

## Psalm 132: Gracious Rememberer

The psalmist asks God to “*remember* David and all his troubles.” That’s what pilgrim people needed to be reflecting on as they neared Jerusalem, some for the first time in their lives, and glimpsed the temple, according to **Psalm 132**. Included In the Psalter as one of the Songs of Ascent, **Psalm 132** reminds those journeying people (and us as journeying people) about David’s promises to God and God’s biggest promise to David. (See Mark 13:1b for a first century person’s descriptors of the temple.)

**1.** Read **2 Samuel 6-7** to review the background story for **Psalm 132**. As you picture and ponder these events, what especially grabs your attention in Advent 2020?

For me, the *real presence* of the LORD in the ark of the covenant stood out. The ark was *more than a symbol*; God himself manifested his *presence* in a special way where the ark was. (ESV Study Bible, p. 624) How might this foreshadow Christian Eucharist?

I also noticed how *God’s presence* motivated David and “all the house of Israel” to celebrate and rejoice with singing and instruments, even dance. I noticed how **Psalm 132** includes images of worship and encouragement to worship.

Reviewing the Davidic Covenant in **2 Samuel 7**, especially **verses 11-16**, what thoughts and feelings do those promises trigger in you in Advent 2020?

What stands out to you about David’s response in **2 Samuel 7:18-29** to God’s promise to him?

**2.** **Psalm 132** is a royal psalm of the Davidic covenant and is concerned with David’s role in the construction of the Jerusalem temple. “The prayer expresses the feeling that such sacrifice and hard work ought not go to waste.” (ESV, p. 1221.) How would you describe David’s role in the temple construction?

What do David’s actions and speech as recounted in 2 Samuel 6-7 add to your understanding of **132:2-5**? What is the reason prompting David to make this vow to God in **132:2-5**?

In **132:1** the psalmist asks God to *remember* David. In light of the rest of the psalm, this appeal is for the interests of all of David descendants. “Remembrance extends beyond an act of cognition; it is an action.” (Longman, *Psalms*, p. 434)

The difficult, hard parts of David’s life are a big part of the Psalter, demonstrating the struggles and complexities common to the lives of all limited humans. How is praying Psalms impacting your awareness and understanding of troubles in

your own life and the lives of others? How are the Psalms impacting your asking God to “remember” people in trouble, including yourself?

3. Some pilgrims might have been coming from the district in Judah called Ephrathah, the location of both Bethlehem and Jaar (Kiriath-jearim), where the ark, had lodged—the “it” in **132:6-7**.

Compare **132:8-10** with 2 Chronicles 6:41-42, the end of Solomon’s dedicatory prayer for the Temple that his father David planned for and Solomon built. Is Solomon quoting **Psalms 132**, already composed and eventually included in the Songs of Ascent? As we pray **132:8-10** with the psalmist, what are we asking for in Old Testament contexts? Also consider Moses’ words in **Num. 10:35**.

(Note: The word *Messiah* comes from transliterating the Hebrew word for “Anointed,” and the word *Christ* comes from translating “Anointed” into Greek.)

4. **Psalms 132:11-12** goes on to tell of God’s answer to David’s plan for building God a house, which involved God’s promise to build David a household dynasty.

After describing the Davidic dynasty, **Psalms 132:13-14** moves forward immediately with God speaking of the temple in Zion, the hill in Jerusalem, the proper place in David’s city for God to have his own dwelling and resting place.

The **book of Psalms** was compiled mostly from existing anthologies in exilic and post-exilic times. It was the hymnbook for the Second Temple. The pilgrims singing **Psalms 132** were declaring their faith that God would again fulfill his promises and raise up a new David. What are the verb tenses in **132:15-18**?

5. We the Church, the Body of Christ, read **Psalms 132** as history about God and his people, as instruction from God for his people, and ultimately as prophecy finding its fulfillment in Christ our Lord and his followers whose very hearts have become the dwelling place of God by the Spirit.

He is at once the new Temple and that very son of David who gives defining substance to God’s covenant sworn to the son of Jesse. When we pray this psalm, it is entirely with reference to its fulfillment in Jesus, **the** Anointed One and **the** Temple. (Patrick Reardon, *Christ in the Psalms*, p. 264)

With the teachings and images of **Psalms 132** fresh in your mind and heart, reflect on these New Testament passages: Hebrews 12:18-24, Ephesians 2:19-22, I Corinthians 3:16-17, I Corinthians 6:19-20, Colossians 3:3-4, Luke 23:42, Revelation 21:2-3, others?

Why do you think it is chosen for worship during Advent? How has God in Christ been a “Gracious Rememberer” in your life, One who remembers to bless?