

## CHRIST, KINGDOM, AND CREATION: Davidic Christology and Ecclesiology in Luke-Acts

~: **Scott W. Hahn** ~:

*St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology*

Luke reflects a deep biblical worldview. Both his gospel and its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles, are based upon a hermeneutic of continuity. Luke's widely recognized reliance on Old Testament allusion and citation is really only the surface manifestation of this deeper, underlying hermeneutic, which is a way of reading and interpreting sacred history.

Luke sees an analogy between the first man, Adam, and the "new Adam," Jesus Christ; between creation and the kingdom of God, and again between the kingdom and the Church; and between the old covenant and the new covenant made in the blood of Christ. Likewise, he sees these relationships diachronically, that is—growing, and developing over the course of time, with the new marking a profound restoration and renewal of the old.

In this article, I will show how this hermeneutical key helps us to understand and explain Luke's christology and his ecclesiology. Luke's vision of Christ and the Church hinges on the figure of Israel's King David and the kingdom established by God's covenant with David.

Luke, following a subtle but clearly discernible line of interpretation that begins in the Old Testament, understands David and the Davidic kingdom as a fulfillment of the divine promises and covenant in creation. Thus Luke's hermeneutic of continuity enables him to see Christ as not only the Davidic Messiah, but the definitive "new man." This hermeneutic also enables him to see the Church as the restoration of the Davidic kingdom but also as the new creation.

I will unfold my argument as follows: First, I will consider recent scholarship on the gospel of Luke, especially research into Luke's use of the Old Testament. I will then consider the evidence for a royal Davidic christology in Luke. This will reveal a certain Old Testament "substructure" to Luke. This in turn will help explain certain distinctive features of the Third Gospel—the centrality of Jerusalem and the Temple, the christological title "Son of God," and the emphasis on "the nations." Second, I will explore the depths of this Old Testament substructure. I will examine how the Davidic kingdom was seen to be a renewal of the primordial covenant with creation. After tracing the Old Testament background, I will show how "new creation" themes—creation as a cosmic temple; Adam as the primordial king and son of God; Zion; and Eden—shape Luke's vision and narrative. I will do this through a close reading of Luke's genealogy of Jesus, and of his accounts of Jesus' baptism and temptation in the wilderness. Finally, I will briefly indicate how

Acts portrays the Church's universal mission in terms of both a restored Davidic kingdom and a renewed creation.

### ***Hermeneutical Reference Points in Luke***

The past two decades have seen a flowering of scholarship on the use and significance of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Luke.<sup>1</sup> Agustín del Agua succinctly expresses the premise of much of this scholarship: “the Old Testament tradition . . . is the hermeneutic reference of meaning sought by Luke in his narration”<sup>2</sup> and “the source par excellence for the narrative elaboration of his theological project.”<sup>3</sup>

There have been excellent studies of Luke's treatment of Israel's covenant traditions.<sup>4</sup> But not all these traditions have received equal attention. Work in this area has tended to emphasize the covenants with Abraham and Moses at the expense of the Davidic covenant.<sup>5</sup> In addition, despite the fact that, as Joel Green observes, “Luke's use of the Scriptures is primarily ecclesiological rather than christological,”<sup>6</sup> the few studies written on Davidic covenant motifs in Luke-Acts

---

1 Important works on the Old Testament background of Luke's theological project include: Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 282 (New York: T & T Clark, 2005); Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, eds., *Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Charles A. Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 94 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994); Robert L. Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech: Voices of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1995); Rebecca I. Denova, *Things Accomplished Among Us: Prophetic Tradition in the Structural Pattern of Luke-Acts*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 141 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 12 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); and Craig A. Evans and W. Richard Stegner, eds., *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 104 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999).

2 Agustín Pérez del Agua, “The Lucan Narrative of the ‘Evangelization of the Kingdom of God’: A Contribution to the Unity of Luke-Acts,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. Jozef Verheyden, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 142 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 639–62, at 643.

3 Del Agua, “Narrative,” 641.

4 On the Abrahamic covenant in Luke, see Brawley, *Text to Text*, and also his “Abrahamic Covenant Traditions and the Characterization of God in Luke-Acts,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, 109–32.

5 For example, Brawley (in *Text to Text* and “Abrahamic Covenant Traditions and the Characterization of God in Luke-Acts,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, 109–32) makes astute observations concerning the Davidic covenant in Luke, but foregrounds and emphasizes the Abrahamic, as does Sabine Van Den Eynde, “Children of the Promise: On the Διαθήκη Promise to Abraham in Luke 1,72 and Acts 3,25,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, 470–82.

6 Joel B. Green, “Theological Interpretation and Luke,” in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation*, eds. Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, Anthony C. Thiselton (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2005), 55–78.

focus mainly on christology.<sup>7</sup> The influence of the Davidic covenant traditions on Luke's ecclesiology remains largely unexplored.<sup>8</sup> This paper will attempt to address that gap in the scholarship.

The work of Mark Strauss and others has won some support for the view that royal Davidic messianism is a major christological category in Luke.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the seemingly logical ecclesiological conclusion has yet to be drawn—namely, that if Jesus is the *Davidic king* proclaiming a coming kingdom, that coming kingdom must be in some sense the *Davidic kingdom*. Perhaps the connection is not made because Luke calls the coming kingdom “the kingdom of God” and not “the kingdom of David.” It is true that the precise phrase, “kingdom of God,” is not found in the Old Testament. However, it is notable that the Chronicler twice employs a virtually synonymous phrase—“the kingdom of YHWH”—to describe the Davidic monarchy (1 Chron. 28:5; 2 Chron. 13:8; compare 1 Chron. 17:14; 29:11–22). The Chronicler understood that the reign of the House of David was based on a divine covenant in which the son of David was also declared to be the son of God (2 Sam. 7:14; Pss. 2:7; 89:27). Therefore, the kingdom of David was the manifestation of God's rule over the earth—that is, God's kingdom for Israel and the nations.<sup>10</sup>

Raymond Brown saw quite clearly the close relationship (indeed, identification) of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of David:

The kingdom established by David was a political institution to be sure, but one with enormous religious attachments (priesthood, temple, sacrifice, prophecy) . . . *It is the closest Old Testament parallel to the Church . . .* To help Christians make up their mind on how the Bible speaks to [whether the Church is related to the kingdom of God], it would help if they knew about David and his kingdom, *which was also God's kingdom*.<sup>11</sup>

7 See also Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, esp. 55–90. An earlier piece is F. F. Bruce, “The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts,” in *Biblical and Near Eastern Studies: Festschrift in Honor of William Sanford LaSor*, ed. Gary A. Tuttle. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 7–17.

8 “Strong emphasis on christological uses . . . tends to overshadow concerns for the ecclesiological function . . . of scriptural traditions in the Lukan writings.” David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2/130 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 17.

9 Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995). Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern*, 293–94: “The fundamental category of Lukan Old Testament christology is a regal one.”

10 The Chronicler describes the worshipping assembly of this kingdom, most often led by the Davidic king himself, with the Hebrew term *לְבַיִת*, or, in the Greek Septuagint text (LXX), *ἐκκλησία* (e.g. 1 Chron. 13:2–4; 28:2–8; 29:1, 10, 20; 2 Chron. 1:3–5; 6:3–13; 7:8; 10:3; 20:5–14; 23:3; 29:23–30:25). Chronicles uses this term more frequently than any other part of the LXX and may provide the background for understanding Luke's deployment of *ἐκκλησία* in Acts.

11 Raymond Brown, “Communicating the Divine and Human in Scripture,” *Origins* 22:1 (May 14,

In this article, I want to build on Brown's insight that we find in the Scriptures an integral relationship of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of David, and the Church. Specifically, I will advance the thesis that the kingdom of David informs Luke's presentation of Jesus' kingship and kingdom, providing much of the content and meaning of these terms. Luke's Davidic royal christology sets the stage for his development of a *Davidic kingdom ecclesiology* in Acts.<sup>12</sup> Inasmuch as Christians believe themselves still to be participating in the ecclesial reality whose birth is portrayed in Acts, my thesis implies that a Davidic kingdom-ecclesiology is still relevant for contemporary Christian theology.

### ***Royal Davidic Christology in Luke***

As a growing number of scholars has concluded, there is a strong strain of royal Davidic messianism in Luke's portrait of Jesus and his mission.<sup>13</sup> This is evident in several key texts:

- ✦ Luke introduces Jesus' legal father, "Joseph of the house of David" (Luke 1:27).<sup>14</sup>
- ✦ Gabriel's annunciation is saturated with Davidic imagery, as Mary hears that her son is promised "the throne of his father David . . . and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32–33), an adaptation the key Davidic covenant text (2 Sam. 7:1–17).<sup>15</sup>
- ✦ In the *Benedictus*, Zechariah praises God who has raised up "a horn of salvation for us *in the house of his servant David*" (Luke 1:69), a reference to a royal Davidic psalm (Ps. 132:17).<sup>16</sup>

---

1992): 5–6, emphasis mine. See also, Jon D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 155–56.

12 "The God of Jesus was the God of Israel, and the kingdom of Jesus was a kingdom for Israel." Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 83. One may go further and say, the kingdom of Jesus is the kingdom of Israel, and the kingdom of Israel is the kingdom of *David*.

13 See Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 115; Brawley, *Text to Text*, 85–86; Thomas J. Lane, *Luke and the Gentile Mission: Gospel Anticipates Acts* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996), 157–63; David Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 119 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 24–49, esp. 34.

14 See Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, *New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 84–85.

15 As demonstrated by Green, *Luke*, 85, 88; likewise Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX*, *Anchor Bible* 28 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 338.

16 An allusion to Psalm 132:17, where a horn sprouts up from David, is probably intended. Green, *Luke*, 116. See also, Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 20, 180. On other, more subtle Davidic allusions in the *Benedictus*, see Stephen Farris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives: Their Origin, Meaning*

- ✦ Jesus' birthplace is Bethlehem, called "the City of David" by the narrator (2:4) and the angels (2:11). Likewise, Joseph's Davidic lineage is repeated for emphasis (2:4).<sup>17</sup>
- ✦ At Jesus' baptism, the divine voice announces, "Thou art my beloved Son," words adapted from Psalm 2, the royal coronation hymn of the Davidic kings (Ps. 2:7).<sup>18</sup>
- ✦ In Luke 3:23–28, Luke traces Jesus' genealogy through David.<sup>19</sup>
- ✦ In Luke 6:1–5, Jesus likens himself to David, and his disciples to David's band, while asserting the unique cultic prerogatives that David enjoyed.<sup>20</sup>
- ✦ At the transfiguration (Luke 9:35), the divine voice reiterates the royal coronation hymn (Ps. 2:7): "This is my Son, my chosen."<sup>21</sup>
- ✦ On entry into Jericho, Jesus is hailed twice by a blind man as "Son of David" (Luke 18:35–43), anticipating his imminent royal entrance to Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup>
- ✦ Luke's description of Jesus' triumphal entry (19:28–48) corresponds to Zechariah 9:9–10, which in turn draws from the narrative of Solomon's coronation (1 Kings 1:32–40), to

---

*and Significance* Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 9 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), 95–96.

17 Appropriately, the first witnesses to the birth of the Son of David, the great shepherd king of Israel's memory, are shepherds (Luke 2:8–20), possibly alluding to Micah 5:2–4; see Green, *Luke*, 130; Ravens, *Luke*, 42–43.

18 See Green, *Luke*, 186; Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 341–43.

19 On David in Luke 3:23–28, see Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 357. The following temptation sequence features a Davidic allusion in its second scene. See Brawley, *Text to Text*, 20.

20 See Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 527 and Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina 3 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 101.

21 Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 873–74. The title "chosen" or "chosen one" is also a Davidic epithet (Ps. 89:3). See Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, 265–67. Jesus' statement in Luke 10:22, "All things have been delivered to me by my Father" recalls the covenantal father-son relationship of God to the Davidic king: see Pss. 2:7–8; 8:4–8; 72:8; 89:25–27.

22 Green, *Luke*, 663–65; Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 1507–12; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, Anchor Bible 28A (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1214.

portray the coming of an eschatological king, as a Davidide (Zech. 12:7–13:1).<sup>23</sup>

- ✦ The climax of Luke’s institution narrative (Luke 22:29–30) evokes key Davidic images: the paternal bestowal and covenant conferral of a kingdom (Luke 22:30; Ps. 89:3–4); while eating at the king’s table (2 Sam. 9:9–13); sitting on thrones, ruling the twelve tribes of Israel (Ps. 122:3–5).
- ✦ In the passion narrative, Davidic titles are used of Jesus with ironic contempt: “King of the Jews” (Luke 23:37–38; 2 Sam. 2:11) and “Chosen One” (Luke 23:35; Ps. 89:3–4).
- ✦ Jesus’ identity as Davidic Messiah is the climax of the three major apostolic speeches in Acts: (1) *Peter’s* first sermon, at Pentecost (Acts 2:14–36, esp. 25–36); (2) *Paul’s* first sermon, at Pisidian Antioch (13:16–41, esp. 22–23, 33–37); and *James’* only recorded speech, at the Jerusalem council (15:13–21).<sup>24</sup>

The large number and wide distribution of Davidic royal motifs make a *prima facie* case for the primacy in Luke of a royal Davidic Christology. However, this Davidic Christology is manifested not only by the many direct references to David scattered throughout key sections of Luke-Acts. On a deeper level, we can see the entire “shape” of the Davidic monarchy—as portrayed in Old Testament texts—is reproduced by Luke in his description of the person and mission of Jesus. This may be demonstrated by enumerating the salient features of David’s kingdom, and how they emerge at crucial junctures in Luke’s narrative:

1. *A Divine Covenant.* The Davidic kingdom was based upon a divinely sworn covenant (ברית in the Hebrew Masoretic text, διαθήκη in the Greek Septuagint translation), the only Old Testament dynasty to enjoy such a privilege.<sup>25</sup> The key text showing the terms of this covenant is 2 Samuel 7:8–16;<sup>26</sup> with the word “covenant” occurring elsewhere, such as in Psalm

23 See Green, *Luke*, 683–88; and Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, 1556–58, who point out the connections with Zechariah 9:9 and 1 Kings 1:33 (the coronation of Solomon).

24 See the treatment in Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, 130–95.

25 Below the Masoretic text will be abbreviated MT and the Septuagint text will be abbreviated LXX. The key text outlining the conditions and promises of this covenant is 2 Samuel 7:8–16, although the term “covenant” only occurs elsewhere: e.g. 2 Sam. 23:5; 1 Kings 8:23–24; Ps. 89:3; 2 Chron. 13:5; 21:7; Sir. 45:25; Isa. 55:3; Ezek. 34:25 LXX. See R. P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, Old Testament Guides 2 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 71; Antti Laato, “Psalm 132 and the Development of the Jerusalemite/Israelite Royal Ideology,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54 (1992): 49–66.

26 See Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 71; Laato, “Psalm 132,” 56.

89:3–4: “Thou hast said, ‘I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: ‘I will establish your descendants for ever, and build your throne for all generations.’”<sup>27</sup>

In Luke, God’s *covenant* with David as described in Nathan’s oracle (2 Sam. 7:9–16) provides all the content of the angelic description of Jesus in Luke 1:32–33.<sup>28</sup> Later, Jesus associates his kingship with a “new covenant” (22:20) and says a kingdom has been “covenanted” to him by the Father (22:29), which he in turn “covenants” to his disciples.<sup>29</sup>

2. *Divine Sonship of the Monarch.* The Davidic king was the Son of God. The filial relationship of the Davidic king to God is expressed already in the key text of the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:14), but is also found in other Davidic texts.<sup>30</sup>

Turning to Luke, we find that Jesus is the *natural* (not merely adopted) Son of God (1:35), and the title is used of him throughout the gospel.<sup>31</sup>

3. *Messianic Status of the King.* The Davidic king was the “Christ,” the “Messiah” or “Anointed One.” The anointed status of the Davidic king was so integral to his identity that he is frequently referred to simply as “the anointed one” or “the LORD’S anointed” in Old Testament texts.<sup>32</sup>

Luke explicitly and consistently identifies Jesus as the *Christ* (2:11, 4:41, etc.),<sup>33</sup> indeed, the “LORD’S Christ” (2:26), a title only applied to kings in the Old Testament (1 Sam. 16:6; 24:6

27 See also 2 Sam. 23:5; 1 Kings 8:23–24; 2 Chron. 13:5; 21:7; Sir. 45:25; Isa. 55:3; Ezek. 34:25 LXX.

28 As demonstrated by Green, *Luke*, 85, 88; likewise Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 338.

29 On the “covenanting” of the kingdom, see discussion of διατιθήμι in Luke 22:29 below.

30 For example Pss. 2:7; 89:26; 1 Chron. 17:13; 28:6. “The individual most often designated as ‘the son of God’ in the Hebrew Bible is undoubtedly the Davidic king, or his eschatological counterpart.” John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 163.

31 See Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, 1990), 1:25.

32 See 1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 19:21, 22:51; 23:1; 1 Kings 1:38–39; 2 Kings 11:12; 23:30; 2 Chron. 6:42; 23:11; Pss. 2:2; 18:50; 20:6; 28:8; 84:9; 89:20, 38, 51; 132:10, 17.

33 See Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 38.

LXX etc.), and the ‘Christ of God’ (Luke 9:20), a title only applied to David (2 Sam. 23:1).<sup>34</sup>

4. *Centrality of Jerusalem.* The Davidic monarchy was inextricably bound to Jerusalem, the city of David and the royal capital for the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam. 5:9), which would not have played a significant role in Israelite history apart from David (compare Josh. 15:63; Judg. 1:21; 19:10–12; 2 Sam. 5:6–12).<sup>35</sup>

Accordingly, Luke more than any other gospel emphasizes the priority of *Jerusalem*.<sup>36</sup> For Luke, it is theologically important that the Word of God go forth from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8, Isa. 2:3). The gospel begins in Jerusalem (1:5–23), the only two narratives of Jesus’ childhood find him in Jerusalem (2:22–52), for most of the narrative he is traveling to Jerusalem (9:51–19:27), and the gospel climaxes in Jerusalem (19:28–24:49), wherein the disciples are told to “remain” (24:49).

5. *Centrality of the Temple.* The Davidic monarchy was inextricably bound to the Temple. The building of the Temple was central to the terms of the Davidic covenant from the very beginning, as can be seen from the wordplay on ‘house’ (“Temple” or “dynasty”) in 2 Samuel 7:11–13.<sup>37</sup> Even after its destruction, the prophets remained firm in their conviction

34 The title “Christ” is probably always intended in a Davidic sense in Luke. See Christopher R. Tuckett, “The Christology of Luke-Acts,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, 133–64, at 147–48; Brian M. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God: The Christology of Matthew 1–2 in the Setting of the Gospel*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 23 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 173; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 58.

35 See Sara Japhet, “From the King’s Sanctuary to the Chosen City,” in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Lee I. Levine (New York: Continuum, 1999), 3–15, at 6; Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology*, *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 142 (New York: de Gruyter, 1977), 118–119.

36 Fitzmyer, *Luke I-IX*, 164–65; Dean P. Bechard, “The Theological Significance of Judea in Luke-Acts,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, 675–91.

37 Heinz Kruse, “David’s Covenant,” *Vetus Testamentum* 35 (1985): 139–64, at 149. On the significance of Solomon’s temple building efforts, see Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 115 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992); Rex Mason, “The Messiah in the Postexilic Old Testament Literature,” in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 270 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 338–64, at 348, 362; Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel*, 145–147.



that God would restore his temple to its former glory as an international place of worship.<sup>38</sup>

What is true of Luke and Jerusalem is also true with regard to the *Temple*. The gospel begins there (1:5–23), Jesus “childhood” is set there (2:22–52),<sup>39</sup> for most of the gospel he is traveling there (9:51–19:27), and the climax is reached when Jesus is teaching from the Temple in Jerusalem (19:45–21:38). In Acts, the Temple remains the focus of the early Christian community (Acts 2:46).<sup>40</sup>

6. *International Empire*. The Davidic monarch ruled over an international empire. David and Solomon ruled not only over Israel but also the surrounding nations.<sup>41</sup> The psalms theologize and celebrate this state of affairs,<sup>42</sup> and the prophets envision its restoration.<sup>43</sup> Both the psalms and the prophets make poetic references to the rule of the Davidide over “all the nations,” even though such a situation was not historically realized.

Turning to the gospel, we find that the extension of Jesus’ kingship *over all the nations* is anticipated throughout Luke. Already in the infancy narratives, Simeon speaks of Jesus as “a light of revelation to the nations” (2:32). Luke traces his genealogy back to Adam, the father of all mankind (3:38). As precedent for his ministry, Jesus cites the healing of Gentiles by the prophets Elijah and Elisha (4:25–27), and he himself heals the servant of a Roman (7:1–10), while praising his faith above that of Israel (7:9). He predicts that “men will come from east and west, and from north and south” to sit at table

38 Isa. 2:1–4; 56:6–8; 60:3–16; 66:18–21; Jer. 33:11; Ezek. 40–44; Dan. 9:24–27; Joel 3:18; Hag. 2:1–9; Mic. 4:1–4; Zech. 6:12–14; 8:20–23; 14:16.

39 On the importance of the Temple in Luke 1–2, see Green, *Luke*, 61–62 and Nicholas Taylor, “Luke-Acts and the Temple,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, 709–21, at 709.

40 On the importance of the Temple in Luke-Acts generally, see James B. Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1988); and Andrew C. Clark “The Role of the Apostles,” in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, eds. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 169–90, esp. 175–76.

41 2 Sam. 8:11–12; 10:19; 12:30; 1 Kings 3:1; 4:20–21; 10:15. See Carol Meyers, “The Israelite Empire: In Defense of King Solomon,” in *Backgrounds for the Bible*, eds. Michael Patrick O’Connor and David Noll Freedman (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), 181–97.

42 See Pss. 2:8; 18:43, 47; 22:27; 47:1, 9; 66:8; 67:2–5; 72:8, 11; 86:9; 89:27; 96:7, 99:1.

43 Isa. 2:3–4; 42:1–6; 49:1–7, 22–26; 51:4–6; 55:3–5; 56:3–8; 60:1–16; 66:18–19; Amos 9:11–12; Mic. 4:2–3; Zech. 14:16–19.

in the kingdom of God (13:29), and finally and most explicitly, Jesus teaches the disciples that “forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name *to all nations*, beginning from Jerusalem” (24:47).

7. *Everlasting Rule*. The Davidic monarchy was to be everlasting. Throughout the psalms and historical books identified by scholars as the work of the Deuteronomist, there is a recurrent theme: that the Davidic dynasty is to be everlasting (2 Sam. 7:16; 23:5; Ps. 89:35–36). Indeed, not only the dynasty but the lifespan of the reigning monarch himself was described as everlasting (Pss. 21:4; 72:5, 110:4).<sup>44</sup>

In Luke, the angel Gabriel promises to Mary that Jesus “will reign over the house of Jacob *forever*, and of his kingdom there will be *no end*.”<sup>45</sup> Jesus’ everlasting reign is mentioned frequently elsewhere in Luke, for example, in passages where Jesus is the mediator of eternal life (18:18–30).

Thus it is clear that all seven major characteristics of the Davidic monarchy are manifested in Jesus and his ministry. In Luke, Jesus is the royal son of David who journeys to the city of David as part of his mission to restore the kingdom of David. In sum, Luke’s christology is strongly Davidic and royal.

### ***The Davidic Kingdom and the Covenant with Creation***

Already in the Old Testament, the Davidic kingdom was viewed as a recapitulation or renewal of God’s plan for creation. In what follows, I will pursue three lines of argument which show that certain Old Testament texts understand the Davidic covenant as a fulfillment of the creation covenant. In the first line of argument, we will trace the temple concept in the Old Testament in order to show that the Temple built by Solomon, so closely integrated into the Davidic covenant, was understood as a microcosm and embodiment of the very creation itself. In the second line of argument, I will show that Adam is portrayed in biblical texts as king over all creation, and similar language and imagery is also applied to David. In the third line of argument, I will show that the Chronicler, by tracing David’s lineage back to Adam, means to suggest that David and his covenantal kingdom holds significance for all Adam’s descendants, that is, for all humanity, and indeed is the climax and fulfillment of God’s purpose in creating humanity.

44 For a discussion of the tension between these texts and others which imply the Davidic covenant can be or has been broken, see Bruce C. Waltke, “The Phenomenon of Conditionality within Unconditional Covenants,” in *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988), 123–40.

45 See Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 116–17.

Many scholars see in the first two chapters of Genesis the description of a covenant between God and creation, in which the creation itself forms a cosmic temple.<sup>46</sup> However, since neither the term “covenant” nor “temple” is to be found in Genesis 1 or 2, I must explain the exegetical basis for this view.

The Genesis creation account cannot be fully appreciated without comparison with several other texts in the Pentateuch which, like Genesis 1, reflect the priestly traditions of Israel. One such text is Genesis 9, the account of the covenant between God and Noah. The language of this chapter so obviously reflects the language of Genesis 1 (“be fruitful and multiply,” “birds of the air, fish of the sea, and every creeping thing,” etc.) that it is not necessary to demonstrate the point. God forms a covenant with Noah, and through him with all creation. However, the Hebrew terms for enacting this covenant are not the usual combination ברית כרת (literally, “to cut a covenant”) but הקים ברית (“to confirm a covenant”).

It has often been argued that כרת ברית and הקים ברית are synonymous expressions that merely reflect the linguistic preferences of their presumably different documentary sources (so-called Yahwist and Priestly sources, respectively). However, William Dumbrell and Jacob Milgrom have both argued independently of one another that הקים ברית has a distinct nuance: outside of Genesis 6–9 it is consistently used in contexts where a preexistent covenant is being *confirmed* or, perhaps better, *reaffirmed*. The clearest examples are Genesis 17 (vv. 7, 19, 21), where the Abrahamic covenant is *reaffirmed* with his “seed.”<sup>47</sup> By contrast, כרת ברית generally indicates the initiation of a new covenant.

The question arises, how could הקים ברית function in Genesis 9 to indicate a *confirmation* of an existing covenant when no prior covenant is explicitly mentioned in Genesis? Where could a covenant previously have been established? The heavy repetition of the very language of Genesis 1 provides the clues and the answer. In Genesis 9 God is reaffirming and perhaps restoring the covenant established with the whole cosmos at creation.

Other texts seem to confirm an implicit covenant at creation. For example, the exposition of the third commandment found in Exodus 31 sheds light on the creation account:

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death. Therefore the people of Israel

46 For a discussion of the relationship between creation and the covenant(s), see Santiago Sanz Sánchez, *La relación entre creación y alianza en la teología contemporánea: status quaestionis y reflexiones filosófico-teológicas* [The Relation Between Creation and Covenant in Contemporary Theology: The Status of the Question and Philosophical-Theological Reflections], *Dissertationes Series Theologica 11* (Rome: Edizioni Università della Santa Croce, 2003); William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984).

47 Compare Lev. 26:9; Deut. 8:18; and Ezek. 16:60, 62.

shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout their generations, *as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign* for ever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. (Exod. 31:15–17)

Then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, commented on this passage vis-à-vis Genesis 1:

To understand the account of creation properly, one has to read the Sabbath ordinances of the Torah. Then everything becomes clear. The Sabbath is the sign of the covenant between God and man; it sums up the inward essence of the covenant. If this is so, then we can now define the intention of the account of creation as follows: creation exists to be a place for the covenant that God wants to make with man. The goal of creation is the covenant, the love story of God and man. . . . If, then, everything is directed to the covenant, it is important to see that the covenant is a relationship: God's gift of himself to man, but also man's response to God. Man's response to the God who is good to him is love, and loving God means worshipping him. If creation is meant to be a space for the covenant, the place where God and man meet one another, then it must be thought of as a space for worship.<sup>48</sup>

The fact that the creation account culminates on the Sabbath—which the pious Israelite would recognize as the “sign” of the covenant (Ezek. 20:12, 20)—suggests not only that creation is ordered to covenant, but that the covenant between God and man is already present at creation.

Further comparisons between the Genesis 1 and the accounts of the Sinai covenant confirm our argument. In the Sinai covenant we see an obvious recapitulation of the heptadic patterning of Genesis 1. God's glory covers Sinai for six days and on the seventh he calls to Moses from the cloud of his glory (Exod. 24:16). The divine blueprint for the Tabernacle is given in a series of seven divine addresses.<sup>49</sup> The instructions for the making of the priests' vestments are punctuated by seven affirmations of Moses' obedience to God's command.<sup>50</sup> The Tabernacle is built according to divine command and seven times we are told that Moses did “as the Lord had commanded him.”<sup>51</sup>

48 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 26.

49 Exod. 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12.

50 Exod. 39:1, 5, 7, 21, 22, 27, 30.

51 Exod. 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32.

There is also a seemingly deliberate echo of Genesis in the words used to conclude Moses' building: "When Moses had finished the work" (compare Exod. 40:33; Gen. 2:2). As God blessed and hallowed the seventh day, Moses blesses the people and sanctifies the tabernacle (compare Gen. 2:3; Exod. 39:43; 40:9). With the conclusion of the work, God's glory fills the Tabernacle (Exod. 40:34). This corresponds to the divine-human rest intended for the Sabbath (Gen. 2:3; Exod. 20:8–11; 31:12–17; 35:1–3).

These intertextual correspondences have led Moshe Weinfeld to conclude: "Genesis 1:1–2:3 and Exodus 39:1–40:33 are typologically identical. Both describe the satisfactory completion of the enterprise commanded by God, its inspection and approval, the blessing and the sanctification which are connected with it."<sup>52</sup>

### *Zion and the Temple of Eden*

We can conclude further: the close correspondence between the building of the Tabernacle and the creation of the cosmos indicates that the tabernacle-building is a recapitulation of creation, and thus the tabernacle is in some sense a *microcosm*, a small embodiment of the universe. Conversely, we may conclude that the universe is a *macro-tabernacle*, a cosmic sanctuary built for the worship of God. Moreover, the close integration of the Tabernacle construction with the giving of the Sinai covenant to Israel suggests that the original construction of the cosmos likewise took place in a covenantal context.

The same heptadic patterning of the Tabernacle construction narrative is recapitulated in the building of Solomon's Temple. As creation takes seven days, the Temple takes seven years to build (1 Kings 6:38). It is dedicated during the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles (1 Kings 8:2), and Solomon's solemn dedication speech is built on seven petitions (1 Kings 8:31–53). As God capped creation by "resting" on the seventh day, the Temple is built by a "man of rest" (1 Chron. 22:9) to be a "house of rest" for the Ark, which bears the presence of the Lord (1 Chron. 28:2; 2 Chron. 6:41; Ps. 132:8, 13–14; Isa. 66:1).

When the Temple is consecrated, the furnishings of the older Tabernacle are brought inside it. (Richard Friedman suggests the entire Tabernacle was brought inside).<sup>53</sup> This represents the fact that all the Tabernacle was, the Temple has become. Just as the construction of the Tabernacle of the Sinai covenant and once recapitulated creation, now the Temple of the Davidic covenant recapitulated the same. The Temple is a microcosm of creation, the creation a macro-temple.

52 Moshe Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1–2:3," in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* [A Collection of Essays on Biblical and Oriental Essays in Honor of M. Henri Cazelles], eds. André Caquot and Mathias Delcor, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* 212 (Kevelaar: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaar, 1981), 501–512.

53 Richard E. Friedman, "The Tabernacle in the Temple," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 43:4 (Autumn 1980): 241–248.

Just as the Tabernacle is associated particularly with the Mosaic or Sinaitic covenant, the Temple is associated with the Davidic covenant. No law of Moses prescribes or even foresees a Temple. The biblical texts identify David himself as the originator of the idea of the Temple. While David's wish personally to build the Temple is denied, the Lord integrates the building of the Temple into the very constitution of the Davidic covenant, as can be seen in the wordplay on "house" in 2 Samuel 7:5–16: The Lord promises to build a "house" (dynasty) for David, and David's son will build a "house" (temple) for the Lord. It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that, from the very beginning, the Temple is associated in the biblical record specifically with David and his covenant. Tomoo Ishida, the great scholar of ancient Near Eastern royal dynasties, remarks, "The Temple was the embodiment of the covenant of David, in which the triple relationship between Yahweh, the House of David, and the people of Israel was established."<sup>54</sup>

The link between the Temple and creation is manifested also in various Edenic motifs associated with the Temple. From the descriptions of Eden in Genesis 2–3 and Ezekiel 28 we observe that Eden was atop a mountain (Ezek. 28) and characterized by abundant gold, precious gems, such as onyx, flowering trees, and cherubim. Most of these elements are incorporated by Solomon into the design and decoration of the Temple (1 Kings 6:18, 20–38; 7:18–51) and others were incorporated into the priestly garments and liturgical furnishings of the earlier Tabernacle (Exod. 25:31–40; 28:6–13). In fact, as Lawrence Stager has shown, it was common practice throughout the ancient Near East for kings to build hill-top temples surrounded by gardens to suggest the primordial garden of creation. Solomon was no different. Textual and archeological evidence suggests he planted botanical gardens around the Temple precincts to represent the Temple's role as a new Eden.

The sacred river that flows from Eden in Genesis 2:10 is later associated with Mount Zion, site of the Temple. One of the four rivers that flow from Eden is named the Gihon, which elsewhere in ancient Near Eastern and biblical literature is known only as the name for the water-source for Jerusalem, flowing from the east side of Mount Zion (Gen. 2:13; 1 Kings 1:33, 38; 2 Chron. 32:30).

This is sufficient indication that Israelite tradition saw Zion as the successor of Eden. The correlation is even clearer in Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple and new Jerusalem in Ezekiel 40–48. At the beginning of the vision, Ezekiel is taken up to a "very high mountain," which in one sense is Zion, because upon it he sees a new Jerusalem and a new Temple. Yet as Jon Levenson shows, the "high mountain" of Ezekiel 40–48 is also typologically described as a new Eden. The convergence between Zion and Eden is especially clear in Ezekiel 47:1–12, in which Ezekiel sees a great river of life which flows out of the temple to the east, renewing creation to its original Edenic perfection wherever it flows. This river is a restoration of the

---

<sup>54</sup> Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel*, 145.

sacred river of the primordial garden, but now the Temple plays the role of the garden. Zion and Eden have fused.

### *David and Adam as “King” and “Son of God”*

Although there is no explicit expression of Adam being God’s “son,” the expression used to describe God’s creation of Adam (בצלמנו בדמותנו “in his image and likeness,” Gen. 1:26) suggests a divine act of fathering—as Adam is later said to “father” a son, Seth, “in his own likeness, after his image” (בדמותו כצלמו Gen. 5:3).

The echoes of the Genesis story found elsewhere in Scripture affirm this royal reading of Adam’s identity. For instance, in Psalm 8, which is filled with references to the creation account, the “son of man (בן־אדם),” is described as “made . . . little less than God” (v. 5). God “crowns him with glory and honor” and gives the man “dominion” over all his “works” (vv. 5–6). Specifically mentioned are some of the various animals also found in the primordial list of Genesis—the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, beasts of the field, and cattle (compare Ps. 8:7–8; Gen. 1:26, 28, 30; 2:20). This “royal first man motif” can also be identified in Ezekiel 28, where two oracles seem to be stylized as an allegory of the creation and fall of the first man in Eden. Ezekiel describes him as a “prince” and a “king.” This primal king is also called “the signet of perfection” (v. 12)—a symbol elsewhere associated with royal likeness and authority (Gen. 41:42; Jer. 22:24–25).<sup>55</sup>

With authority derived from God, the first human was given a mandate to rule the earth in God’s name, and to become, in effect, the father of many nations, of a worldwide kingdom of God. In the Genesis account, God blesses man and commands him to “be fruitful and multiply and fill . . . and subdue . . . and have dominion . . . over all the earth” (Gen. 1:26, 28).

David fits this royal Adamic profile. It is interesting that “subdue” (כבש) is used to describe David’s conquest of the nations (2 Sam. 8:11). The word “to rule” or “have dominion” (רדה) also turns up in the royal Davidic messianic tradition. The kingdom of David’s son is said to be a worldwide “dominion” (Ps. 72:8) and the Davidic priest-king is to “rule” in the midst of his enemies (Ps. 110:2). As Adam’s descendents were to fill the earth, we see similar language used to describe the Davidic kingdom (Ps. 72:7, 16).

The authorship of Psalm 8 is attributed to David. The exalted “son of man” described in terms of Adamic royalty in vv. 4–9 could be understood as self-reference. After all, Psalm 89:19–37 describes David as (1) second only to God in power

55 James Barr, “‘Though Art the Cherub’: Ezekiel 28:14 and the Post-Ezekiel Understanding of Genesis 2–3,” in *Priests, Prophets, and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honor of Joseph Blenkinsopp*, ed. Eugene Ulrich, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 149 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 213–223; Herbert G. May, “The King in the Garden of Eden: A Study of Ezekiel 28:12–19,” in *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenberg*, eds. Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 166–176.

(v. 27, compare Ps 8:5, “a little less than God”); (2) having universal dominion over creation (v. 25–27), and (3) being the firstborn son of God (vv. 26–27). His throne or kingdom is as enduring as the sun and the moon (v. 37)—in other words, as permanent as the creation itself.

The Davidic kingdom is, without doubt, the consuming passion of the Chronicler and the subject matter of his composition. At the same time, the Chronicler is not unconcerned about the purpose and fate of the rest of humanity and creation.

The genealogies of 1 Chronicles 1–9 serve to situate the history of the Davidic kingdom within a universal framework: a framework extending back to Adam himself and incorporating all Adam’s descendants (1 Chron. 1:1–27), the whole human family. In this way the Chronicler implies that the Davidic kingdom has significance for all humanity as the fulfillment of God’s creational purpose. Indeed, the Chronicler treats the Davidic kingdom essentially as the high point of humanity’s development since creation. He fully realizes the fact that now—at the time of his writing—that kingdom is in shambles; yet he clearly anticipates the hope of kingdom restoration. Thus the two books of Chronicles, taken as a whole, are at least implicitly eschatological, that is, they embrace a restorationist eschatology.

It will be seen that Luke’s genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23–38) reflects a nearly identical literary-theological strategy, except on the other end of the exile, with the fulfillment of the eschatological hopes imminent. By tracing Jesus’ line of descent back to Adam, Luke suggests that (1) the person of Jesus bears significance for every descendant of Adam, and (2) the purposes of God in creating mankind (Adam) are finding their fulfillment in Jesus. Luke would agree with the Chronicler that God’s purpose, established with Adam for all people, was renewed with David for all nations; but he would add that it has now been fulfilled by Christ in and through the Church.

### ***The Old Testament Background to Luke***

As we turn our attention back to Luke, we ask the question: Is Luke aware of the creational horizon behind the Davidic covenant? I would argue the affirmative: at least in the early chapters of Luke, we observe a few texts where Davidic and Adamic/creational motifs are simultaneously employed in the portrayal of Christ.

The clearest instance of this is in the genealogy of Christ in Luke 3:23–38. Up to this point in the gospel, the concept of Jesus as Son of David and thus the one to fulfill the Davidic covenant has been stressed again and again by references to David, to Jesus’ Davidic lineage, and to various Davidic covenant texts: Luke 1:27, 32–33, 69; 2:4, 11. Immediately prior to the genealogy, the divine voice is heard from heaven at Jesus’ baptism, echoing Psalm 2 (specifically v. 7), the royal Davidic coro-



nation hymn, by declaring “Thou art my beloved Son.” Accordingly, the genealogy of 3:23–28 identifies Jesus as a descendant of David (v. 31), as we would expect.

But Luke proceeds to trace Jesus’ lineage all the way back to Adam, and he declares Adam to be “the son of God” (v. 38). Elsewhere in the gospel only Jesus is ever called “Son of God.” By calling Adam “son of God,” Luke is inviting a comparison between the two. The comparison suggests that Jesus is a second or new Adam, superior to the first, the father of a new humanity. Furthermore, by tracing Jesus’ lineage back to Adam, Luke is suggesting that Jesus is significant for all Adam’s descendants, that is to say, for all humanity and even for all creation.

Curiously, most scholars of Luke do not follow this line of thought. I. Howard Marshall, in his well-known commentary, speaks for the scholarly consensus: “The thought of Jesus as the second Adam . . . does not play any part in Lucan theology.”<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Joseph Fitzmyer sees the Adamic motif as distinctly “Pauline” and having no place in Luke. In his opinion, the genealogy merely functions to explain “the relation of Jesus . . . to God and to the human beings he has come to serve.”<sup>57</sup>

In light of the following points, however, I find it virtually impossible to deny that Luke employs an Adam-Christ typology:

- ✦ No other genealogy found in the Old Testament or in the rabbinic tradition traces any individual’s origins back to God.<sup>58</sup> Luke is unique and intentional in doing so.
- ✦ Nowhere else in the Bible is Adam called “son of God.” Again, Luke is unique and intentional in so doing.
- ✦ Only Jesus and Adam are identified as the “Son of God” in Luke-Acts.
- ✦ This identification of Adam as “Son of God” is sandwiched between pericopes (the baptism and the temptation) that focus explicitly on Jesus identity as “Son of God”:

3:22: a voice came from heaven, “Thou art my beloved Son”

3:38: son of Adam, the Son of God.

4:3: The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God . . .”

<sup>56</sup> *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986 [1978]), 161. See also, Marshall D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies, With Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969), 233–235.

<sup>57</sup> *Luke I–IX*, 498. The same reasoning is found in other notable Lucan works, such as Robert F. O’Toole, *Luke’s Presentation of Christ: A Christology* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2004), 171.

<sup>58</sup> Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies*, 237.

4:9: And [the devil] . . . said to him, “If you are the Son of God . . .”

4:41: And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!”

- The concept of Jesus as “Son of God” is critically important to the message of Luke, recurring at critical junctures in the narrative: at the annunciation (1:35), the baptism (3:22), the temptation (4:3, 9), the transfiguration (9:35), before the Sanhedrin (22:70, a climactic scene), and elsewhere.

In view of the fact that Luke breaks with convention by identifying Adam as “son of God,” a term deployed strategically throughout the gospel to identify Jesus’ true identity, it seems reasonable to infer Luke’s purpose is to draw a comparison between Adam and Jesus—for the purpose of showing how Jesus fulfills the role of (a new) Adam for a new humanity. In fact, this inference may be corroborated by noting the number of references to Genesis 1–3 in the preceding (baptism) and subsequent (temptation) pericopes.

Luke’s baptismal narrative is marked by new creation motifs. For example, the image of the dove in all three gospels is generally recognized as an allusion to the Spirit brooding over the waters of creation (Gen. 1:2).<sup>59</sup> As with the first creation account, Luke’s narrative of Jesus’ baptism contains references to heaven, to the Spirit, and to the spoken word of God. Heaven is “opened,” as it is in other dramatic biblical accounts (Isa. 64:1; Ezek. 1:1), especially divine (new) creations (Gen. 7:11; Isa. 24:18). What we have in Luke’s baptism scene, as in his genealogy, is the picture of a new creation—culminating with the presentation of a new Adam. Likewise, Jesus’ role as Son of David is simultaneously evoked, inasmuch as the divine voice (“Thou art my beloved Son”) alludes to the royal Davidic coronation hymn, Psalm 2 (v. 7; “I will tell the decree of the LORD. He said to me: ‘You are my Son’”).

The allusions to creation in the baptismal account and the reference to Adam in the genealogy both suggest that Jesus is the recapitulation of the biblical first man. And as the first man immediately encountered rivalry and temptation by the devil in paradise, Luke’s new Adam engages immediately in a struggle with the personification of evil.<sup>60</sup>

Read in light of the genealogy, Jesus’ three temptations by the Devil in Luke 4:1–13 are a reprise of the temptation faced by the first son of God (Gen. 3). Adam was tempted with food. So is the new Adam. Adam was made in God’s image and given dominion over the world, yet fell prey to the temptation to try to become

59 See, for example, Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, Anchor Bible 27 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 159–160, 165–166.

60 Marshall, *Luke*, 171.

“like God.” The new Adam is tempted with worldly glory and power. Adam was tempted to test God’s warning that he would die if he ate the forbidden fruit. The new Adam, too, is tempted to put God’s promise of protection to the test by throwing himself down from the Temple. In all three temptations, the new Adam, unlike the first, resists and prevails over his tempter.

Thus, the baptism and temptation narratives in Luke 3:21–22 and 4:1–12 are the “creation” and “temptation” of the new Man, and they correspond to Adam’s experiences in Genesis 2 and 3. Sandwiched between the baptism and temptation is the genealogy which explicitly evokes the memory of Adam and uses the title “son of God” to invite a comparison between Adam and Jesus. Simultaneously, Jesus’ role as the definitive Son of David is also being indicated, at least in the genealogy (through the mention of David) and the baptism (through the echo of Psalm 2:7) accounts. Davidic allusions may well be present in the temptation narrative, however, there is not space here to explore them.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Covenant, Kingdom, and Church at the Last Supper***

The royal Davidic character and creational background of Luke’s Christology also characterizes the ecclesiology of Acts. Succinctly stated, what is true of Christ in Luke becomes true of the Church in Acts.

In order to see how this is so, it is useful to examine Luke’s narrative of the institution of the Eucharist (Luke 22:14–30). This institution narrative serves as a literary-theological bridge linking the royal Davidic identity and mission of Christ with the early apostolic Church as the restored Davidic kingdom. The institution narrative serves to establish the apostles as vice-regents of the Davidic kingdom, empowering them to rule over the Church in the opening chapters of Acts. These same opening chapters reveal, at times, the creational horizon behind the more obvious theme of Davidic kingdom restoration.

Although there are important royal Davidic allusions in several parts of the institution narrative, let us focus immediately on the verses of most relevance to our thesis, namely, vv. 28–30. To the apostles, who have shared with Jesus his trials, Jesus says, “καὶ γὰρ διατίθεμαι ὑμῖν καθὼς διέθετό μοι ὁ πατήρ μου βασιλείαν” (“I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom,” v. 29b). The usual English translations of the verb διατίθημι (“assign” in the Revised Standard Version, “confer” in the New Revised Standard Version) do not quite capture the sense of the word for Luke. Luke’s style, as all acknowledge, is dependent on the Septuagint, in which the phrase διατίθεσθαι διαθήκηγ is used almost eighty times as the equivalent of the Hebrew כרת ברית (“to make a covenant”)—in

<sup>61</sup> The prominence of the Temple in Luke’s account is the most obvious Davidic feature seen in the temptation account, recalling the importance of the Temple in Luke’s early narrative of John’s birth and Jesus’ presentation and later finding in the Temple.

fact, διατίθημι even without the noun διαθήκη χάρι denote covenant-making.<sup>62</sup> Since the nominal form διαθήκη with the meaning “covenant” has just been employed in v. 20 above, the sense of “covenant-making” would seem to accrue to the verb διατιθήμι here in v. 29.<sup>63</sup> A more precise, if awkward, translation of v. 29b would thus be: “I covenant to you a kingdom, as my Father covenanted one to me.”<sup>64</sup>

The only kingdom established on the basis of a covenant in Scripture is the kingdom of David (Ps. 89:3–4, 28–37). Moreover, the use of father-son terminology in v. 29b evokes the father-son relationship of the Lord with the Son of David as reflected in 2 Samuel 7:14, and Psalms 2:7, and 89:26–27. Significantly, in each of these three passages, father-son terminology is employed in the context of *God granting a kingdom to the Davidide* (2 Sam. 7:13; Pss. 2:6, 8; 89:25, 27).

The meaning of Luke 22:29b becomes clear: God has “covenanted” a kingdom to Jesus, since Jesus is the Son of David, the legal heir to David’s covenant and throne (Luke 1:32–33). Now Jesus, through the “new covenant in [his] blood” (v. 20), is “covenanting” to the disciples that same kingdom of David. This is not the promise of a conferral (future tense), but the *declaration of a conferral* (present tense).<sup>65</sup> This *present conferral* of the kingdom militates against those scholars who acknowledge a present kingdom in Luke-Acts but limit it to the person and ministry of Christ. As Darrel Bock comments with respect to an earlier passage (Luke 11:20), “An appeal only to the presence of God’s kingly power in the person

62 See 1 Chron. 19:19; 2 Chron. 5:10; 7:18; Ezek. 16:30; and discussion in Peter K. Nelson, *Leadership and Discipleship: A Study of Luke 22:24–30*, Dissertation Series / Society of Biblical Literature 138 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1994).

63 Διατιθήμι and διαθήκη often bear the sense “to make a testament” and “testament/will,” respectively, in secular Greek literature. See Walter Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 189b, Definition 3; 183a, Def. 1). But it does not mean that here. (Here my reading is against that of Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972], 105 n. 24, and Nelson, *Leadership and Discipleship*, 204). “Though the verb can bear such a sense [i.e. “bequeath”], its parallel use in connection with God here hardly encourages us to move in such a direction.” John Nolland, *Luke*, 3 vols., Word Biblical Commentary 35 (Dallas: Word, 1993), 1066. See the discussion in Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), §34.43; Marshall, *Luke*, 814–15; John Priest, “A Note on the Messianic Banquet,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 222–38.

64 “In Luke 22:29 in the phrase *diatithemai . . . basileian*, appoint a kingdom . . . exactly expresses the formula *diatithemai diathēkēn*. The new covenant and the kingdom of God are correlated concepts.” O. Becker, “Covenant,” in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 3 vols., ed. Collin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975–1978), 1:365–76

65 Bock, *Luke*, 1740. See also Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 124–127; Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Passion According to Luke: A Redaction Study of Luke’s Soteriology* (New York: Paulist, 1985), 27–28.

and message of Jesus misses the significance of this transfer of power to others and ignores the kingdom associations Jesus makes in explaining these activities.”<sup>66</sup>

Jesus continues on in Luke 22:30 to emphasize the apostles’ vice-regal role: “you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (v. 30b). Searching for the scriptural background of this concept of “thrones over the twelve tribes,” we find the Davidic imagery of Psalm 122:3–5

Jerusalem, built as a city which is bound firmly together,  
To which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD . . .  
There thrones for judgment were set,  
The *thrones of the House of David*.

The connection between the two texts is firm, in light of the collocation in each of the three elements “tribes,” “thrones,” and “judgment.”<sup>67</sup> Psalm 122:5b makes explicit the Davidic context of the promise of Luke 22:30b. The disciples, then, are promised a share in the exercise of authority of the Davidic monarchy over all twelve tribes. The disciples’ “appointment is an anticipation of the restoration of Israel . . . and [they] are commissioned to govern the renewed people of God.”<sup>68</sup> L. T. Johnson comments on the significance of Luke’s version of this dominical saying vis-à-vis Matthew’s:

Luke decisively alters the reference point for this prediction. . . .  
In Luke the saying points forward to the role that the apostles  
will have within the *restored Israel in the narrative of Acts*. . . .  
These followers [will] exercise effective rule within the people  
gathered by the power of the resurrected prophet (see, for ex-  
ample, Acts 5:1–11).<sup>69</sup>

### ***Kingdom Restoration and “Theological Geography” in Acts***

In order to grasp the ecclesiological implications of the institution narrative, it is necessary to venture a little way into Acts. Significantly, in the opening verses of Acts (1:3, 6), Jesus’ topic of discussion with the apostles over forty days is *the kingdom of God*.<sup>70</sup> When the disciples ask Jesus, “Lord, will you at this time restore

66 Darrell L. Bock, “The Reign of the Lord Jesus,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church: The Search for Definition*, eds., Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 37–67.

67 Craig Evans, “The Twelve Thrones of Israel: Scripture and Politics in Luke 22:24–30,” in *Luke and Scripture*, 154–70.

68 Green, *Luke*, 770; compare Fitzmyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1419.

69 Johnson, *Luke*, 345–46, 349. Also see Thomas J. Lane, *Luke and the Gentile Mission*.

70 On the close link between the “kingdom” in Luke 22 and here in Acts 1:1–11, see Jervell, *Luke*, 81–82.

the kingdom to Israel?" (1:6), their query may refer to Jesus' promise in Luke 22:30b that "you will sit on thrones." The apostles are asking, in effect, "When will we receive the authority promised to us?" In response, Jesus discourages speculation about *timing* (v. 7), but does in fact describe the *means* by which the kingdom will be restored, namely, through the Spirit-inspired witness of the apostles throughout the earth (v. 8).<sup>71</sup>

Jesus' geographical description of the spread of the gospel: "you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" is, on the one hand, a programmatic outline of the narrative of Acts, helping us to recognize that the whole book concerns the spread of the kingdom (Acts 28:31).<sup>72</sup> On the other hand, it is a *Davidic map* that reflects the *theological geography* of God's covenant pledge concerning the extent of the Davidic empire. Jerusalem was David's city (2 Sam. 5:6–10), Judea his tribal land (2 Sam. 5:5; 1 Kings 12:21); Samaria represents (northern) Israel, David's nation (1 Kings 12:16); and "the ends of the earth" are the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6), David's vassals (Pss. 2:7–8; 72:8–12; 89:25–27).<sup>73</sup> The kingdom of David, encompassing Jerusalemites, Jews (Judeans), Israelites, and Gentiles, will be restored as the apostles' witness extends to "the ends of the earth" and the ἐκκλησία grows.<sup>74</sup>

But the apostles in the narrative of Acts 1 do not yet realize the significance of Jesus' words or understand his transformation of their expectation of a national, earthly kingdom to one that is international and, though manifest on earth, essentially heavenly.<sup>75</sup> *The Spirit must still be poured out for the apostles to perceive the transformed kingdom.* Thus only *after* the disciples have received the power of the Holy Spirit will they become μάρτυρες, witnesses (Acts 1:8).

After the reconstitution of the Twelve, the event of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–42) marks (1) the restoration in principle of Israel as kingdom under the Son of David, and (2) the beginning of the apostles' vice-regency over that kingdom. It is clear that Luke presents us in Acts 2 with the principal fulfillment of the promised restoration of Israel. Not only are all the Twelve (and presumably the 120) "all together in one place" (2:1)—thus representing the nucleus of the restored Israel—but they

71 As argued by John Michael Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 70; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 95 n. 143, 144; and Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Jesus," 45.

72 "The verse is programmatic in its significance for the narrative structure . . . That the mission will begin in Jerusalem alludes to the restored Zion of Isaiah (Isa. 2:3)." Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, 73.

73 See Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 95.

74 See Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, 21, 71.

75 "Jesus shifts the focus from 'knowledge' to mission . . . [This is] the real answer to the question concerning the 'restoration' of the kingdom to Israel. Jesus' answer contains a redefinition of 'kingdom' and therefore of the Christian understanding of Jesus as Messiah . . . The 'kingdom for Israel' will mean for Luke, therefore, the restoration of Israel *as a people of God.*" Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 29.

address their message to “Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven” (v. 5), and Luke enumerates those nations (vv. 9–11). The exile is reversed.<sup>76</sup>

The exile scattered Israel. An earlier event, recorded in Israel’s history, the tower of Babel, scattered all mankind. At Pentecost, Babel (Gen. 11:1–9) is reversed as well. In a brief recapitulation of the table of nations in Genesis 10, Luke lists representatives of all mankind—both Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism (Acts 2:9–11)—from all the regions of the known world. They now remark to one another, “How is it that each of us hears them in his own language?”

The account of Babel in Genesis (Gen. 11:1–9) follows hard on the heels of the conclusion of the flood narrative. The flood and its abatement are a new or renewed creation event: the world is plunged again into the watery chaos of Genesis 1:2, and emerges once more under the leadership of a new man, a new father of the human race, a new Adam: Noah. The granting of the covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:1–17) in words that echo the original creation narrative creates the hope that in the newly re-created earth, the original divine blessing on all humanity (whose branches are listed in Genesis 10:1–32) may be experienced once more. The hubris of Babel resulted in a dashing of that hope.

Now, at Pentecost, the effects of Babel are overcome. God’s Spirit is poured out “on all flesh” (ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα)—a phrase very common in the flood narrative (Gen. 6:12, 17, 19; 7:15, 16; 8:17, 21; 9:11, 15, 16, 17) referring not only to humanity but to every living thing in creation. The result of this outpoured Spirit is a reunification of the human family in a way not experienced since the world had been newly re-created by the Flood. The implication: humanity is being re-created through the breath of God’s Spirit, who was also the agent of the Adamic first creation (Gen. 1:2; 2:7) and the Noahic re-creation (Gen. 8:1).

### ***The New Israel at Pentecost and Beyond***

To summarize: at Pentecost Babel and exile are reversed, humanity and Israel are restored. More precisely: humanity is being restored and constituted as a new Israel.

This restored Israel has a certain form and structure: not a tribal confederation as under Moses, but a kingdom as under David, incorporating Israel and the Gentiles.<sup>77</sup> Peter’s sermon stresses the Davidic royalty of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36).<sup>78</sup> He preaches to the assembled exiles of Israel that Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenant of David (v. 30)<sup>79</sup> and the fulfillment of David’s own prophecies

76 Denova, *Things Accomplished Among Us*, 138, compare 169–75.

77 See Robert F. O’Toole, “Acts 2:30 and the Davidic Covenant of Pentecost,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983): 245–58. “Although the term *kingdom* never appears in the entire chapter, the imagery of rule and the features of God’s covenants are present. In fact, the chapter is saturated with such images and allusions.” Bock, “The Reign of the Lord Jesus,” 47.

78 See Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts*, 38.

79 See Bock, “The Reign of the Lord Jesus,” 49.

(vv. 25–28; 34–35).<sup>80</sup> He applies to Jesus the royal Davidic enthronement psalm (Psalm 110), asserting that Jesus is now enthroned in heaven (“exalted at the right hand of God”) and has poured out the Spirit on the apostles as the crowd has just witnessed (v. 33). Thus, Jesus is reigning now in heaven, and the results of his reign are being manifest now in events that the people may “see and hear” (v. 33).<sup>81</sup> When Peter’s hearers accept the fact that Jesus is the presently-enthroned Davidic king—and thus acknowledge his rightful reign over themselves—they are incorporated into the ἐκκλησία through baptism (2:41–42; cf. 4:32–5:11, esp. 5:11).<sup>82</sup> Not just Israel, but David’s reign over Israel has been established in principle. And not just over all Israel, but over “all the nations under heaven” or “all flesh” as well, that is, over all humanity and all creation.

It is important to note, however, that the Davidic kingdom is not only restored but transformed.<sup>83</sup> The Son of David is not now enthroned in the earthly Jerusalem but the heavenly, “exalted at the right hand of God.” The kingdom has been transposed from earth to heaven, even though it continues to manifest itself on earth as the ἐκκλησία.<sup>84</sup> This *ecclesial* kingdom exists simultaneously on earth and in heaven. The king is enthroned in heaven, but the ministers (the apostles) are active on earth.

In sum, Acts 1–2, the key introductory chapters of the book, have several links to the institution narrative and describe the birth of the Church as the restoration of the kingdom of David, as well as the restoration of the unity of the human family lost shortly after the re-creation of the Flood.

Davidic covenant motifs recur elsewhere at key junctures in Acts. For example, the prayer of the assembled believers in Acts 4:23–30 identifies the persecution of the nascent Church as a fulfillment of the royal Davidic coronation hymn, Psalm 2. Interestingly, the beginning of the prayer invokes the Lord as both (1) the God of creation and (2) the God of David: “Sovereign LORD . . . you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of . . . David.” (4:24–25).

Later in Acts, Paul’s first recorded sermon—at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16–41)—advances the same Davidic christology presented by Peter in Acts 2.

80 On the Davidic background of Peter’s sermon, see Bock, “The Reign of the Lord Jesus,” 38–39.

81 On the relationship of Luke 1:32–33 and Acts 2:24–31, see Lane, *Luke and the Gentile Mission*, 160.

82 See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Role of the Spirit in Luke-Acts,” in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, 165–84, at 175–76; and Denova, *Things Accomplished Among Us*, 138 and 169–75.

83 Francis Martin compares the way in which the New Testament transforms the expectations of the Old Testament in the very process of fulfilling them to Bernard Lonergan’s concept of “sublation,” although Martin prefers the term “transposition.” See the discussion in his “Some Directions in Catholic Biblical Theology,” in *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew, Mary Healy, Karl Möller, and Robin Parry (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 65–87, at 69–70.

84 So Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, 75.



Paul identifies Jesus as the promised heir to David (v. 23) and explains his person and role in terms of the royal Davidic coronation hymn (Psalm 2, in v. 33) and the Isaianic promise of the extension of the Davidic covenant (Isa. 55:3). Paul concludes his proof of Jesus' status as the Christ by citing the same (Davidic) Psalm 16 that Peter used in his sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2:24–32.

Similarly, James' speech at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) applies Davidic covenant imagery to the Church of Christ, much like Peter and Paul applied Davidic christology to the resurrected Jesus. Recall that the question facing the elders and apostles at the "Jerusalem Council" in Acts 15 was whether to require Gentiles to receive circumcision. After Peter speaks against it, James confirms Peter's decision to embrace baptized (but uncircumcised) Gentile converts by quoting Amos 9:11–12: "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David (σκηνητην Δαυιδ) . . . that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name' (Acts 15:13–18)."

The historical background and literary context of Amos' oracle regarding the "tent" or "dwelling" of David (Amos 9:11) is the Davidic kingdom, which at its peak incorporated Edom (Amos 9:12a) and other Gentile nations (Ammon, Moab, Aram)—that is, "the nations who are called by my name" (Amos 9:12b).<sup>85</sup> Significantly, in Acts 15:14–19, James announces that the incorporation of Gentiles into the *Church* is the fulfillment of Amos' oracle concerning the *restoration of the Davidic kingdom*.<sup>86</sup> His exegetical argument presumes that the "tent of David" is the Church. As David Pao observes:

The promise to rebuild and restore the Davidic kingdom is explicitly made at the point in the narrative of Acts that focuses on defining the people of God. The Amos quotation of Acts 15 shows that . . . the development of the early Christian community is also understood within the paradigm of the anticipation of the Davidic kingdom. The *christological* focus of the David tradition should be supplemented by an *ecclesiological* one.<sup>87</sup>

85 John Mauchline, "Implicit Signs of a Persistent Belief in the Davidic Empire," *Vetus Testamentum* 20 (1970), 287–303; Max Polley, *Amos and the Davidic Empire: A Socio-Historical Approach* (New York: Oxford University, 1989), 66–82.

86 See Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*, 190–92; Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel: Israel's Re-gathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish Literature and Luke-Acts* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006).

87 Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 138. See also Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology*, 74; David P. Seccombe, "The New People of God," in *Witness to the Gospel*, 350–72; and Richard Bauckham, "James and the Jerusalem Church," *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, ed. Richard Bauckham, Vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 415–80, esp. 457.

In sum, Luke's *Davidic christology* is clearly ordered to the *kingdom ecclesiology* which we see unfolding throughout Acts, especially in the apostolic speeches. At the same time, Luke presents the renewed covenant of the Davidic kingdom against the background of the *renewed creation*, inasmuch as the expansion of the Church-kingdom is "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), including "every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5), with the outpouring of the Spirit "on all flesh" (Acts 2:17).

### ***David and his Kingdom, Christ and his Church***

We have seen that the christology of Luke is strongly royal and Davidic. However, the full significance of this royal Davidic portrait of Christ is missed unless its Old Testament context is carefully examined. Several Old Testament texts establish a link between the Davidic kingdom and the original form and divine purpose of creation. The Jerusalem Temple assumes features of Eden; David is characterized as a king exercising dominion in terms reminiscent of Adam; and the Davidic kingdom appears as a fulfillment of God's covenantal purposes for creation.

Luke is clearly aware of the creational background of the Davidic kingdom. Indeed, as we have seen, his accounts of Jesus' baptism, genealogy, and temptation all contain intertwining allusions to creation and Davidic traditions. Jesus is Son of David and therefore messianic king, but he is also the Son of God, and thus a new Adam to originate a new humanity. And all that Jesus possesses—the kingdom of David and its significance for all creation—is transmitted to the apostles in the institution narrative. In Acts, the apostles are commissioned by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to extend the kingdom they have received to "the ends of the earth," to "every nation under heaven," and to "all flesh"—references to the (new) creation. Both the restored kingdom and the renewed creation are thus united in the Church.

In sum, when Luke-Acts is read in light of the Old Testament—that is, in canonical perspective—it shows how the Church's universal mission effects the restoration of the Davidic kingdom for all nations, just as it fulfills God's plan and purpose for all creation. God's plan for Adam and creation, renewed with David and his kingdom, is thus fulfilled by Christ in the Church.