

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL 2021

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DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 22, 2021

SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 7:18-29

18 Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? 19 And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord God; you have spoken also of your servant's house for a great while to come. May this be instruction for the people, O Lord God! 20 And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord God! 21 Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have wrought all this greatness, so that your servant may know it. 22 Therefore you are great, O Lord God; for there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 23 Who is like your people, like Israel? Is there another nation on earth whose God went to redeem it as a people, and to make a name for himself, doing great and awesome things for them, by driving out before his people nations and their gods? 24 And you established your people Israel for yourself to be your people forever; and you, O Lord, became their God. 25 And now, O Lord God, as for the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, confirm it forever; do as you have promised. 26 Thus your name will be magnified forever in the saying, 'The Lord of hosts is God over Israel'; and the house of your servant David will be established before you. 27 For you, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house'; therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. 28 And now, O Lord God, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant; 29 now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you; for you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever."

DEVOTIONAL

Amanda Horan '20

In a striking plot twist, David—who intended to build a house for God in the form of a temple—learns that God intends to build him a house in

the form of a dynasty. In response to God's gift and promise, David prays. His prayer is a mixture of awe-filled humility and praise mingled with a bit of anxious insistence. Walter Brueggemann concisely characterizes David's prayer as "a sequence of deference, doxology, and demand." David's language in the latter half of his prayer is indeed forceful and assured: "And now, O Lord God, as for the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, confirm it forever; do as you have promised" (v. 25). Perhaps we can imagine the anxious anticipation in David's voice as he dwells before the Lord in prayer.

Perhaps the idea of demanding anything from God in prayer makes some of us uncomfortable; it certainly makes me uncomfortable. And yet, David says that he is emboldened to pray as he does because he trusts in God's own promise. We know from the biblical narrative about David and his descendants that their behavior does not always merit divine favor, and yet God, through the prophet Nathan, declares the covenant promise will not be taken away. God's promise for David's house and kingdom "shall be made sure forever" (2 Sam. 7:17).

David brings his insistence, his urgency, and his anxious anticipation before God in prayer. Advent should be a time of anxious anticipation, not just for the delights of holiday celebrations, but for the coming of the One who "descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness..." (Rom. 1:3-4). Perhaps, in these final days of Advent, we may be inspired by David's courage to trust in the goodness of God's promise and anxiously anticipate the coming of the Son of God.

PRAYER

O Lord God, as David says, you are God, your words are true, and you promise good things. Give us an eagerness for your gifts, and help us to pray and to live in the courage and boldness of your good promise. May our eagerness and urgency inspire us to worshipful prayer and action guided by your steadfast love and presence with your people. Amen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
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Phone: 412-362-5610



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