



2025 Weekly Devotions

Week of: January 5th - 11th

Sermon: January 4th



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH
building community • equipping believers • serving Jesus

January 5

1 Samuel 2:2

Exodus 15:11 asks a rhetorical question, “Lord, who is like you among the gods?” The answer is obvious to us and it was just as clear to the people of Israel who sang the words recorded in Exodus after they crossed through the sea. My goal for this week’s devotion is to see what Scripture says about the exclusivity of our God. What we will see is that there are many ways in which our Lord is unrivaled in heaven and on earth and my prayer is that this will give us even more reason to sing!

Today’s passage reminds us that there is no firm foundation like the Lord our God. The term “rock” could mean many things but, at its core, it denotes a steady and immovable base upon which we can stake our very lives. The Lord is our rock. He will not be forced to move and He will not shift of His own accord. This truth should bring us joy for many reasons.

First, we should be overjoyed in the knowledge of His trustworthiness. I don’t know how often you have taken the time to observe your surroundings but, if you’ve ever seen a rock, you should know that it is firm and unchanging. Now, some might push back here and claim that a rock under water can be altered and while that is true that also posits some outside force that has an effect on the rock. In our case, the Lord is a rock and there is no water (or other substance) to change His character or mold His attributes! The reality is that God is firm and unflinching. He is the same yesterday, today and forever and this means that we have every reason to build our lives on the truth of His promises knowing that they will not change.

Second, we should be elated in assurance of His perseverance. Rocks stand steady in all circumstances. A rock is not a feather or a piece of pine straw that is susceptible to stronger forces in nature. The Lord is steadfast, immovable and, therefore, always victorious. There have been many attempts to dislodge Him, several attacks have been waged against Him by our enemy but He has always emerged... unmoved. In Exodus, Pharaoh attempted to prevail over the Lord and the result was great calamity upon Egypt and freedom for the Lord’s followers. The Philistines and Amorites and Amalekites and numerous other pagan groups learned the same hard lesson... the Lord is a rock!

As we begin our journey this week, remember that God is not like us (and that’s a marvelous thing)! I may waffle daily but the Lord is always the same. He is a rock. He is firmly planted and deeply rooted and this gives me hope that while the storms might have their effect on me, He will always be a steady anchor for my soul.

January 6

Deuteronomy 3:24

Deuteronomy 3 is a bit of a tragic passage as it records the words of Moses as he begs for the Lord to allow him to enter the Promised Land prior to his passing. While context is king as we seek to understand a passage, for our purposes today, I want us to fixate on what Moses says about God in making his appeal to the Lord.

To paraphrase Moses' sentiment, the great leader of Israel is simply asking who can do what God can do? Yesterday we were reminded that no one, and nothing, can sway the Lord our God and today we are reminded that no one, and nothing, can rival the Lord our God's power and accomplishments.

As we begin to consider this truth, think first about Moses' vantage point. What would give him the credibility to say such a thing? Well, there were numerous reasons for Moses' assertion. Remember, this was the man that saw the plagues. He saw the magicians struggle and fail to replicate the signs and wonders of locusts and hail and boils. He, presumably, heard them tell Pharaoh that this was the finger of the Lord and that the forces and gods of the Egyptians could not rival the Lord's abilities. He had seen the destruction of the Passover and the massacre at the Red Sea. He had eaten bread from heaven and drank water that came from a rock. All of this leads us to the inescapable conclusion that Moses spoke with conviction and credibility.

Nevertheless, we should argue that we have even more reason to say such things about God today. After all, Moses knew nothing of the young David who would slay Goliath in God's power or the prophet Elijah and God's overcoming the prophets of Baal. He wouldn't know about the feeding of the thousands or the healing of blind men and he certainly wouldn't have heard testimony about the resurrection!

Furthermore, Moses wouldn't know the story of the church. How often the gates of hell have attempted to come against her only to see her continue to grow and prosper. He wouldn't know the stories of the millions who have been converted and the glories of the new covenant in providing a new heart.

Moses speaks with conviction and credibility but his conviction should only be furthered by all that we have heard about and seen. Oh dear friends, when we gather to worship or spend time with the Father, our words should echo those of Moses long ago. Who is like the Lord our God? Who can do what He can? The answer is no one and this provides further reason to praise His holy name, exalting Him for what He alone can do.

January 7

1 Kings 8:23

We are going to spend two days in this particular verse of Scripture because there are two assertions made that further our understanding of the exclusivity of the Lord our God. Today, we are going to focus on the idea that our God is both a Promise maker and a Promise keeper.

In today's passage, you will notice mention of the term "covenant". That word is incredibly important in biblical literature. In fact, I would argue that the entire Bible is meant to be understood in terms of covenant. If the story of Scripture is the retelling of God's redemptive plan, worked out in space and in time (and it is), then the way that God goes about working out this plan of redemption is through covenants with His people.

Consider the backbone of the scriptural story in terms of covenant for just a moment. God makes a covenant (a binding agreement) with Adam but Adam breaks the terms and suffers the consequences. Then, God makes a covenant with Abraham promising to bless Him with offspring through whom the world will be blessed. This blessing would come through One who would overcome the consequence of the covenant with Adam. Next, God covenants with His people through Moses, providing a law to guide them and a means of sacrifice to be practiced by them. Then, God covenants with David, promising a King who would reign His people forever. Finally, God covenants with the world through Christ. Jesus satisfies the demands of the law, overcomes the consequence of the fall of Adam in the first covenant and makes a new covenant with His people, entered into by faith, which promises eternal life for those who enter in.

These things being so, it is imperative to the story that our God be trustworthy. These covenants are only as good as the faithfulness of the One who enters in and this means that we would be in a very tenuous position if the Lord did not keep His promises.

Truthfully, no mere mortal keeps his word entirely. Even the most honest man you have ever met has told a lie! No mere mortal is fully faithful to his promises but the Lord is! He is honest and faithful to the point that we can rely totally on all of the guarantees He makes to us in the covenants that He designs and enters. God has never misled a soul. He has never reneged on a promise that He offers and He never will. His faithfulness to keep His covenants provide the Christian with rest and assurance, knowing that all of the promises of future glory and salvation that are made to us in Christ will be carried out. This is the source of our peace and it is grounded in the truth that there is no one like our great and trustworthy God.

January 8

1 Kings 8:23

Today's devotion will deal with the next assertion of 1 Kings 8:23, namely that God shows "lovingkindness" to His servants. The term can be translated "steadfast love" or "faithfulness". The point here is that God is faithful because He is loving! God's faithfulness is not the result of contractual guarantees alone, His faithfulness is a product of His love. Why does God keep His covenant with us? Because He loves us! What kind of God not only rules and reigns but also loves His subjects to the point of deep personal sacrifice? There is only One and this is further reason why there is no one like our God!

When was the last time you fixated on the love of God towards you? It is necessary for us to consider God in His other attributes. He is holy, He is Sovereign, He is wrathful towards sin, He is omniscient and omnipotent but none of these things skew the fact that He is love. He loves us so much that He is steadfast towards us.

Of the many reasons I have to praise God, near the top of the list is steadfast love. Folks, I have given God so many reasons to not love me. I fail... daily (even hourly)! I am a work in progress and that is putting things kindly. I have many flaws, I rebel against God's Lordship, I wander and I have imperfections more numerous than the stars in the sky and yet, He loves me! He is faithful to all of His promises towards me, even while I am unfaithful to Him. He pursues me, sanctifies me, guards me, and makes promises to me.

What other god is like this God? What other entity in the universe could claim such steadfast love towards us? My prayer for today is that the love of God which is revealed in Scripture would result in a reigniting of your love towards Him! May your contemplation of all that He has done and is doing fan into flame your love for Him!

It seems to me like human nature has been wired by God to respond to love with love. Think about it, who do you love the most in your life? Aren't they the people who have shown you kindness in the past? If so, there is no one that has been kinder to you than the Lord and this means that there is no Person more deserving of your love than Him.

Take some time today to consider the Lord's steadfast lovingkindness towards you. Instead of dwelling upon the challenges and the things that didn't work out the way that you thought they should, consider all of the undeserved graces in your life. As I type these words, I sit in a beautiful home, surrounded by a beautiful family while serving a faithful church. I have friends that have served me well this week, I have a knowledge of Christ that many have never received, I have assurance of a future and a relationship with God! What a demonstration of lovingkindness towards me! Praise the Lord, there is surely no one like Him in all the universe!

January 9

1 Kings 8:23

Happy New Year! I pray that this year is full of growth and fruit as we seek to serve the Lord together and I pray that today's devotion will get us off on the right foot as we take some time to consider just how good the Lord has been to us!

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January 10

Jeremiah 10:7

Today we learn that God is unmatched in His wisdom! There have been many wise men who have lived but there is no wisdom like that of our God. We see this in redemptive history. Consider for a moment two examples.

First, Solomon was known as the wisest man of his generation but note that his wisdom was both derivative and insufficient for salvation. Solomon's wisdom was a derivative of the Lord's. We see this when we recall how Solomon received his wisdom. Remember, the Lord gave him the opportunity to ask for anything he wanted and his request was wisdom! This means that all of the wise counsel and decisions that he made were not the product of intrinsic knowledge, instead they were the result of God's wisdom given to the king.

Additionally, we must note that Solomon was wise... but not always! The end of his life illustrates the result of foolishness, specifically as it relates to taking many wives who led him down the path of idolatry. The lesson is relatively simple, even the wisest man in the world is prone to foolish and sinful decisions!

The second example is that of the wise men. Remember these famous "magi" who came to bow down to the newborn Messiah? If so, you will recall that men known for their acumen and understanding came, confessing their allegiance and submission to One who was greater. Why would they bow down at the manger? The answer is that they realized that the Messiah was the wisest of wise men! They traveled a great distance and brought expensive gifts as a declaration that they were coming to submit to One who was far greater. They knew, in their wisdom, that there was One who would be exalted amongst all men and this means that they confessed that human wisdom pales in comparison to the God who is the source of all wisdom.

The point is relatively simple, there is no one like our God in His wisdom. His wisdom is manifest in many ways in this world. He designed us and our environment to sustain life. He orders the world so that we can enjoy its good gifts. He has made a way for us to be saved, in spite of our sin and He has given us a Word to follow which unveils the difference between His superior wisdom and the faulty and foolish "wisdom" of the world. One does not need to look far to see the glorious contrast between a wise God and the fools that populate the landscape around us and this gives us more reason to proclaim that there is indeed "no one like our God"!

January 11

Psalm 86:8

The final devotion will be dedicated to exploring the fact that there is one true God because there is one true God! Stated differently, there is no one like our God and there is no faith like faith in Christ. This is part of the motivation behind the Psalmist words in Psalm 86 when he writes, “there is no one like you among the gods”.

What is the point here? Well, the Psalmist looks around and sees at least two things. First, he sees that no other god could stand against the Lord. We have already explored this topic a bit this week so I will leave it alone now. Second, he sees that there is no other relationship with God like Israel’s God’s relationship with His people. Here’s what I mean. The pagan world was full of abhorrent and detestable acts that posed as worship. Famously, those who worshipped Baal were known for sacrificing their children to their god. There were other fornications and sinful indulgences that were commonplace in worship in that time and this provided a great contrast with the Lord of Israel.

Today, we could make a similar case. There are numerous false religions that populate the landscape but they are all cheap imitations and sinful renditions of what we have in Christ. False religions have distinct rules that govern their system but they all teach a form of self-achievement. The idea, in a nutshell, is that you and I can earn our standing before God. In Buddhism, this entails emptying yourself of all desires over the course of many reincarnations, in Islam, it means following rules such that your good can outweigh your bad or dying in a holy war. The particulars might look unique but the underlying assumption is the same... you can do it!

Conversely, Christianity stands alone as an example of God’s goodness in condescending to us in order to free us from sin that we could not overcome. The message of Christianity is that God did what we could not do and freely offers us grace which we did not deserve. Whenever you hear a message that begins and ends with what you need to do, you can know that you are hearing a false gospel. While it is true that we must respond, a response is always... a reaction! The good news is that God has acted and only when we contemplate this point will we have reason to move. He has finished His work and now offers it to us as a matter of faith. There is nothing you can do to improve upon this Gospel and there is nothing you must do to earn it. There is no other message like it in the world which is another reason for us to exclaim, “who is like our God?”

Today as we gather to worship, let us be reminded that worship is motivated by the love of God in the Gospel of Christ. Why do we sing and listen to God’s revelation? Because God has set us free! He has done what all other gods have failed to do, He has given us hope and saved us for all eternity. What could be better and more glorious than this? The answer, of course, is nothing and this is why we know that there is, in fact, absolutely no one like the Lord our God.