



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: LESSON 94

**Davidic covenant** – Having studied the covenants which God established with Abraham and Moses, we now come to the next major covenant in the Old Testament, God’s covenant with David, the Davidic covenant. Along with Abraham and Moses, David is a very significant person in the history of Israel.

After Moses and Joshua, Israel was ruled and led by a number of individuals raised by God, known as judges, for a period of about 350 years. The last judge was Samuel; and when he was old the people asked him to anoint a king for them like all the nations (1 Samuel 8:5). As a judgment for their sinful motive God gave them their desire, and Saul became the first king of Israel. Due to his disobedience God rejected Saul and later anointed David to be king. God’s choosing of David was wholly based on His grace and good pleasure, elevating him to a place of special honor and preeminence.

Over 800 years earlier, before his death, Jacob blessed Judah over his firstborn Reuben, describing him as a lion, with an everlasting scepter, prophesying that kings would come out of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:8-10). Saul, the first king of Israel, was a Benjaminite, the people’s choice; whereas David was from the tribe of Judah, being God’s choice of king for His people (Psalm 78:67-72). God chose David and would establish a great covenant with him (2 Samuel 7), but before we look at this, the book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel records a number of key events that took place paving the way for this covenant.

God gave David success against Israel’s enemies, and the people’s affections turned toward David. Even Saul knew that David was God’s choice and would one day be the rightful king of Israel (1 Samuel 13:13; 23:17), but he did not want to give up the kingdom; and so he became jealous of David, hating him and even desiring to kill him. David ran away from Saul and took refuge in the wilderness, and war broke out between Saul and David’s armies. God sovereignly protected David from Saul and his forces. And finally Saul and his son Jonathan were killed in battle by the Philistines (1 Samuel 31).

Even though Saul was dead, the animosity and war between the armies of David and Saul’s followers continued for a number of years until it was ended per God’s plan, when the elders of Israel recognized David’s kingship and submitted to his rule (2 Samuel 5:3). Also in those days the capital of David’s kingdom was Hebron, but Jerusalem had been under the control of a pagan people, the Jebusites (Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21). Thus they had become a wedge between the southern and northern tribes of Israel. But in 2 Samuel 5:6-7 we read that David captured Jerusalem, and made it the capital of his kingdom, which was well located between the southern and northern tribes, thus further uniting the nation.

Another important task which David accomplished was to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:1-2, 16, 17). The ark of God symbolized the presence and the throne of God in the midst of the people. With this action David displayed his desire to rule as a king in submission and obedience to God.

Furthermore, in 2 Samuel 8 we read that the Lord gave David victories over Israel’s enemies and thus the boundaries of the kingdom were expanded greatly (vv. 6, 14), becoming a powerful nation. The Lord had brought about an unparalleled state of peace and security for the king and the nation (2 Samuel 7:1).

So it was within such a context that God moved to establish His covenant with David. In 2 Samuel 7:1-3 we read that God had blessed David and given him a palace, but David felt the incompatibility of where he lived and where God’s ark was located, which was in a portable tent. David obviously desired to build a suitable and permanent temple for the Lord. Even though God was pleased with David’s desire (1 Kings 8:18-19), it wasn’t His plan, and so in the verses which follow we read that God declined David’s offer, but instead established a magnificent covenant with him, the Davidic covenant, pledging him and his offspring a number of great and gracious promises, which we will look at in the next study.