



# REASONS TO BELIEVE

*How to Understand, Explain, and Defend  
the Catholic Faith*

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DOUBLEDAY

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## CREATED FOR THE KINGDOM

In the moments before Jesus' Ascension into heaven, there is just one question burning in the hearts of the disciples: "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

There is, at the heart of the biblical story—and so in the hearts of God's people—a keen sense of loss and gain, fall and redemption. God had bestowed a kingdom on His people. They forfeited that kingdom. They eagerly awaited its restoration. And Jesus announced its imminent restoration.

The story actually begins in the Book of Genesis, when God gives Adam "dominion" over "all the earth" and all the creatures therein, from fish and birds to cattle and bugs (Gen 1:26). Adam is made in God's "image" and "likeness," which suggests a father-son relationship and a delegation of royal responsibilities. Man and woman are made to serve as firstborn vice-regents of God. When the Psalmist revisits this theme, he discusses the dominion in terms of the kingship that God shared willingly with the first man:

What is man that You are mindful of him,  
and the son of man that You should care for him?  
You have made him little less than the angels,  
and crowned him with glory and honor.  
You have given him rule over the works of Your hands,  
putting all things under his feet. (Ps 8:4-6)

God “crowned” all humankind in Adam and bestowed “dominion” and “rule” upon the primal couple and their offspring. Ancient peoples would have recognized in the Genesis account the common behavior of kings, who amassed lands to pass on to their sons and heirs.

But Adam was more than merely a king. He was a *priestly* king. Genesis relates that God placed him with specific duties, indicated by the Hebrew verbs *abodah* and *shamar* (usually translated as “to till” and “to keep”). Elsewhere in the Pentateuch, these verbs appear together only to describe the ritual service of the priests and Levites in the sanctuary (see Nm 3:7-8, 8:26, 18:5-6). In describing priestly service, they might be rendered “to minister” and “to guard.” The priests were to offer the sacrificial service to God, and they were to protect His sanctuary from defilement. These literary clues suggest the biblical authors’ intent to describe all creation as a royal temple built by a heavenly king. Adam is intentionally portrayed as a royal firstborn and high-priestly figure, a priest-king set to rule as vice-regent over the temple-kingdom of creation.

God seals all this in a special way. The terms of man’s relationship with God are ordered by the covenant of the Sabbath established on the seventh day: The Hebrew word for a covenant oath is *sheva*, which means seven. To swear is, literally, to “seven oneself.” Covenant, then, is the meaning of God’s Sabbath rest. It could not

have been for God’s respite, since the Almighty does not grow weary. No, God is here creating a covenant bond—that is, a *family* bond—with the cosmos. By breathing life into Adam, He bestowed His Spirit of sonship upon the man. Adam was to rule over the world as a son of God. This view is borne out not only in the teaching of the Catholic Church, but also in the writings of the ancient rabbis. Modern scholars have referred to God’s seventh-day blessing as the “Cosmic Covenant.”

In the story of creation, we see God amassing a realm and then establishing humankind as His royal family on earth. He solemnly seals his decree by establishing an everlasting covenant.

This covenant is key to understanding the Book of Genesis—and the entire Bible, which itself is divided into the “Old Covenant” and the “New Covenant.” (The Hebrew word for covenant, *brit*, and the Greek, *diatheke*, are usually translated into English as “testament.”) When we take Genesis on its own terms, it is intelligible. When we try to impose our terms on the text, however, the text disintegrates before our eyes.

Some people, for example, read Genesis as an ancient science textbook, and so they find it wanting. But it was not written as a science textbook. It is, on one level, a charter of kingship—the kingship of Adam, whose name means both “a man” and “humankind.” One of the terms of God’s covenant with the human race was dominion: Adam and Eve were to fill the earth and subdue it. Thus, God made the cosmos for their good and for their delight. He made the cosmos knowable for them in a way it was not knowable to the other animals. Our knowledge of creation differs from theirs not only in degree, but in kind. The human mind, then, was conformed to creation; and creation was made for the human mind. This is the cosmic anthropic principle in its primal form.

And this term of the covenant, this charter of dominion and kingship—along with the necessary intelligibility of creation—is what made the natural sciences and technologies possible.

In giving the world to Adam, God gave the human race a kingdom to rule as His vicars. By their pride and disobedience, however, Adam and Eve forfeited their privileged status. When the serpent tempted them, they renounced their divinely appointed offices. Adam failed to protect the garden sanctuary from the deadly intruder; and, by taking the forbidden fruit, he and Eve refused to make a sacrifice of their desire for earthly goods. They refused, too, to exercise dominion over the beast that confronted them. Thus Adam failed in both his royal and priestly tasks. He abdicated the kingship God had shared with him, and in doing so he bequeathed the heritage of his failure to all generations in his line.

This, the Original Sin, is a disaster of cosmic proportions. Yet the ancient Christians, and their modern descendants, could sing of the fall from grace as a "happy fault"—because it created the need for a savior, the actual occasion of the incarnation of the eternal Word of God. From the wreckage of the fall, God would accomplish a still greater work for humanity. Because of Adam's self-destruction, the world would await a restoration.

### THE COMEBACK TRAIL

But salvation was a long way off. In the subsequent chapters of Genesis, the human family grows more rebellious, beginning with Cain's murder of his brother Abel and continuing through the worldwide decadence at the time of Noah. God partially re-establishes cosmic order by saving the family of Noah; but sin once again appears on the scene. With the arrogant self-worship at the

Tower of Babel, the human family is once again dispersed, exiled from God and even from one another. These evil generations have wandered far from humanity's original kingly vocation.

Yet then comes Abraham, a man of faith, to whom God promises a future restoration of the cosmic covenant. To Abraham and his descendants, God promises divine blessing for all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3); a fruitful land (12:1); and a line of kings (17:6). And God seals each of these promises with a covenant (see Gen 15, 17:4–8, and 22:15–18), thus re-establishing the bonds of kinship between God and a human family. It is through Abraham that we also glimpse a priest-king, Melchizedek, king of Salem (Gen 14:18), who blesses Abraham as he offers a sacrifice of bread and wine to God. (Salem will later be renamed Jeru-salem and identified with Mount Zion; see Ps 76:2.) God's covenant with Abraham marks a partial restoration, a partial fulfillment that would one day be complete, universal, cosmic—catholic.

But only after further setbacks. For, within just a few generations, God's family would again sin grievously, this time bringing upon themselves the punishment of slavery in a foreign land. But this, too, proves to be a "fortunate fault," as slavery in Egypt provides the occasion of God's great saving work of the Exodus. The biblical narrative describing Israel's liberation everywhere echoes the Genesis narrative of creation. Israel is delivered through water as a new creation. The cloud of divine presence covers Mount Sinai for six days before God calls Moses, on the seventh day, to enter the cloud and receive the blueprint for God's dwelling (Ex 24). God's instructions appear in sevens, again like His work of creation, and His seven commands conclude with ordinances for observance of the seventh day, the Sabbath. The making of the priestly vestments and the building of the tabernacle recall the creation narrative. In both, the work proceeds through seven stages

(which, in Exodus, conclude with "as the Lord commanded Moses"). Moses beholds his handiwork, as God did in Genesis, and blesses it (Ex 39:43). As God "finished His work," so Moses "finished the work" (Gen 2:1-2; Ex 40:34). And as God rested on the seventh day, blessing and hallowing it, so when Moses finished his work, the divine presence filled the tabernacle (Ex 40:34).

With the Exodus, God restored a royal priesthood, a priestly kingship. He declared Israel to be His "own possession among all peoples . . . a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:5-6). He set them in the place of Adam, the priest-king. What Adam was to be for every person, Israel was to be for every nation—a royal priest, "the firstborn of many brethren" (see Rom 8:29). As Adam had been made in God's image and likeness, so God addressed Israel with titles suggesting royal-priestly primogeniture. To Him, Israel is "My son, My firstborn (Ex 4:22-23, 19:6).

Nevertheless, just as the Israelites received Adam's vocation, they also perpetrated an Adam-like fall from grace. And just as the original fall had resulted in exile and de-consecration of the royal-priestly figure, so too did Israel's idolatrous worship of the golden calf. God disinherited His people, pointedly telling Moses that they are "*your* people, whom *you* brought out of the land of Egypt" (Ex 32:7). In defiling itself through ritual rebellion, Israel, like Adam, had become unfit for the divine vocation. And never again does the Old Testament use the royal-priestly title of Exodus 19:6 to describe the people of Israel.

Still, on the strength of His covenant with their father Abraham (see Ex 32:13), God spared Israel and permitted the tribes, eventually, to enter the promised land. So God's people experienced, again, a partial restoration.

In the promised land, Israel remained a people set apart. A na-

tion unlike any other, they were governed not by human laws, but by God Himself through His prophets. Yet they were inexorably drawn to the trappings of kingship, which they saw in the neighboring pagan lands. They wanted power, prestige, loot, and conquest. In other words, they no longer wished to be a nation set apart. They longed to be like everyone else. They demanded that the prophet Samuel appoint a king for them (see 1 Sam 8). Like Adam's sin in Eden and Israel's in Sinai, this petition marked a rebellion against God's rule. Moses had foreseen this day, and so, grudgingly, in the Book of Deuteronomy he had provided laws to govern the behavior of Israel's kings.

Samuel told the people what they could expect from a king: taxes, military conscription, and oppression. But the people insisted, and God let them have their way. Samuel ritually installed Saul in his kingly office by anointing, an action formerly used only for the ordination of priests. As soon as he was anointed, Saul began to prophesy. Thus, God showed His people that, even though they had rejected His rule, He could continue to rule them through their king. They hadn't chosen Saul as their king; God had chosen him as their king. Thus, even though Saul was a proud and arrogant man, as king he was "the anointed," which in Hebrew is *messiah* and in Greek *christos*, whence we get the English title "Christ." Though Saul's misdeeds would eventually bring down his reign and his dynasty, they could not bring down the validity of the kingship God had established.

Ultimately, God would turn Israel's demand for a king, like all of mankind's previous rebellions, into the occasion for an even greater royal house—an even greater messiah-king—indeed, a blessing for Israel and, through Israel, for all the nations.

Thus, in spite of mankind's repeated failure to live up to its royal-priestly vocation, the restoration of the cosmic covenant proceeded in history at the pace of God's providence. God first gathered into one kingdom all the sons of Abraham, so that He might eventually gather all the sons of Adam.

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*Twelve*

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## THE FLEETING AND FUTURE KINGDOM

The Difference David Made

As psalmist, monarch, and ancestor of Jesus Christ—and as a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14)—King David amounts to so much more than we would guess from popular homiletics. Don't get me wrong: I'm not saying that no one preaches or writes about David. Such a charge would be absurd. David stars in the Bible's emblematic tale of repentance, the aftermath of his dalliance with Bathsheba. As such, he's a stock figure in sermons of every denomination.

But David is so much more than that. Within the Bible, he is the man who defines kingship—a kingship that had merely been suggested in the stories of the creation and the Exodus. He establishes the only lasting royal house in the Old Testament, and the longest-running dynasty in the ancient world.

Scholars and preachers usually acknowledge David as the dominating figure in the Book of Psalms, with more than seventy psalms attributed to him. What is not widely recognized is his prominence throughout the Old Testament. Without a doubt, the lively memory of David and his kingdom are central to the Gospel of Jesus

Christ; but it is perhaps even more important to the direction and meaning of the Old Testament.

Why has David been relatively neglected? It's hard to say. But one reason is that researchers have tended to focus instead on the importance and influence of Moses and the covenant at Sinai.

Moses is indeed a gigantic figure of influence in both Testaments of the Bible. But is David any less? Consider just a few points. While the name *Moses* occurs more than 720 times in the Old Testament, *David* is mentioned almost 1,020 times. David's career is the subject of forty-two chapters, or nearly 30 percent, of what ancient rabbis call the "Former Prophets" (Joshua—2 Kings). In Chronicles, a review of Israel's history from a priestly perspective, the percentage is even greater.

In the prophets, David is mentioned thirty-seven times, and Moses only seven. And the hopes of the Jewish people usually find their focus in Mount Zion, the site of David's royal palace, rather than Sinai, where Moses received the Law. Even today, the Jewish movement to re-establish the ancient homeland is known as "Zionism," and its symbol belongs not to the Lawgiver but to the King: the Star of David.

When the ancient Israelites, and later the Jews, spoke of "the kingdom," the reign of David provided their only historical referent. If the stories of Adam, Abraham, and Moses foretold the reign of a priestly king, that priestly king was David—and, in turn, his house, his line, his "son."

#### HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

Scripture tells us that David was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14). He was indeed a man *unlike* Saul. While Saul looked princely, David was a mere youth, small in stature (1 Sam 16:7).

But when "Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers . . . the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1 Sam 16:13).

At the same time, the Lord withdrew His Spirit from Saul, who was then tormented by demons. The demons relented only when David played his lyre. (Similarly, the demons would one day run from Jesus, confessing Him to be the anointed, the Christ. See Luke 4:41.)

Saul brought about his own demise when he opposed God's will and sought to kill David. As David assumed the throne, he began a reign quite unlike Saul's. He moved the nation's capital to Jerusalem, in order to unite the tribes. Once David had firmly established himself at Jerusalem, he decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant there—the shrine that contained the Law God gave to Israel, along with other relics, such as Aaron's priestly staff and manna from heaven. The presence of the Ark would make Jerusalem not just the political center of Israel, but the religious center as well. David himself led the procession that carried the Ark to its destination. The king was dressed not in royal robes, but in priestly vestments: a linen ephod. He danced for joy "with all his might" before the Ark. And when the procession had reached its new home, David himself offered the sacrifices.

Why was it all right for David to act as a priest? He was not, after all, a member of the tribe of Levi. When Saul, earlier, had tried offering sacrifices, he was severely punished. But there was a huge difference between David and Saul. Saul's sacrifices were just a business transaction with God. But David danced and made offerings out of love and joy—not because he wanted something from God.

David was a priestly king, as God had intended Adam to be. He possessed a royal priesthood, as God had intended Israel to hold.

David and his son, Solomon, were to be, like Melchizedek, priest-kings who reigned and offered sacrifice in (Jeru)Salem (see Ps 110:1-4).

Yet David was not satisfied. He desired something more: he wanted to build a Temple for God in Jerusalem. So he consulted with the prophet Nathan: "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent" (2 Sam 7:2). God, however, did not intend for David to build the Temple. God had something much more important in store for his king. Nathan spoke God's word to David:

The Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house . . . I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be My son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men; but I will not take My steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before Me: your throne shall be established for ever. (2 Sam 7:11-16)

God here renewed His *covenant* with Israel through the house of David. He re-established His family bond with His people, using the language of close kinship. As Adam and then Israel would live as God's "firstborn," so David's heir would enjoy a father-son relationship with the Almighty. This time, however, it came with an everlasting guarantee.

The terms of the covenant are rather remarkable:

- *The Lord will make you a house:* David will be not just king for a day or a lifetime, but the founder of a royal dynasty.

- *I will establish his kingdom:* The son of David will be ruler of a vast kingdom that includes all of Israel, but also the rest of the world, "the nations" (see Ps 2:8; 72:11, 16). The Books of Chronicles go so far as to call it the "Kingdom of Yahweh" (see 1 Chr 28:5; 2 Chr 13:8).
- *He shall build a house for My name:* David's son will build the temple as a permanent home for the Ark of the Covenant.
- *I will be his father, and he shall be My son:* David's son would be adopted as God's own son. This is the first time divine sonship is explicitly applied to one individual. Before this, the whole people of Israel had been called God's firstborn son (Ex 4:22), but no single person had ever been "son of God."
- *I will chasten him . . . but I will not take My steadfast love from him:* God would never disown David's line the way He disowned Saul, no matter how much his descendants might sin. The covenant would be permanent. Like a loving father, God would punish His son, but only for his own good.
- *Your throne shall be established for ever:* The dynasty of David would never end. Dynasties rise and fall in all other earthly monarchies, but the throne of David would always be occupied by a descendant of David himself.

#### KEYS OF DAVID

Since David's kingdom would be everlasting, it would come to define "kingdom" for all subsequent generations raised on the word of God. It was not merely a theoretical concept or theological metaphor. It had a definite historical shape, vividly and specifically recorded by Israel's historians, prophets, and poets. And the qualities they record relate directly to the terms of the covenant revealed by the prophet Nathan.



What did David's kingdom look like? It's important that we know, because—as Jesus Himself made clear—the contours of “the kingdom” mark the shape of our salvation. The heart of Jesus' earthly ministry was the proclamation of the kingdom, and His use of that word could mean only one thing to His hearers. They understood Him to mean the restoration of the kingdom of David, and He did not contradict their expectation. In fact, He confirmed it and clarified it, never diminishing its Davidic character.

From the historical sources, we can identify certain elements that prevailed as long as the House of David ruled from Jerusalem. Here I would like to identify seven primary features of God's covenant with the House of David and three secondary features. I focus on these ten because they are integral to the dynastic drama we read in the later books of the Old Testament, and also because they will re-emerge as keys to the Davidic identity of Jesus Christ—and the Church He established on earth.

1. *The Davidic monarchy was founded upon a divine covenant, the only human kingdom of the Old Testament to enjoy such a privilege (see 2 Sam 8:11–16).*
2. *The Davidic monarch was the Son of God. The familial relationship of the king to God is expressed in Nathan's oracle, but again in other places (see Psalm 2:7). The son of David received the grace of divine sonship at the time of his anointing.*
3. *The son of David was “the Christ,” that is, “the messiah,” since *mashiach* in Hebrew literally means “the anointed one” (see 1 Sam 16:13; 1 Kgs 1:43–48; 2 Kgs 11:12; Ps 89:20–39). His anointing with oil made him a priest and a king, “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (Ps 110:4). Melchizedek*

was priest-king in the Jerusalem of Abraham's time (Gen 14:18; Ps 76:2).

4. *The House of David was inextricably bound to Jerusalem, particularly Mount Zion, which was the personal possession of King David and his heirs (2 Sam 5:9). More than the capital city for the monarchy, Jerusalem became the spiritual center of God's people, and the place of pilgrimage for Israel and all the nations (Is 2:1–3).*

5. *The Temple was the visible sign of the Davidic covenant and God's kingdom. Building the Temple was central to the terms of the covenant, and the same Hebrew word for “house” was used to describe not only David's dynasty, but also God's dwelling place, which was to serve as a “house of prayer for all peoples” (Is 56:7; Mt 21:12–15).*

6. *The Davidic King was to rule over all twelve tribes of Israel—but also over all the nations. It was only under David and Solomon that both Judah and all the northern tribes were united as one kingdom and freed from foreign oppression (see 2 Sam 5:1–5; 1 Kgs 4:1–19). The Lord also decreed that the Davidic king was to rule over all the nations (Ps 2:8, 72:1–17), and welcome gentile pilgrims to Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8:41–43, 10:1–24), from all over the world. The Davidic Kingdom at Zion thus marks the first time Israel was called to welcome gentiles as an integral part of their covenant with God.*

7. *The monarchy was to be everlasting. One of the most prevalent emphases in the Psalms and histories is that David's dynasty will be eternal (see 2 Sam 7:16). Not only the dynasty, but also the life*

span of the reigning monarch was described as everlasting (see Ps 21:4).

Along with those seven primary features, we should note three secondary elements. Though these were not mentioned explicitly in Nathan's oracle, they are found throughout the histories and hymns of the House of David. Again, they will become even more important under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ.

1. The *Queen Mother* became an important part of the royal government. It starts with King Solomon in I Kings 2:19:

So Bathsheba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right.

Note, here, that everyone bowed before Solomon, but Solomon himself bowed down before his mother. From that point on, the Queen Mother became a permanent fixture in the kingdom, a symbol of the continuity of David's royal line. She also served as one of the king's most important advisers. Indeed, Proverbs 31 is identified as the advice of the queen mother of King Lemuel: "The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him." When the prophet Jeremiah addresses the king, he addresses his mother as well, such was her authority: "Say to the king and the queen-mother . . ." (Jer 13:18; see also 2 Kgs 24:15).

2. The "prime minister" or chief steward became a distinct office in the royal government. The king had many servants (in I Kgs 4:7

there are twelve), but one man was chief among them and stood between the king and his other ministers. Almost two centuries after David, Isaiah prophesied a transition in the royal government in which one prime minister would be replaced by another (see Is 22:15-25). From his prophecy, we can tell that everyone in the kingdom could identify the prime minister: "he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah." The sign of the prime minister's office was the *keys of the kingdom*. "And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."

3. The *thank offering* or "sacrifice of thanksgiving" became the primary liturgy celebrated at Temple, much more than the sin offering (see Ps 50:13-14, 116:17-19). The thank offering (Lev 7:12-15) included unleavened bread and wine freely offered to God in gratitude for deliverance. Ancient Jewish teachers predicted that, when the Messiah came, no other sacrifice would be offered: the thank offering alone would continue. The word for "thank offering" is *todah* in Hebrew, but is translated as *eucharistia* in many Greek translations of the Scriptures and in the writings of ancient Jews, such as Philo and Aquina.

#### THRONE AWAY

Under David, and then under his son Solomon, the kingdom flourished. God delivered on His promise of peace, stability, and a family bond between Himself and His people. The blessings of the covenant seemed evident everywhere, and the foreign nations all wanted a piece of it. They sought to make alliances with Solomon. They sent delegations to Jerusalem to pay homage to Solomon's

God. And Solomon designed his Temple to accommodate the worship of the gentiles, as "a house of prayer for all nations" (Is 56:7). So great was the prestige and prosperity of Israel that the memory of those generations—of David and Solomon—would remain indelible, especially for the tribe of Judah, for millennia afterward.

Yet the historical reality of the kingdom fell apart, very quickly. Like Adam before him, like Israel before him, Solomon sinned grievously and then fell into a downward spiral of sin. He flouted the laws of Moses that governed his kingship; he overtaxed the tribes and multiplied wives for himself (seven hundred!) and concubines (three hundred!). These sins led to still deadlier sins. The Scriptures tell us that "his wives turned his heart . . . to strange gods" (1 Kgs 11:1-3). Once the archetypal wise man, Solomon now became an idolater.

When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam refused to renegotiate the kingdom's taxation policies, and the tribes rebelled. Ten of the twelve tribes split off and established a Northern Kingdom—separating themselves not only from the kingdom of David, but also from the worship of the Temple. All that was left for the House of David were the two tiny tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

In this period of decay, great prophets arose to herald a revival of the House of David. Isaiah prophesied that salvation would come with the birth of an heir to David's throne. The new king's dominion would be vast and would endure "both now and forever" (see Is 9:5-6). Elsewhere (see Is 11:1-16), Isaiah predicted the sprouting of a new shoot from the root of Jesse, who was the father of David. The prophets repeatedly portrayed the restoration as a recapitulation of God's covenants of the past; it would be like a new creation, a new exodus, as well as a new kingdom.

The prophets, however, could not halt Israel's decline. Badly weakened, the divided kingdom was easy prey for its neighbors—

the lands that had once been eager to win the favor of Jerusalem's king. The Northern Kingdom was destroyed in 722 B.C., overrun by the Assyrians. In 587, Babylon sacked Jerusalem, shattering the Southern Kingdom and sending its elites into exile. The conquering king rounded up the descendants of King David, and he mercilessly slaughtered them.

Within a generation after David's death, the "everlasting kingdom" had vanished. Within five hundred years the royal lineage, too, was apparently extinguished.

So much had seemed near at hand: the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, to bless all peoples through Abraham's seed; the rehabilitation of Israel as a priestly nation through the sacrifice of the Temple; and even the restoration of God's cosmic covenant with all the children of Adam.

#### HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Still, the words of the prophets held out the promise, and history recorded God's oracle through Nathan as an unconditional surety.

In the second half of the sixth century B.C., after Babylon fell to Persia, some Israelites returned to Jerusalem and began to rebuild the Temple. The Second Temple was just a shadow of Solomon's, a humiliating reminder of how far the land and people had fallen, from prosperity and from God.

The literature between the testaments records the residual hope that the House of David would be restored: "raise up unto them their king, the son of David . . . that he may reign over Israel Your servant . . . For all shall be holy and their king the anointed [*Messiah*, *Christ*] of the Lord!" The Dead Sea Scrolls witness to the same hope: "He is the branch of David who shall arise . . . in Zion at the end of time. As it is written, 'I will raise up the tent of David that

is fallen: 'That is to say, the fallen tent of David is he who shall arise to save Israel.'

The hope endured, in spite of the apparent impossibility of its fulfillment. The tent of David, after all, had fallen. The tree of Jesse had been cut down. But it was God who had made His covenant with the House of David, God who had made the promises. Almighty, He could raise up children of Abraham from stones if He willed. He could draw up a branch of David from the stump of the family tree.

He who made the covenant had also created the earth, and He could gather the children of Adam once again from the ends of the earth to receive their blessing from the son of David, the son of Abraham.

The idea of a *catholic* faith, a universal faith—willed from creation, promised to Abraham, mediated by Israel, glimpsed in David—remained as the special possession of Israel's remnant. The gentile nations were content with their local gods. But God's people awaited the day of a great king over Israel and the nations. "And I will set up over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd . . . My servant David shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow My ordinances and be careful to observe My statutes" (Ezk 34:23, 37:24).

### *Thirteen*

## THE KINGDOM COME

On Christ the King, the Son of David

There is ample evidence that, in the century before the birth of Christ, God's people sensed—and hoped—that the time was at hand: The time had arrived.

The Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament—which was very popular among the Jews who were dispersed in Gentile lands—sometimes added royal titles where none had existed in the Hebrew. In Genesis 49:10, for example, the Septuagint adds that the coming "ruler" will be a "prince."

In the apocryphal book Second Esdras, the divine oracle anticipates the arrival of "My son the Messiah" (2 Esd 7:28–29), who will rule "all people" from "the top of Mount Zion" (13:36–37). Similar language appears in the literature attributed to the Enoch tradition and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The authors of the latter expected the imminent arrival of not one messiah, but two: a kingly warrior and priestly prophet. The Scrolls refer to the future king as both "messiah" and "the branch of David." We find the spirit of the age vividly preserved in the annals of the Jewish historian Jose-

phus, who records the rise and fall of several self-proclaimed messiahs. Josephus himself advanced an improbable candidate for the title: his patron, the Roman emperor Vespasian.

Those who kept the faith lived in hope. Nevertheless, it must have been difficult. The current conditions of God's people were certainly humiliating. The gentiles often mocked the Jews for the stark contrast between their elitism—they claimed to be God's "chosen people"—and their actual status as a vassal state of decadent pagan empires.

For God had clearly spelled out His promises in the covenant with David. David's line would be everlasting. Yet now it seemed to be extinguished. David's son would rule all nations. Yet now the nations were taking turns ruling Israel! The Hebrew Scriptures proclaimed the permanence and majesty of the House of David; but that majesty was nowhere to be found. In fact, the House of David was nowhere to be found.

The situation invited ridicule. The evidence of failure was everywhere. Except for a brief space in the Maccabean period, Israel—or rather, what was left of Israel—was ruled by foreign powers.

#### FALSE STARTS

Then, after the Maccabean period came a strange interlude, when kings arose who seemed eager and able to restore the fortunes of Israel—in the very terms of God's covenant with David. They reconquered almost all the lands that had formerly belonged to Israel, and they forced the male inhabitants to undergo circumcision.

In time there came a king named Herod; historians would refer to him as Herod the Great. He tried mightily to make himself look like the "son of David." He rebuilt the Jerusalem Temple on a grand scale, outdoing even Solomon—and he acquired many wives

for himself, just as Solomon had. And the people prospered. Herod's Roman patrons brought some measure of peace, stability, and security to the region.

Herod, however, was not a Jew. Though he kept kosher and made a show of some religious practices, he was born an Edomite, a gentile. Moreover, he was, by all accounts, insane. He brutally murdered three of his own sons, because he feared they would plot his overthrow. This curious combination of outward religiosity and extreme cruelty moved Caesar Augustus to say that he'd rather be Herod's pig than Herod's son. Herod's paranoid spells often ended in murderous purges of his subjects. Once he had hundreds of suspected conspirators crucified along a busy highway, and he left their bodies there to rot for weeks.

Yet Herod's successes were indisputable—the restoration of the land, the recovery of the tribes that had long since mingled with the pagans, and the reconstruction of the Temple. Some people wondered whether he might indeed be the Son of David. After all, even Solomon had his flaws . . .

Herod probably knew better, but his life depended upon the ruse. It is quite possible that he, too, expected a true "son of David" to arrive at any moment. And where would that leave Herod?

Such was the social, political, religious, and covenantal climate at the moment when the Word became flesh, in the moment when He made His dwelling with His people.

#### A KING IS BORN

"Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with day, and my covenant with night, so that day and night no longer alternate in sequence, then can my covenant with my servant David also be

broken" (Jer 33:19-21). Thus said the Lord through the Prophet Jeremiah—*after* the kingdom of David's descendants had already fallen down in a heap.

And those who had faith continued in hope. God had made very specific promises to King David. They could not be any clearer, even if circumstances had made the promises seem absurd. The prayer of God's people in the Old Testament continued to rise heavenward during the reign of Herod: "How long, O Lord?"

We see the answer to the question—and the answer to the prayers—in the very first words of the New Testament: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1). Addressing a Jewish readership, Matthew identifies Jesus as "the Christ," the anointed, the awaited Messiah. He adds that, true to expectations, the Messiah is born into the House of David and from the stock of Abraham. By invoking those two names, Matthew evoked the covenants. Thus, from the beginning of his Gospel, he makes clear that he is announcing the arrival of the *kingdom*. That is the essence of his "good news" (the literal meaning of the word "Gospel"). The covenants had been fulfilled. The promised kingdom had come, and it was indeed a universal kingdom, consisting of both Israel and the gentiles. "Kings shall come forth from you . . . Abraham shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by him" (Gen 17:6, 18:18). "I will establish the throne of [David's] kingdom for ever" (2 Sam 7:13-14).

The long-awaited king had come, the son of David, the son of God, the Christ—the anointed. And He had the royal pedigree to prove it.

Matthew's genealogy begins with Abraham, but it centers on the kingdom of David. The four fixed points are the life of Abraham, the reign of David, the fall of the house of David at the Babylon-

ian exile, and the arrival of Jesus. Matthew compresses the generations so that they fall into three groups of fourteen—the numeral that, in Hebrew, spells out the name David (*DAVD*). In Hebrew, as in Latin, letters stand for numbers; so the genealogy of the son of David repeatedly reinforces its identity with the royal family.

As his narrative unfolds, Matthew shows us the convergence of the two contenders for the kingship: Herod and Jesus. Jesus is born in Bethlehem, the city of David, which the prophets had identified as the birthplace of the Messiah-king (Mt 2:6; Mic 5:2). Moreover, He is born of a virgin, thus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of the Davidic king: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (Mt 1:23; Is 7:14).

At Jesus' birth, the gentiles, represented by the Magi, come to pay tribute to the newborn king, just as they did to the original son of David, King Solomon (Ps 72:10-11). The Magi find Jesus with Mary—the king with his queen mother, as they would have encountered Solomon with Bathsheba in the long-ago royal court of Jerusalem (see 1 Kgs 2:19).

The appearance of the Magi provokes one of Herod's murderous rages, and so he orders the massacre of the innocents. The holy family must flee the country, just as the legitimately anointed David had been forced to flee from the envious wrath of the divinely deposed Saul.

#### THE KING'S SELF-DISCLOSURE

It is not just the evangelists who identify Jesus as king and the kingdom as Davidic. It is not just a matter of imposing prophecies on the scenes. Repeatedly, bystanders and even his enemies give Jesus the title. Consider the blind men who cry out "Have mercy on us, son of David!" (Mt 9:27, 20:30) or the Canaanite woman who

seeks a healing for her daughter (Mt 15:22). The crowd that welcomes Jesus to David's capital, Jerusalem, greets him with "Hosanna to the son of David!" (Mt 21:9). The hostile Pharisees identify "the Christ" with "the son of David" (Mt 22:42). Even Pilate and the Roman soldiers mock Jesus with Davidic titles (Mt 27:11, 29, 37), and the crowd jeeringly confirms that the son of David should also be the son of God (Mt 27:40).

Jesus does not refuse or deny the Davidic titles, but rather confirms them with His own pronouncements. One chapter begins with the story of Jesus and His disciples picking grain on the Sabbath, an action that Jesus justifies by comparing Himself and His men with David and his band: "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry . . . ?" (Mt 12:3). Later in the same chapter, the people ask one another: "Can this be the Son of David?" (12:23). Jesus responds to them by saying, "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (12:28).

The Gospels clearly identify Jesus as "son of God" and as "son of David," as a king and as the anointed. His kingdom is clearly the kingdom of God, but also the kingdom of David. This is confirmed in the small details. For the reign of Jesus, as we find it in the Gospels, displays the consistent characteristics of the Davidic monarchy. Let's revisit those seven primary and three secondary features of God's covenant with David, and let's see how well Jesus fills the role.

1. *The Davidic monarchy was founded upon a divine covenant.* 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. Later, Jesus associates His kingship with a "new covenant" (Lk 22:20) and states that a kingdom has

been assigned (literally, "covenanted") to Him by the Father (Lk 22:29).

2. *The Davidic monarch was the Son of God.* Jesus is the natural, not merely adopted, Son of God (Lk 1:35), and the title is used of Him throughout the New Testament.

3. *The son of David was "the Christ."* "Christ" is indeed the preferred title of Jesus, from the first line of the New Testament onward. Indeed, He is the "Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:26), a title applied only to kings in the Old Testament (see 1 Sam 16:6).

4. *The House of David was inextricably bound to Jerusalem.* The climactic scenes of Jesus' ministry occur in Jerusalem—His trial, passion, and death. The Gospel makes it clear that the word of God should go forth "from Jerusalem" to the ends of the earth (Lk 24:47).

5. *The monarchy was also bound to the Temple.* Luke's Gospel begins in the Temple. Jesus' childhood is set there. Jesus cleanses the Temple and evicts the moneychangers. For most of the Gospel he is traveling there (9:51–19:27), and the climax is reached when Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, where he cleanses—and teaches within—the Temple (Lk 19:45–21:38).

6. *The Davidic king is destined to rule all twelve tribes of Israel—but also all the nations.* The Gospels show—by many signs—that Jesus intends to restore the unity of the twelve tribes. He appoints twelve Apostles, and He promises that they will judge "the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk 22:30). Key figures, such as the prophetess Anna, from the tribe of Asher, represent a faithful remnant from the

"lost" northern tribes (Lk 2:36). And Jesus gained a "multitude" (Lk 19:37) of followers from the former lands of united Israel by preaching in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea. By His entry into Jerusalem, he has formed a reunited kingdom. Yet Jesus' kingship extends over all the nations. Simeon announces that He will be a "light of revelation to the nations" (Lk 2:32). Luke traces genealogy back to Adam rather than Abraham. Jesus heals gentiles as well as Jews (e.g., Lk 7:1-10). He predicts that "men will come from east and west, and from north and south" to sit at table in the kingdom of God (Lk 13:29). He commands that "forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to *all nations*, beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk 24:47).

7. *The kingdom of David was to be everlasting.* The angel Gabriel promises Mary that Jesus "will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Lk 1:33).

The three secondary characteristics find fulfillment in the Gospel as well.

1. Mary appears as *Queen Mother* when she advises her royal son (Jn 2:3), when she pleads the cause of His subjects, when she receives foreign dignitaries with Him (Mt 2:11), and when she stands with His court of twelve royal ministers, the Apostles (Jn 19:25; Acts 2:14).

2. Jesus appoints Peter as prime minister using the very terms used in the appointment of the "steward" who governs "the household of David" as vice-regent (see Mt 16:19; Is 22:15-25). The king bestows authority symbolically with "the keys." (We'll come back to this yet again.)

3. Jesus renews the sacrifice of Thanksgiving, the *todah*, by His own offering of bread and wine, the *eucharistia*, the Eucharist. Indeed, whenever we find Jesus breaking bread, we see Him "giving thanks" (e.g., Lk 24:30-35; Jn 6:11).

No one who believes the Gospels can deny that Jesus' contemporaries awaited a Messiah-king from the House of David. No one who believes the Gospels can deny that Jesus presented Himself as the awaited Davidic king.

If Jesus is the Davidic king, His kingdom must be, in some sense, a Davidic kingdom—the Davidic kingdom. Jesus' "kingdom of God" did not supplant or replace the everlasting kingdom created by the covenant with David. Jesus' kingdom *was* that kingdom, and *is* that kingdom, brought to fulfillment.

For only David's kingdom was called the "kingdom of Yahweh" (1 Chr 28:5). The Old Testament authors 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; Ps 2:7). Therefore, the kingdom of David was the manifestation of God's rule over the earth—that is, God's everlasting kingdom for Israel and the nations.

But where is that kingdom today? Indeed, where has it been all the years since Jesus' ascension? For the Christian apologist, ancient or modern, there is perhaps no more important question.



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*Fourteen*


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## WHEN THE REIGN COMES

### The Church Is the Kingdom

The modernist biblical scholar Alfred Loisy prophesied his own loss of faith when he sardonically remarked: "Jesus proclaimed the kingdom; what came was the Church."

But Loisy was not merely speaking for himself. This juxtaposition of Church and kingdom had become a commonplace in certain scholarly circles by the end of the nineteenth century.

When it comes to the kingdom of God, there is indeed often a gap between believers' expectations and the Lord's fulfillment. People with better dispositions than Alfred Loisy have been vexed by the problem. Consider the profound dejection of the disciples after Jesus' death: "But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel" (Lk 24:21).

They had expected their redemption to come with a military conquest or with a miraculous intervention from heaven. They did not expect redemption to entail suffering, death, and apparent failure. When they prayed for a kingdom, they certainly didn't expect the Church. Yet that's what they got.

Throughout the centuries, Jews have cited Jesus' "failure" to produce the expected kingdom as obvious evidence against Christianity's claims. Pagan opponents to Christianity (Celsus in the second century, Julian in the fourth) took the same line of argument. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, certain *Christians* joined their voices to this unusual chorus. Alfred Loisy was among them, but he was hardly alone. Another was the German F. C. Baur, who claimed that Paul invented Christianity as we know it today, in order to accommodate the non-appearance of the kingdom.

On the opposite end of the theological spectrum from Baur and Loisy, the American dispensationalist C. I. Scofield—whose famous *Scofield Reference Bible* has nurtured generations of American fundamentalists—attempted a response to liberal critics, but he accepted their claim that there was a breakdown between expectation and fulfillment of the kingdom. Scofield's version went like this: Jesus offered the kingdom to the Jews, but they rejected Him, so He established the Church instead, as a "great parenthesis" between the ministry of Jesus and the coming of the true kingdom, which will not arrive until after the "rapture."

In the days immediately after the resurrection, one disciple asked: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). And the anguished question echoes down the millennia. It's clear that, after all these years, some disciples still find an unbearable disparity between what God promised and what Christians got.

We must ask, however, whether the problem is with God's provision or with human expectations. Turn with me to the moment in Scripture when Jesus proclaimed His kingdom in the clearest and most intimate terms—at the Last Supper. Since Luke's Gospel provides the greatest abundance of kingdom-related details, that's where we'll look most closely.

## A MEAL FIT FOR A KING

Luke's account of the Last Supper is a key text for linking the identity of Jesus as the royal "son of David" with the Church as the Davidic "kingdom of God." At that table, Jesus established the Apostles as His vice-regents, the men who would thenceforth exercise authority in His name. In the Acts of the Apostles—the book Luke wrote as a sequel to his Gospel—we see the Apostles exercising the authority Jesus had given them, as they rule over the Church.

Luke, more than any other evangelist, associates the imagery of *kingdom with table fellowship*. Scholars identify ten separate meals in Luke, all of which may be viewed as forerasters of the Messiah's banquet foretold by the Old Testament prophets (see Is 25:6–8; Zech 8:7–8, 19–23). This is particularly evident in the meals hosted by the Messiah Himself: the feeding of the five thousand (9:10–17), the Last Supper (22:7–38), and the meal at Emmaus (24:13–35). In those three meals in Luke—and in them alone—is bread said to be "broken"; the same expression will be used in Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11; 27:35.

Kingdom motifs distinguish these three meals:

- all five thousand are "satisfied" and twelve baskets full of leftovers (9:17), bespeaking the fullness of the twelve tribes of Israel under the Son of David (see 1 Kgs 4:20, 8:65–66);
- the Last Supper is closely associated with the imminent coming of the kingdom (see Lk 22:16, 18, 29–30);
- and the Emmaus sequence is initiated with the disciples' remark "We had hoped He was the one to *redeem Israel*," that is, to restore the kingdom of David (see Lk 1:68–69).

In sharing meals, Jesus was acting like His royal ancestor. David had extended covenant loyalty through royal-table fellowship (2 Sam 9:7, 10, 13; 1 Kgs 2:7). The Psalms of David use images of eating and drinking to celebrate God's provision, and the prophets describe the restoration of David's city (Is 25:6–8; Jer 31:12–14) and David's covenant (Is 55:1–5) with images of feasting. In Ezekiel the primary role of the Davidic "shepherd" is to "feed" Israel (Ezk 34:23).

So it is in true kingly character that Jesus says to His Apostles: "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes" (Lk 22:15–18).

Jesus emphasizes here that the Supper is somehow related to the kingdom and its arrival, and indeed that the kingdom is coming now. He associates the kingdom with eating and drinking, as He does again a few verses later, when He assures the disciples that they will "eat and drink . . . in My kingdom" (v. 30). Those two statements frame the Supper story, and they make a promise: eating and drinking with Jesus will be important manifestations of the kingdom's presence. A few days later, when the risen Christ eats with the disciples, those moments provide His guarantee that the kingdom was truly present.

## BREAKING NEWS

If Jesus' promise is the frame of the story, the focal point is the so-called "narrative of institution." The words of institution are certainly strange, though Christians have become inured to them over

the millennia. Jesus, the king and the anointed, identifies Himself with the broken bread and the wine: "This is My body . . . this cup . . . is the new covenant in My blood" (Lk 22:19–20). Then, in Luke's and Paul's telling of the story, we hear Jesus' command to repeat this meal "in remembrance" of Him. It is this command that makes the passage an *institution narrative*. Without it, nothing would be *instituted*: it would only be the story of Jesus' last meal before His death. But Jesus commands the Apostles to repeat the meal when He is no longer visibly present, and so the account of the Last Supper becomes the foundational story for the Church's actions, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles (2:42, 46; 20:7, 11; 27:35).

Some people say that Jesus was using the bread and wine as metaphors to explain His upcoming sacrifice. But, if that were the case, they would be useless. They fail as metaphors, because it is the bread and wine and not His death that require explanation! Jesus' words are not so much an explanation or a teaching as a "speech-act," a declaration that brings about what it expresses—like "Let there be light" or any of God's covenant promises. Jesus' speech does not come after the event; it brings about the event.

And what is implicit at the Last Supper becomes explicit in the Emmanuel story, where the visible presence of the Lord vanishes during the distribution of the pieces (24:31). Why did this happen? Because, in light of Luke 22:19, His presence was now identified with the bread. Thus the messianic king was "made known" to the disciples "in the breaking of bread" (24:35). Later, Luke links his own liturgical experience to Jesus' Last Supper by including himself among those who gather on the first day of the week to "break bread" (Acts 20:7).

In the Last Supper and the Emmanuel story, Christians—throughout all of history—have learned that the risen Christ is truly present in the bread we break together.

Where the Eucharist is, there is the king. And where the king is, there is the kingdom.

#### NEW AND IMPROVED

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus refers to the Eucharistic cup as the "new covenant in My blood" (22:20). He is certainly evoking Moses' words at Exodus 24:6–8, "Behold the blood of the covenant," but He is combining it with Jeremiah's much later oracle of God's promise: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (Jer 31:31). The "new covenant" of Jeremiah was to be unlike the *broken* covenant of Sinai (Jer 31:32). The prophet made clear (in Jer 30–33) that the "new covenant" would involve a new level of intimacy with God (31:33–34)—plus the reunification of the divided kingdom (31:31) and the *restoration of the House of David* (30:9; 33:14–26) and the *covenant of David* (33:19–21). That's big news: it's good news; and it's all caught up in Jesus' words of instruction.

With these covenantal associations, Jesus marks this meal as a *covenant-renewal* meal, just as the Passover was the covenant-renewal meal of God's covenant with Moses. When Christians take the Eucharistic cup, they reaffirm their place within the covenant—the renewed and transformed Davidic covenant.

Within this renewed kingdom, Jesus will share His authority, but not before He corrects the disciples' misguided notions of kingship and power (Lk 22:28–30). He tells them: "I assign to you, as My Father assigned to Me, a kingdom" (v. 29). The verb translated as "assign" does not quite capture the sense of the Greek. The original word, *diatithenai*, means literally "to make a covenant." A more precise translation of the sentence would be "I

covenant to you a kingdom, as My Father covenanted one to Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk 22:29–30).

The clarification of that verb may seem like a small change, but it really adds an astonishing element to an already remarkable list of Davidic privileges that Jesus is passing on to His Apostles: the thrones, the tribes, the father-son relationship, the banquet at the king's table—and now the covenant.

For Scripture tells us of only one kingdom that had been founded on a covenant: the kingdom of David (see Ps 89:3–4, 28–37). Only the kingdom of David enjoyed that family bond with God Himself. But now Jesus is extending the covenant as He renews it.

The meaning of Luke 22:29 becomes clear: since Jesus is the son of David, He is the legal heir to David's covenant and throne. God has "covenanted" to Him a kingdom. Now Jesus, through the "new covenant in [His] blood" is "covenanting" to the disciples that same kingdom. This is not the *promise* of a conferral (future tense), but the *declaration* of a conferral (present tense).

Yet Jesus isn't giving away His kingdom. He continues to refer to it as "My kingdom." The Apostles do not replace Him in any way. But now they may share in His kingship as well as His priesthood. The very purpose of the new covenant, Jesus says, is to admit the disciples to "eat and drink at My table in My kingdom." He is sharing the exercise of authority in His kingdom with those who share in His body, His covenant, and His life. And the distinguishing mark of that authority is service. Jesus Himself is not seated, but rather serving the others.

The sign of the kingdom will be eating and drinking at the king's table. But note that the disciples are already—at the Last Supper—eating and drinking at Jesus' table. He is not putting it

off till a future date. The sign of the kingdom is there, present tense, in the Upper Room.

What can this mean? It means that *the kingdom is already present in the Eucharistic eating and drinking*. And the presence of the kingdom continues when the Apostles break bread in remembrance of Jesus. The celebration of the Eucharist manifests the kingdom. Kingdom and Eucharist are tightly bound: God's kingdom is a *Eucharistic kingdom*.

Jesus is the heir of the covenant with David. He is eternal king over Israel and the nations (Lk 1:32–33). But now He enacts a *new* covenant between Himself and the disciples, extending the privileges of God's covenant beyond the House of David, to all the Apostles. The Apostles, like Christ, are now heirs of the kingdom of David. And, because they are heirs, they enjoy the privileges of God's children: they eat at the royal table and sit on the thrones of the royal house, judging the twelve tribes.

It's all about the kingdom of David. It's all about the kingdom of God. It's all about the Church. And it's all about you and me.

For Christ made it clear: the kingdom of God is the Church, and it belongs to God's children. For "the children share in the flesh and blood" (Heb 2:14) of the great king.

#### ACTING UP

What does this mean for the Church? We find out immediately and repeatedly in the Acts of the Apostles.

Jesus' promise of inheritance and rulership is fulfilled as the Apostles assume authority in the Church. What's more, the promise of table fellowship is fulfilled, first, in post-resurrection meals with Jesus and then in the Church's continuing Eucharistic practice.

In the very first verses of Acts (1:3, 6), we learn that Jesus' topic of discussion with the Apostles over forty days was the *kingdom of God*. "Kingdom" will remain a central theme throughout the book, which ends with Paul proclaiming the kingdom of God in Rome (28:31). Acts 1:4 makes the now-familiar connection between the kingdom and eating and drinking—the messianic banquet—when it states that Jesus taught them over this forty-day period "while taking salt" with them. "Taking salt" is slang for "eating together."

When the disciples ask Jesus, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (1:6), they may be referring to Jesus' promise in Luke 22:30 that "you will sit on thrones." If that is so, then the Apostles are asking, "When will we receive the authority promised to us?" While Jesus discourages speculation about *timing* (v. 7), He 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). Jesus' geographical description of their mission—"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 recognize that the whole book concerns the spread of the kingdom (cf. Acts 28:31). But, 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 Kgs 12:21); Samaria represented northern Israel, David's nation (1 Kgs 12:16); and "the ends of the earth" stood for the Gentiles (cf. Is. 49:6), David's vassals (Ps 2:7–8; 72:8–12; 89:25–27).

Still, the Apostles did not yet understand what Jesus was saying. They did not know that He would transform their *expectation* of a national, earthly kingdom to the *realization* of a kingdom that is international, universal, catholic—a kingdom that is manifest on

earth, but essentially heavenly. *The Spirit must still be poured out before the Apostles can perceive the transformed kingdom.* Thus, only after the disciples have received the power of the Holy Spirit will they become true witnesses (Acts 1:8).

Between the promise of the Spirit (Acts 1:8) and Pentecost (2:1–4), Luke records the restoration of the circle of the Twelve by the replacement of Judas with Matthias. Once the Twelve have been reconstituted, the event of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–42) marks the restoration of Israel as kingdom under the Son of David, and the beginning of the Apostles' vice-regency over that kingdom.

Luke vividly shows us the promised restoration of the kingdom. Not only are all the Twelve (and presumably the hundred and twenty) "all together in one place" (2:1)—thus representing the nucleus of the restored Israel—but they address their message to "[J]ews, devout men from every nation under heaven" (v. 5); and Luke enumerates those nations (vv. 9–11). In a moment, the work of the Apostles reverses the effects of the exile and dispersion of the tribes.

Thus the prophecies of Joel (1:2:28–32) and others are fulfilled, and Israel is restored, not definitively—as the Church still must grow much more—but nonetheless fundamentally. God has gathered the scattered children of Israel. And, for the chosen people, that in-gathering was the very definition of salvation.

In Acts we see that the restored Israel had a certain form and structure: not that of the confederated tribes at Sinai, but that of the twelve tribes within the *kingdom of David*. Peter's sermon stresses the Davidic royalty of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36). He preaches to the assembled exiles of Israel that Jesus is the fulfillment of the covenant of David (v. 30) and the fulfillment of David's own prophecies (vv. 25–28, 34–35). He applies to Jesus the royal enthronement psalm (Psalm 110), asserting that Jesus is now en-

throned 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).

Peter and the Apostles, filled with the Spirit, have become witnesses. Now they see the nature of Jesus’ kingdom and its present realization. When Peter’s hearers accept the fact that Jesus is the Davidic king—and thus acknowledge His rightful reign over themselves—they are incorporated into the Church through baptism (2:41–42; see also 4:32–5:11, esp. 5:11).

It is important to note, however, that the Davidic kingdom is not only restored, but also transformed. The Son of David is not 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 Church. The kingdom—the Church—exists simultaneously on earth and in heaven. The king is enthroned in heaven, but His ministers (the Apostles) are active on earth. Meanwhile, the heavenly king is united to His earthly officers and subjects by the Holy Spirit and by the sacraments, especially baptism and the Eucharist (Acts 2:38–42).

The Davidic kingdom finds historic fulfillment in the Catholic Church. Yet it also undergoes a transposition from the earthly to the heavenly sphere. The earthly Jerusalem and its Temple, despite Luke’s genuine respect for them, cannot be the kingdom’s ultimate fulfillment (see Acts 7:48–50; Lk. 21:6). Peter makes clear that Christ’s present rule is not from the earthly Jerusalem, but from the heavenly (Acts 2:33). Nonetheless, His reign expresses itself in the earthly realm by what can be “seen and heard” (Acts 2:33). The renewed kingdom of David, of which the Church is the visible man-

ifestation, exists simultaneously in heaven and on earth, as its citizens move from one sphere to the other.

Still, the whole kingdom—the whole Church—is united by the indwelling Holy Spirit and the celebration of the Eucharist. That’s when the king becomes present, when the kingdom is manifest, and when the earthly citizens of the kingdom participate in the perpetual messianic banquet of the heavenly king.

#### NET WORTH, FIELD OF DREAMS

It’s all new. Yet it was all there, as if in seed, in the time of David. The twentieth-century Scripture scholar Father Raymond Brown points out that the united kingdom of Israel under David remains the one Israelite institution with the greatest relevance for the study of the Church today:

The story of David brings out all the strengths and weaknesses of the beginnings of the religious institution of the kingdom for the people of God. . . . *The kingdom established by David . . . is the closest Old Testament parallel to the New Testament Church . . . To help Christians make up their mind on how the Bible speaks [to Church issues], it would help if they knew about David and his kingdom, which was also God’s kingdom and whose kings, with all their imperfections, God promised to treat as “sons” (2 Sam 6:14).*

And there are indeed imperfections in what we see of the Church. All of the kingdom’s earthly rulers are imperfect, as I am, and as I suppose you are, and as David was, and as Peter was. As I said earlier in the book, the pope goes to confession at least once a week.

But *this* Church, with all its imperfections, is the only Church that can correspond both to the kingdom covenanted by Jesus and to the “kingdom parables” Jesus tells in Matthew’s Gospel. With those seven parables, Jesus prepared His disciples to recognize the kingdom of heaven, and to recognize that the kingdom on earth would be a mixture of good and bad—much like the original Davidic kingdom. It would be a field sown with both wheat and weeds, a dragnet brimming with good fish and rubbish.

At the same time, the parables make clear that the restored kingdom will be manifest in an unexpected form that may not be recognized by many (see Mt 13:11–15, 44–46). It will not be characterized by royal pomp, military conquest, political power, and economic wealth. Amid Pilate’s interrogation, Jesus put the matter in no uncertain terms: “My kingship is not of this world; if My kingship were of this world, My servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but My kingship is not from the world” (Jn 18:36). Jesus did not mean His kingdom is not *in* this world, just that His kingdom does not derive its royal authority *from* this world’s swords or armies or majority votes or political parties. He derives His royal authority from His heavenly Father. The kingdom was not what Caiaphas or Pilate—or any of their contemporaries—had expected.

From the kingdom parables we can conclude—beyond any doubt—that Jesus established a kingdom on earth with His coming. In the fourth century, St. Augustine put it well: “The Church is already now the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of heaven.” A modern theologian, Cardinal Charles Journet, echoed him: “The kingdom is already on earth, and the Church is already in heaven. To abandon the equal value of Church and kingdom would mean overlooking this important revelation.”

Thus, unless we include both the earthly and the heavenly, we

are not seeing the Church (or the kingdom) as Jesus wants us to see it. For there aren’t two Churches, one in heaven and one on earth. Nor are there two kingdoms, one on earth and one (for the moment) present only in heaven. The Church exists in two states, but it is one Church. It is one kingdom. There is, as we profess in the creed, only one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

The kingdom has come, and it is the Church—the universal Church—the Catholic Church—a field with wheat and weeds, a net with good fish and bad. If Jesus had intended the kingdom to be established in its perfection, He would not have included the weeds in that field or the bad fish in that dragnet. His parables make sense only if *the kingdom is the Church as we know it*—one, holy, catholic, and apostolic—full of sinners, some of us repentant.

Only in heaven, at the end of time, will we know the kingdom in its manifest glory: “when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 Jn 3:2). Until that day, He is still with us in all His glory, in the Church, the Eucharistic kingdom. For it’s not that He’s less glorious now. It’s just that we cannot perceive Him as He is.

Still, “we are God’s children now” (1 Jn 3:2), thanks to the covenant. We are sons of God in the Davidic “Son of God,” the king of creation. And that is ample cause for rejoicing from now until the day when the Son of David heals us, that we might see (see Lk 18:41), and so see His glory.

#### JERUSALEM, MY HAPPY HOME

The Old Testament foresaw our day and foreshadowed it. Even in the time of David, the Greek Septuagint Bible tells us, when the priest-king gathered to worship with the assembly of Israel, he gathered with the *ekklesia*. That’s the word the New Testament uses

to denote the Church. And so the priest-king gathers with the Church today. But where?

By now, we should not be surprised to learn that, when we go to Mass, we go to the habitation of King David: "you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly [*ekklesia*, Church] of the firstborn" (Heb 12:22). Though the earthly Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed just a generation after Jesus ascended to heaven, Christ Himself gave His people more than a consolation. He revealed to us the heavenly Jerusalem: "And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God" (Rev 21:10-11), "the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven" (Rev 3:12).

That is what happens when we celebrate the Eucharist: the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven—and God and His angels lift us up to divine life. When we go to Mass, we gather as the Church of the priest-king, a king forever, like David, a priest forever like Melchizedek. The king of Salem, the King of Peace, still reigns in the place where the bread and wine are offered to God in thanksgiving, in the *today*, in *eucharistia*. The Son of David is really present among us, and so we are really present in His kingdom.

Mount Zion comes down from heaven! Jerusalem descends in grace to the place where you and I go to Mass, even if it is the humblest chapel, even if it's behind bartlements in the open air of a foreign land. We are at home on Mount Zion. The kingdom of heaven touches down wherever we go to Mass. There we are served by apostolic ministers, vice-regents of Christ, ordained according to the apostolic custom.

The kingdom imagery dominates the Bible's Book of Revela-

tion. It is there that we meet Jesus as "the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth," recalling what is said of David in Psalm 89:27: "And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth." This Jesus has "made us [to be] a kingdom" (Rev 1:6). The sword that proceeds from his mouth (Rev 1:16) refers to the Davidic prophecy of Isaiah 11:4: "[T]he shoot of Jesse] shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked." In Revelation 5:5, Christ appears as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David." The reign of this Davidic Christ is universal and eternal: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 11:5). In Revelation 12:1-6, the mother of the Christ ("a male child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron," v. 5; see Ps 2:8-9) is portrayed as royalty ("clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars," v. 1), that is, as fulfilling the role of Israel's Queen Mother.

What we find, then, on the last page of Revelation recapitulates what we found in nature's pristine state, on the first pages of Genesis. We find divinized man given dominion over the cosmos, by means of a covenant with God. We are one with that Man in a Holy Communion. Far more than we are one with our ancestor Adam, we are one with Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, the King. And His kingdom is the Church. That fact might take us by surprise. But the Lord told us that it would, and well it should. Our God transcends us. So He fulfills our prayers and expectations in surprising ways and in hidden ways. That is the very definition of mystery.

What, then, of Alfred Loisy and his rant about the Church being a poor stand-in for the kingdom? Loisy looked for evidence that Jesus intended to establish a Church, and he found it wanting.



But we might very well ask in reply: Where is the evidence that Jesus intended to abolish the structures and traditions of Israel? There is none! Jesus Himself declared emphatically: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:17-19). The question we should ask is this: what would those traditions and structures look like if their penultimate, Davidic form were fulfilled in a way that is both restorative and transformative?

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### *Fifteen*

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## THE CATHOLIC LIFETIME READINGS PLAN

### An Apologetic Exhortation

"Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet 3:15).

Gentleness and reverence come naturally and supernaturally to those who know they are living in the kingdom. We are always in the presence of the holy, and we see in all others the image of our immortal king.

We should always be ready with an answer. But this is what should set Catholic apologists apart: we answer to *lift people up*, not shut them up. If we genuinely listen to people who disagree with us, and if we learn to present the content of the Catholic faith to them in a positive way, we are far more likely to persuade them. Sometimes, in the midst of an argument, we can get so caught up in the mechanics of argumentation that we miss many opportunities to witness to grace.

124. That saving fire is what Catholics call purgatory. For a helpful explanation to this doctrine, see Michael J. Taylor, *Purgatory* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1998); Curtis A. Martin, "The Burning Truth about Purgatory," in *Catholic for a Reason: Scripture and the Mystery of the Family of God*, ed. Scott Hahn and Leon J. Suprenant Jr. (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 1998), pp. 291–310.

## CHAPTER 9

128. In this chapter, I'll respond to some of the common objections against Catholic doctrine on the papacy. Also very helpful are the following books: Scott Butler, Norman Dahlgren, and David Hess, *Jesus, Peter, and the Keys: A Scriptural Handbook on the Papacy* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing, 1997); Stephen K. Ray, *Upon This Rock: St. Peter and the Primacy of Rome in Scripture and the Early Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999); Vladimir Soloviev, *The Russian Church and the Papacy* (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2002).
128. They're misunderstandings in most cases: For questions not treated here, see Patrick Madrid, *Pope Fiction: Answers to 30 Myths and Misconceptions about the Papacy* (Rancho Santa Fe, CA: Basilica Press, 2000).
135. "They have not the heritage of Peter": *On Penitence* 1.7.
135. "He who deserts the chair of Peter": *On the Unity of the Church* 4.
135. "I speak with the successor of the fisherman": Letter 15.

## CHAPTER 10

139. While the ordering principle behind *systematic theology* is the logical progression of doctrines: See Scott Hahn, *Letter & Spirit*, pp. 16–19. See also my chapter entitled "Search the Scriptures": Reading the Old Testament with Jesus, John, and Thomas

Aquinas," in *Scripture Matters: Essays on Reading the Bible from the Heart of the Church* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2003), pp. 49–63.

## CHAPTER 11

144. Adam is intentionally portrayed as a royal firstborn: See my *A Father Who Keeps His Promises: God's Covenant Love in Scripture* (Cincinnati: Servant Books, 1998), pp. 37–55.
145. This view is borne out not only in the teaching of the Catholic Church: See Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, Apostolic Letter on Keeping the Lord's Day Holy (July 5, 1998), n. 8; see also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 288.
145. . . . but also in the writings of the ancient rabbis: See, for example, *Sifre Deuteronomy*, the *Book of Jubilees* (36.7), and *1 Enoch* (69:15–27).
145. Modern scholars have referred to God's seventh-day blessing as the "Cosmic Covenant": See, for example, Robert Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1992).
146. This, the Original Sin, is a disaster of cosmic proportions: For my thoughts on the fall, see *First Comes Love: Finding Your Family in the Church and the Trinity* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), pp. 62–79; *A Father Who Keeps*, pp. 57–76. One of the best (if not the best) articulations of the theology surrounding creation and Original Sin is found in Scheeben's *The Mysteries of Christianity*, pp. 201–310.
146. Yet the ancient Christians, and their modern descendants, could sing of the fall from grace: See the *Exultet*, the opening song of the Easter Vigil liturgy.
148. As Adam had been made in God's image and likeness: See John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004).
148. And just as the original fall had resulted in exile: See Scott W. Hahn,

"Canon, Cult and Covenant," in C. Bartholomew, S. W. Hahn (eds.), *Canon and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), pp. 214–17.

## CHAPTER 12

151. He establishes the only lasting royal house in the Old Testament: On the Davidic Kingdom covenant traditions in the Old and New Testament, see Y. S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and in the Gospel of Matthew* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); Anri Laaro, *A Star Is Rising: The Historical Development of the Old Testament Royal Ideology and the Rise of the Jewish Messianic Expectation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); C. Meyers, "The Israelite Empire: In Defense of King Solomon," in P. O'Connor and D. N. Freedman (eds.), *Backgrounds for the Bible* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1987), pp. 181–97; Brian M. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979); Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977); A. G. Hebert, *The Throne of David: A Study of the Fulfillment of the Old Testament in Jesus Christ and His Church* (London: Faber & Faber, 1956).

156. *The Davidic monarch was the Son of God*: John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), p. 163; "The individual most often designated as 'the son of God' in the Hebrew Bible is undoubtedly the Davidic king, or his eschatological counterpart." Also see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The One Who Is to Come* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 33–55.

157. *The House of David was inextricably bound to Jerusalem, particularly Mt. Zion*: See Theodore Marsekenhas, *The Missionary Function of Israel* (New

York: University Press of America, 2005); Norbert Lohfink and Erich Zenger, *The God of Israel and the Nations: Studies in Isaiah and the Psalms* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000).

157. The Davidic Kingdom at Zion thus marks the first time Israel was called to welcome gentiles: The Mosaic covenant at Sinai had been strictly national and exclusive, whereas the Davidic covenant at Zion was international and all-inclusive. The Psalms celebrate—and justify from a theological perspective—this state of affairs, just as the Prophets envision its restoration. Just as the Mosaic covenant is embodied in the Pentateuch, so the literary corpus of the Davidic covenant may be found in Wisdom literature (e.g., Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes). These are the biblical books with the most universal reach, appealing not to the Mosaic laws of Israel's polity, but to creation, the natural law, and family values and relations, all of which convey a universal message for all peoples. See K. I. Parker, *Wisdom and Law in the Reign of Solomon* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Biblical Press, 1992).

158. *The Queen Mother became an important part of the royal government*: See Edward Sri, *Queen Mother: A Biblical Theology of Mary's Queenship* (Seabenville, OH: Emmanuel Road Publishing, 2005); George Montague, *Our Father, Our Mother: Mary and the Faces of God* (Steubenville, OH: Franciscan University Press, 1990), pp. 89–101; Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, "The Role of the Queen Mother in Israelite Society," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1982): 174–94; Carol Smith, "Queenship in Israel: The Cases of Bathsheba, Jezebel and Athaliah," in John Day (ed.), *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 142–62; K. Spanier, "The Queen Mother in the Judean Royal Court," in Athalya Brenner, ed., *A Feminist Comparison to Samuel and Kings* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 186–95; Susan Ackerman, "The Queen Mother and the Cult of Ancient Israel,"

- Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993): 385–401; Zafira Ben-Barak, “The Status and Right of the Gebura,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (1991): 23–34.
- 158–159. The king had many servants (in I Kgs 4:7 there are twelve); See T. N. D. Mettinger, *Solomonic State Officials: A Study of the Civil Officials of the Israelite Monarchy* (Lund: Gleerup, 1971).
159. The word for “thank offering” is *todah* in Hebrew: The exact quote (“In the coming [messianic] age, all sacrifices will cease except the *todah* sacrifice. This will never cease in all eternity”) is taken from the *Pesiqta* I, cited by Hartmut Gese, *Essays in Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981), p. 133. See Jean Laborte, *Eucharistia in Philo* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1983), 31–34.
162. That is to say, the fallen tent of David is he who shall arise: *Ps. Sol.* 17:4; 4QFlorilegium (4Q 174) 1 I, 7–13; cf. 4Q252 V, 1–5; cf. Sir 45:25; 47:11; 4Q504 (4QDhHam) 1–2 IV, 6–8; *T. Jud.* 2:3. See William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1998), pp. 36–63; idem, *Messianism among Jews and Christians* (New York: T&T Clark, 2003), pp. 35–64.

## CHAPTER 13

166. And He had the royal pedigree to prove it: Matthew’s genealogy begins with Abraham, but it centers on the kingdom of David. The four fixed points are the life of Abraham, the reign of David, the fall of the house of David at the Babylonian exile, and the arrival of Jesus. Matthew compresses the generations so that they fall into three groups of fourteen—the numeral that, in Hebrew, is spelled out by David’s name (*David*). In Hebrew, as in Latin, letters stand for numbers; so Jesus’ Davidic genealogy repeatedly reinforces his identity with the royal family line.
169. For most of the gospel he is traveling there (9:51–19:27): For a broader treatment of the ecclesiological significance of the Temple,

- see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004); also see Stephen T. Um, *The Theme of Temple Christology in John’s Gospel* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006); Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus’ Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (New York: T & T Clark, 2002).
170. The king bestows authority symbolically with “the keys”: See the comments of recent Protestant biblical scholars on Mt 16 and Is 22: W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), pp. 196–97; “Is. 22:15ff undoubtedly lies behind this saying. The keys are the symbol of authority . . . the same authority as that vested in the vizier, the master of the . . . royal household in ancient Israel. Eliakim is described as having the same authority in Is. 22 . . . It is of considerable importance that in other contexts, when the disciplinary affairs of the community are being discussed (Mt 18:18), the symbol of the keys is absent, since the sayings apply in those instances to a wider circle.” Also see Bruce Chilton, “Shebna, Eliakim, and the Promise to Peter,” in J. Neusner et al. (eds.), *The Social World of Formative Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), p. 322; Tord Fornberg, “Peter: The High Priest of the New Covenant,” *Southeast Asia Journal of Theology* 4 (1986), p. 113; Peter is presented as some kind of successor to the high priest. . . . Peter stands out as a kind of Chief Rabbi who binds and looses in the sense of declaring something to be forbidden or permitted.” See the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum* (“On the Unity of the Church”; June 29, 1896): “The Church is typified not only as an *edifice* but as a *kingdom* and everyone knows that the keys constitute the usual sign of governing authority. Wherefore when Christ promised to give to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, He promised to give him power and authority over the Church” (*Papal Teachings: The Church* [Boston: St. Paul, 1961], p. 322).

171. Indeed, whenever we find Jesus breaking bread: On the significance of the *todah* in the New Testament, see Joseph Ratzinger, *Faith of Faith* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), pp. 51–60; James Swetnam, “*Zabab Todah* in Tradition: A Study of ‘Sacrifice of Praise’,” *Patrologia Neoscholastica* 15 (2002): 65–86; idem, “A Liturgical Approach to Hebrews 13,” in Scott Hahn (ed.), *Letter & Spirit: The Word of God and the People of God* (Stuebenville, OH: St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, 2006), pp. 159–73; Tim Gray, “From Jewish Passover to Christian Eucharist: The *Todah* Sacrifice as Backdrop for the Last Supper,” in *Catholic for a Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass*, 67–76.

## CHAPTER 14

173. Since Luke’s Gospel provides the greatest abundance of kingdom-related details: For a more thorough treatment of these themes, see Michael E. Fuller, *The Restoration of Israel: Israel’s Regathering and the Fate of the Nations* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006); Scott Hahn, “Kingdom and Church in Luke-Acts: From Davidic Christology to Kingdom Ecclesiology,” in Craig Bartholomew, Joel Green, Anthony Thiselton (eds.), *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflections, Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), pp. 294–326.
182. The Davidic kingdom finds historic fulfillment in the Catholic Church: This thesis concerning the identity of the Davidic kingdom and the Church can be confirmed by other passages in Acts, but it will suffice to focus on James’s concluding statements at the Jerusalem council (Acts 15). James cements the council’s decision to embrace gentile converts by quoting Amos 9:11–12: “After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling skene of David . . . that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name” (Acts 15:13–18). The “dwelling” or “tent” of David referred to by Amos (Amos 9:11) is

- the Davidic kingdom, which at its peak incorporated Edom (cf. Amos 9:12a) and other gentile nations (Ammon, Moab, Aram, etc.) which may be “the nations who are called by my name” (Amos 9:12b). In other words, James observes that the Davidic kingdom was an empire incorporating gentile peoples, and Amos prophesied that this arrangement would be restored in the last days. He sees the fulfillment of Amos’s prophecy—i.e., the restoration of the Davidic empire—in the incorporation of gentiles into the Church as related by “Simeon” before the whole council. See David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck 2000), p. 138: “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 *eschatological* one.”
183. “The story of David brings out all the strengths and weaknesses of the beginnings of the religious institution of the kingdom”: Raymond Brown, S.S., “Communicating the Divine and Human in Scripture,” *Origins* 22.1 (May 14, 1992): 5–6, emphasis mine.
184. It would be a field sown with both wheat and weeds. See J. P. Arendzen, *Men and Manners in the Days of Christ* (St. Louis: Herder, 1928), pp. 34–35: “What, then, are the texts which have persuaded some people of Christ’s mistaken expectation in this matter? Amen. I say unto you, there are some of them that here stand by, who shall in no-wise taste death, till they see the Kingdom of God come with power (Mark ix, 1) . . . Here, so it is said, it is plain that Christ looks forward to His coming within the lifetime of at least some of those then living. We answer that the whole question depends on what is meant by this coming of the kingdom in power and the coming of

- the Son of Man in His kingdom. The word kingdom occurs some sixty times in the Gospel of St. Matthew, as many in St. Luke, and thirty times in St. Mark; it cannot be so difficult to ascertain its meaning. It usually means, not a kingdom away from this earth, a kingdom in the skies; a kingdom at the end of time, God's final kingdom after the day of judgment, the kingdom where Christ in His unveiled glory shall reign amongst the angels and saints, but the kingdom of truth and grace, which He came to found on earth, the Catholic Church. There are scores of parables to show this. The kingdom is like unto ten virgins, five of whom were foolish and five wise, but in heaven above there are no fools, only on this earth. The kingdom is like unto a field in which the wheat and tares are sown, but Christ Himself explains: 'the field is this world.' The kingdom is like unto a net cast into the sea, catching good fishes and bad, but such a catch is only possible here upon earth . . . Thus we might go through all the parables, showing that Christ's kingdom is a human, though divine, kingdom on this earth in which Christ reigns, long before He comes again upon the clouds of heaven. To Peter He gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that what Peter loosed on earth might be loosed also in heaven . . . It is clear that 'the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom with power' means the evident and triumphant establishment of the Catholic Church of Christ . . ."
184. "The Church is already now the kingdom of Christ": *Meditations on the Psalms* 92.4.
184. "The kingdom is already on earth, and the Church is already in heaven": Quoted in Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, *From Death to Life* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), p. 83; reprinted in S. Hahn (ed.), *Letter and Spirit II: The Authority of Mystery* (Staubenville, OH: St. Paul Center, 2006), pp. 217–34.
185. "when He appears we shall be like Him": Charles Cardinal

- Journer, *The Theology of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), p. 377: "As revelation presents her to us, the Church is a Kingdom, the Kingdom in which God in Christ triumphs over the wickedness of the world, in which God can reign over men already here below through the Cross of Christ and, later on, by the glory of Christ. The Kingdom, indeed, like its King, has two phases: one veiled and on pilgrimage, the other glorious and definitive."
186. "you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God": See K. Son, *Zion Symbolism in Hebrews: Hebrew 12:18–24 as a Hermeneutical Key to the Epistle* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Biblical Monographs, 2005). Various early patristic figures (e.g., Epiphanius, Eusebius) identify Zion as the mountain on which the Cenacle or Upper Room was located, and where the "mother church" was located, which survived Titus's siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The Upper Room on Zion thus evoked a very profound (threefold) theological symbolism—as the place: (1) where Christ ratified the New Covenant, by instituting the Eucharist (LK 22); (2) where the resurrected Christ first appeared to the Apostles, and instituted the sacrament of confession (Jn 20:19–23); (3) where the Holy Spirit fell upon Mary and the Apostles at Pentecost, which marked the "birth" of the Church of the New Covenant (Ac 2).
187. *And His kingdom is the Church*: See *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (Lumen Gentium): "To carry out the will of the Father, Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth and revealed to us his mystery; by his obedience he brought about our redemption. The Church—that is, the kingdom of Christ already present in mystery—grows visibly through the power of God in the world" (no. 3). See "Select Themes of Ecclesiology" (1984): "To limit the Church to her purely earthly and visible dimension is unthinkable . . . The origins of the Church and the advent of the Kingdom of God

are presented here in perfect synchronicity . . . The Church is not a mere sign (*sacramentum tantum*) but a sign in which the reality signified is present (*res et sacramentum*) as the reality of the Kingdom" (*International Theological Commission: Texts and Documents, 1965-1985* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989], pp. 301-4. See the encyclical of Pope Pius IX, *Vixi dum a Nobis*: "In fact, the Creator and Redeemer of the human race has certainly founded the Church as his visible Kingdom on earth." And Pope St. Pius X: "The Church is a kingdom whose master is none other than God; her mission is so great that it goes beyond frontiers and makes of the peoples of every language and every nation, one family" (*Papal Teachings: The Church* [Boston: St. Paul, 1962], pp. 240, 397). See *The Catholicism of the Catholic Church* (nos. 541, 670-71, 768-69, 865). See F. X. Durrwell, *The Resurrection: A Biblical Study* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1960), p. 270: "So [the Church] exists fully in two different periods of time . . . she dwells in heaven but also journeys on earth. She does not exist somewhere between the two times, but actually in both simultaneously . . . Thus the Church bears the marks of two opposite states. She leads a mysterious, heavenly existence, and she is also a visible empirical reality. . . . In her mysterious reality the church is indeed the Kingdom of God . . . but as perceived by the senses, she is only its sign and instrument." See Avery Dulles, "The Church and the Kingdom," in Eugene LaVerdiere (ed.), *A Church for All Peoples* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), pp. 17-18: "If one looks on both the kingdom and the Church as existing proleptically within history and definitively at the close of history, it becomes more difficult to see how they differ." In sharp contrast, Richard McBrien considers the identification of Church and kingdom as "the most serious pre-Vatican II ecclesiological misunderstanding" (*Catholicism* [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1981], p. 686).

## CHAPTER 15

190. "a transference from the state in which man is born a son of the first Adam": Council of Trent, session 6.4.

190. "the notion of justification would have escaped the shallow and muddled treatment that has so often disfigured it": *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p. 623.



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To David Timothy Bonaventure Hahn  
On the occasion of his First Communion  
and the royal-priestly anointing of Confirmation