

Advent Reading for Thursday, December 7, 2017 ***“A Branch from the Root of Jesse” (Isaiah 11:1-2)***

When the Jews were removed from their land, and taken away as captives to Babylon in 586 B.C., the kingly family of David, which God had promised would endure forever, appeared to be extremely weak. Today's prophecy from Isaiah indicates, however, that life remained in the *stump* in the family of Jesse, who was David's father. This new life was to manifest itself in the form of one who would be called the *Rod and Branch*. *“Then a rod will spring forth from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord”* (Isaiah 11:1-2).

Even as the Spirit of the Lord came upon David when he was anointed king (I Samuel 16:13), He would also rest upon David's descendant, Christ (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18). Though Jesus was largely rejected by Israel as their King, the recurring promise of Scripture is that He will one day rule the world.

In terms of fulfillment in Christ's first coming, we turn to the words of the angel, Gabriel, when he informed Mary of her pregnancy: *“Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end”* (Luke 1:30-33).

In addition, in Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, he mentioned the covenant God had made with David: *“David knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SIT ONE OF HIS DESCANDENTS ON HIS THRONE; he looked ahead and saw the resurrection of Christ, THAT HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID HIS FLESH SUFFER DECAY. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses”* (Acts 2:30-32).

These are but two of a number of examples where Jesus is identified as the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. And as we have seen in our earlier readings, other promises still await our Lord's second return for their fulfillment.

In terms of application, the careful attention Scripture gives to the Davidic Covenant, and our Lord being the ultimate fulfillment of it, is meant to remind and encourage us of God's sovereign involvement in history. Though world events can be confusing and often troubling, as has often been said, *history is His story!* The more we read and study God's Word, the more our faith will grow, and the greater will be our peace.

It is also significant that God's Word contains many encouraging promises of the work He is doing in His church and in us as His people: *"I will build My church, and the gates of hell will not overpower it"* (Matthew 16:18). *"Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will continue to perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 1:6).

Giving Thanks – Thank you, Lord, for being unconditionally faithful; whatever You promise, You will fulfill, and whatever You begin, You always bring to completion!