

YOUR HOUSE IS MY HOUSE: EXEGETICAL INTERSECTION WITHIN THE DAVIDIC PROMISE

Gary Edward Schnittjer

ABSTRACT

The Davidic promise makes exegetical allusions to the blessing of Judah (Gen 49:8–12) and the place legislation (Deut 12:2–29), which are actualized in the house of David and the house of Yahweh. David and Solomon make interpretive interventions with Nathan’s oracle within the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic narratives. The present study investigates the father’s and son’s exegetical enhancements of subtle interpretive allusions to Torah expectations that intersect within the Davidic promise.

INTRODUCTION

THE SCRIPTURAL EXEGETICAL ALLUSIONS within the Davidic promise mediated by Nathan give rise to a series of exegetical allusions by David and Solomon. This evidence makes the Davidic promise an exegetical intersection.

Nathan’s presentation of the promise uses numerous scriptural traditions including subtle allusions to the blessing of Judah (Gen 49:8–12) and the place legislation (Deut 12:2–29). The Davidic promise connects these key allusions as they are actualized in the house of David and house of Yahweh, respectively.

Modern scholars have sharply disputed the (un)conditionality of the promise to the house of David as well as the name theology of the house of Yahweh. These debates often serve competing excavative diachronic agendas. In spite of protracted attention, confusion surrounds these seemingly intractable debates. Consequently, the significance of the connection between the houses of David and Yahweh has not been adequately explained. But it is this connec-

tion that most attracted the attention of David and Solomon.

Several speeches of David and Solomon embedded in the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic narratives wrestle with the implications of the relationship between the house of David and house of Yahweh. The Deuteronomistic narrative is comprised of the scrolls of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings as a coherent and unified serial that unfolds in the shadow of Deuteronomy. The Chronistic narrative refers to the story of the Davidic kingdom and its temple patronage presented in Chronicles.¹

The present study pursues the thesis that David and Solomon exegetically enhance subtle interpretive allusions² to Torah expectations of the blessing of Judah and the place legislation that intersect within the Davidic promise. The series of exegetical allusions build on one another to reveal that Yahweh's taking of David's son as his own merges the two expectations into his singular will.

The present study is limited to interpretations of the Davidic promise by Nathan, David, and Solomon as they are presented in the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic narratives.³ This is followed by a conclusion with a summary and implications.

DAVIDIC PROMISE MEDIATED BY NATHAN

The present section focuses on potential exegetical allusions to scriptural traditions within Nathan's mediation of the Davidic promise (2 Sam 7:1–17). Amid many minor allusions, the primary concern here relates to potential uses of the blessing of Judah and the place legislation.

The Davidic promise brilliantly frames the intertwined actual-

¹ This study regards Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah as independent books by different authors. See Gary Edward Schnittjer, "The Bad Ending of Ezra-Nehemiah," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 173.689 (2016): 35.

² Allusions are intentional, but echoes do not have enough evidence to know if the potential parallels are coincidental or purposeful. The expressions "donor text" and "receptor text" refer to the cited context and citing context of an interpretive allusion. For detailed definitions and how to handle exegesis within Scripture inclusive of qualifications, examples, and references, see Gary Edward Schnittjer and Matthew Harmon, *How to Study the Bible's Use of the Bible: Seven Hermeneutical Choices for the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, forthcoming); and Gary Edward Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021), xvii–xlvi, 889–903.

³ Elsewhere prophets and psalmists frequently featured exegetical interventions with the Davidic promise (e.g., Jer 23:5–6; 33:14–22; Ezek 37:24–28; Pss 2; 72; 89; 110; 132). For a detailed summary of these and other readings of the Davidic promise in the prophets and Psalms, see Daniel I. Block, *Covenant: The Framework of God's Grand Plan of Redemption* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 331–91.

izations of the house of Yahweh and the house of David.⁴ The house of Yahweh signifies the temple, and the house of David denotes the royal dynasty. Much pivots on the semantic functions of the term “house” (בַּיִת). The episode begins when David was living in his palace (בַּיִת) and desired to build a temple (בַּיִת) for the ark. Nathan mediates: “Yahweh declares to you that Yahweh shall make a house for you” (2 Sam 7:11).⁵ Yahweh interchanges synonymously David’s “house” (בַּיִת), “throne” (כִּסֵּא), and “kingdom” (מַמְלָכָה) (vv. 11, 13, 16). Only after David dies will the seed of David “build a house for my name” (vv. 11, 13). Modern scholars have debated the house of David in 2 Samuel 7 in terms of its (un)conditionality and the house for Yahweh in terms of name theology. Both of these debates have been driven by excavative agendas.

Excavative studies sometimes use the apparently contradictory conditional/unconditional assessments of the Davidic promise to help detect theoretical layers in the Deuteronomistic History.⁶ Other scholars who favor the unconditionality of the Davidic promise use empirical models from ancient treaty forms to understand the biblical covenants. They explain how the seemingly conditional statements do not really apply to the unconditional Davidic promise since it is more like a grant than a vassal treaty.⁷ The problem

⁴ The expression “house of your servant [David]” (בַּיִת עַבְדְּךָ) appears in 2 Samuel 7:19, 26, 29 [2x]; cf. verses 1, 2, 11, 16, 18, 25, 26; and “house for my [Yahweh’s] name” (בַּיִת לְשִׁמִּי) appears in verse 13; cf. verses 5, 6, 7.

⁵ All Scripture translations are by the author unless otherwise stated. The verb in 2 Samuel 7:11 is “make” (עָשָׂה). David used the verbs “establish” (כִּוֵּן), “build” (בָּנָה), and “bless” (בָּרַךְ) to refer to the dynastic promise of a royal house (vv. 26, 27, 29).

⁶ Richard D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 18 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1981), 99–146. For a feisty reading of the divine “unconditional” promise as disingenuous, see Lyle Eslinger, *House of God or House of David: The Rhetoric of 2 Samuel 7*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 164 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 40–41 passim. On the Chronicler retaining both the conditional and unconditional readings of the Davidic promise as complementary, see Sunwoo Hwang, “Coexistence of Unconditionality and Conditionality of the Davidic Covenant in Chronicles,” *Heythrop Journal* 58.2 (2017): 239–46.

⁷ See Moshe Weinfeld, “בְּרִית,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. John T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 2:270–72; Moshe Weinfeld, “Covenant, Davidic,” *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 189–90; Moshe Weinfeld, “The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90.2 (1970): 184–203; cf. Moshe Weinfeld, “Addenda to JAOS 90 (1970), 184ff: The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 92.3 (1972), 468–69; Michael A. Grisanti, “The Davidic Covenant,” *Master’s Seminary Journal* 10.2 (1999): 235, 240–41; and John H. Walton, *Covenant: God’s Purpose, God’s Plan* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 20. For a thoroughgoing

comes when clients/vassals in both kinds of treaties get obligations or conditions piled on them.⁸ In spite of enormous energies these debates have remained at an impasse until recently.

A significant part of the problem stems from the modern imposition of the idea of unconditionality. This idea seems to take for granted that a forever covenant must be unconditional. But how can a covenant with conditions be unconditional? The modern imposition of alleged unconditionality creates and sustains the circular debate. Recent studies point to a way out of the (un)conditional cul-de-sac. Several scholars note that permanent ancient covenants come with obligations.⁹

Block observes that all covenants in Scripture involving the deity are “monergistic suzerain-vassal pacts” that can be referred to as “covenants” or “treaties.”¹⁰ Block blasts the mistaken approach that imposes “unconditionality” upon the Scriptures.

Biblical covenants have long been classified either as unconditional and irrevocable covenants of grant (Abrahamic, Davidic) or conditional and revocable covenants of obligation (Israelite). But *this dichotomy is false*: they *all* exhibit signs of *both irrevocability and contingency*.¹¹

This important about-face puts aside the modern imposition of unconditionality. The common denominators of divinely initiated covenants go a long way toward joining David and Solomon in their natural starting place when they consider Yahweh’s promise.

critique of this approach as it applies to the Davidic covenant, see Gary N. Knoppers, “Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116.4 (1996): 670–97.

⁸ Notice the case of the Hittite treaty of Tudhaliya IV with Ulmi-Teshup (Kurunta) (13th c. BCE), which includes severe punishment for disobedience even though the covenant endures: “And even if some son or grandson of yours commits treason . . . they shall do to him whatever the king of the land of Hatti decides. . . . But they may not take from him his ‘house’ (i.e., his dynasty).” William W. Hallo, ed. *Context of Scripture*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002), 2:104. For this example and others, see Knoppers, “Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants,” 682–84.

⁹ See Block, *Covenant*, 2–3, 316; Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *1 and 2 Samuel*, Teach the Text (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 218–19, 224–25; and Robert B. Chisholm Jr., “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Psalm 18/2 Samuel 22” (ThD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1983), 302–3. Regarding the Davidic promise Chisholm said that “the promise in its essence is *irrevocable* and certain of fulfillment, while the *conditional* statements refer to experiencing the benefits of the covenant at any given point in time” (*1 and 2 Samuel*, 224; emphasis added). For references to several formative studies by Gordon Johnston of irrevocable ancient covenants with obligations, see Gary Edward Schnittjer, “The Blessing of Judah as Generative Expectation,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 177.705 (2020): 25n22.

¹⁰ See Block, *Covenant*, 2–3, 316. For a brief discussion of covenants between people in Scripture in relationship to divinely initiated covenants, see 1–2.

¹¹ Block, 2; emphasis added.

The recognition of divine biblical covenants as irrevocable with obligations fits with Nathan's promise. The concept of an enduring covenant with obligations did not bother David or Solomon in the slightest. As David explains: It is a covenant.

The basis for the enduring quality of the promise to David comes from its allusion to the blessing of Judah.¹² Jacob said, "The scepter (שֵׁבֶט) shall not turn aside (סוּר) from Judah" (Gen 49:10a).¹³ Nathan uses the term "scepter" then three times "turn aside."

I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me, when he does wrong I will punish him with **the rod** (שֵׁבֶט) of mortals and with wounds inflicted by humans. But my covenantal loyalty **shall not depart** (סוּר Qal) from him, as **I removed it** (סוּר Hif) from Saul whom **I removed** (סוּר Hif) before you. (2 Sam 7:14–15, emphases mine)

Nathan's ironic wordplays alluding to the blessing of Judah fit well with the way he worked through the connotations of "house" in the larger context. Punishment of Yahweh's adopted Davidic son does not contradict the permanence of the promise. Instead Yahweh demonstrates his covenantal loyalty (הֶסֶד) by using the rod (שֵׁבֶט) upon his son even while his covenantal loyalty shall never depart (סוּר). The fatherhood of Yahweh and the language of forever become exegetical shorthand for the way the Davidic promise carries forward the blessing of Judah.

The Deuteronomistic narrator sets the context of Nathan's promise as "when Yahweh *had given him [David] rest from all the surrounding enemies* (וְהִנֵּיחַ לוֹ מִסָּבִיב מְפֹלְאֵי־בָיִת) (2 Sam 7:1; emphasis added). Since this motivates David's desire to build a temple, the narrator seems to have in mind: "He [Yahweh] *will give you rest from all your surrounding enemies* (וְהִנֵּיחַ לָכֶם מִפְּלֵאֵי־בָיִתְכֶם מִסָּבִיב) so that you live in safety. Then the place that Yahweh your God chooses to place his name" (Deut 12:10b–11a; emphasis added).

As with so much else in the context of this passage, the sense of "rest" provides a dynamic that pushes aside simplistic readings.¹⁴ As Yahweh is wrapping up his retrospective to contextualize David's request he says, "*I will give you rest from all your enemies* (וְהִנֵּיחֶנּוּ לָךְ מִפְּלֵאֵי־בָיִתְךָ). Thus Yahweh declares to you that Yahweh will make a house for you" (2 Sam 7:11; emphasis added). The rest appears to be something of an already/not yet scenario. The same

¹² See detailed study in Schnittjer, "Blessing of Judah," 24–26.

¹³ On the textual difficulties of Genesis 49:10c, see Schnittjer, 16n3.

¹⁴ The discussion here is abbreviated from a detailed presentation in Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use*, 192–94. On allusions to earlier scriptural traditions in Deuteronomy 12, see 111–19.

situation appears elsewhere in the Deuteronomistic narrative. When Joshua was old “Yahweh *gave rest* to Israel *from all their enemies*” (Josh 23:1; emphasis added; cf. 21:44; 22:4). Yet when Joshua was old the narrator explains that many areas of the land still needed to be taken (13:1). The space between the already-rest and the not-yet-rest provides fertile soil for the series of troubles in the days of the judges.

Before moving on it will help to clarify the significance of the phrase in 2 Samuel 7:13a: “he [David’s seed] will build a house for my name (הוּא יִבְנֶה־בַּיִת לְשִׁמִּי).” Some scholars wrongly identify this with the place legislation under the umbrella of so-called name theology.¹⁵ The expression “to place one’s name” in Deuteronomy 12 and parallels has been interpreted by many scholars as some sort of divine quasi-manifestation. Von Rad explains that the view in Deuteronomy represents a halfway stage in demythologizing the older idea of the glory dwelling in the sanctuary. He says the name has an “almost material presence” and that it comes close to “a hypostasis.”¹⁶ This name theology has been thoroughly debunked by Richter. The exact expression “to place one’s name” is used nine times in Scripture.¹⁷ Richter explains this ancient transcultural idiom as inscribing a person’s name on a monument, building, or the like to signify ownership.¹⁸ The use of the term “name” in Nathan’s promise goes in a different direction. Richter helpfully explains the sense of “name” as reputation¹⁹ in 2 Samuel 7:13 by David’s interpretation in verse 26: “so that your *reputation [name]*

¹⁵ See P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *II Samuel*, Anchor Bible 9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 206; and Arnold A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary 11 (Dallas: Word, 1989), 122.

¹⁶ See Gerhard von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, trans. David Stalker (London: SCM, 1953), 37–40.

¹⁷ See Deuteronomy 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23–24; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2; Jeremiah 7:12; Ezra 6:12; Nehemiah 1:9.

¹⁸ Summaries of her argument can be found in Sandra L. Richter, “The Place of the Name in Deuteronomy,” *Vetus Testamentum* 57.3 (2007): 343–44; Sandra L. Richter, “Placing the Name, Pushing the Paradigm: A Decade with the Deuteronomistic Name Formula,” in *Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch, Hexateuch, and the Deuteronomistic History*, ed. Konrad Schmid and Raymond F. Person, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* 56 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 65–73; and Sandra L. Richter, “Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology of Creation,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20.3 (2010): 358n4. For a full-length treatment, see Sandra L. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: lešakkēn šemô šām in the Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 318 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002).

¹⁹ See Richter, 71.

will be great forever (וַיִּגְדַּל שְׁמִי עַד-עוֹלָם) (lit.; emphasis added).

In spite of Richter's widely accepted argument against name theology, persistent claims appear in studies of the Davidic promise. Schniedewind proposes that the phrase "He will build a house for my name" is a later exilic insertion into the promise based on two lines of evidence. He says the similarity of the phrases immediately before and after it may be resumptive repetition and that the use of the third person independent pronoun as a "deictic" particle is sometimes used to mark exegesis versus the text itself. He credits Fishbane for identifying these markers of exegesis.²⁰ The use of the same phrase can be resumptive repetition or it can function as a literary *inclusio* or quasi-lyrical expression in a formal pronouncement such as an oracle. The repetition of "your throne will be established before me forever" in verse 16 suggests the repetition of establishing a kingdom/throne in verses 12b and 13b is more likely literary than a signal of later editorial intervention.

The more serious problem turns on Schniedewind's misidentifying "it" (הֵיא) as a marker of an exegetical gloss versus the function of "he" (הֵי) as an emphatic pronoun in verse 13. The examples of deictic markers of exegetical glosses offered by Fishbane all function like this: "David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, *that is* (הֵיא) Jebus" (1 Chr 11:4a; emphasis added).²¹ These glosses tend to

²⁰ See William M. Schniedewind, "Calling God Names: An Inner-Biblical Approach to the Tetragrammaton," in *Scriptural Exegesis: The Shapes of Culture and the Religious Imagination, Essays in Honour of Michael Fishbane*, ed. Deborah A. Green and Laura S. Lieber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 77–78; William M. Schniedewind, "Innerbiblical Exegesis," *Dictionary of Old Testament Historical Books*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 506–7; and William M. Schniedewind, *Society and the Promise to David: A Reception History of 2 Samuel 7:1–17* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35, 83–85, 159. Schniedewind credits Michael Fishbane concerning the exegetical indicators citing *Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 44–48; Michael Fishbane, "The Qumran Peshet and Traits of Ancient Hermeneutics," in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies: Held at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 13–19 August 1973*, vol. 1, ed. Avigdor Shinan (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1977), 97–114; this essay is reprinted in Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Exegetical Culture*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 215–30.

²¹ See many kindred biblical examples in Fishbane, *Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 44–46; and Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Exegetical Culture*, 216, 225–26. Schniedewind cites two examples from 4QFlorilegium/4Q174 to illustrate his claims regarding 2 Samuel 7:13 (*Society*, 35). Yet, both examples feature the pronoun הֵיא used in verbless clauses like Fishbane's biblical examples and unlike emphatic use of הֵיא with a finite verb form in 2 Samuel 7:13. Thus, the evidence provided by Schniedewind demonstrates the problem with his own proposal. Here are the two examples: "[I appointed judges] over my people Israel, *this (is) the house* which . . . (צוֹיְתִי שׁוֹפְטִים) על עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַזֶּה הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר" (4Q174 1 I, 2; translation mine, emphasis added) and "I will be to him a father and he will be to me a son, *this (is) the*

appear in verbless clauses with the predicate marked by a *pleonastic* pronoun.²² A person may also be glossed using the third person pronoun in a verbless clause: “Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine, *he is* (הוא) priest of God Most High” (Gen 14:18; emphasis added). The situation in 2 Samuel 7:13 is entirely different. It is not a verbless clause. The independent pronoun is spelled out emphatically even though it is included in the verb in order to match the emphatic second person pronoun earlier in the oracle.²³ Third person independent pronouns can easily serve in “adversative juxtaposition” as first and second person pronouns.²⁴ Compare “Are *you* the one who will build a house for me to live in? (האֵתָהּ תִּבְנֶה־לִּי בַּיִת לְשִׁכְתִּי) (v. 5b; emphasis added) with “*He* is the one who will build a house for my name (הוא יִבְנֶה־בַּיִת לְשִׁמִּי) (v. 13a; emphasis added). Nathan states, “*He* will build!” with the emphatic pronoun to answer the emphatic question “Will *you* build?” earlier in the oracle (vv. 5b, 13a). In short, it makes much more sense to read verse 13a as part of the context based on its integrated literary fit rather than to force it into the mold of a later editorial update to salvage an excavative diachronic agenda.

In sum, the evidence shows that the promise mediated by Nathan includes exegetical allusions to at least two Torah expectations: the blessing of Judah and the place legislation. In both cases the allusive paraphrases have been fully integrated into the ironic tone of the oracle’s retrospective and promise. Yet the subtle exegetical allusion to the place legislation is confirmed by the Deuteronomist’s narrative framing (v. 1). The allusions to the blessing of Judah and the place legislation broadly correspond to the oracle’s house of David and house of Yahweh, respectively.

INTERPRETATION OF NATHAN’S PROMISE BY DEUTERONOMISTIC DAVID AND SOLOMON

branch of David . . . (אני אהיה לוא לאב והוא יהיה לי לבן הוא צמח דוד) (4Q174 1 I, 11; translation mine, emphasis added). For the text of 4Q174, see Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1:352.

²² See Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 130–32, 297–99. Waltke and O’Connor use Genesis 36:8 as an example matching those used by Fishbane in the previous footnote.

²³ For examples of emphatic uses of independent pronouns in phrases with verbs, see Waltke and O’Connor, 296–97; and Emil Kautzsch, ed., *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd ed., trans. Arther E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 437–38.

²⁴ See discussion and examples in P. Paul Joüon, *Grammaire de l’hébreu biblique* (Rome: Institut Biblique Pontifical, 1923), 449.

This study targets Nathan's allusions to the blessing of Judah and the place legislation. This section's agenda pivots on how Deuteronomistic David and Solomon handle these allusions.

David has often been accused of self-serving motives in expressing a desire to build a house for Yahweh. The ancient practice of building shrines provides a visible symbol of the king's good favor before the deity. Evidence for David's self-interest is often found in Yahweh's response to David, especially that he was disallowed to build the temple.²⁵ Other scholars see David's desire coming from good motives based on Yahweh's promise to David. The sentiment of the latter is captured by the man of God with no name: "Those who honor me I will honor" (1 Sam 2:30).²⁶ David's response offers some insight.

David's response to the promise does not refer at any time to the house of Yahweh. David six times offers his gratitude that Yahweh promised a house for David (2 Sam 7:18, 19, 25, 26, 29 [2x]). David says: "Now, O Yahweh God establish the word you have spoken *to your servant about his house forever*. Do as you have promised so that your reputation (כבוד) will be great forever, when they say, 'Yahweh of hosts is God over Israel,' and *the house of your servant David will be established* before you" (2:25–26; emphasis added). David's response of gratitude for the promise about the house of David lends support to the view that he was pursuing his own interests in building a temple (but see below). More importantly for the discussion at hand, David repeatedly stresses the enduring sense of the dynastic promise. It is forever. This watershed interpretation in the Davidic promise becomes the go-to for many later scriptural interpretive allusions.²⁷ Hereafter biblical authors still return to the blessing of Judah, as does David himself, but to draw out other aspects of its expectations.²⁸

Though gratitude for the house of David dominates David's immediate response, later he devotes considerable attention to the house of Yahweh as narrated at length in Chronicles. The Deuteronomist, however, does not draw attention to David's preparations for the temple.

David's last poetic words, framed as an oracle, include an interpretive allusion to Nathan's promise. David identifies the prom-

²⁵ See Eslinger, *House of God*, 15–16; and Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, 71–75.

²⁶ This observation is from Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 115.

²⁷ For a list, see Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use*, 869.

²⁸ See Schnittjer, "Blessing of Judah," 26–39 (including list, 39).

ise as an “everlasting covenant”—an expression picked up by Isaiah (55:3). David says: “Is not *my house* established by God? For he has granted an *everlasting covenant* to me” (2 Sam 23:5; emphasis added).²⁹ In David’s last words to Solomon he emphasizes the obligations of the royal heir to obey the commands in the scroll of Moses (1 Kgs 2:3). David explains this as a condition of the covenant: “*If your descendants keep their way to walk before me in integrity with all their heart and all their soul*, then he [Yahweh] will not cut off your successors from the throne of Israel” (2:4; emphasis added).

In sum, Deuteronomistic David repeatedly emphasizes the enduring promise Yahweh made to the house of David. He does not allude to the blessing of Judah itself but enhances aspects of Nathan’s interpretation of it. For David the dynastic promise is irrevocable and carries covenantal obligations. David calls the promise an everlasting covenant. He easily speaks of the covenant’s permanence and its obligations in the same breath.

Deuteronomistic Solomon’s message to Hiram includes exegetical interventions with Nathan’s promise that explain and deduce some of its implications about the house of Yahweh.³⁰ Notice Solomon’s interpretive explanations (bold and underlining signify verbal parallels, and italics signify similar concepts):

When the king had settled in his house and Yahweh **granted** him **rest** from his enemies **all around** . . . [Nathan said,] “I **will grant** you **rest** from *all your enemies*. Yahweh declares to you that Yahweh will establish a house for you. ¹²When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up *your offspring* to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” (2 Sam 7:1, 11b–13)

[Solomon said,] “You know that my father David was not able to build a house for the name of Yahweh his God because of battles all around him, until Yahweh *put them under his feet*. ⁴But now Yahweh my God has **given** me **rest on every side**, and there is no adversary or trouble. ⁵So I intend to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, as Yahweh told my father David, saying, ‘*Your son* whom I will put on the throne in your place will build the house for my name.’” (1 Kgs 5:3–5[17–19])

The Deuteronomistic narrator is anxious to connect the Davidic oracle’s house of Yahweh with the place legislation by characterizing Solomon’s rest with the term “safety” (4:25[5:5]; cf. Deut 12:10–

²⁹ For verbal parallels between 2 Samuel 7 and 23:1–7, see Michael Avioz, *Nathan’s Oracle (2 Samuel 7) and Its Interpretations* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 64.

³⁰ *Contra* Avioz who does not see any interpretive intervention (82).

11).³¹ Meanwhile Solomon contents himself with deducing that David's temple-building disability is nothing other than his constant warfare. Though Solomon only alludes to Nathan's promise, his exegetical deduction confirms Nathan's allusion to the place legislation. Yahweh said, "I will give you rest" (2 Sam 7:11; cf. Deut 12:10–11), and Solomon deduces that the absence of rest prevented David from building a house for the name of Yahweh (1 Kgs 5:3[17]).³² Moreover, he says, "Yahweh my God *has given me rest on every side*, and there is no adversary or trouble. *So I intend to build* a house for the name of Yahweh my God" (5:4–5a[18–19a]; emphasis added; cf. Deut 12:10–11).

Yahweh responds to David's request with incredulity: "Really!? Are you the one to build a house for me to live in?" (2 Sam 7:5).³³ Solomon frames Yahweh's refusal to David more generously by emphasizing the necessary prerequisite of rest.³⁴ Solomon's exegetical deduction highlights the need to be sensitive to conflicted intentions within complex settings as well as the sovereign will of the deity. Yahweh grants David's request but on his own terms and according to his choosing. Yahweh exercises his prerogative to make a house for David before a house might be built for him. And, significantly, Solomon later goes on to explain that Yahweh views David's desire to build a temple in a positive light (1 Kgs 8:18). Many interpreters fail to make room for complex characterizations and subtle ironies prevalent throughout biblical literature.³⁵

During Solomon's blessing of the congregation gathered at the temple's dedication he interpretively blends the house of Yahweh

³¹ See Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 102.

³² *Contra* Gray, who does not take 2 Samuel 7:11 into account and only notes 7:1 in the background of 1 Kings 5:3[17]. See John Gray, *I and II Kings, A Commentary*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 151. *Contra* Pruess, who accepts that the Chronicler revises history by speaking of Solomon enjoying "peace on every side" (1 Chr 22:18) based on the promise to David (v. 9), but who does not acknowledge the tradition in Solomon's own mouth in 1 Kings 5:3–4 [17–18]. See H. D. Pruess, "יָנַח," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 9:281.

³³ See Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, 71.

³⁴ See a thoughtful comparison of Solomon's defense of David in 1 Kings 5 and 8 in Avioz, *Nathan's Oracle*, 90–91.

³⁵ On complex characterization in biblical narrative, see Schnittjer, "Bad Ending of Ezra-Nehemiah," 54n70. Jeannine K. Brown helpfully encourages students that "meaning is complex yet determinate" and that "ambiguity can and often does attend meaning." *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 73–78, 80–84.

from the Davidic promise with the place legislation (bold and underlining signify verbal parallels, and broken underlining signifies marking of citation).³⁶

But you shall seek the place Yahweh your God **will choose from among all your tribes to set his name there** for his dwelling. (Deut 12:5)³⁷

I have not lived in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. . . . Now, say to my servant David, “Thus says Yahweh Almighty: ‘I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be ruler over my people Israel. . . . He [David’s seed] will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.’” (2 Sam 7:6a, 8, 13)

Then he [Solomon] said: “Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David. For he said, ¹⁶‘From the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, **I have not chosen** a city **from among all the tribes of Israel to have a house built** so that my name might be there, but I have chosen David to be over my people Israel.’ ¹⁷My father David had it in his heart to build a house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel. ¹⁸But Yahweh said to my father David, ‘Regarding that it is in your heart to build a house for my name, your heart was right. ¹⁹Yet, you shall not build the house, but your son, who comes forth from your body—he will build the house for my name.’ ²⁰Yahweh has upheld the promise he made. I have risen in place of David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as Yahweh promised, and I have built the house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel. ²¹**I have set up a place there** for the ark, in which is the covenant of Yahweh that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt.” (1 Kgs 8:15–21)³⁸

Solomon uses language from Nathan’s oracle repeatedly in verses 17, 18, and 19 (cf. 2 Sam 7:13). His major exegetical intervention hinges on the interpretive blend in verse 16 and the two phrases to mark allusions in verses 15 and 20. Both require close attention.

Richter worries over the way advocates of name theology infer

³⁶ Observations on the interpretive blend in 1 Kings 8:15–21 are indebted to Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, 86–89, 251. The expression “interpretive blend” is based on but broader than “legal blend” coined by Fishbane, *Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 110–19, 134–36. Legal blends work identically to interpretive blends in other genres and make up a subset of the commonplace phenomenon of interpretive blends appearing across all genres of the Christian Bible.

³⁷ My translation of Deuteronomy 12:5 follows the Masoretic Text—the more difficult reading. For a detailed critique of Richter’s conjectural emendation, see Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use*, 197n17.

³⁸ The translation here follows the Masoretic Text without the plus in the Septuagint (con. Gray, *I and II Kings*, 241). See below for detailed interaction with the evidence in the footnote on 2 Chronicles 6:5–6.

presence from the use of the auxiliary infinitive of “to be” in the phrase “so that my name might be there (לְהִיֹּת שְׁמִי שָׁם)” in verse 16. She recognizes the close relationship of this phrase and the same auxiliary infinitival use of “to be” in the choosing of David “to be over my people Israel (לְהִיֹּת עַל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל)” in the same verse. Richter theorizes that this construction of the “deuteronomic idiom [of the name] was pioneered in this passage—the speechwriter has altered the deuteronomic idiom in order to make the association between David and the *place*.”³⁹ Because of the way this affects the name idiom, Richter speculates that it likely was inserted by an exilic editor.⁴⁰ Richter’s conjecture fails to account for the symmetry of 1 Kings 8, which suggests integrity rather than accretions of ideological editorial layers.⁴¹ In any case, the evidence supports Richter’s basic observation of the connection between the two phrases, but it points in the opposite direction than her proposal. Solomon is not trying to use the Davidic promise to leverage the place legislation but to leverage the Davidic promise.

Solomon’s rapid-fire repetitions of language from Nathan’s oracle in verses 16, 17, 18, and 19 indicate his agenda. More than this the structure of verse 16 folds an allusion to the place legislation into the Davidic promise framework (see underlining in 1 Kgs 8:16 above). Even the parallel auxiliary infinitival phrase comes from the Davidic promise. Solomon uses the same syntactical structure to splice the place legislation into his point about the promise to his father. Notice the repetition of the same finite verb form in 1 Kings 8:16 to set up the repetition of the same auxiliary infinitive construction from 2 Samuel 7:8 (italics signify finite verbs and underlining infinitive uses of “to be”).

I took you (לָקַחְתִּיךָ Qal perfect) from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be ruler over my people Israel (לְהִיֹּת נָגִיד עַל־עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל). (2 Sam 7:8)

I have not chosen (בְּחַרְתִּי Qal perfect) a city from among all the tribes

³⁹ Richter, *Deuteronomistic History*, 87; emphasis original.

⁴⁰ See Richter, 87.

⁴¹ See detailed explanation of the symmetry and integrity of 1 Kings 8 in Gary N. Knoppers, “Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon’s Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist’s Program,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1999): 233–39. Knoppers proposes chiastic structure of 1 Kings 8 is collaborated by Lissa Wray Beal’s similar but less detailed chiastic structure; see *1 and 2 Kings*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 133. Knoppers stresses that symmetry suggests the desire to capture the complexities of Solomon’s temple dedication (238). He also stresses the unlikelihood of emphasizing the function of the temple during the exile after the temple had been destroyed (247).

of Israel to have a house built so that my name might be there (לְהִיֹּת שְׁמִי שָׁמָּה), but *I have chosen* (וָאֶבְחַרְךָ Qal wayyiqtol common plural) David to be over my people Israel (לְהִיֹּת עַל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל). (1 Kgs 8:16)

Solomon does not have in mind subtle metaphysical recasting of the sense of “name” in verse 16 (con. Richter). He uses catchword mechanics commonplace in interpretive blends to identify the Torah expectation underlying the Davidic promise.⁴² Solomon repeats the sense of how the name will be there four more times in the next four verses, alluding to what Nathan said (1 Kgs 8:17–20; cf. 2 Sam 7:13). Solomon seeks to emphatically declare that the building of the temple fulfills the expectation of the place legislation.

Solomon’s twofold use of overt marking of citation reinforces even further the same point. He makes clear that David’s son building the temple bears witness to Yahweh’s fidelity to David. Solomon says Yahweh “has fulfilled *what he promised with his own mouth to my father David*. . . . Yahweh has upheld the promise he made. I have risen in place of David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, *just as Yahweh promised*, and I have built the house for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel” (1 Kgs 8:15, 20; emphasis added). Solomon’s temple serves as the empirical evidence of Yahweh’s faithfulness before Israel.⁴³ Solomon uses the temple as an effect to deduce the place legislation as the cause in order to validate the election of David. The election of the place and the election of David stand together within the singular sovereign will of Yahweh, and they are actualized by building the temple.

In sum, Deuteronomistic David’s interpretive allusions to Nathan’s oracle emphasize that the promise of a house of David is irrevocable with obligations. It is a covenant. Like other ancient covenants, Yahweh’s covenant with David is permanent and includes responsibilities for David’s house. David does not connect the promises back to the blessing of Judah.

Deuteronomistic Solomon’s interpretive allusions to Nathan’s oracle circle around its promise for the house of Yahweh. Solomon explains that David could not build the temple because of constant warfare. Solomon binds together the election of the house of David and the election of a place for Yahweh’s name by an interpretive blend of Nathan’s oracle and the place legislation. It is worth noting that Yahweh’s second revelation to Solomon affirms all of the

⁴² Cf. “name” in Deuteronomy 12:5; 2 Samuel 7:13; 1 Kings 8:16.

⁴³ Knoppers makes a similar point by comparing the language of 1 Kings 8:16 and 2 Samuel 7. “Prayer and Propaganda,” 243.

exegetical allusions made by David and Solomon (1 Kgs 9:3–5).

INTERPRETATION OF NATHAN'S PROMISE
BY CHRONISTIC DAVID AND SOLOMON

This section evaluates the interpretive interventions of Nathan's promise by David and Solomon in Chronicles. For this study the focus will be limited to the re-presentation of Nathan's oracle in Chronicles and how the royal father and son interpret the house of David and house of Yahweh especially in relation to the blessing of Judah and the place legislation (see figure below).

One point seems necessary to consider before evaluating the relevant speeches of David and Solomon: the Chronistic version of Nathan's oracle. The Chronicler's handling of the setting for Nathan's oracle corroborates the contention above that the Deuteronomistic narrator and Nathan allude to the place legislation and its prerequisite of "rest" required for Yahweh to choose a place to set his name. The Chronicler removes both uses of rest from this context (2 Sam 7:1, 13). Noting the first case will suffice:

When the king had settled in his house *and Yahweh granted him rest from his enemies all around*, then the king said to Nathan the prophet." (2 Sam 7:1–2a; emphasis added)

When David had settled in his house, then David said to Nathan the prophet." (1 Chr 17:1)

The Chronicler's adjustment removes the ironical already/not yet rest that the Deuteronomist used to characterize David's request. More importantly, in Chronicles the divine selection of the place happens in stages with the resting place finally established at the dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chr 6:6; 7:12).

The many minor differences in spelling, syntax, and style in the Chronistic version of the Davidic promise may be passed by as non-interpretive.⁴⁴ The present purposes only require evaluating the shift in personal pronouns from "your house" to "my house" in the concluding pronouncement of the Chronistic promise.

In the (in)famous chapter in which Wellhausen ridicules the Chronicler's "mutilation" of the "old and genuine" history in Samuel and Kings, he takes special note of the concluding sentence of

⁴⁴ For a full color-coded, side-by-side presentation of 1 Chronicles 17:1–15, 16–17 in Hebrew and English, see Gary Edward Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament in Parallel Layout* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, forthcoming); and in a different format, see Abba Bendavid, *Parallels in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Carta, 1972), 42–43.

the Davidic promise. He claims that “house” in 1 Chronicles 17:14 means “without any ambiguity the temple” because he used the article to say *the house* in 17:4 which “does not, like *a house*, contain that possibility of a double meaning on which the original point depends [in 2 Sam 7:5].”⁴⁵ His series of mocking criticisms seems to stand behind his exaggeration of this point. The shift of pronouns from second-person singular to first-person singular indicates a bold exegetical intervention rather than a blunder.⁴⁶

This interpretive move is not isolated to the Chronistic version of Nathan’s promise. As noted above, Nathan’s interchange of David’s house, throne, and kingdom make them semantically parallel in this context. Notice that David and the Chronicler both follow up on the shift in pronouns at the end of Nathan’s promise (italics signify verbal parallels and bold signifies exegetical intervention).

Your house and your kingdom will be secure before me forever, your throne will be established forever. (2 Sam 7:16)⁴⁷

I will set him over **my house and my kingdom forever**, his throne will be established forever. (1 Chr 17:14)

[David:] He [Yahweh] has chosen my son Solomon to sit upon *the throne of the kingdom of Yahweh* over Israel. (28:5b)

[Chronicler:] Solomon sat upon *the throne of Yahweh* as king in place of his father David. (29:23)

The Chronicler’s interpretive allusion advances revelation. The promise to David is personal to the deity. Yahweh’s claim of David’s seed as Yahweh’s son naturally triggers the expanded connotation of his house (17:13–14). Now “Yahweh’s house” stands inclusive of the palace and the shrine in the place he has chosen. The divine identification of the Davidic heir initiates further advances

⁴⁵ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. A. Menzies and J. S. Black (1885; repr., Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 177. The evidence in 1 Chronicles 28:5b and 29:23 presented herein eliminates Wellhausen’s point grounded on special pleading.

⁴⁶ Others have observed the Chronicler’s bold moves. See Gary N. Knoppers, “Changing History: Nathan’s Oracle and the Structure of the Davidic Monarchy in Chronicles,” in *Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, Its Exegesis, and Its Language*, ed. Moshe Ben-Asher et al. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2007), 107; and Sarah Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, trans. Anna Barber (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 308–15. Japhet says: “the kingship is not ‘before’ YHWH; it *is* YHWH’s,” 314 (emphasis original).

⁴⁷ Translation here follows the Septuagint and a few Hebrew manuscripts with “before me” (לפני) versus “before you” (לפניך) in the Masoretic Text (see note A in the critical apparatus of *Biblia Hebraica Kittel* or *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*). Nearly all modern committee translations follow the Septuagint here.

of the revelation of the kingdom of God in the gospel of messiah.

Chronistic David's three interpretive interventions with Nathan's promise appear in the massive insert of non-synoptic narratives in 1 Chronicles 22–29. After David's sin with the census, he bought the threshing floor as a place to repent (2 Sam 24 // 1 Chr 21). The threshing floor later became the site of the temple (1 Chr 22:1), so it provides a natural segue into David's extensive preparations for the temple his son will build. The speeches of David include a private conference with Solomon, instructions for worship personnel, and a public assembly (22:6–16; 23:25–26; 28:2–7).⁴⁸

David's speech reinforces many of the same themes as his allusions to Nathan's oracle in the Deuteronomistic narrative: Yahweh's fatherhood to the Davidic ruler (v. 10); everlasting dynasty (v. 10); and urging obedience to covenantal obligations (vv. 11–13).⁴⁹ David also explains his stockpile of materials to construct the temple and offers detailed advice on how to build it (vv. 14–16).

David's explanations of why he could not build the house of Yahweh himself shine light on the relationship between Nathan's oracle and the place legislation. David memorably frames as direct discourse from Yahweh that he has shed too much blood (22:8). He goes on to speak at length about the need for peace in Solomon's days, thereby alluding to the place legislation (22:9). David may be referring to direct revelation not narrated elsewhere in Scripture. Yet, the language in the next lines makes it sound like he could be offering a highly interpretive loose paraphrase of Nathan's promise (bold and underlining signify verbal parallels).

He [Yahweh] **will give** you **rest from all** your **surrounding enemies** so that you live in safety. Then the place that Yahweh your God chooses to place his name. (Deut 12:10b–11a; emphasis added)

[Nathan:] I will raise up your seed after you who will be one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for me. I will establish his throne forever. I will be his father and he will be my son. (1 Chr 17:11b–13a)

[David:] Behold, a son will be born to you who will be a man of rest. **will give** him **rest from all** his **surrounding enemies**. For his name will be Solomon, and I will grant peace and quiet to Israel all of his days. He will build a house for my name. He will be my son and I will be his father. I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Isra-

⁴⁸ On the parallels between 1 Kings 5:3–5[17–19]; 8:17–19; and 1 Chronicles 22:7–20, see Avioz, *Nathan's Oracle*, 148–49.

⁴⁹ Knoppers notes that David's admonishment for Solomon to obey Yahweh's statutes in 1 Kings 2:3–4 does not connect to building the temple as they are connected in 1 Chronicles 22:12–13. "Changing History," 115.

el forever. (22:9–10)

The inversion of father and son in 17:13 and 22:10 reflects a common habit among biblical authors when making allusions.⁵⁰ The extensive verbal parallels to Nathan's earlier promise offer good reason to suspect David's conference with Solomon offers his own interpretive deductions. David builds his interpretation around the prerequisite for rest in the place legislation. For David, the place legislation offers an explanation as to why Yahweh disallowed David from building the temple.⁵¹ In response, David insists that Solomon's rule be characterized by peace. David's exegetical blend shows how the place legislation binds together the house of David and house of Yahweh within the Davidic promise.

David's exegetical deduction highlights the deep irony built into the prerequisite for Yahweh to select a place for his name. A ruler cannot vanquish the enemies all around and also have a rule of peace. Building a house for the name of Yahweh is an inherently multigenerational project. David recognizes the situation as he turns to the officials of Israel. He says: "Is not Yahweh your God with you? Has he not *granted rest from all those surrounding you? For he has given into my hand the inhabitants of the land* and the land is subject to Yahweh and to his people" (22:18; emphasis added). The required task of defeating the enemy and then building the temple sets apart building a temple for Yahweh from royal propaganda in competing ancient cultures.

The broad pattern repeated throughout ancient Neo-Assyrian and northwest Mesopotamian royal inscriptions is military conquest followed by building projects within the rule of each individual king. Green notes that the royal inscriptions often use dischronological arrangements to achieve this pattern since military campaigns and building projects frequently overlapped. The larger issue turns on the glory that the kings enjoy by building

⁵⁰ Inverted allusions are commonly referred to as Seidel's theory after the scholar who identified the practice. Inverted citations seem designed to cause listeners to spend an extra moment considering the allusive relationship to the donor context. See Pancratius C. Beentjes, "Discovering a New Path of Intertextuality: Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. L. J. de Regt, J. de Waard, and J. P. Fokkelman (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), 49.

⁵¹ *Contra* Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 397. Fishbane argues that David's "flagrant violation" of the donor scriptural traditions stems from the Chronicler's desire to push back against the violence and dissension that broke apart the restoration community. The evidence of interpretive allusion to Deuteronomy 12 in 1 Chronicles 22 points in a different direction.

palaces, temples, gardens, and other structures.⁵² Many other differences exist between the first-person, self-aggrandizing ancient royal inscriptions and the third-person, critical-prophetic biblical narratives. The crucial point for evaluating the exegetical allusions in and upon the Davidic promise is the impossibility of David enjoying in his own lifetime the military conquest and temple-building pattern pervasive in ancient Near Eastern royal ideology.⁵³

The necessary multigenerational project of securing rest and building a house for Yahweh begins to explain some of the complex undercurrents in Nathan's oracle. David is denied the conventional royal arc of conquest then building a temple. This corroborates the line of interpretation that sees Yahweh pushing back against David's self-serving request (see above). Yet David's giving of the precious materials he had amassed through his military successes to the next generation to build the temple reveals his commitment to his God affirming Solomon's positive view of his father's motives (cf. 1 Kgs 8:18 // 2 Chr 6:8). As noted above, ancient scriptural narrators often favor complex characterizations, conflicted motives, and embedded speeches with ironic undercurrents.

David's linking of the house of Yahweh in Nathan's oracle with the place legislation seems to bleed over into his organization of worship personnel. David's decision to re-task the Levites as worship personnel hinges on Yahweh's selection of the place. The narrator uses a pluperfect construction to embed David's deduction.

For David had said (כִּי אָמַר יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), "Yahweh the God of Israel has granted rest to his people and *he has settled in Jerusalem forever. Therefore the Levites do not need to carry the tabernacle or any of the vessels of service.*" (1 Chr 23:25–26; emphasis added)

In Chronicles the divine choosing of the place takes place in stages. Even while David accepts that only a king of peace could build a temple, he takes preparatory steps toward establishing the temple based on Yahweh's promise. David moves the ark and some worship personnel to Jerusalem (16:37–38), commissions his son (22:6–16), and re-tasks the Levites for a permanent shrine (23–26).

If David's private conference with Solomon focuses on the house of Yahweh based on allusion to the place legislation (22:6–

⁵² See Douglas J. Green, *"I Undertook Great Works": The Ideology of Domestic Achievements in West Semitic Royal Inscriptions* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 302–4. Green notes that these widely disseminated shared ideological patterns appear to have no direct or indirect literary influence on the biblical narratives of building the temple (309n66).

⁵³ That David built his own palace does not complete the desirable royal arc because it is eclipsed by his temple-building disability (2 Sam 7:2).

16), his public assembly emphasizes the house of David by allusion to the blessing of Judah (28:2–10).⁵⁴ These differences are not absolute but merely differences in emphasis. Both speeches include David’s interpretation of his constant warfare as preventing him from building the temple himself (emphasis signifies verbal parallels).⁵⁵

The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, “You have shed much blood and have engaged in many **battles. You will not build a house for my name because you have shed much blood** upon the earth before me.” (22:8)

God said to me, “**You will not build a house for my name because you are a man of battles and you have shed blood.**” (28:3)

This shared interpretation of the Davidic promise sets up both the house of Yahweh by allusion to the place legislation and the house of David by allusion to the blessing of Judah. David’s exegetical deduction combines the house of Yahweh to be built by his son during a time of rest with the election of the house of David (2 Sam 7:11–14; cf. 1 Chr 17:10–13).

In his address to the public assembly David makes explicit the election of his house as proximate fulfillment of the blessing of Judah.⁵⁶ He goes on to emphasize the promise through Nathan as irrevocable with obligations (28:7–8; 29:19). Notice the emphatic connection of election leading up to building the temple based on the Davidic promise:

Yahweh the God of Israel chose me of all my father’s house to be king over Israel forever. For *he chose Judah* as leader, and from the tribe of Judah he chose my father, and from my father’s sons he was pleased to make me king over all Israel. And of all my sons . . . *he chose Solomon*. . . He said to me: “*Solomon your son will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son and I will be a father to him.*” (1 Chr 28:4–7; emphasis added)

The crucial issue in David’s exegetical advancement pivots on the temple that Solomon will build as evidence for the election of the Davidic line. In this way David regards the house of Yahweh and

⁵⁴ Though Avioz observes the private versus public setting of David’s speeches in 1 Chronicles 22 and 28, he fails to note the shift in emphasis from the house of Yahweh to the house of David (*Nathan’s Oracle*, 158–60).

⁵⁵ Ralph W. Klein argues that shedding blood does not relate to warfare but to David’s sin with the census. *1 Chronicles*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 437. This explanation fails to adequately handle the context of David’s speech that permission to build the temple hinges on military aggression versus a time of peace (1 Chr 22:8, 18).

⁵⁶ See Schnittjer, “Blessing of Judah,” 32–34; and Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use*, 754–55.

the house of David as inherently intertwined. The fulfillment of the place legislation validates the fulfillment of the blessing of Judah in the Davidic dynasty and vice versa.⁵⁷

David's exegetical move does more than identify the building of Solomon's temple as simultaneously actualizing the fulfillment of two long-awaited Torah expectations. David's exegetical connection suggests that the royal patronage of the temple is the point of the rule of the Judah king. If the covenantal relationship of Yahweh and his people is epitomized in the declaration "I am your God and you are my people," then it gets sharpened in the election of the Davidic rule to establish temple worship.

When Yahweh says, "I have chosen him to be my son and I will be a father to him," the house of David overlays the house of Yahweh.⁵⁸ As Yahweh enacts divine sonship of the Davidic heir in order to build the temple, he causes both houses to share a single identity and a single mission. Deuteronomistic Nathan said to David: "Your house and your kingdom" (2 Sam 7:16). Yet if Yahweh says that your son is my son (7:14 // 1 Chr 17:13; 28:7), the Chronicler realizes the house of David and the kingdom of David (2 Sam 7:16) transpose to the house of Yahweh and the kingdom of Yahweh (1 Chr 17:14).

Yahweh's taking of David's son as his own son is the engine of David's exegetical advances. It requires more than kingship and military success to build the temple for the name of Yahweh. Yahweh identifies who he would choose to build a house for his name—the king who is at one time son of David and son of Yahweh.

David senses that the promised king and the election of a place for Yahweh's name are not two separate expectations. When Yahweh says your son is my son, he unmasks the singular destiny of the two promises. In this way Yahweh could tell David that your

⁵⁷ The focus in this study is restricted to the proximate fulfillment of two Torah expectations (blessing of Judah and place legislation) by actualization of the Davidic promise signified by the building of Solomon's temple. The debate on the Chronicler's view of the fulfillment of the Davidic promise falls outside the present study. For a helpful summary of the debate over the past six decades with a both/and outcome, see Mark J. Boda, "Gazing through the Cloud of Incense: Davidic Dynasty and Temple Community in the Chronicler's Perspective," in *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography*, ed. Paul S. Evans and Tyler F. Williams (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 215–45.

⁵⁸ Harmon makes the point that Yahweh's declaration of his fatherhood over the Davidic heir aligns the Davidic promise with the interconnections of God's covenant across the Christian Scriptures. See the section on abiding authority in Matthew Harmon, "OT Use of the OT: Comparison with the NT Use of OT," *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023).

house is my house. And David can claim that the temple his son builds fulfills at one time both the blessing of Judah and the place legislation. For the house of Yahweh is none other than the house of David, and the house of David is none other than the house of Yahweh.

One last critical point needs to be observed. The connection of the house of David and the house of Yahweh in the Davidic promise advances revelation. Yahweh makes clear that he never asked for a house (2 Sam 7:7 // 1 Chr 17:6). It is David's idea.⁵⁹ David's exegetical deduction makes a retrospective connection declaring Yahweh's ancient will from the days of the Hebrew ancestors as recorded in Torah. Yahweh had said he would wait to choose a place for his name when the land enjoyed rest. Yet when he declared David's son his own son to build his house, David sees how this connects backward to the promised Judah king. David makes the bold claim that the house of Yahweh Solomon will build signifies proximate fulfillment of the election of Judah's descendant. In this way Solomon's temple signifies an unexpected accommodation of David's request and at the same time a fulfillment of an ancient promise. David's initiative growing out of his desire to build a house for his God gets folded into Yahweh's sovereign mission from of old. This advancement of revelation comes from the divine declarations that your son is my son and your house is my house.

Chronistic Solomon enhances the exegetical connections between the Davidic promise and the place legislations along the same lines as his father. Notice the plus in his blessing of the congregation at the dedication of the temple (regular font signifies verbatim parallels, bold signifies a plus, and underlining signifies verbal parallels with Deut 12:5).⁶⁰

From the time I brought my people Israel out of Egypt I did not choose a city in any tribe of Israel to build a house for my name to be there, but I have chosen David to be over my people Israel. (1 Kgs 8:16)

From the time I brought my people out of the land of Egypt I did not choose a city in any tribe of Israel to build a house for my name to be there, **and I did not choose a person to be leader⁶¹ over my people Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem for my name to be there**, and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel. (2

⁵⁹ See Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use*, 755.

⁶⁰ See Schnittjer, *Old Testament in Parallel Context*; and Bendavid, *Parallels*, 86.

⁶¹ On the significance of "leader" (רִאשׁוֹן) in Chronicles, see Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use*, 754–55.

Chr 6:5–6)

Deuteronomistic Solomon already explicitly alluded to the place legislation and even mentioned choosing “a city” (1 Kgs 8:16). Yet the syntactical structure makes the decision a sequence: “did not choose a city . . . but I have chosen David. . . . David had it in his heart to build a house for the name of Yahweh . . . [but Yahweh said:] you will not build the house but your son . . . will build a house for my name” (8:16, 17, 19). This is so in Chronicles. Solomon follows David in identifying the choices of the place and of David as a unified act of the divine will (2 Chr 6:5b–6a, see bold above).⁶²

Yahweh affirms Chronistic Solomon’s exegetical petition. “Yahweh appeared to Solomon at night and said: *‘I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices’*” (2 Chr 7:12; emphasis added and underlining marks allusion to Deut 12:5).⁶³

In sum, in Nathan’s oracle the allusions to the blessing of Judah and the place legislation broadly correspond to the house of David and house of Yahweh, respectively. The Chronicler’s bold move in identifying Yahweh’s house as inclusive of the shrine and Davidic dynasty in Jerusalem cautions against separating the actualizations of these mutually interrelated expectations.

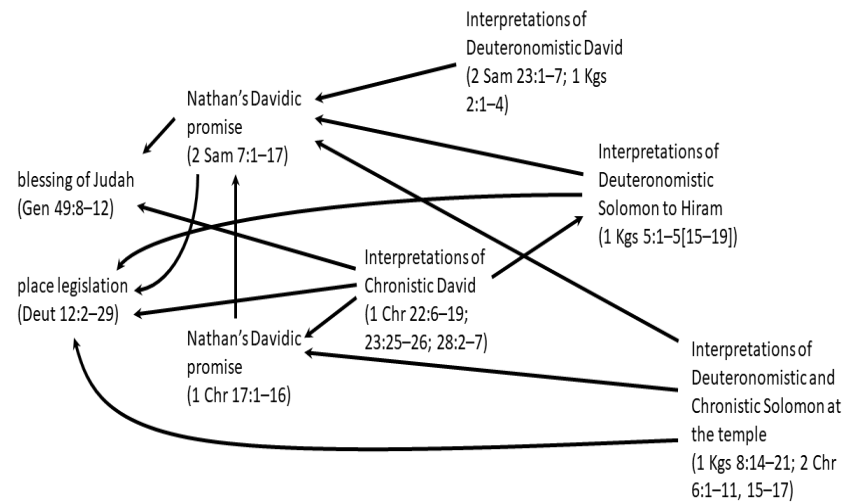
⁶² The conjectured reconstruction by Ulrich and Tov of 1 Kings 8:16 based on a suggested Septuagint *Vorlage* akin to 4QKings fragment 7 is not convincing. See Eugene Ulrich, ed., *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants*, Vetus Testamentum Supplements 134 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 325–26; and Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 223. For a summary of an earlier version of the same proposal by Martin Noth, see Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 282. Part of Tov’s reasoning is the sequence of not choose this but choose that from 1 Chronicles 6:5–6 appears in the reconstruction of 4QKings fragment 7. For Tov this means that 2 Chronicles 6:5–6 is merely a copy of the version of 1 Kings 8 he was using. But Tov’s suggestion is not necessary because 1 Kings 8:16 Masoretic Text already has “I did not choose a city . . . but I chose David.” More significantly, 4QKings fragment 7 includes the term “leader” (לָוִי) in an extant fragment not reconstructed. This evidence points in the opposite direction of the Ulrich and Tov conjectural emendation. Namely, the Chronistic plus in 2 Chronicles 6:5b uses “leader” connecting with the Chronicler’s exegetical interventions featuring this term in 1 Chronicle 5:1; 28:4 (see Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use*, 754–55). Moreover, the repetition of “for my name to be there” as represented in 2 Chronicles 6:5–6 did not give rise to a case of homoioarchton (con. Tov), but the Chronicler repeated the phrase as a resumptive repetition to enclose his interpretive intervention marked in bold above. This evidence suggests that the portion of 1 Kings 8:16 preserved in 4QKings fragment 7 includes a harmonistic expansion to agree with 2 Chronicles 6:5b. Thus 1 Kings 8:16 in the Masoretic Text is preferred.

⁶³ See Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use*, 769; and Ralph W. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 110.

CONCLUSION

The biblical evidence suggests complex, subtle, and ongoing exegetical interventions with Nathan’s oracle to David. Most of the biblical evidence has been bracketed out in this study to focus on the interpretations of David and Solomon cast as direct speech embedded in the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic narratives (see figure below). With so many moving parts this concluding section begins with a summary of interpretive conclusions followed by select exegetical and theological implications.

Figure: Narrative Sequence of Interpretations of Nathan’s Promise by David and Solomon in the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic Narratives‡



‡ This figure depicts the narrative sequence from left to right and the interpretive relationships are indicated by arrows. Vertical placement, whether higher or lower, does not signify anything.

David and Solomon both show sustained exegetical interest in Nathan’s promise. Their exegetical interventions emphasize the house of David and the house of Yahweh as actualizations of expectations from the blessing of Judah and the place legislation.

Deuteronomistic David’s interpretive interactions circle around the house of David. David interprets Yahweh’s promise to him as irrevocable even while bound by covenantal obligations. David does not sense any tension between the promise’s permanence and its obligations.

Deuteronomistic Solomon credits his father with identifying the place legislation as a donor text of the Davidic promise. Solomon explains that David’s temple-building disability pivots on his

constant warfare. This interpretation stems from the prerequisite of rest before Yahweh chooses a place for his name to dwell in the place legislation. Chronistic David makes explicit that Nathan's promise connects the expectations of the blessing of Judah and the place legislation. This corresponds with the Chronistic version of Nathan's promise that identifies the house of David as the house of Yahweh and the kingdom of Yahweh. It is the house of Yahweh (Davidic dynasty) that builds the house of Yahweh (temple). Yahweh says, in short, your house is my house. Chronistic David recognizes the different kind of situation for royal patrons of the shrine of the God of Israel in contradistinction to ancient counterparts. The arc of accomplishment is not centered in the life of an individual king—conquering enemies and erecting buildings including temples to glorify the name of the king. Instead, Israel's God is the center of the narrative arc that requires one royal generation to defeat the enemies and the next royal generation to build the house of Yahweh. The exegetical leverage for Chronistic David's interpretation of Nathan's oracle comes from the oracle itself. David views the divine declaration of Yahweh's fatherhood and the sonship of David's heir as connecting the fulfillment of the blessing of Judah and the place legislation in building the temple.

Chronistic Solomon strengthens the connection between dual actualizations of the promise for the house of David and the house of Yahweh in the Davidic promise. For Solomon, like David, building the temple provides empirical evidence that the election of David's line and the election of the place for Yahweh's name are fulfilled together.

Having summarized the conclusions of the exegetical evaluations, selected implications can be noted. First, none of the Deuteronomistic or Chronistic interpreters—Deuteronomist, Chronicler, Nathan, David, Solomon—show any concern for the supposed tension between “unconditional” and “conditional” covenants. It appears that the conditional/unconditional interrogation of the Davidic promise is a modern imposition. David repeatedly affirms that the promise is irrevocable with obligations. In David's words: It is a covenant. There appears to be a wide gap between the biblical view of how ancient divine covenants work and modern views of how ancient covenants work. The Deuteronomistic and Chronistic interpreters evaluated in this study appear to be of one mind. The Davidic promise is permanent and comes with obligations. These are two different qualities that naturally go together.

Second, biblical narrators serve the progressive revelation of God's redemptive will by their interpretive narratives. Yahweh revealed his will through Nathan's promise in its historical delivery

before David. The Deuteronomist's exegetical advances include the way the episode gets framed in its immediate context (esp. 2 Sam 7:1). The Deuteronomist also edited, arranged, and embedded direct discourses from David and Solomon, which create a layering effect with one interpretative intervention building on another. The Chronicler offers numerous interpretive enhancements by reframing several synoptic versions of Nathan's, David's, and Solomon's interpretive allusions as well as by new embedded speeches to fill out the backstory. All of the moving parts of the interpretive narratives of the Deuteronomist and Chronicler do more than merely draw out theological explanations of what Nathan promised in the historical event itself. The narrative presents authoritative interpretations that advance revelation in their own right. Yahweh reveals his will through his chosen delegates: Nathan, David, Solomon, and the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic narrators. Biblical narration, narrative design, and narrative shaping all serve as vehicles for authoritative advances of revelation in different ways than, but as effectively as, prophetic announcements themselves.

Third, revelatory advances activated by exegetical allusion come in many forms and may include complications. Readerly attitudes that expect scriptural interpretive allusions to clarify and simplify revelation are not so much irrelevant as wrongheaded. The trajectory of David's own responses increases in subtlety from one to the next. David moves from gratitude (7:18–29) to recognition of the covenantal structure of the promise (23:1–7; 1 Kgs 2:1–4) to grounding the promise in the place legislation (1 Chr 22:6–16) to the blessing of Judah and identifying the house of David and the house of Yahweh as actualization of Yahweh's singular will (28:2–10). David's brilliant exegetical deduction—shedding too much blood—can easily make sense of all of it. But the source of this exegetical advancement of revelation requires David's subtle and protracted consideration of the details of Nathan's promise.

Finally, the impetus for the series of scriptural exegetical advances that stems from the Davidic promise starts with David. Yes, it reaches its high point when Yahweh declares that your house is my house and I am taking your son to be my son. But it starts with David requesting to make a house for the name of Yahweh. At first Yahweh is incredulous. He claims that he never asked for such a thing (2 Sam 7:7 // 1 Chr 17:6). A house for Yahweh is David's idea. And yet, after years of pondering David comes to the conclusion that the whole thing has been part of Yahweh's will since the days of the Hebrew ancestors. Yahweh actualizes the great Torah expectations of the blessing of Judah and the place legislation when he says your house is my house.