

- David penned Psalm 16:8-11 as words of worship and praise expressing his confidence that his faithful God would not forsake him in death. He had no pretensions about the outcome for his physical body, but he knew that death would not bring an end to his relationship with his Lord (cf. Asaph's spiritual insight in Psalm 73, esp. vv. 21-24).
- David knew his body would decay in the grave, but he also knew that was not to be the end of his life. Yahweh was David's refuge and preservation in this life, and His power and intent would not cease with his death. Most importantly, *David's personal confidence was prophetic because it was grounded in God's covenant oath to him (2:30-31)*. Yahweh had sworn to establish David's house and throne forever in a future descendent: David's life would continue everlastingly *in* this Son, but, more than that, *through* Him: the Son's triumph over the grave meant that David himself would live; David's words were true of himself because they are true of Christ.
- Peter indicated David's prophetic understanding of his words, but their status as inspired prophecy didn't depend upon it; history itself proved that he wasn't speaking of himself first and foremost. If the Spirit did indeed inspire David's words, then the mere fact that David's tomb continued to hold his decayed corpse affirms that He had been pointing to someone beyond David when He led him to write as he did (2:29).

Psalm 16 prophetically points to the resurrection of the True David, but the historical context of that and many others of David's psalms highlights the larger typological connection between him and his covenant Son: *David gained his throne through ignominy and unjust suffering, and so it would be with Jesus.*

- To many it appears strange that God would have Samuel anoint David the rightful king of Israel, only to then withhold the throne from His anointed shepherd for many years. After his triumph over Goliath and a brief period of service in Saul's palace, David was forced to endure years as a condemned fugitive while the disqualified Saul and his army doggedly pursued his life (ref. 1 Samuel 15-30). Even after Saul's death, it took some time for David to assume the throne of all Israel (2 Samuel 1-4).
- Considered in themselves, these things seem to reveal a fickle (if not unrighteous) God. But viewed in the light of the prophetic (christological) nature of David's life, the circumstance of his ascension to the throne of Yahweh's kingdom becomes profoundly illuminating.

*In insisting upon a Davidic messiah of their own invention, the sons of Israel had insured that the true Messiah would enter into His regal glory just as the Scriptures had prophesied: Like His father before Him, David's covenant Son obtained His royal dominion as the Lord's anointed as the triumphal reward of patient, submissive suffering at the hands of unrighteous men.*

When one rightly reads David's words of supplication, petition and imprecation, he finds in them insight into the mind and heart of the One to come (ref. Psalm 22:1-21, 31:1-5, 34:15-22, 35:1-26, 41:5-9, 69:6-9, 109:1-5, etc.; cf. Isaiah 53).

- b. Christ is revealed in the Scriptures in David's typology, but more directly in the **Davidic Covenant** (2:29-31). This covenant set forth God's promise to David that his house, throne and kingdom were to be established forever in one of his sons. *By linking the Davidic Covenant with Psalm 16, Peter testified that Christ's resurrection from the dead had its immediate goal and meaning in His ascension and enthronement as the Davidic heir at God's right hand* (ref. 2:32-35; cf. Paul's consideration of the resurrection in Acts 13:34-35; Ephesians 1:18-21; Romans 8:34). This is an important truth that must be addressed by those who argue that the Davidic Covenant will not be fulfilled until an alleged future Millennium.

Even as Jesus wasn't the first referent in David's psalm, so the Davidic Covenant referred initially to David's son *Solomon*. (In this way Solomon, too, serves as a type of Christ). The context for the covenant was David's desire to build Yahweh a permanent sanctuary in Jerusalem, and God's response was that David's son would build His house. Moreover, the fulfillment of the covenant would find the Lord building a house for David (2 Samuel 7:1-16). David understood that God was appointing Solomon to build the Jerusalem temple, and so set about making preparations for that future work (cf. 1 Chronicles 18:1-11, 22:1-11, 28:1-29:5).

At the same time, David recognized that the promise pertained ultimately to the *distant future* and another son after Solomon (2 Samuel 7:18-19). As in his own case as the King of Israel, David understood that Solomon was only a prefiguration of the true Seed the Lord had pledged to him. Peter recognized this as well, and so reminded his hearers of David's prophetic role in connection with his kingship and God's covenant with him:

- When David spoke of himself regarding his confidence in Yahweh's preserving intention and power, he was ultimately highlighting the same intention and exercise with respect to the true "David" – the One in whom David would realize his own fulfillment as Yahweh's king.
- Moreover, David understood that this work of preservation – which looked beyond him to his royal covenant Son – was absolutely necessary given God's oath that, in this Son, He would establish David's house (dynasty), throne and kingdom (dominion) *forever*.
- To fulfill His covenant with David, Yahweh would have to raise up from his line a man characterized by a *perpetual kingship*. Importantly, this perpetual reign could not be realized through a dynastic succession of kings. The first indication of this was the Lord's prophecy through Jacob that the royal scepter would continue with Judah's line until it came to rest in the hand of *Shiloh* ("the one to whom it belongs") (Genesis 49:10).

But what Yahweh only suggested by Jacob's blessing – namely an everlasting Davidic kingdom ruled by one descendent, He made explicit to David by connecting his own kingship with that of *Melchizedek* (2:34-35; Psalm 110). David's dynasty and dominion – which the Lord swore to perpetuate in his covenant Son – were to endure in the way they did with Melchizedek: not through an unbroken line of descent, but through the “*power of an indestructible life*” (cf. Genesis 14:17-20; Hebrews 7:1-16).

- c. Melchizedek – the King of Salem – was the paradigm for the perpetual kingship of the Davidic Seed, but he was also the “*priest of God Most High.*” Thus God's pledge of an unending reign for David's covenant Son was equally His promise of this Son's **perpetual priesthood**. (This was the main concern of the Hebrews writer in addressing Jesus' relationship with Melchizedek.)

In this way, too, David had acted as a prophetic prefiguration. Inasmuch as David's kingship and kingdom were to find fulfillment in a future Son, one would expect this Son's priestly role to equally find precedent in David. This is precisely the case: Among all the kings of Judah, Yahweh permitted only David to act directly as a priest in His behalf. (cf. 2 Samuel 6:12-18 with 1 Samuel 13:5-14 and 2 Chronicles 26:14-21; cf. also 1 Kings 8:62-66 in which Solomon presided as king over the temple dedicatory offerings but didn't offer them himself.

- Saul presented sacrifices to Yahweh and He stripped the kingdom from him for doing so; David wore the linen ephod of the priests (cf. 2 Samuel 6:13-14 with Exodus 28:1-6; 1 Samuel 2:18, 10:1-8, 22:18; etc.) and offered sacrifices before the ark of the Lord's presence and the Lord took no displeasure. (Some, noting the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 15:27-16:2 in which the writer ascribes at least some of the sacrificial duties to the attending Levites, conclude that David, like Solomon at the dedication of the temple, was simply overseeing the sacrifices. The best refutation of this is that both passages are careful to speak of David in priestly terms, emphasizing that he wore the priestly garb of the Levites.)
- And lest someone conclude that God had changed His disposition regarding kings functioning as priests, He later struck David's royal descendent Uzziah with leprosy when he took that prerogative to himself.

Both before and after David, no Israelite king was allowed to act as a priest. Indeed, God's covenant with Israel had introduced an unbridgeable chasm between the kingship and the priesthood: The Sinai Covenant set apart the descendents of Levi to hold the priesthood, whereas God had previously assigned the kingship to the tribe of Judah. Only a change of covenant could allow for a king-priest to rule over Yahweh's kingdom, and yet this is exactly what God had pledged to David: The Branch of David would build the Lord's house as a priest upon His throne (cf. Zechariah 3:1-4:10 with 6:9-15); the Davidic Covenant implied a “*priest according to the order of Melchizedek*” (Psalm 110:1-4).

Yahweh's covenant with David had localized the Judahite scepter in him and the "Shiloh" to come from him, and this localization equally pertained to the priesthood. God had long before begun to develop the priestly aspects of messianic revelation and promise (along with the royal aspects), but it was in connection with David, the Davidic Covenant, and the Melchizedek typology that the priestly and royal strands were brought together.

And if the Davidic Seed was to be "*a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek*," then it followed that He would offer sacrifices to God Most High as Melchizedek (and the Levitical priests) had. Most important in this regard, the Branch was to embark upon His priestly work in connection with His kingship (ref. again the Zechariah passages cited above). Like all priests, this Davidic priest would present His offering to Yahweh in His sanctuary and there mediate for His people, but He would do so as the Lord's enthroned king.

If it was necessary that the Son of David not undergo decay in order to take His everlasting throne, it was equally demanded by his role as perpetual High Priest. A dead man cannot rule over David's kingdom, but neither can such a one act as a priest on behalf of the sons of the kingdom. And yet, the Son of David *had* to die inasmuch as every high priest must have an offering to present to God (Hebrews 8:3). No high priest ever entered into Yahweh's presence without the blood of the appointed sacrifices (Leviticus 16:1-34), and so it is with the ultimate High Priest:

Jesus had to *die* in order to present to God the required sacrifice – the blood of His own self-offering. But for the very same reason He also had to be *raised* from the dead; a dead priest cannot bear the atoning offering into Yahweh's sanctuary.

At the same time, mere resurrection wasn't enough: Jesus had to *ascend* from the earth because the sanctuary in which He was to present His sacrificial offering exists in the heavenly realm. Every high priest that preceded Him had appeared before Yahweh's glory-cloud over the ark – that is, His symbolic enthroned presence (ref. 2 Samuel 6:2; Psalm 80:1, 99:1; etc.) – within an earthly sanctuary; the true High Priest had appeared in the very presence of God in His sanctuary throne room in the "heavenlies," presenting, not the blood of goats and bulls, but His own blood, thereby obtaining eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:1-12).

But again, Messiah's priestly role is inseparable from His royal one. Previous priests performed their duties by symbolically approaching the enthroned God; the Melchizedekian High Priest performs His as the *enthroned* Davidic Branch – the Son of David whose royal dispatch of the Spirit (2:33) and priestly mediation are the very means by which He builds David's house and administers the rule of his kingdom. God has indeed made Jesus both *Lord* (King) and *Christ* (Savior).

Thus Peter's Spirit-led focus on Psalm 16 was profoundly appropriate; every thread of messianic revelation and promise converge on the core truth that David's Son, though entering the grave in death, could not and would not be abandoned to it and its decay.