afflicted one", again a term David uses for a True Worshiper, expressing contrition, humility
- "the ends of the earth", "he rules over the nations" David recognized the end goal of YHWH's dealing with Israel: the establishment of the Kingdom of God over all the earth
- "children" is from בָּנִים - vanim, plural of בֶּן - ben, literally "son" – David is speaking in a "fatherly" way to the people he is teaching
- "godly", "saints" are from חָסִיד - hasid, "godly ones", another "technical term" for True Worshipers
- "the way" is from דֶּרֶךְ - derek, the Way of God

**Understanding the Covenant of Descent is critical to understanding the Plan of God:** the life and work of the Messiah were planned from the beginning. **Abraham** was given the promise initially, **"in you all families of the earth will be blessed"**; with **David**, the promise was particularized to his descendant **"I will raise up your offspring ... I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever"**. God unequivocally committed to accomplish his purpose through the Nation of Israel; ancient Israel failed, so the promise has passed on to the New Israel. **David worked tirelessly to teach the ancient nation** setting an example **for us** and giving us invaluable material **to prepare to teach the New Israel.**

The material is based on the papers "Covenants of Grace" and "David – A Man After My Own Heart" available at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/>

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