

Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

Series: *Covenant: God's Way of Relationship*



Teaching Sermon: “God’s Covenantal Faithfulness”

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God’s Covenantal Faithfulness

God is faithful, but some want a little proof that once God makes a binding oath, His decree cannot be violated and is irrevocable. We have looked at 2 Samuel 7, the foundation of the Davidic covenant and of the entire monarchy in Israel. In that chapter we saw references to King David and his sons as kings (2 Samuel 7:2, 12, 13, 16). We saw God initiate this covenant relationship, and we saw God named “Yahweh of Hosts (v. 8), “Lord Yahweh” (v. 18, 19, 20, 28, 29), “Yahweh Elohim” (v. 22, 25), “Yahweh of Hosts, God of Israel” (v. 27), and a climatic conclusion of “And now, Lord Yahweh, You are He—the Elohim.”

We can see the central role played by God’s covenantal word to David in passages like 1 Kings 2:1-4, 1 Kings 8, and 1 Kings 9. God’s covenant with David does not supplant the provisions of the Mosaic covenant, and David’s son Solomon understands its provisional character, meaning that only as David’s descendants walk faithfully before the Lord will they enjoy the full blessings of this covenant. Solomon understands (1 Kings 8:15, 20, 24-26). In 1 Kings 9 God appears to Solomon for the second time to remind him to keep the statutes and ordinances given to direct his life, again uniting the Mosaic and Davidic covenants. (1 Kings 9:5)

Now we can see a pattern develop when we trace the history of the Word of God among the kings of Israel. Slight variations may occur, but the pattern overall is this:

1. “God’s word experiences particularization so that a specific application of the broader word concerning the Davidic covenant is made evident.” (O. Palmer Robertson, p. 256)
2. “The particularized word of God finds verification in the history of Israel.” (O. Palmer Robertson, p. 256)
3. “The author of Kings pointedly calls attention to the fulfillment of God’s word through formularization.” (O. Palmer Robertson, p. 256)

Solomon revolted against the kingship of God, so part of his kingdom will revolt against him. Yet because of God’s covenant to David, the rending of the kingdom would occur under Solomon’s son, Rehoboam. When Rehoboam came along, the young king did not listen to the counsel of the older men. God caused this “In order that he might cause to stand his word which he had spoken.” (1 Kings 12:15) See 1 Kings 11:9-13, 31, 35; 1 Kings 12:13-15.

With the division of the kingdom, Jeroboam becomes the king of the northern kingdom, Israel, with ten tribes. He wanted the heart of northern Israel to be weaned from its loyalty to Jerusalem, the central place of worship, so he summons everyone to Bethel in order to dedicate a new altar (1 Kings 12:32f.). Remarkably, an unnamed man of God prophesies of a child to be born to the house of David who will desecrate this unholy altar by burning men’s bones on its surface. That child is even named, Josiah. This prophecy comes some 300 years before Josiah

appears as king in Judah. The altars and false worship system of the northern tribes will become known in scripture as “the sin of Jeroboam.” Jeroboam’s defeat is declared from its beginning. Jeroboam will fail to break loose from God’s ordained center of worship.

Josiah does come and break down the altar at Bethel. 2 Kings 23:15, 16. And with the fulfillment comes the formula “according to the word of Yahweh.”

Another remarkable thing is that this same unnamed prophet becomes the victim of God’s judgment himself. He rejects the bribery of Jeroboam, but does not resist the pleas of one who pretends to have a word from God. This disobedience ends in his death, and again we have the formula of fulfillment. (1 Kings 13:11-32)

1 Kings 16:34; Joshua 6:26 – Joshua placed a curse on anyone attempting to rebuild Jericho, namely the death of his firstborn son and the death of his youngest son. Hiel of Bethel initiated the rebuilding of Jericho. His firstborn son dies at the laying of the new foundation, yet he persists until he raises up the gates of the city. The completion of the city brings the death of his youngest son. This, the Bible says, is “according to the word of Yahweh which He spoke.” (1 Kings 16:34)

1 Kings 21:17-24; 1 Kings 22:34, 35, 38; 2 Kings 9:21-26, 30-37, 10:10, 17 – Ahab took possession of Naboth’s vineyard. As Ahab proudly walks the land, he is met by Elijah and given four distinct prophecies.

1. 1 Kings 21:19 – Ahab will meet a violent death and as further humiliation, his blood shall be shed on this very ground. 1 Kings 22:10, 19. The regal pomp of the earthly kings is contrasted with the glory of the one true living God, the true King of the covenant. Conflicting prophetic projections concerning an ensuing battle end in the death of Ahab, 1 Kings 22:37, 38, “according to the word of Yahweh which He spoke.” Ahab is spared the humiliation of dying on Naboth’s vineyard because of Ahab’s repentance, though imperfect. The judgment defers to his son Joram (1 Kings 21:27-29).
2. The second prophecy of this chapter concerns Joram, who will die violently on Naboth’s vineyard. This finds fulfillment when Joram dies at the hands of Jehu, who casts his corpse onto the field. The formula? 2 Kings 9:26. “**Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,**” says the Lord, “**and I will repay you in this plot,**” says the Lord. **Now therefore, take and throw him on the plot of ground, according to the word of the Lord.**
3. The third prophecy in 1 Kings 21 concerns Ahab’s posterity. It will suffer annihilation 1 Kings 21:21f. This word is repeated to Jehu in 2 Kings 9:1-9. The fulfillment is in 2 Kings 10:17 and the elimination of Ahab’s line comes “according to the word of Yahweh which He spoke.”
4. The fourth prophecy concerns Jezebel. The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel. 1 Kings 21:23. This prophecy is repeated by Elisha in 2 Kings 9:10. It comes about in 2 Kings 9:30-37. The formula comes in 2 Kings 9:36. **Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, “This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, ‘On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel;’**

2 Kings 7:1, 2; 2 Kings 7:16-20. A servant mocks God’s lordship over the nations of the earth. He may also have been mocking the provision of manna recorded in Exodus 16:4. Whatever, he failed to acknowledge that all peoples, whether the Assyrian armies or the Israelites, derived

their existence and their provision from the one true living God. For this mocking, the servant will see God's provision with his eyes, but never taste it. 2 Kings 7:2b. The next day, a measure of fine meal is sold for a shekel according to the word of Yahweh. The servant, i.e., the captain of the gate, sees this but gets none. He is trodden to death at the gate of the city as a ravenous mob presses toward the abandoned provisions of the Syrians. He dies "according to the word of the man of God which he spoke."

2 Kings 20:12-18; 2 Kings 24:10-17. Hezekiah had been healed by God. This was total grace on God's part. Hezekiah did well, but at one point he responds foolishly. Emissaries from Babylon come and Hezekiah falls for the flattery. He shows them all the riches of his kingdom with great pride. This folly brings divine judgment. Isaiah prophesies that all the wealth in which he gloried will be carried away. God alone was worthy of the glory in Israel. Fulfillment comes in the days of Jehoiachin. As part of the removal of glory from Israel, the king of Babylon takes with him all the treasures of the Lord's house "just as the Lord had said." (2 Kings 24:13) Failure to acknowledge Yahweh as King of kings and Lord of lords meant the loss of all.

What's the point? The entire history of the monarchy in Israel is governed by the word of the Lord. God established the covenant relationship with David. God made sure His word remained true. The author of Kings says it himself. 2 Kings 17:7-41. Failure to keep God's covenant resulted in being cast out of the land. Stubborn refusal to hear and to heed God's word seals their fate.

Another important point. "Predictive prophecy occurs only as it relates organically to the covenantal ordinances established between God and His people." (O. Palmer Robertson, p. 267) Commitments in the past by God as Lord of the covenant determine the course of the future. Historical reality explains and is the outworking of the verbal commitment by Yahweh in the covenant. What we have in the books of the kings is the overarching purpose concerning the justification of the ways of God with His people. Judgments occur according to the word of Yahweh which He spoke. The word of warning concerning the kingdom was built into the Davidic covenant and worked out repeatedly in specific circumstances in Israel's history.

In contrast to God's faithfulness to strike Israel's sons in the northern kingdom is God's faithfulness to sustain the line of David in the south. God chastened David's sons according to the provisions of the covenant, but He never removed His lovingkindness as He did from the house of Saul. Even as the last of David's line finds himself in prison, God still remembers covenant mercy.

Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life. 2 Kings 25:27-30.

Side note: *Jehoiachin*, King of Judah, also known as *Jeconiah*, *Coniah*, or *Jechonias*. ... *Jehoiachin*, son of *Jehoiakim* and *Nehushta*, was also called *Jeconiah*, and *Coniah*, became king at age 18, but only reigned three months. He was forced to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar II and was taken to Babylon (597 B.C.), along with 10,000 of his subjects. Mattaniah was the son of Josiah and the uncle of **Jehoiachin**, the reigning king of Judah. In 597 B.C. the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar besieged and captured Jerusalem. They deported **Jehoiachin** to Babylon and made Mattaniah regent under the name **Zedekiah**. **Zedekiah**, original name

Mattaniah, (flourished 6th century B.C.), was the last king of Judah (597–587/586 B.C.). His reign ended in the **Babylonian** destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of most of the **Jews** to Babylon.

The end of the Davidic monarchy and the devastation of Jerusalem fulfills the covenantal curse associated with the Davidic covenant. Expulsion from the land of promise is a reversal of the blessing expressed in the covenant with Abraham. Abraham's descendants are now treated as the uncircumcised and cast out of the land. Expulsion through exile dramatizes a massive failure under the old covenant. Israel failed. All Israel failed. Judgment was inevitable, yet the prophets would declare a hope beyond devastation. Even as Israel failed to fulfill its covenantal responsibilities, God will not fail in His purpose to establish a people to glorify His own name. He will redeem a people to Himself from among the fallen of humanity, and He will not be stopped.

The consummation of God's covenant is not realized, but the stage is set for a return of David's Son to the throne of Israel. A greater will come on the surety of God's covenant faithfulness. God is faithful, and He also will do it. As the prophets declare, there will be a return to the land of promise, the restoration of acceptable worship, and a renewal of a regal messianic line. This will come in a new covenant relationship. This new covenant will supersede God's previous covenantal administrations while at the same time be the reality of the essence of the previous covenants. This is why we will call the new covenant in Christ the Covenant of Consummation.

May we praise our Covenant-keeping Lord for His faithfulness,

Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D. Min.

"And to you and your descendants I will give the land of your sojourn--all the land of Canaan--as an eternal possession; and I will be their God." Genesis 17:8

"And He told me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give freely from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." Revelation 21:6, 7.

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