

The Place of King David in Christianity¹⁾

Scripture: Acts of the Apostles 13:20-23

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I am very grateful this evening for joining with you to this blessed service of worship to our God, and for your kind invitation to allow me to speak to you from our Bible.

Our Scripture portion is Acts, 13: 20-23. Shall we read it altogether?

I ask your special attention to the verse twenty-two: "And when he had removed him(the King Saul), he raised up David to be their king; of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will".

Almost every one of us might ask here: 'Why God had esteemed David as a man after his own heart, and how God ever could do all of his will through a mere sinful man, like David?'.

Tonight I would like to present to you my Bible-based answer to this really crucial question.

As we read the whole book of the Acts of the Apostles we are ready to find the very impressive facts that, first, the book is roughly consisted in two great parts: the forepart, from chapters one to twelve (or to fifteen) is largely occupied by the activities of the Apostle Peter and of his co-workers, located mainly in Jerusalem and Palestine.

And the second part(chapters 13 to the end of the Book) is totally consisted with the out reaching works of the Apostle Paul and his helpers' activities in Asia Minor and in Rome.

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The English sermon below was preached by the present writer at Morning Star Bible College, Lusaka, Republic of Zambia, Africa, May 12, 2004. The sermon is inserted here in place of an epilogue to the present book. (이 영문 설 교는 필자가 2004년 5월 12일 아프리카의 잠비아 공화국, 루사카에 있는 모닝 스타 바이불 칼리지에서 수요일 저녁 예배 시간에 신학생들에게 행한 설교이다. 이 설교를 본서의 간략한 영문 발문(跋文, epilogue)을 대심하여 여기에 게재한다.

And further we come to find the more impressive fact that these two main parts are beginning with the two prime sermons of the two great Apostles: the St. Peter's sermon at Pentecost in Jerusalem, recorded in the second chapter of the Book, and then the St. Paul's sermon, preached at Pisidia Antioch, located in the center of Asia Minor, which is recorded in the thirteenth chapter of the Book.

And still further, the most impressive fact we come to find in the two sermons of the both Apostles is that these two great sermons' scripture texts were consisted of both very similarly the life history of the King David, together with his Psalms, quoted and interpreted by the two Apostles alike from the Old Testament, which was of course the only Bible then existed.

Now the Apostle Peter's sermon texts were quotations from the King David's two psalms; the first one was Ps. 16: 8-11, the confession of David explaining his inner man's uneasy shaking caused by his sin²⁾(Act. 2: 25). Whereas Davis's this uneasiness is followed instantly by his strong faith, expressing his sure and joyful forgiveness and his future resurrection, too, both of his heart and body(verses 26-28).

The second quotation of Peter from David's very important Ps. 110: 1(Act. 2: 25) recorded by St. Luke, was not interpreted or explained by Peter as Ps. 16: 8-11 at the beginning of his sermon.

(Peter's mentioning of Joel 3: 28-32 at the beginning of his sermon(Acts, 2: 16-21) was only quoted as an introductory or by-passing message, not belonging to the main subject of his sermon, as Luke's by-passing quotation of it at the beginning of the sermon clearly shows).³⁾

And, about ten years later, the Apostle Paul's sermon at Pisidia Antioch(Acts 13: 16-41) was based on the Scripture from I Sam. 16: 13 and on David' two psalms, Ps. 2: 7, 16: 10, (Ps. 16: 10 was quoted by Peter also), and Paul had further quoted from the words of the Prophet Isaiah(55: 3), which testifies so meaningfully on "the faithful gift of God given to King David"(Acts 13: 34).

In a word, as we have seen in our rough survey on the sermon Scriptures used by the two prime Apostles, it could be said safely that those two great sermons were nothing but the so familiar, intimate, and also thorough and enlightening exegesis of the King David's real life history, and of his Psalms, by the two Apostles.

²⁾ Robert Alter writes, 'The personal voice of a shaken David begins to emerge here'(*The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York, Basic Books, 1981, p. 119, n. 1). (Quoted from Walter Brueggemann's *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory*, Second Edition, Fortress Press, 2002, p. 126).

³⁾ Though the first Pentecostal upheaval of the Jerusalem Church was the sure outcome of the great supernatural and powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Assembly on that day, the writer of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke, rightly and duly, does not emphasize in heedless way on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Peter's sermon itself. For, the rightful and main subject of Peter's sermon on that day was the all important topics of David's real life history and his Psalms.

Of the astoundingly great and breath-taking fruits of the two impressive sermons we here mention only briefly.

As the result of St. Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, "three thousand persons were baptized, and were added on the very day to the number of the new born church" (Acts 2: 41). What an amazing and unbelievable fruit out of a single sermon!⁴⁾

And, about ten years later, St. Paul, "the Apostle for the Gentiles"(on the way of his first missionary journey, had come to preach in a synagogue in Antioch of Pisidea, in the center of Asia Minor, perhaps was entirely a new foreign city to the Apostle and to Barnabas.

After the preaching, when they were going out from the synagogue, some audiences asked them abruptly, "to continue in the grace of God"(Acts 13:42), that is, the Korean Bible reads, "Speak this same word at the next Sabbath day, too".

We, the preachers, can well imagine how much Paul was encouraged and thrilled inside by that sudden and unexpected invitation of a unknown member of his foreign assembly.

And further, to our uttermost surprise, it is recorded, "The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered together to hear the word of God" (Acts 13: 44).

But, very regretfully, the Apostle Paul could not preach to the large crowd of the city jammed in the Synagogue in that second Sabbath day, because of the jealous Jewish crowds, uprising against the Apostle Paul and Barnabas(Acts 13: 45).

But, then in the following fourteenth chapter of the Acts, we find the really super human preaching power of Paul was displayed again and again in the new towns where the Apostle preached, and the fruits thereof which were brought out at Iconium and Lystra(Acts. 14) were so amazing, and it was no doubt, we may imagine, but the results of the great encouragement given to Paul by the astonishing outcomes of his former activities in Antioch of Pisidia. And further, the core of the encouraging power given to Paul was nothing but his inner spiritual and heart warming spiritual power, provoked and ignited by his own exegegis on the texts of the Davidic real life history and on the David's powerful Psalms.⁵⁾

Here we may soberly ask again to ourselves, 'What was the real reason of the almost unbelievable great power and the results of these two sermons of the Apostle Peter and Paul?

We answer, in a word, that it was the fruit of no other thing but of their solid and sound exegegis of the Davidic life history out of the Old Testament historical books, and also of David's Psalms as shown clearly by the records of St. Luke.

In answering to this question merely to mention the super natural unctions and helps of

⁴⁾ The writer of the present book is deeply alarmed, and painfully astonished by the fact that the almost whole extant church leaders and preachers are entirely neglecting, and blind-folded to this great, important Scriptural record ever was written.

⁵⁾ W. Brueggemann calls David's manifold psalms as 'powerful say of David'. (David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory, p.

the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and upon their sermons themselves(Act. 2: 1-13, 13: 52) is, even though it may be true in some aspects, by no means the most adequate answer, because of our following reasoning, which are based on our point of view that the core of the powers of the two sermons were existed decisively in the both Apostles' sound exegesis of the Davidic life history out of the Old Testament history books, and of David's messianic Psalms.

I recently have read a book, titled, The Making of Modern German Christology, From the Enlightenment to Pannenberg, (Basil Blackwell Inc. UK), written by Professor Alister E. McGrath, and was translated into Korean by Dr. Sungbong Kim.

Professor McGrath is the Dean of Wycliffe Hall in Oxford University, and also teaching at Regent Seminary, Canada. More than twenty volumes of his books are translated into Korean.

The book was very helpful to me. Actually the reason I have decided to have this long journey of two months to visit you and five more countries this time was provoked by the real joy and deep encouragement given to me while I was reading the book.

The main subject of the book is: 'Are the paths of the mere traditional, or the closed Christian faith and the historical and critical or existential approach to the life of Jesus study are unmovably destined to continue the endless parallel ways to the final day, without meeting the long sought and the crucial point of co-relation and mutual help between them?'(p. 238).

The author of the book have enumerated clearly and pointedly and also savoury the most of the renowned German theologians of the last two centuries, displaying their scholarly opinions in depth on the crucial questions of Christology, specially of the historicity of Jesus Christ, beginning from F. D. E. Schleiermacher(1768-1834), A. Ritschl, down to J. Moltmann, W. Pannenberg and E. Jüngel of the present day.

One of the most enlightening and impressive statement in the book to me was this: 'the cause of the passive or the negative character of R. Bultmann and G. Ebeling in their study of the life of Jesus was that it is impossible to obtain the proper sources of information concerning the historicity of Jesus'(p. 214-5).

This scholarly attitude of Bultmann, I presume, is contradicting bluntly to the teaching of Jesus himself. By saying, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"(Jn. 5: 46-7). According to Jesus 'the very words of Moses' were the real life history of Jesus himself.

Jesus himself thus diametrically opposed to the notions of the world-wide trend of liberal theology of today.

Accordingly, Jesus had demanded us to evaluate the both Testaments equally and simultaneously. However, Bultmann and Ebeling, by their utterly careless neglecting of "the

Mose's writings", i. e. the Old Testament, had fallen into the dark and somber ditch where they could not find the proper and important passages to the historical background and the sound informations concerning Jesus.

Peter and Paul did find them more than richly and poignantly through their conferring the Old Testament historical books and specially the Psalms of the King David, together with the teachings of Jesus himself, that were given to the Apostles even on his cross, concerning Davidic sayings and Psalms, which are recorded in the Gospels so often, and specially in the Passion Week records of St. John(Mt. 27: 45, Jn. 19: 24, 28, 36, etc).

F. D. E. Schleiermacher, though he had asserted mistakenly that the Christian faith is not only based on the intellectual reasoning or on the moralistic behaviorism but is based solely on the human emotion, had rightly and keenly pointed out, on one hand, the twofold errors of the German Christian thought: first, the error of its empiricism, second, the error of the magical traditionalism(p. 36), and, at the same time, he also had acknowledged decisively the importance of approaching to the life of Jesus study historically and in existential way, and thereby the possibility of obtaining the proper informations on the historicity of Jesus' earthly life(p. 124-5).

It is noteworthy that Schleiermacher had advocated specially the historical nature of the Gospel of John, in spite of its so called 'spiritual nature', on the base that the author often asserts that 'he had eye-witnessed the very facts of Jesus, of which he had recorded in his Gospel and subsequently in his other writings'(Jn. 15:27, 19: 35, I Jn. 1: 1-3, Rev. 1: 2) (p. 69).

R. Bultmann, sadly enough, had missed this important spiritual insight of his great teacher and the scholastic forerunner, the Evangelist John.

Professor A. E. McGrath judges that the standpoints of W. Herrmann and K. Barth's study of Jesus' life are, even though their insights are deep sometimes, basically 'ahistorical' in their nature(p. 129-30), that is, void of historical stance.

So it was a great irony that Barth's explosive fame that were gained by his renowned writing on the Book of the Romans was basically rooted on the increasing protest of the day against the pseudo-historic milieu of the liberal theology of the time(p. 136). Therefor, Barth's fame given to him for writing the massive exegegis on the Book of the Romans had evaporated soon.

The modern critical schools fatally tend to limit their study on the life of Jesus exclusively within the New Testament area only, neglecting the entire Old Testament, and also the vital and powerful continuity between the two Testaments(p. 218, 291, 296).

R. Bultmann, while he asserts the only path to prove the historicity of Jesus is open in his 'theory of kerigma', based solely on the New Testament study, he laments that 'he could not find the least piece of witness for the foundation of the historicity of Jesus'(p. 219).

He, together with G. Ebeling, discards all of the Old Testament records as 'the fruit of the idea of Late Jewish Apocalyptic', of which idea Jesus and all of the Apostles never knew. Both, Bultmann and Ebeling, were baffled sorely by this their own idea, while Pannenberg was, on the other hand, over relying on the idea of Late Jewish Apocalyptic as reasonable. Thence Pannenberg also looses his own sure ground of the New Testament study fatally(p. 236, 244).

Therefore we may safely admit the fact that Barth, Bultmann and Ebeling's difficulty to find the proper informations for the historic study on Jesus' life is due to their own neglecting of the truly keen and observative exegegis of the Old Testament books, taught by Jesus himself, and also by the two main Apostles.

E. Käsemann, too, bluntly questions and doubts how to find the sorely desired 'continuity out of the discontinuity of Jesus' real life, and he also fears the possibility of errors and blunders that might caused by chance or mistakes of the Biblical scholars'(p. 223).

The so called discontinuity of Jesus' life history is fundamentally discarded by Jesus himself, and also by all of the Apostles, as we look carefully and soberly at their Davidic history centered interpretation of the Old Testament, and also by seeing their preaching of the Gospels. Of which the best examples are the two cases of the prime sermons of the two Apostles, Peter and Paul, recorded in the Book of Acts, 2: 25-36, and 13: 20-41.

By adding the following records here concerning a "Branch of Jesse, David", from the two major Old Testament era Prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, we may be allowed to prove our theory of the so-called 'Davidic-centered structure of the whole Bible'.

Isaiah 7:14, "Therefor the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel".(cf. Isaiah 8:8, 10, Mt. 1:1, Acts. 13:22, 23).

Isaiah 9: 6-7, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace". Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forever more. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this".

Isaiah 11:1-10, "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slav the wicked.

Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek, and his dwellings shall be glorious".

Isaiah 55: 3, 4, "Incline your ear, and come to me; hear that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples"(Acts 13:42-45).

Jeremiah 23: 5, 6, "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness'".

Jeremiah 33: 14-16, "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness'".

Hence, the four giant pillars of soteriological knowledge in the whole Bible, namely, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, are standing firmly upon the Davidic-centered principle of the Bible.

Now we return to our former, main subject of the Professor McGrath's book. A. E. McGrath's said book ends with Professor Joachim Jeremias's more open view which draws out the foundation of Jesus' life history out of the Israelite history in the Old Testament(p. 225). And J. Jeremiah's said position is further developed by W. Pannenberg, who is roughly following the view of Gerhard von Rad. Joachim Jeremiah had asserted that 'the Christ event is not isolated; it has the continuity from the Old Testament to the New Testament'(p. 229), and 'he also had asserted that in the possibility of finding Jesus' historicity from the Israelite life history itself'(p. 230-2).

However, this possibility held by G. von Rad was blindedly denied by R. Bultmann. Whereas Pannenberg decisively claimed that 'the Old Testament history is to be interpreted, and God's self-disclosure is open to them who are able to see it'(p. 229).

J. Moltmann, by upholding his 'theology of the death of God, or theology of the cross'

was drawn more close to the Biblical idea of the Redeemer(אל, Ps. 69: 18, $\lambda \nu \tau \rho \omega \tau \eta \varsigma$, Acts, 7: 35), which is richly revealed in the Davidic life history and in his numerous Messianic Psalms. David was 'cast away by God because of his dreadful sin', but, because of that very fact he was finally encountered by God's truly righteous Saviour and by his righteous people in the eternal Kingdom of God'(Ps. 22: 1, 69: 6, 18, 26, 33).

J. Moltmann asserts that 'Jesus was God, an existential being, who was pushed back to the rear stage in the Biblically life-situational world'(p. 262-8), even as David himself was.

E. Jüngel also held the opinion withstanding to that of Bultmann. Jüngel assumed that 'the Bible is to be interpreted; it is impossible to separate the facts and their interpretation'(p. 273).

Lastly D. Bonhöeffer had consistently upheld the unique centricity of Jesus Christ in Christian Church's science, but by adhering to 'the idea of the Late Jewish Apocalyptic' he also neglected the great value of the sound Old Testament exegegis(p. 296).

Professor McGrath's book ends with his very important, bold, and deep-cutting view of comparison between the English Protestant Church's Christology with that of German Church in their basic attitude toward the notion of the existential situation of humanity and of the truly historical, critical and existential nature of the Biblical Christology.

'The former, the English position, by being slow to grasp the notion of Biblical and existential situation, is loosing fatally the opportunity to win mankind in the modern world', and, in stark opponent to this, the German position, that is, 'the historico-existential method of Christology, which strengthens effectively the historical study of the life of Jesus, is allowed to grasp firmly the precious opportunity to evangelize the modern world'(p. 296-7, the last two pages of the book).

The two prime sermons of St. Peter and St. Paul(Acts, second and thirteenth chapters) attest firstly the supremely important significance of the Davidic life history in Christian preaching. And secondly they attest the central principles in choosing the right kind of the sermon texts by the Christian preachers, and to acknowledge the principle of the Davidic-Christ-centeredness in preaching the Gospel.

The names of Abraham and David each appear some 310 vs. 810 times in the Bible, showing the importance of David twice as much than Abraham.

Now, please allow me to mention some of the important passages from the Davidic life history and also from his Psalms, which testify the place of the King David in Christianity as central, pivotal, and vital. I Samuel 25: 28, "Pray forgive the trespass of your handmaid; for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord; and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live".

Dr. Walter Brueggemann, the author of David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory, deems this verse, the word of Abigail, the wife of Nabal, who had denied bluntly the humble asking of David for some foods in his fleeing life in the wildness from Saul, as to point the greatness of David.⁶⁾ For in the prophetic words of Abigail we may find first, "the Lord God will make a sure house to David"; second, "David will fight the battles of the Lord"; and thirdly, "evil shall not be found in David as long as he lives".

These symbolic words of Abigail had became all true in David's life in the New Testament writings.

Ps. 8: 2, "By the mouth of babes and infants, thou hast founded a bulwark because of thy foes, to still the enemy and the avenger" was quoted by Jesus so meaningfully and usefully at his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, right before his passion week(Mt 21: 16).

Jesus' this quoting of the passage from the Psalm was meant to testify Jesus's all enduring and also almighty meekness, specially on his cross(Mt. 5: 2-5, 11: 29, 27: 46). And Jesus's this testimony had stood firmly on nothing but the ground of David's deep knowledge of the power of Jesus' true meekness(eg. Ps. 69: 7-13, 131: 1-3).

Ps. 16: 8-10, "I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also dwells secure. For thou dost not give me up to Sheol, or let thy godly one see the Pit". This portion of the Scripture derived from David is one of the strongest bedrock for Christians' spirituality, for both in theory and practice.

The Apostles Peter and Paul had quoted similarly these verses from the Psalm in their great prime sermons(Act. chapter two and thirteen) to testify the power of the resurrection of Jesus, and subsequently the resurrection of all of the believers in Him. And the both Apostles and St. Luke mention all-correctly the overflowing joy of the would-be resurrected Christians in their sermons and in their subsequent works(Act. 2 : 26, 28, 13 : 52).

There is an impressive and also important statement in A. E. McGrath's Making of Modern German Christology, concerning the fundamental nature of the resurrection of Jesus and all of his believers: 'in the order of cognition Resurrection foregoes Incarnation, and we are not only to acknowledge the trait, but to understand it'(p. 243-4, 274, 289). Namely, the only resurrected Christians in true faith are allowed to know the truth of Christ's Incarnation, and not vice versa.

⁶⁾ W. Brueggemann, David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory, Fortress Press, Second Edition, 2002, p. 90.

The two Apostles had knew well this basic principle, and only had to apply it to their sermons so well.

On the conclusive phrase of verse eight of Psalm sixteen, "I shall not be moved" Paul Tillich's Existential Theology's basic idea(Deut. 6: 5, 32: 35), 'The Shaking Foundation', finds the final and strong solution and its bulwark.

The Apostle Peter had pointed the former "shaking" and the later "joy" of David's mind and body as the two clues of David's salvation, and subsequently he made them the powerful explosive clues for the crowds' shouting, "Brethren, what shall we do?".(Act. 2: 25, 28, 37, 46, Ps, 16: 8).

Later the Apostle Paul had experienced the overcoming of the "shaking" of both his inner man and outer body as much as to write to the Philippians :

"You should not only believe in Christ but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which you saw and now hear to be mine"(Philippians, 1: 30).

Also Paul "knew how to be abased, how to be abound; in any and all circumstances have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want". (Philippians, 4: 12). In Christ, Paul's life knew no more of shaking of mind and body.

David's Ps. 40: 6-8 together with Heb. 10: 5-7 testify, to our utter and holy astonishment, that David had even spoken the very words of Jesus himself, which Jesus had uttered at his first advent(!), as below.

"Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body has thou prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,' as it is written of me in the roll of the book".

By speaking and writing these words ten centuries before the first advent of Christ as the very utterance of Jesus himself, and that David had found them "in the roll of the book", that is the Bible, the Old Testament, David had proved himself the fact that he was the very first and supremely outstanding, sound and solid Biblical Theologian of the Christian Church, clearing the manifold and mystic problems of the Christian Church's Christology.

In Mt. 12: 1-8 we read, that Jesus, by quoting the blunt law-breaking and unfortunate experience of David's eating of the show bread in the tabernacle of Nob, which had caused the slaughter of 85 families of the priestly clan by the brutal hand of the king Saul(I Sam. chapters 21 and 22, and 22: 18, 19), had beautifully testified both his own Messiaship and his high-priestly office, and the similar offices of the King David, and further of his disciples, and, still further, the priesthood of all of the Christians!.

King David's Ps. 110: 1 was quoted by Jesus so meaningfully and also poignantly in the beginning day of his passion week at the Sanhedrin(Mt. 22: 43-6). He had to quote this verse of Davidic Psalm to testify his Messiaship thoroughly and clearly to the Jewish church leaders, and subsequently to all mankind(Mt. 22: 43-4). And St. Peter had quoted this verse as the very percussion cap at the conclusion of his explosive, powerful Pentecostal sermon(Act. 2: 34-5).

Thus the place of the King David in our Christianity is so important, and is also very great as we have seen above.

Thank you very much for your attentive listening. Shall we pray?