

Jesus and the Throne of David

Randy Watson

Randy labors with the church in Albany, Missouri and is also self employed in secular work. He makes regular trips to Riga, Latvia where he labored full time for two years. He will be returning to full time work in Riga in October of 2003. Randy is a fellow laborer in the International Bible Studies work and the work of the Mid-West School of Biblical Studies.

The Promise of God

In Genesis 49:10, Jacob identified Judah as the forefather of the “ruling” tribe, through which the “lawgiver” and “Shiloh” would come.

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

When the throne was initially established over the united kingdom of Israel, Saul was anointed as the first king. Interestingly, he was not a descendent of Judah, but of Benjamin. However, as a result of his sinful behavior, the throne was taken from him and given to David, a descendent of Judah. Subsequently, God promised to David that the throne would not be removed from him as it had been from Saul.

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. (2 Samuel 17:12-16)

While premillennialists look to this passage to find Jesus, the text of verse suggests that he is NOT under consideration here by the prophet. The primary focus is upon Solomon and his descending kings. Solomon is the one who would build God’s house during the time of the Israelites, the temple, in Jerusalem, and according to God’s promise, even if he sinned, the kingdom would not be given to another family. That his kingdom would be “for ever” shows that as long as there was an Israelite nation sanctioned and governed by God, this would remain true. This is in the same sense that the Sabbaths and sacrifices of the Israelites were to be “for ever”.

It will be important to remember the promise of God here, that David’s throne ruled through Solomon’s house is the one described here. Later we’ll see the relevance of this point.

Another key passage often mistakenly used to support the idea of Jesus’ return to rule from a physical throne from the city of physical Jerusalem, is Psalm 132:11-13, and 17.

The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, he will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation ... There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

In reality, the focus here is upon Jerusalem and its connection to the physical throne of David during the remaining years so long as those kings would reign.

One more prophesy we want to notice is found in Isaiah 9:6-7, one of the more widely known prophecies concerning Christ.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Here God chose to describe Christ's reign as one for which "there shall be no end". He would reign upon the throne of David and over his kingdom. The judgement and justice under his rule is said to be "henceforth even for ever".

I. The Lineage of Christ

In the New Testament we find two lineages of Christ given, one in Matthew 1:6-16; the second in Luke 3:23-32.

Matthew give the legal lineage, tracing the descendants of David through Solomon, which ends with Joseph, the 'legal' father to Jesus. Well look at Matthew 1:6-7, 16.

"And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; and Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; ... And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

This line includes the ruling kings from David continuing until the last ruling king, Jehoiachin (also called Jechonias or Coniah). Matthew 1:11, *"And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon."* Why is this important? Because Jeremiah revealed that no descendent of this man would ever rule as king!

Jeremiah 22:28-30, "Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? Is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? Wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."

How then can Jesus reign on David's throne? Considering God's promise to David regarding Solomon, and the problem connected with Coniah, Jesus could NOT legally do so. It must be

remembered however, that Jesus was NOT a descendant of Coniah, although Joseph was. No need to despair, as we now turn to Luke's record.

Luke 3:23, 31-32, "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, ... Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David, Which was the son of Jesse..."

While Jesus was "supposed" to be the son of Joseph, in reality he was of Heli, Mary's father. Remember, Joseph's father was Jacob (Mt. 1:16). Mary is not mentioned by name, because the Jewish custom was to give attention to the male descendants. By law, her name would not be given, but it is implied in the text which names her father and his lineage. We know that Heli is NOT another name for Joseph, because he is a descendant of Nathan, half brother to Solomon (c.f. 2 Samuel 5:14) whereas Joseph was a direct descendant of Solomon.

Being a true descendant of David, Jesus could legitimately rule on David's throne. However, those who today await Christ's return to reign from a physical throne of David in physical Jerusalem, face quite a problem reconciling that doctrine with the word of God. It's not a question of Christ reigning on David's throne. It's a question of Christ reigning on David's throne 'in Jerusalem'? If observing the "legal" lineage of Christ, he could not rule on that Judean throne because the line of kings ended with Coniah! If following the literal lineage of Christ, through Mary's family, he could not rule on that Judean throne for as we noticed earlier, that throne belonged exclusively to Solomon and would never be taken from him! Do you think perhaps God anticipated the doctrine currently being taught by so many? Is it possible that this represents one of those "strong delusions" promised in 2 Thessalonians 2:11, to distinguish between those who really pay attention to the details of God's word and those who do not?

II. The Gospel Record

Jesus' ruling on David's throne and over his kingdom is anticipated throughout the four Gospels.

At Christ's birth, the anticipation begins, with the word of God's angel to Mary, "*And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end*" (Luke 1:31-33)

Both John and Jesus were preaching, "the kingdom is at hand" (Matthew 3:2; 4:17). Within a few days of his death, after most people stopped following him, Jesus told his disciples, "*Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*" And then in his meeting with Pilate, Jesus was asked, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33). Jesus eventually replied, "*Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*"

If Christ were failing to establish the kingdom as many who claim to believe in Christ often teach, then surely at this eve of his crucifixion, Jesus would have realized this fact. But his position was clear, as he confirmed Pilate's question of curiosity.

Also in the gospels, we cannot ignore the anticipation of the people. As Jesus was making his "triumphal" entry into Jerusalem, the people were excited to greet their "King".

Mark 11:10, *"Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."* Here in the only New Testament verse where appears the phrase "kingdom of David" the people are clearly exuberant to believe that Jesus was planning to reclaim that throne and restore the kingdom.

Luke's account of the same event tells more. *"And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."* (Luke 19:36-38).

Even the apostles, after Christ's resurrection, were expecting a swift restoration of the kingdom of David, apparently still not understanding what Jesus had proclaimed to Pilate in John 18:36, *"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."* Those apostles asked, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Well Jesus simply told them to go to Jerusalem and wait until the Holy Spirit would come upon them as promised, then they would understand, which they did.

Aside from the teaching of Christ and the anticipation of the disciples, there are two other truths revealed in the gospel record relevant to our discussion: (1) the kingdom was to be taken away from the Israelites (Jews) and given to others; and (2) the Jews rejected God king for them.

In Matthew 18:11-12 see Jesus taught that the kingdom would be inclusive of many from the east and west, but that the children of the kingdom, the Jews, would be cast out! (see also Matthew 21:33-45; Matthew 22:2-14; and Romans 15:12).

"And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

And then in John 19:13-16 we read, *"When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away."*

While these truths seem to have been widely ignored by many, they remain eternally a part of the gospel record and the doctrine of Christ. Perhaps this is what Jesus meant in Matthew 23:13, *"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."*

III. The Glorification of Christ

Finally we turn our attention to Christ's final victory and glorification.

Acts 2:29-36

*Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, **he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ**, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore **being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost**, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that **God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.***

I've highlighted specific statements which we should take note of. First, that the promise to David that Christ would rise to sit upon his throne was a prophecy of Christ's resurrection! Next, God already exalted him and finally he has already been made both Lord and Christ! The fact that he is "Lord" in this context points to his sitting and reigning upon the throne, just as prophesied and promised.

This is why the prophesy of David (Psalm 45:6) quoted in Hebrews 1:8 can be applied to Jesus who is Lord over his kingdom.

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

Consider the following excerpt from Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia.

Acts 13:22-39

"And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second

psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

When Jesus was raised from the death, he ascended not only to heaven, but to sit upon the throne of David as king over God’s chosen people. He now reigns supreme and all who are awaiting his return to restore the throne need to get on board today. When Christ returns, this will not be for the purpose of taking the throne, but for the purpose of “laying down all rule and all authority” and delivering “the kingdom up to the Father” (1 Corinthians 15:24) where the saved will spend eternity together with them in the place God now calls home. Waiting to follow him will result only in being on the wrong side when he comes “in flaming fire” (2 Thessalonians 1:8) to judge the world.

The only promise of God left to keep is the judgment day. Are you waiting? Or are you ready?