

Covenant Theology (March 16, 2025)

The Davidic Covenant

"The one who does these things shall live by them." (Leviticus 18:15) Views on Paul's Use in Romans 10:5 and Galatians 3:12			
View	Summary	Pastoral application	Potential weakness
Hypothetical (Early Reformed)	Moses affirmed only the abstract principle of justification for perfect obedience, which was neither possible nor the essential intent of the law given to Israel.	Emphasizes the graciousness of God's law in our lives.	Paul seems to affirm the law's promise of life (Rom. 7:10).
Literal (Later Reformed)	Moses affirmed a principle of blessing for obedience to the law, which is still operative in the new covenant. But such blessing corresponds only to <i>sanctification</i> ; justification has always and only been by faith.	Shows how the OT foreshadows our need for Christ's active obedience.	Seems to minimize the blessing of obedience to the law in the Christian life.
Rhetorical (Murrayans)	Paul is merely speaking ironically, quoting Moses as legalistically misinterpreted by the Judaizers, but Moses didn't actually teach that the law promises justifying life.	Emphasizes the law's requirement for perfect obedience.	Seems to minimize the original context of the law in Leviticus.
Typological (Klineans)	Moses affirmed a temporal reward for Israel's national obedience—which they failed to obtain due to disobedience—foreshadowing a greater eschatological reward for Christ's perfect obedience.	Highlights both the original context of Leviticus and also the blessing of obedience.	Paul doesn't seem to distinguish between justifying "life" and sanctifying "life".

1 Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, 2 the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." 3 And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you." 4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, 5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? 6 I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. 7 In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' 8 Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. 10 And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11 from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. 12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15 but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.'" (2 Samuel 7:1–16)

Introduction

"Taken as a whole, the Davidic covenant offered both apparent disappointment and simmering expectation. In both aspects, God's covenant with David brings greater clarity both to the redemption that He is accomplishing in the covenant of grace and to the manner in which He will accomplish it." (Stephen Myers, *God to Us*, 231)

Is It a Covenant?

"For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?" (2 Sam. 23:5)

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant." (Ps. 89:3)

Continuity with the Mosaic Covenant

- Deut. 17:14–20

Dependence on the Mosaic Covenant

- 1 Kings 2:1–4

Context of 2 Samuel 7

- David victorious in civil war against Saul
- David captures Jerusalem
- David brings ark of the covenant
- David given “rest from all his surrounding enemies” (2 Sam. 7:1)
- “...Something like a benchmark has been reached and something new and wonderful is about to begin. God had promised His people a day of rest from their enemies, and that day has come. It is as if redemptive history is leaning forward to behold what comes next.” (Myers, 234)

A “House” for David

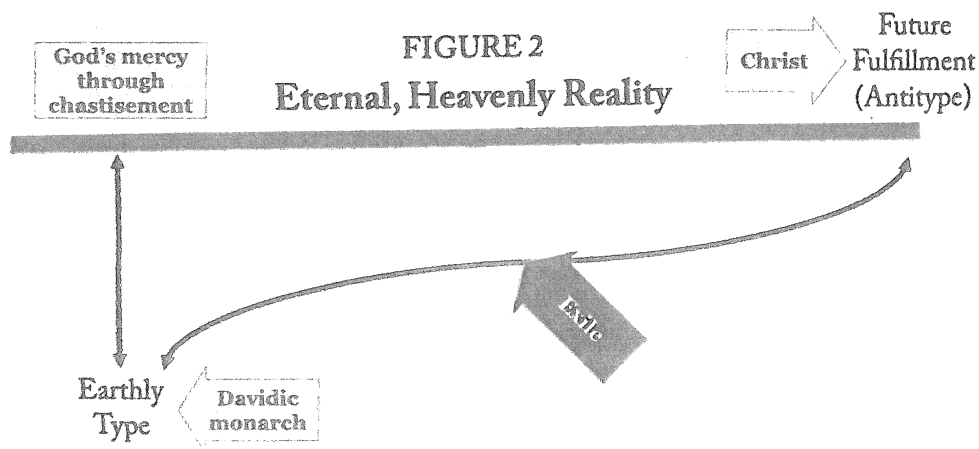
“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house (*bayith*) to dwell in? ... Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house (*bayith*).’” (2 Sam. 7:5, 11)

Obedience and Mercy

“In the same breath, God is affirming two things that seem to be in tension. First, the obedience of the Davidic king is necessary and important. Second, God’s faithfulness will not be affected by the obedience or disobedience of that mediator. God’s promises to David are not affected by the king’s obedience or disobedience, even if the king’s enjoyment of those promises is.” (Myers, 236)

Does the Davidic Covenant End in the Exile?

“To state the matter strongly, the exile can appear to be the strongest argument for rejecting the suggestion that there is one, eternal covenant of grace, for in that exile God seems to take away the embodiment of His promises only to begin afresh later with Jesus Christ.” (237)



The Davidic Covenant in the Covenant of Grace

1. The mediatorial office through which Jesus Christ must be understood.
2. The importance of the mediator's active obedience.
3. The complex relationship between divine mercy and human obedience.
4. Jesus is King.