

The Biblical Metanarrative #3: David, Solomon, and the Prophets

BACKGROUND

The Exodus generation of Israel was forbidden by God to enter the Promised Land due to their sin. Joshua succeeded Moses and led Israel into the land, but was unable to drive all of the reprobate inhabitants out. From the time of the generation after him until the time of David, Israel languished through cycles of: 1) forgetting their Creator and Redeemer, 2) engaging in major sin and idolatry, 3) being given over by God to oppression and subjugation by their enemies, 4) crying out to God for deliverance, and 5) being delivered by God through an Israelite champion. This cycle repeated itself for hundreds of years. Eventually Israel wanted a permanent king to deliver them from their enemies.

DAVID (c. 1000 BCE): Idealized King, Progenitor of Christ, Type of Christ

1. Israel's demand for a king was essentially a rejection of YHWH as their king (1 Sam 8).
 - ANE nations often viewed their king as the "custodian and guardian of the stability of the cosmos" on behalf of a particular god. Israel's demand for a king ran the risk that they too would fall into this idolatrous belief (*Anchor Bible Dict.*, "Davidic Covenant").
2. Nevertheless, God acquiesced to Israel's demand, but Israel's first king, Saul, failed to honor God, and the kingdom was torn from him and given to David by God's decree.
3. David was a man after God's own heart and came to be honored as the idealized king against whom all subsequent kings were measured (1 Kgs 11:4-6). This idealization took place in spite of David's egregious sins of adultery and conspiracy to murder.
 - David was known for his worship of God and his love of God's presence.
 - David conquered the enemies of God's people and united God's people.
 - David sought to implement God's reign as expressed through God's Law.
 - David reestablished Jerusalem, which came to be known as the city of God.

- In all of these things and more, David foreshadowed Jesus (was a type of Christ).
4. God promised David an everlasting royal dynasty through his descendants but warned of ominous judgment if a descendant king would turn away from God (2 Sam 7:12-16).
- Future kings and the nation did turn away, leading eventually to the Babylonian Exile.
 - The destruction of the temple & nation were due to idolatry, immorality, and injustice.
 - Nevertheless, God promised a future “Son of David” who would have an everlasting reign and bring deliverance and blessing to Israel and the nations (1 Chr 17:11-14; Is 9:6-7; 11:1-5; Mic 5:2-4). This would of course turn out to be Jesus.

SOLOMON (c. 960 BCE): An Idealized (Terribly Flawed) Type of the Messiah

1. Although Solomon sinned terribly in his later years, his earlier years were marked by achievements and characterized by qualities that would serve to foreshadow God’s ultimate purposes of redemption that are being realized through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Solomon subdued his enemies and established his throne (1 Kgs 2).
 - Solomon possessed supernatural wisdom to lead God’s people (2 Chr 1; 1 Kgs 3).
 - Solomon built God’s temple according to God’s plan (2 Chr 2-7; 1 Chr 28:11-12, 19).
 - Solomon’s glorious reign benefited the people of God (2 Chr 9; 1 Kgs 4, 10).
2. Solomon’s glorious reign foreshadows the future reign of Christ on a renewed earth.
- Solomon reigned over the full extent of God’s promised borders for Israel, even as Jesus will one day reign over the whole earth.
 - God’s people were numerous, prosperous, happy, and safe, as redeemed humanity will be when Christ governs the earth and all wars and sorrow cease.
 - “All the kings of the earth” sought to hear Solomon’s wisdom, even as we will rule and reign on earth with Christ according to his wisdom and truth (cf. 2 Chr 9 Sheba’s Queen).

THE PROPHETS (c. 760-460 BCE)

After the reign of Solomon, Israel split into the kingdoms of Israel (North) and Judah (South). The majority of the kings of both realms did evil in the eyes of God. In response God sent prophets to speak to the kings and people of both nations. The northern prophets ministered primarily during the 40 years prior to Israel's fall in 722 BCE to Assyria, while the southern prophets ministered primarily during the 100 years prior to Judah's fall in 586 BCE to Babylon.

1. The primary function of the prophets was to enforce the Mosaic Covenant. Sent by God, they reminded the people of their history with Yahweh and of the terms of God's covenant. They spoke by God's authority calling for repentance and adherence to God's covenant.
2. Their message carried three primary emphases that were based on the Mosaic Covenant.
 - Blessing: They reminded the people that God desired to bless them.
 - Judgment: They warned of what would befall them if they remained unrepentant.
 - Prior to the fall of Israel and Judah, the prophets mostly warn of impending judgment due to the people's sins of idolatry, immorality, and injustice.
 - Restoration: They predicted eventual restoration after future repentance (Dt 4:25-31).
 - After the fall of Judah, the prophets often speak of God restoring the people to himself and to the land, and of the restoration of God's covenantal blessings.
 - God promised to renew his people (Jer 24:4-7; 31:31-34; Ezk 36:22-38).
 - He will give his people a new heart to know him.
 - He will make a new covenant with his people, whereby he puts his law in their minds and writes it upon their hearts.

- He will cleanse his people and put his Spirit in them to move them to obey him, which in turn will cause the nations to come to know God.
- God promised to rule the nations (Isa 11:1-14; 12:4-6; 42:1-4; 49:5-7; 2:1-4).
 - He will raise up a Davidic ruler to slay the wicked, subdue God's enemies, render justice for the poor, and restore God's people who are in exile.
 - God's servant will bring God's salvation to the ends of the earth and God's justice to the nations.
 - God's reign will be celebrated and proclaimed among the nations.
 - God's reign will be characterized by peace, extending from Jerusalem to all nations.

MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS

1. By the first century (CE) God's people longed for the fulfillment of God's promises concerning their restoration and redemption. They had suffered through several centuries of foreign oppression and internal corruption. Their hopes centered primarily on a set of messianic expectations derived from Scripture, which included the following:
 - The coming of Isaiah's servant of Yahweh (Isa 42:1-7; 49:1-7; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12), whom God would give as a covenant to bring salvation to his people and to the nations.
 - The coming of a Messianic-Davidic warrior-king like Joshua/David who would restore the kingdom. (Isa 11:1-15)
 - The gathering of the scattered people of God. (Isa 11:11-13; 43:1-7)
 - The purging, cleansing, and blessing of God's people and the land. (Isa 4:2-6)
 - The overthrow of foreign, pagan oppression. (Isa 9:2-7)

- The establishment of God's true temple [not the Herodian corruptions]. (Ezk 40-48)
 - The subduing of God's enemies and the judgment of the nations. (Isa 9:2-7; 63:1-6)
 - The establishment of God's kingdom worldwide from Jerusalem. (Isa 2:1-4)
 - The blessing of the nations: peace, prosperity, and the worship of Yahweh. (Isa 19:23-25)
 - The outpouring of God's Spirit upon all flesh. (Joel 2:28-32)
 - The resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous for the purpose of judgment on evil and reward for good. (Dan 12:2-3; Isa 66:15-24)
 - The renewal of creation. (Isa 65:17-25; 11:6-9)
2. How these various prophetic promises fit together and in what manner they would take place was not clear. However, most Jews by the first century believed the following:
- Fulfillment would take place in a relatively short time frame (perhaps one generation).
 - Fulfillment would be precipitated by the requisite faithfulness of a righteous remnant.
 - The Pharisees pursued righteousness through strict Law observance.
 - The Essenes pursued righteousness by separating from society.
 - The Zealots pursued righteousness through violent opposition to the Romans.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. **David as a Type of Christ:** In what ways did David prefigure Jesus? How do his strengths and failures help us understand the nature of godly leadership?

2. **The Prophetic Voice:** What were the three major themes of the prophetic message? How should these themes inform the church's voice in society today?
3. **Messianic Expectations:** How did the expectations of a Messiah develop over time? How did different groups in Israel interpret and pursue these expectations?

HOMEWORK

1. Read 2 Samuel 7:12–16; Isaiah 9:6–7; 11:1–10; and Micah 5:2–5.
2. Write responses to the following questions:
 - What were Israel's expectations for a future descendant of David?
 - What kind of kingdom did the prophets anticipate this ruler would bring?
 - How do these eschatological promises shape your understanding of Jesus and your hope for the future?
 - How do these Messianic prophecies help anchor your faith in a world full of injustice and uncertainty?