

# Christ In The Old Testament

## Lesson 3

### 2 Samuel 7:12-16, Zechariah 6:12-13

**2 Samuel 7:12-16** is a great text to study because it introduces us to prophecies with more than one application. This is a concept that will be encountered throughout the Bible, so it is beneficial for us to learn that some scriptures, especially the prophetic texts, can have greater meaning the deeper we dig in to them.

*“When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers...” (7:12).* The message is given specifically to King David, by the prophet Nathan (7:17). Undoubtedly, it refers to a time after David’s death, but the specifics of that epoch are not explained by the speaker. *“The Davidic covenant was a very important affirmation of God’s intention to complete that which He had promised to Abraham (Genesis 12). This covenant consisted of three essential elements: (1) a posterity, (2) a throne (Luke 1:32), and (3) a kingdom (Luke 1:33). The nature and scope of this covenant are such that their fulfillment could not have been realized in the days of Solomon, but will find their ultimate fulfillment in Christ through the establishment of His kingdom...” (The Birth Of A Kingdom, John J. Davis, 136).* *“...I will raise up your descendent after you...”* Referring back to the previous quotation from J.J. Davis’s commentary, we see that this the first portion of the covenant. Through the line of David, future kings would come to rule over Judah. While the kings of Israel, after the division of the kingdom, became progressively more evil and worldly, the line of Judean kings tended to be more faithful (though not always). As for the Messianic aspect of this prophecy, God is promising David that the Great King, Jesus Christ, will come from His line. According to the genealogy of **Matthew 1:6**, Jesus is born as a direct descendent of David. *“... And I will establish His kingdom.”* Notice that it is not a man establishing the future kingdom, but it is God! A very valuable point that can be made is that any religious body that exists today that claims to be the true kingdom of God must have Jesus Christ as its founder and ruler. History will tell us that every denomination had a founder, and that many of them have a human head as their leader!

*“He shall build a house for My name...”* This is in response to David’s request in **2 Samuel 7:2-3**, in which he asks to build a temple for God. While the Lord informs David that he is not allowed to build a temple, He does note that David’s son shall perform the task. In the literal sense, Solomon builds a grand temple in the city of Jerusalem. But there is a much more significant spiritual application that must be considered. The *“house”* that will be built by the future descendent of David is the church established by Christ. Read **Ephesians 2:19-22** and **1 Corinthians 3:10-17** to see that Christians are all parts of the grand household of God – a temple not built with hands, but established by God, built upon the cornerstone of Jesus Christ. *“...And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”* It seems from the context of the previous statements that the throne of the kingdom would be Christ’s, for the physical throne of David ceases to be in power after the invasion of the Babylonians. After the conquest, no more legitimate descendents of David sit on the Judean throne, replaced for generations with figureheads and even part-Gentile kings such as the line of the Herods during our Lord’s time. Therefore, we should believe that the eternal throne is Christ’s, and that it is established by the power of God.

**Discussion Question:** Do you ever find it hard to reconcile the words of this prophecy (and others, as well) with the literal, historical outcome of Jewish history? Did God fail to keep any of His promises to them, or to David’s line of descendants specifically? What New Testament passage helps us here?

*“I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me...”* (**7:14**). In the most literal sense, Christ is the Son of God (**Matthew 3:17**, **Matthew 16:16**, **John 11:27**, **Romans 1:4**, **Hebrews 1:5**). The second part of the prophecy does not apply to Jesus; *“...when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men.”* Christ was sinless in this life (**2 Corinthians 5:21**, **Hebrews 7:26**), so it is unnecessary for God to punish Him for nonexistent iniquities. The son in this context, therefore, is the physical king of Judah, who would be considered a son by God. When the kings of Judah did commit iniquity,

they were all punished by God – not directly in most cases, but through the power of heathen nations. These Gentile kingdoms would be given opportunity by God to rise in glory for the purpose of teaching humility to the disobedient sons of Judah. Consider some of the examples of this concept throughout the history of the Israelite and Judean kings, such as Ahaz in **2 Kings 16** and **2 Chronicles 28**. Because of his arrogance, God raised up enemies from Damascus and Assyria to afflict the nation of Judah.

*“But My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you” (7:15).* This portion of the prophecy can apply to either Christ or the kings of Judah. In the one sense, the lovingkindness of God never left Jesus Christ, even as He was hanging on the cross. In the other sense, the lovingkindness of God was manifested to the kings of Judah by allowing them to exist much longer than their Israelite counterparts.

*“And your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever” (7:16).*

**Discussion Question:** Consider the word “forever” in the above context. What does it teach or illustrate about Christ’s rule, practically speaking?

### **Zechariah 6:12-13**

This section of scripture includes a prophecy about Jesus Christ that is similar to the one discussed above. It deals primarily with the establishment of Christ as the centerpiece of God’s true religion, and His role in the construction of a spiritual house of the Lord. *“Then say to him, ‘Thus say the Lord of hosts, ‘Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the Lord. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of the Lord, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices’” (Zechariah 6:12-13).* The application of this prophecy is obviously to Christ, who is called the branch of the Lord in other texts (**Isaiah 4:2**, **11:1-10**, **Jeremiah 23:5**, **33:15**). This branch is also the promised seed of David, who would come many years after his death to fulfill the promise of an eternal kingdom. A primary lesson is that Christ’s kingdom has been planned for many years. It was not an accident that He came

when He did, and He died, and was crowned with glory on high. Many false doctrines exist in the world today that try to teach us that Christ is not on His throne right now, or that the church is some kind of accidental kingdom. However, there is no room for error in these prophecies, and if Christ did not mean to set up the church as His true kingdom, then what an inept God it is who we worship!

The image of the Branch is significant because it symbolizes the connection of one thing to another. In this prophecy there are actually two beneficial ways to interpret the “branch” of Christ. First, He is the branch that connects God to man. Because Jesus is God, but lived as a man in this physical world (**Philippians 2**), He is perfectly suited to understand both perspectives. He has the will and understanding of God, but also has the unique ability to sympathize with us in our afflictions and weaknesses (**Hebrews 4:15**). Christ is, therefore, the most perfect advocate for us before the Father (**1 John 2:1-2**). Second, Christ is the branch that connects the priesthood to the throne of royalty. Until the establishment of the church, no Jewish king had ever held the offices of priest and king jointly. In our Lord, however, we see both roles fulfilled to perfection (**Hebrews 7:14-17**). *“This action was symbolical of the coronation of the Messiah who would serve both as priest and king... ‘the branch’ fulfilled the qualifications to serve both capacities”* (**The Minor Prophets**, Harkrider, 111).

*“He will build the temple...”* *“Obviously, this has a future spiritual application because Zerubbabel was already overseeing the building of the material temple in Jerusalem. The church is the spiritual temple built by the Lord (**Ephesians 2:21-22, 1 Peter 2:5**)”* (Harkrider, 111). Some, however, try to argue that Christ is not reigning as king yet because an earthly kingdom has not been established for Him. Premillennialists will say that Christ is going to return someday to reign in this world, from a throne in Jerusalem, for 1,000 years, but that forces them to deny this prophecy. It is undeniable that Christ is now our high priest, because even proponents of this false doctrine do not believe that a Levitical high priesthood exists today (**Hebrews 5:1-10, 7:1-3, 25**). But if Christ is our high priest, then He must also be our king, because this prophecy in Zechariah clearly states that He will rule as both, simultaneously, and establish peace between the two offices.

*“The counsel of peace shall be between them both...”* (**6:13**). *“As priest and king He shall be able to provide the perfect peace for His people (**Isaiah 9:6-7, Ephesians 2:14-17**). As priest He provides forgiveness with the perfect sacrifice,*

*and as king He gives counsel with the perfect law”* (Harkrider, 112). It is because of these qualifications that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the most perfect means of salvation. Without Him, we would have no Advocate, no king, no priest, no Savior, and no Lord.

**Discussion Question:** What facts are established in the above prophecies about the reign of Christ in His kingdom? Why is it valuable to have a proper understanding of the way Christ fills two offices (priest and king)?