

1: *Experiencing God's Faithfulness* ☆ *The Christmas Experience*

Do you ever wonder what's taking God so LONG to answer? Or maybe God just didn't answer the way you asked. Today we discover how the birth of Jesus reminds us of God's faithfulness.

Whatever the case, you need God to show up in a BIG way as you face an uncertain future. **What do you do then?**

BIG TRUTH: Remember God's faithfulness when the future is uncertain.

This is what God wanted His people to recall over & over again. Read 1 Chron. 16. Here's a quick clip of what King David tells the people:

1 Chronicles 16:11–13 (ESV)

¹¹ Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually! ¹² **Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered,** ¹³ O offspring of Israel his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones!

They were to pause and remember WHO God is and WHAT God had done. When we fail to recall God's faithfulness it often leads to our UNFAITHFULNESS. When we forget who's in charge we tend to think that WE are. That's what happened throughout the life of Israel.

Here's an example.

Judges 8:33–34 (NIV)

³³ No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god ³⁴ and did not remember the Lord their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side.

☘ It has been said that *sin is what you do when you are not fully satisfied in God.*

Instead, we would be wise to follow the example of the Psalmist when he writes these words:

Psalm 77:11–13 (NET)

¹¹ **I will remember the works of the LORD.** Yes, I will remember the amazing things you did long ago! ¹² I will think about all you have done; I will reflect upon your deeds!" ¹³ O God, your deeds are extraordinary! What god can compare to our great God?

So what's all this have to do with The Christmas Experience?

By the time Jesus was born, the Jewish people had long been waiting & wondering how & if God would be faithful to the promises He had made so long ago. Just like many of us, they had asked & waited for God's answer, but His answer didn't return WHEN or HOW they expected it to.

God had promised King David's that his family reign would never end.

Psalm 89:3–4 (ESV)

³ You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ⁴ **I will establish your offspring forever,** and build your throne for all generations."

- **King David** reigns over Israel starting around 1000 B.C. and Solomon, his son, reigns after him.
- After Solomon, the Davidic kingdom splits in two - 10 tribes north (Israel), 2 South (Judah). The Kingdom is divided for over 200 years (924 B.C. until 722 B.C.).
- The **Assyrians** attack Israel over 100 years (mid 800s B.C.) & eventually conquer Israel in 722 B.C.
- The **Babylonians** conquer Assyrians in 605 B.C and take captives from JUDAH, finally destroying Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC.
- **So, how in the world will God keep His promise to David?** Ever since, there has been no king of Israel. Israel & Judah had been dispersed over the Assyrian & Babylonian Empires.
- **Jeremiah** the prophet claims that God has said the captives in Babylon will be sent back to Jerusalem in 70 years (Jer. 29:1-14). And after the **Medo-Persians** conquer Babylon during the life of Daniel, the prophet (Daniel 9:1-2), God DOES send His people back to Jerusalem. Still no king, yet the people need to...

BIG TRUTH: Remember God's faithfulness when the future is uncertain.

- In one of the last OT writings we call Malachi, with the Persians still in charge, God still speaks of a future King to come. And yet the people still have to wait - over 400 years between the prophecies of Malachi & the stories of Matthew.
- ☀ In C.S. Lewis' The Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe, Narnia is described as a place **where it's always winter, but never Christmas.**
- The **Greeks** conquer Persia & Alexander the Great, and the Greek culture permeated the lands it touched - including Israel. The Hebrew Scripture was translated into Greek, the street language that allowed different ethnicities to communicate.
- The **Romans** conquered the Greeks in 63 BC and continued to expand in territory & influence ("Pax Romana", adequate roads, safe travel, & protection for citizens, Jews often mistreated and dispersed)

The Christmas Story and all that leads up to it should prove at least 2 truths to us:

1. **God doesn't always show up WHEN or HOW you expect Him to.**
2. **God is faithful to do what He has promised.**

And so it was, that 1000 years after King David, after the divided kingdom, after the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, & now Romans - the stage was set for the greatest story ever told.

Galatians 4:4-5 (NET)

⁴ But when the appropriate time had come, God sent out his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we may be **adopted as sons** with full rights.



1. Remember, write, & share 3 moments God proved faithful.
2. Memorize Ps. 77:11-13.

BIG TRUTH: Remember God's faithfulness when the future is uncertain.