

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Although God promised King David through the prophet Nathan around 1000 B.C. that his throne and his kingdom would last forever, the reality was that David's throne and kingdom were divided very shortly after that promise. In 922 B.C., when Solomon died, the kingdom split in two. The 10 northern tribes became the kingdom of Israel and the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin stayed with the Davidic king and with the Temple. **There was now a divided kingdom instead of a united kingdom.**

Within a few hundred years after the split, by 722 B.C., the 10 northern tribes of Israel were decimated by the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians entered and destroyed them and took them into exile. Less than a couple centuries later, in 587 B.C., the two remaining tribes in the south, Judah and Benjamin, were taken into exile by the Babylonians. The Temple was destroyed, and Jerusalem was burned to the ground. **The Davidic king and some of his descendants were killed.**

So, we can ask, what happened to the promise of God? What happened to God's promise to David that his kingdom, his throne, and his heir would always be in power? It looked like God had broken His promise. It looked as if God's promises to David had failed, and that his kingdom was destroyed and never going to rise again.

This was the reality in the first century A.D. when an angel came to a virgin in Nazareth who was betrothed to a poor man named Joseph. Joseph happened to be part of the royal family, but it would never be discovered by looking at what he owned. The angel said to that virgin, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

What a momentous event! This is what the Jewish people had been waiting for! **That, against all odds, God would keep his promise! God would restore the kingdom and bring the Messiah!** The Catechism of the Catholic Church says the following about the Annunciation and Visitation that we are recalling on this Fourth Sunday of Advent. "The Annunciation to Mary inaugurates 'the fullness of time,' the time of the fulfillment of God's promises and preparations."

Why am I highlighting all this? Am I giving you a history lesson for Christmas? It is important for us to remember all this because many times in our lives, we have the temptation to think that God has abandoned us, or that God has forgotten us. **Maybe we thought that He was going to do something for us, and He didn't do it. Maybe we are tempted to think that He has broken His promises. The reality is that God does not abandon us. We might abandon Him, but He never abandons us. He never breaks his promises.**

The proof of that is his promise to David! Against all odds and against all visible appearances, where it looked like God had forgotten, He comes in the mystery of the Incarnation and not only fulfills but transcends even the craziest imagination of what the Jewish people could have ever expected about what His kingdom and the Son of God would be like. What God is giving us in Christ is His Eternal Son come as man, to save us from sin and death. He comes to establish a kingdom that is not earthly, but heavenly, and that will last for all eternity. Let us ask the Lord that we be given the grace not to abandon Him and to stay focused on how He fulfills His promises! **Merry Christmas!**

Peace,