

# “CHRIST: THE PROMISE OF FULFILLMENT.”

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**First Christian Reformed Church**

**December 25, 2025, 10:00 AM**

**Scripture Texts: Luke 1:67-79; I Corinthians 1:20**

## **Introduction.**

I went to the eye doctor last week to get a new prescription for my glasses. It has been ten years and since I have nearsightedness, distant objects are getting a bit blurry.

God doesn't suffer from nearsightedness. In fact, God is supernaturally farsighted. He is like the father in the parable of the prodigal son who saw his son coming while he was still a long way off (Luke 15:20).

God could see the coming of His Son while He was still far off. God saw the incarnation of Jesus, while it was still 4000 years off, from the Garden of Eden to all the way to Bethlehem. Not only that but He could also see and read all the fine print in between, all the littlest details written into history.

This advent we have looked at some of those details in history, called covenants, and looking through them we could see what God was seeing from Eden to Bethlehem. This morning we arrive at the fulfillment of all God's promises in His covenants.

## **Fulfillment:**

**II Corinthians 1:20** For all the promises of God find their *Yes* in [Christ]. That is why it is through him that we utter our *Amen* to God for his glory.

Christ is the Yes and Amen of God, the so let it be, it is accomplished. The promise is fulfilled. God has remembered His holy covenant and kept His Word, fully, faithfully, finally and forever in His Son.

We have been saying all along that all of God's purposes are redemptive and that means they all point to Christ. So it follows that Christ is the fulfillment of all of God's purposes and plans.

From Adam to Abraham, to Moses to David, God was been telling one story—a story fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ. “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (II Cor. 1:20).

## **Zechariah's prophecy in song.**

I have used Zechariah's prophecy because he captures how the covenants of old are fulfilled in Christ. His prophecy is especially poignant when we consider the background to it.

Remember the story when the angel appeared to foretell the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth who were advanced in years. When Zechariah questioned this possibility, the angel said Zechariah would not be able to speak until the baby was born. So Zechariah had been mute for nine months until at John's birth he was able to speak this prophecy.

But that is not the only long silence that was broken by this prophecy. God had been mute for 400 years since the last words of Malachi. For 400 years not a word from God. No prophets, no prophecies, no angels, no divine interventions. The heavens were like brass. Dead silence.

After 400 years of utter silence from heaven, Zechariah speaks, not his words, but God's words. What must it have been like for the people of God to finally hear the voice of God and to hear God utter so great a promise?

Zechariah's first words are words of blessing and thankfulness to God followed by profound insight into the promises and purposes of God. Zechariah rejoices that the Lord God of Israel has come and is visiting His people with redemption and salvation. Not only have 400 years of silence ceased, but promises made to David 1000 years ago and to Abraham 2000 years ago and Adam 4000 years ago are now being fulfilled. The fullness of time has come.

## **The Covenant with Adam — *The Promise of Redemption.***

Christ is God's Yes and Amen to the promise of redemption. When God's announcement of His covenant promise to Adam, He declared the commencement of the greatest project ever undertaken on earth, the saving of the human race. The Gospel Project.

The greatest need of all of mankind is that it must be saved from sin. Jesus is the fulfillment of the oldest promise in the OT.

Zechariah blesses God because He has “visited and redeemed his people” and raised up “a horn of salvation... to save us from our enemies.” This language reaches back all the way to Eden.

Zechariah echoes Genesis 3:15 when God promised a deliverer who would be the serpent-crusher. Christmas is the beginning of that decisive conflict. At the cross, Satan bruises Christ’s heel; at the resurrection, Christ delivers the decisive blow. He destroyed the one who had the power of death. God keeps His promise to undo the fall.

**I John 3:8** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

### **The Covenant with Abraham — *The Promise of Blessing***

Christ is God’s Yes and Amen to the promise of blessing to Abraham and all the families and nations of the world. Jesus is the Light for the Gentiles and glory for Israel.

Zechariah explicitly names Abraham: God is acting “to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham.”

Jesus Christ is the true Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). At Christmas, God sends not only Israel’s Messiah but the Savior of the nations. Through Abraham’s seed, blessing would come to all nations. The child in Mary’s womb is the one through whom God’s mercy will overflow to the world. He is the good news of great joy who is for all the people.

### **The Covenant with Moses — *The Promise of Righteousness.***

Christ is God’s Yes and Amen to the Promise of Righteousness made to Moses.

Zechariah says that salvation leads to a people who serve God “without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.” This is Mt. Sinai language. God redeemed Israel from Egypt so they might be a holy nation.

But Zechariah knows this holiness cannot come through the law alone. It must come through redemption. Christmas announces the arrival of the

one who will fulfill the law and create a truly righteous people—not by fear, but by grace. God provides the righteousness He requires.

**Galatians 4:4-5** When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Jesus is the true and better Moses, who not only delivers God's law but fulfills it perfectly. Where Israel failed, Christ obeyed. At Christmas, the Lawgiver comes under the Law, to provide the righteousness we could never achieve. Law still serves to remind us just how much we need Christ.

### **The Covenant with David — *The Promise of the King.***

Christ is God's Yes and Amen to the promise of a King and His eternal kingdom.

Zechariah rejoices that God has raised up "a horn of salvation... in the house of his servant David ... that we should be saved from our enemies." The covenant with David promised a king whose throne would endure forever. Zechariah declares that this promise is now being fulfilled.

Jesus is the Son of David, born in David's city, whose kingdom will never end. The manger is the throne room of God's eternal King. Christmas declares the true King has come, the greatest ruler Israel has ever seen and the greatest ruler the world has ever seen.

**Luke 1:32-33** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.

### **Christ — The Sunrise of All God's Promises, (vs. 78–79).**

Zechariah ends with a beautiful image: "the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." This is the dawn of redeeming grace (Silent Night).

Zechariah calls it the sunrise. Malachi calls Christ "the Sun of Righteousness." Peter calls Christ the "daystar." And in Revelation he is called "the bright and morning star."

All the covenants converge in this glorious sunrise. Redemption promised in Eden, blessing sworn to Abraham, holiness required at Mt. Sinai, and eternal kingship pledged to David—all rise together in Jesus Christ.

Christmas proclaims God has not forgotten His promises. He has remembered them all, and He has kept them in His Son, who is the covenant Redeemer, Blessing-giver, Law-keeper, and King of all kings.

### **Implications and application.**

When God promises to do something forever, everything is shaped by that promise.

I hope we have learned that the OT is not just some old history book about Jews, by Jews, for Jews. The Bible is one unified whole, telling the unfolding story of God's redemptive plan for all of mankind. The OT is a thoroughly Christian book, it preaches the Gospel, always pointing to Jesus Christ and our salvation. That promise still holds and points to the second coming of Christ.

If we have learned anything from our reading of the covenants in the OT it is that we should always be asking the question where is God and what is God doing here, how is He revealing Himself, how is He working His plan of redemption, what is He continuing to bring to completion?

**Romans 15:4** Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

**Matthew 13:16–17** Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Abraham, Moses, David would have traded places with you in a heartbeat. Think about your place in history. What are you doing with so great a gift, so great a privilege to know what you know? To have the knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of sin.

Have you ever received a homemade gift? Something someone invested their own time, effort, thought and creativity into the making of something

special for you. If they spent a couple of hours on it, that is one thing. If they had spent a month or two on it that would be yet another thing. If they had spent a full year creating this gift, that would be a whole other realm of gift.

Behold, our salvation has come. A homemade gift, 4000 years in the making.

It is a personal gift, it is a heaven-made gift. Your salvation has come, receive it. God gave His only Son for you, don't let another Christmas pass without receiving His gift, accepting it by faith and repentance, making it personal.

God saw us while we were still a long way off and with perfectly clear supernatural farsightedness began making plans for our salvation.

Down through all the corridors of time, God relentlessly pursued, purposefully followed after us through the twists and turns and mazes of our waywardness, our lostness, our sinful ways and paths, as the hound of heaven, to bring us back from captivity, back from the brink of destruction. His promises are for you. Say Yes and Amen to Christ today. Our world doesn't need better rulers, kings or presidents, it needs to submit to one true King.

Yield your fears and hopes to His reign. Let the King's peace rule your heart this Christmas. Bow your heart to King Jesus. Trust Him, obey Him, and take comfort your life is held within an unshakable kingdom.

### **Conclusion.**

As I love to say on this day every year, now is the time to go to our houses for feasting. For all who believe have a right to be very happy, He gave you the right to be the children of Abraham, heirs of God and that is cause for rejoicing. Go and feast. In the words of Solomon, "Go your way, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart."

Let your faith give you great joy, for to us a child has been born, a Son has been given and He is Christ the Lord and we have beheld His glory. Glory to God, hallelujah and Amen.