Advent 4 2 Samuel 7:8-16
December 20, 2020 26-23-28/9-21

What a God We Have!

I. How gracious He had been to David.

II. His Christmas promise to David.

Dear Christian friends,

As you come to the **special Christmas services** this week you really won't hear anything NEW. It will be the SAME OLD MESSAGE of **our sin** and **God's amazing grace**. We'll hear again that SIMPLE, BEAUTIFUL Christmas gospel, ***"Unto you is born …a SAVIOR."***

As we gather around the manger it is my HOPE AND PRAYER that **each one** of us is overcome by the AWE of Christmas. Paul had that awe in the epistle reading, ***"to God, who alone is wise, be glory forever through Jesus Christ."*** As we make our FINAL PREPARATIONS for Christmas these verses lead us to exclaim, "WHAT A GOD WE HAVE!" We can see that 1)in how gracious God had **been to David** and 2)in God's Christmas promise **to David**.

I. How gracious God had been to David.

WHAT KIND of a God **do we have**? Just look what He all did for David! ***"This is what the LORD of Armies says (to My servant David). I took you from the pasture, from following sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel."*** David was the eighth and youngest son of Jesse. He had been pretty much **just** ONE OF MANY shepherds who **lived and worked** around Bethlehem. **Bethlehem** itself was a relatively unimportant town. It's ONE BIG CLAIM to fame was that Jacob had buried his **beloved wife Rachel** nearby. But that was 1,000 years ago!

Then one day the **prophet Samuel** CAME TO TOWN. At God's command Samuel ***"anointed"*** David to be the **next king** over Israel. ***"I took you,"*** God reminded David from tending the flocks **to being** the CONQUEROR of nations – from being Saul's servant to being his SUCCESSOR. David's rise to glory – his success on the **battlefield** – was ALL GOD'S DOING. WHAT A GOD David had!

"I have been with you wherever you went. I have cut off all your enemies from before you." These verses take us to late in David's life. David was SETTLED INTO a nice, new, comfy palace in Jerusalem. It had been a LONG ROAD getting there – a LONG-TIME **coming**. ALONG THE WAY there were fights and flights – triumphs and **tragedies**. But THROUGH IT ALL God had been with David – watching over him – protecting him – working everything out for him. WHAT A GOD David had!

HOW GRACIOUS God had been to David. YOU KNOW David was no angel. David had plenty of SKELETONS in his closet. There was his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her **husband Uriah**. David's PRIDE brought misery and a plague on his people. David was a POLYGAMIST – he had eight different wives! You HAVE TO WONDER what kind of a **father** he was. **One** of his sons rapes his sister. Another son plotted to **overthrow** him.

God knew each one of David's **many** sins. David knew God knew all about him. David knew the RICH, AMAZING GRACE of his God. God's **grace** is NOT FOR the worthy and the **good**. Grace is UNDESERVED love. **Grace** reaches out and RECLAIMS and RESTORES the sinner. David was savoring God's rich grace when he wrote in Psalm 32, ***"How blessed is the person whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is covered. How blessed is the person whose guilt the LORD does not charge against him. I said, 'I will confess my rebellion to the LORD,' and you forgave the guilt of my sin."***

Can't we see a **lot of ourselves** in David? What about those words, ***"I took you"***? We've all had water put on us ***"in the name of the Father - Son - and Holy Spirit."*** In that SIMPLE ACT of Holy

Baptism God took us out of the **unbelieving world** and made us members of His family. Or as Peter put it, ***"Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God."***

Can't we also apply to ourselves the words, ***"I have been with you wherever you have gone"***? Like David it may have been a LONG HAUL and a LONG TIME in **getting to where** we are today. David's rise to being king was NOT AN EASY ROAD. David had days where he was SCRATCHING his head **wondering what** God was up to. You know that **feeling**, don't you? Yet as we look back isn't it TRUE that God has been with us **all the way** – watching over us – protecting us – working everything out for us? WHAT A GOD we have!

We saw the skeletons in David's closet. We have OUR OWN SHARE of skeletons too. **Just like David** God knows all about every one of them. **Just like David** we too have experienced that AMAZING GRACE of our God. God didn't count our sins **against us** but AGAINST His own **sinless Son** and punished Jesus in our place on the cross. God has washed us clean in Jesus' blood and covered us with Jesus' sinless life. **For Jesus' sake** God has graciously forgiven ALL our sins and trusting in Jesus God PROMISES US eternal life in heaven the moment we die. WHAT A GOD we have!

David was overwhelmed by HOW GRACIOUS God had been to him. This chapter begins with David wanting to build a beautiful temple for God. It just DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT to David for him to enjoy **all these blessings** while God's house was NOTHING MORE than a **tent**. The prophet Nathan told David, "GO for it!" – but then God told Nathan, "NO, David is not going to build Me a temple." But God's "NO" didn't mean that He was TICKED OFF at David. God had big plans for **David** and **his family** – plans that lead us to exclaim, "WHAT A GOD we have!"

II. God's Christmas promise to David.

David was not to build a ***"house"*** – a temple – for God. But ***"the LORD declares to you*** (David) ***that the LORD Himself will make a house for you."*** The promise God made David has both SHORT and LONG-TERM **fulfillments**. Some of this was fulfilled in David's son **Solomon**. Others is only fulfilled in **great David's** GREATER SON – the Lord Jesus.

"When your days are complete and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your offspring. He will build a house for My name." This refers to Solomon. Solomon succeeded David and as promised here he built that **magnificent temple** in Jerusalem.

"When he sins, I will discipline him with a rod used by men. My faithful mercy will not depart from him as I removed it from Saul." This too was fulfilled in **Solomon** and the coming generations of **David's dynasty**. NOT ALL of David's descendants shared DAVID'S FAITH in the Lord. Solomon was led by his heathen wives AWAY from the **only real God** to the worship of **worthless idols**. That happened again and again. Sadly AS THE KINGS DID so did the **people**. GODLY KINGS can have a godly influence on their people. But UNGODLY KINGS with their **ungodly examples** only encourage their **people to be** ungodly. As promised God ***"disciplined"*** His people with **wars, hard times**, etc. – trying to KNOCK SOME SENSE into their **hard hearts**. But they just DIDN'T GET it. **Finally** David's dynasty came TO AN END when the Babylonians conquered Judah – destroyed the temple and deported the people **into exile**. 70 years later the PEOPLE came back to the Promised Land but never again did a SON of David **sit on a throne** in Jerusalem. David's FAMILY TREE was reduced to a ***"stump."***

God had every right to GIVE UP on David's family and the **Israelites**. But God had promised David, ***"My faithful mercy will not depart from him - your kingdom - your throne - will be established forever."*** That promise is ONLY FULFILLED IN Jesus. WHAT A GOD that He would keep His **Christmas promise** to David AFTER THE WAY David's **sons** and **people** had treated Him!

David believed in the **coming Savior**. He TRUSTED that this Savior would pay for all his sins and take him to heaven when he died. Now God tells David that this Savior would come from DAVID'S OWN FAMILY!

1,000 years would pass with NOTHING HAPPENING. But then God sent the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary. ***"Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name Him Jesus. The Lord God will give him the throne of His father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will never end."***

AS WE HEAR the **Christmas gospel** this week listen to how often the NAME DAVID is used. ***"So Joseph also went up from Galilee …unto the city of DAVID …because he was of the house and lineage of DAVID."*** The angel directs the shepherds to ***"the city of DAVID"*** to find their newborn Savior. Years later on **Palm Sunday** the crowds welcomed Jesus with shouts of ***"Hosanna to the Son of DAVID."*** The Bible closes with Jesus reminding us, ***"I am the Root and Offspring of DAVID."*** Why the BIG FUSS about that? It's God showing He KEPT His **Christmas promise** to David. It's God saying, "You CAN COUNT on Me to always keep My promises!" WHAT A GOD we have – ever faithful to His Word!

Think of what God is promising US here! **Our Savior** is a King whose ***"kingdom will never end."*** Our King is NO MERE MAN. Jesus is the **eternal Son** of God born the ***"Son of David."*** What Jesus all did for us ENDURES FOREVER. The forgiveness we have in Jesus' blood is **eternal** forgiveness – our sins will never come back to HAUNT us. The righteousness we have in Jesus' holy life is **eternal** righteousness – there's NO IMPROVING on it. Jesus' defeat of Satan **eternally crushed** the devil. Jesus' victory over death **means** ETERNAL LIFE in heaven for us when we die. Our King will never be toppled – He'll **never** retire. WHAT A GOD we have to promise to DO JUST THAT for us **at Christmas**!

HOW did David respond to all this? ***"David went and sat before the LORD and said: Who am I, LORD? What is my house that You have brought me to this point? Yet this was a small thing in Your eyes, LORD God. You have also spoken about the future of the house of Your servant. LORD God, there is none like You. There is no God except You. Your words are truth."*** Isn't that that PERFECT PRAYER for us as we gather again at the manger? May **this Christmas** lead us to exclaim, "WHAT A GOD we have!" Amen.

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