

## **Romans 1:1-4**

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord ...

## **Second lesson Psalm 89:1-4**

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth, I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"

## **Luke 1:26-33**

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Grandchildren are not only wonderful and a great blessing to Lois and me, but there is another benefit to those precious little ones. They provide almost endless antics and actions that make really good sermon openings. For example .....

Our grandson Korben was working on memorizing all of the United States Presidents. Quite a job for a 6-year-old, but it was part of a kindergarten project to encourage students to learn about the great country we live in. It does not matter which political aisle you may fall into, most of us in America are proud to be a part of this nation. During the study Korben came to his mother with a question.

“Mom, who was the president when you were born?” and quite innocently and sincerely he then said, “George Washington?”

Don’t you just love the uninhibited way that children think?

Washington is considered the father of our country; a historic figure that still inspires patriotism. He was the General of the Revolutionary Army and our first President; his courage and leadership helped America defeat the mighty British empire.

When we celebrate our nations birthday on July 4 we can all take great pride in this country that we are privileged to live in and be a part of.

Now step back in time with me to first century Israel. Just like the pride we Americans feel, there was fierce patriotism to the men and women who had followed God’s direction in the history of their people: Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, Samuel and many others were revered for their faith and contributions to the nation.

However, in the time of Christ, the nation was not in a good place. The Jewish people were under the rule of the Roman Empire; and even though they were allowed to carry on their religious practices throughout the known world, and worship in the temple at Jerusalem things were not the same as the glory the nation had experienced in the past.

There was a strong expectation that God would send someone to change all of this. The Jewish people were looking for a promised King who would lead them out of bondage to Rome. Someone who would usher in a new kingdom of God.

They were expecting someone like a George Washington, a great military leader to free them from Roman rule and restore Israel to greatness.

This coming king would be descended from one of the greatest heroes in the history of Israel, and of course I am speaking of King David.

In 2 Samuel 7 God speaking to David made this promise: "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."

Now David certainly had his flaws and sins, which the scriptures openly describe. Which is by the way one of the amazing characteristics of the Bible we love; not much is hidden about the humanity and failures and transgressions of Old Testament heroes like Abraham, Solomon, Jacob and New Testament heroes like Simon Peter.

But the scriptures tell us that in spite of David's imperfections, he was a man after God's own heart. Just listen to a few moving verses from some of the Psalms that he wrote – words many of us know and have quoted often:

Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

Psalm 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."

And in Psalm 51, the King had committed terrible sins and in remorse prayed: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit."

These and many other passages attributed to David give us a glimpse inside the heart of this man of God.

And this hero would be the father through ancestry of the promised one; the coming Messiah chosen to save the world and restore Israel to greatness and usher in the kingdom of God on earth.

Genealogy was extremely important to the Jewish believers as this was one of the main conditions for any claims to be the promised King. The Messiah must be the son of David.

How many of you can trace your family history back 100 years? ----- 150 years? ----- 200 years? --- 300 years?

How about 900 years? Anyone? Well the records of King David were known in the time of Christ going back to 1000 BC and even farther.

There was no internet and no massive written records as we now have today; those family records were most likely passed down from one generation to the next primarily through oral traditions; they were preserving their history, telling and remembering the stories of their heritage for hundreds of years!

Today there is still great interest in discovering our roots. Just enter the word genealogy on Google and see all the sites that pop up like Ancestry.com, myheritage.com and many others. We have many ladies here in Holiday Island who are proud members of DAR, the Daughters of the American Revolution, finding ancestors all the way back to and even before the founding of our country.

Interest in learning about these family relationships can start early in life as children. On a recent visit to our daughter Janae's house in Springfield, our 5 year-old granddaughter Brielle greeted us at the door saying,

"Hi Nonnie & Papaw! Did you come to see your daughter? Your daughter is in the kitchen making a cherry cobbler! Are you proud of your daughter? Mommy your parents are here!"

We couldn't help but chuckle while Janae explained that Brielle had lately become very interested in the "who's who" of the family tree. "What is your daddy's name Nonnie? she asked. "Where does he live? Did you know that you have two sons Nonnie and only one daughter?"

At this point we spent some time discussing who was who in the family and where she fit in. Have any of you grandparents had similar discussions with your grandkids reviewing the family tree?

Research shows the importance of children knowing who they are connected to. A famous study done at Emory University back in the 1990s demonstrated the emotional benefits of children knowing their family history.

An article titled "Why It's Important to Teach Kids Your Family History" found on the Dallas Fort Worth Child website said: "Researchers asked children certain "Do you know" questions like: Do you know where your grandparents grew up? Do you know where your parents met? Do you know an illness or something really terrible that happened in your family? Do you know the story of your birth?"

The study showed that children who knew the most about their family histories showed higher self-esteem, a stronger sense of control over their lives and believed that their families were healthier and more successful."

When children are taught about their own history -- both the good and the bad -- then they can make their own choices and not necessarily follow in the same steps as those in their past. They also learn that they are part of something bigger than themselves.

One of the Emory scientists doing the study said. "Hearing these stories gave the children a sense of history ... Even if they were only nine, their identity stretched back 100 years, giving them connection, strength and resilience,"

The Jewish people knew their history and heritage and it made them unified and gave them purpose and hope!!! Hope that the coming Savior would restore the nation of Israel to prominence as God's chosen people; hope that was not diminished even after more than 900 years of waiting through many dark times!

So, to the first century Christians, both Jewish and Gentile, it was absolutely critical that Jesus, our Lord, had to be the descendant of David if he was indeed the promised King.

In the New Testament Matthew and Luke provide genealogies that trace the line of David to Jesus. Matthew written to the Hebrew nation begins his gospel with the words, "An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David" and then shows the lineage from Abraham to Christ through King David. Luke writing to Gentile's traces Jesus all the way back to Adam. The genealogies do differ – but most scholars believe that Matthew is presenting Joseph's bloodline and Luke gives Mary's genealogy - both recorded to prove that Jesus had legal and blood rights to the throne of David.

In the gospel of Mark, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar heard Jesus was passing by so he began shouting "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me". When Jesus heard the loud cries, he understood that the beggar was calling him the Son of David. He called for the blind man to come to Him and then healed him. The grateful man became a follower of Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus Christ our Lord was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and from Revelation chapter 22 Jesus Himself declares "I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

So what is the point of all of this?

The point is .. we as children of God are all now part of this spiritual genealogy -- connected to and privileged members of the family of God, through Jesus Christ our Savior, the Son of David.

The kingdom we are part of is firmly established, will last forever, and brings peace and justice and righteousness to its members. It is our heritage and our birthright as those born into the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Our hope and our inheritance is with the King whose term of office will never expire!

Let us pray .....