

Commentary on the Readings for December 24, 2017

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Promises, promises! How often have we heard that remark when we learn of a promise being made? In the Readings for today, we learn about God making promises, first to King David in the Old Testament and then to Mary in the beginning of the New Testament. These promises, when fulfilled as they were, changed the world far beyond our understanding. And yet, do you ever take the time to try to understand the significance of God's promises, these and others?

The **First Reading** is from the *Second Book of Samuel (7:1-16)*. In this passage, Samuel, is a prophet at the time of King David who has desires and expectations of building a great temple. However, God had different plans for David and He made a promise to David in the form of a covenant, which assured David that a descendent of David's would remain on the throne of Judah (Jerusalem) forever. Thus, David's descendants became known as "the house of David."

The **Responsorial Psalm (89:2-29)** is meditation on the promises God made to David and the blessings bestowed upon him for following God's will not his own. David, in spite of some weaknesses, led a good life in the service of God and his reign as king became known as the "golden age of Judaism."

The **Second Reading** is the very ending of *Paul's Letter to the Romans (16:25-27)*. In this beautiful passage, we have a doxology, a brief exclamation or blessing of God in recognition of some truth. Here, Paul is praising Almighty God for keeping His promise to David in the person of Jesus who is not only King of Jerusalem, but "King of kings and "Lord of lords."

The **Gospel Reading** is from the *Gospel of Luke (1:26-38)*. This passage is the re-telling of the story of the Angel of the Lord promising Mary that if she agreed, she would become the Mother of the Savior of the World. We should be eternally grateful that Mary agreed. Who knows what would have happened if she had said "No!" But as we said in last week's commentary, Mary was the greatest "witness" and the first disciple of Jesus the Savior. From her earliest age, she was devoted to God and longed to be His servant. The promise made to Mary was the fulfillment of those made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the other great persons of the Old Testament and to all mankind. (See Hebrews 6:13-15)

Christmas is the fulfillment of the great promises of God, the beginning of our salvation. It is good to enjoy the traditional celebrations of the Christmas season; but take some time to be alone with Christ in Prayer, thanking Him for the many blessings He has bestowed on each of us through our families, our Church and our very spirit. So the question now becomes: What promises have YOU made that are yet to be fulfilled? Something to think about during your Prayer Time this week!

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