

TEXT: ¹⁴ “‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

¹⁵ “In those days and at that time
I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line;
he will do what is just and right in the land.

¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.
This is the name by which it will be called:
The LORD Our Righteousness.’

Dear Friends in Christ,

My of my favorite activities as a kid was “*connecting the dots.*” (To draw **connecting** lines between a seemingly random arrangement of numbered **dots** so as to produce a picture or design) As a pastor I like to use that activity also with the children. It’s always fun to discover what picture is hidden on the page once all the dots are connected.

But this idiom has another meaning in our culture. We can use it for a person when they draw logical inferences connecting items of information to reveal something previously hidden or unknown. This morning Molly Largent is being confirmed. Recently I gave her a test on all the parts of the catechism that she has studied the past three years. From the results it is easy to see that Molly has *connected the dots*, that is, she understands what God has revealed to her and the world in all the history and doctrine of the Scriptures. She gets it! She understands the basic plan of salvation and the main teachings of Scripture. Today she will have an opportunity to confess her faith before her Christian family.

She has connected the dots...

1. She knows that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah God spoke of in Genesis 3:15.
2. From her study of the 10 Commandments she has connected the dots. These commandments have made her conscious of her sin and, revealed God’s judgment for those sins and revealed her need for a Savior.
3. From her study of the Apostles Creed she has learned who the true God is and that Jesus is that Savior God has promised. She has connected the dots between O.T. prophecy and the life of Jesus.
4. From her study of the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed she has learned that God didn’t just give her the gift of a Savior, but that she has also received the gift of faith in that Savior for salvation.
5. She has learned that the Holy Spirit created that faith when she was baptized and that the same Spirit strengthens her faith by the power of the gospel in the preaching of the Word and through the sacraments.
6. Molly has connected the dots concerning how important it is that we preserve the true Word and deal with false doctrine lest a “little yeast leaven the whole lump.”

Today, as Molly confesses her faith, know that she has connected the dots just as we have and is now prepared to be a communicant member. Today we will also formally recognize Christine Adryan as a communicant member of our fellowship. From my talks with her the past weeks I assure you that Christiane has also *connected the dots*. She understands and believes the Word of God!

This morning we are also beginning a new church year with the season of Advent. It’s easy to see why we have the reading from Jeremiah as one of the readings for this Sunday of the Church Year. Advent means “coming.” Jeremiah speaks about one who will be coming when he says, “**The days are coming,’ (declares**

the LORD,) ‘when I will fulfill the gracious promise I made to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.’ Let’s connect the dots of this prophecy with the fulfillment.

First, what was the promise that God had made to both the house of Israel and the house of Judah? God’s promise to King David is found in 2 Samuel 7:11-16. “**The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you:** ¹²When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me^[b]; your throne will be established forever.” God promised David that a member of his family would come. He would rule forever. This is a reference to the Messiah. In other words, God is speaking about Jesus here. Jeremiah wanted his people to know this when they would be taken into captivity to Babylon as slaves. When they thought that their hope for a spiritual Messiah was over after the nation of Judah was conquered, the city of Jerusalem and the temple in it was destroyed God wanted his people to remember that He had not forgotten his promise to Adam and Eve, to Noah, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to Moses, to Joshua, to David and all the other true believers of the spiritual Israel. God will be faithful to his promise!

Secondly, let’s connect the dots....

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1. Jesus is the **righteous Branch** which God brought forth miraculously from the family of **David**.
 - a. Isaiah 11:1 – “*a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse.*” See Mt. 1:1, 6, 16.
 - b. Jesus is righteous. John 8:46 – “*Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?*” “**God made him who had no to be sin for us.**” (2 Cor. 5:21) “**He committed no sin.**” (1 Peter 2:22) “**He was tempted like us in every way, yet was without sin.**” (Hebrews 4:15), “**In him is no sin.**” (1 John 3:5)
2. Jesus is the one who did what was **just and right in the land**.
 - a. Jesus perfectly obeyed God’s law.
 - b. Jesus would rule righteously.
3. Jesus **saved Judah**, God’s people.
 - a. Whoever believes in Jesus and trusts in him for forgiveness will not perish but have everlasting life.
 - b. Jesus saves us from sin, death, the power of Satan and hell.
4. Jesus brings his people to the true **Jerusalem** where they will live in true peace and eternal **safety**.
 - a. “Today you will be with me in paradise,” Jesus promised the believing thief on the cross.
 - b. Jesus promises us a mansion in heaven. (John 14)
5. Jesus is the **LORD**!
 - a. This he proved with his resurrection from the dead. (Romans 1)
 - b. “My Lord and my God,” the believing Thomas who formerly doubted said!

- c. “He is the image of the invisible God.” (Col. 1:15)
- 6. Jesus is ***our righteousness!***
 - a. “God laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Is. 53:6) “The blood of Jesus Christ purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)
 - b. “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16,17, John 3:16)

In this season of advent we will once again remember that God promised us a Savior and that Jesus was that Savior. We will once again connect the dots so that we can have **the peace** which surpasses all understanding, **the joy** of all who know what Jesus came to do and accomplished, **the hope** of eternal life and **know the love** of God.

Molly and Christine have these blessings today because they have connected the dots God put there in the Scriptures. Have you connected the dots? Join us every week here at Our Savior to see the plan of salvation and its fulfilment. I guarantee that when you have connected the dots you will see God’s amazing grace and love for you! Amen.