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New Year's Eve Communion Service
December 31, 2009
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Hecla, SD

Text: Deuteronomy 33:26-27 ***There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; He will thrust out the enemy from before you, and will say, "Destroy!"***

Theme: THERE IS NO ONE LIKE OUR GOD

- He helps us
- He is our refuge
- He defeats our enemies

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ Jesus,

Well only a few hours to go and another year will have come and gone. As you look back on 2009 and look ahead to 2010 what are some things that are running through your head? For some, New Year's Eve is an exciting time. They are looking forward to putting the old year behind them and starting a brand new year. But to others it is scary to think about all that could happen in the coming year.

The book of Deuteronomy is a fitting portion of Scripture to look at as we prepare to close the old year out and begin a new one. Deuteronomy was written by Moses as the Children of Israel were preparing for something new. For forty years they had been wandering in the wilderness and now they were preparing to enter the promised land of Canaan. Before they enter, Moses gives his final sermon to them. In our text for this New Year's Eve we are reminded by Moses that there is no one like our God. From Deuteronomy 33:26-27 we read,

"There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to help you, And in His excellency on the clouds. The eternal God is your refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms; He will thrust out the enemy from before you, And will say, 'Destroy!'"

So far the Word of God.

HE HELPS US

The Children of Israel faced many challenges as they wandered in the Wilderness for those forty years. There were enemies they fought. There was the dry and thirsty land with no water and no food. There were fiery serpents. And yet, they had the God of Jeshurun who helped them time and again. The name Jeshurun is used four times in the Old Testament to refer to Jacob. God supplied water from a rock and manna to eat every day. When they complained about not having any meat to eat, God gave them quail. There wasn't a problem they had which God did not help them with. Moses reminds them of powerful God is when he writes that He ***"rides the heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds."***

As the children of Israel were about to enter the Promised Land of Canaan there were

many challenges that lay ahead of them. But through it all, they needed to know that there was no one like their God. None of the man-made gods of Canaan could help them like the LORD their God could. None of the kings or armies of Canaan could help them like the LORD their God could.

2009 brought with it many challenges for us. Some of you dealt with illnesses and pains either in your own body or by your family members or friends. There were several prayer requests we had for pastors and parents, children and adults in 2009. We had a very wet spring which led to a late planting season as well as a wet fall which led to a late harvest. You could probably add other challenges which the LORD brought into your life in 2009, which no one else here knows about.

Was there any one like our God who helped us? It is the LORD our God *who rides the heavens to help you, and in His excellency on the clouds*. Consider how he rode the heavens to help us with our greatest problem of sin! The Son of God rode down from heaven to earth to help us. He came to take our burden of sin on Himself and remove it forever. He tasted death for all of us and overcame death by rising from it. Through Jesus, our God has helped us forever by removing sin and defeating death.

What will 2010 bring for our lives? Will there be physical suffering, emotional suffering, and financial suffering? We do not know. But we do know this, there is no one like our God to help us!

HE IS OUR REFUGE

The Christmas blizzard of last week reminded us of how important it is to have a refuge in a storm. None of us wanted to be out in that weather. We would much rather have stayed home where it was safe and warm.

As the Children of Israel needed protection as they wandered through the Wilderness for forty years and they would need protection as they entered Canaan. Moses reminds them, *“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”* Their refuge was not some stone fortress in the mountains. Their refuge was the eternal God Himself. He was their protection. He would continue to be their refuge in the years to come.

As the new year dawns, where will we go for refuge in time of need? Remember that there is no one like our God. He is our refuge - He is our protection from the storms that will rage in our lives in the new year. Moses reminds us that He is eternal. That means He is always going to be there. Our refuge isn't going anywhere, but will always be there to protect us.

Have you ever seen a picture of a strong man cradling a little baby in his arms? It is quite a striking contrast to see bulging biceps embracing a helpless and defenseless baby. You know that baby is safe. This is the sort of picture Moses is painting for us when he writes, *“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”* Holding us and protecting us are the strongest arms in the universe - the arms of almighty God. His everlasting arms never get tired of holding us and protecting us. Jesus said the same in the Good Shepherd section of John 10, *“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.”* (Jn 10:28-29)

There is no one like our God who was our refuge from the storms of 2009 and will be our refuge in 2010. Our God whose everlasting arms hold us and protect us as we journey from this world to the next.

HE DEFEATS OUR ENEMIES

One week ago we were reminded that our nation has enemies that want to destroy us as a Muslim terrorist tried to blow up an American airplane. Right now the leaders of our nation are debating the best way to protect us from such enemies. One way to protect America would be to utterly defeat all of our enemies. Then there would no longer be a threat. But since we do not face an army or a nation, but a way of thinking - it is going to be virtually impossible to defeat such an enemy.

The Children of Israel were about to face many enemies as they entered Canaan. Some armies would be bigger than their army. Some would have better weapons. Some cities would be well fortified and difficult to defeat. Left to their own strength, they would never be able to defeat all their enemies. But Moses reminds them that there is no one like their God. ***“He will thrust out the enemy from before you, and will say, ‘Destroy!’”*** When the Children of Israel fought the city of Jericho it was not marching and trumpets that caused the city walls to come tumbling down - it was their God who gave them the victory. The LORD defeated their enemies and gave them the victory.

The battles we face in 2010 are against an enemy much greater than the Philistines or Al Qaeda. The Apostle Paul writes, ***“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*** (Eph 6:12) The enemy we face is the same enemy that has been assaulting every man, woman, and child since Adam and Eve. That enemy is the devil. And which of us has the strength to stand against the spiritual hosts of wickedness? Adam in his perfection gave into the tempter and left to our own strength so will we.

But we rejoice to know that there is no one like our God. Rather than us having to defeat our enemy, He Himself defeats our enemies for us. The Son of God became man to fight our battles for us. In Hebrews we read of Jesus, ***“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*** (Heb 2:14-15) Jesus became man to defeat the devil for us and free us from the fear of death. Jesus fought our battles for us against sin, death, and the devil and defeated them all for us. ***“Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** (1 Cor 15:57) There is no one like our God who defeats our enemies for us!

As we stand on the edge of a new year we are comforted and rejoice to hear once again that there is no one like our God. Our God who was our help in ages past will continue to be our help in years to come. Our God who was our refuge in 2009 will in 2010 be our refuge from the spiritual attacks and storms in our lives. Our God who defeated our enemies in the past by dying on the cross and rising from the dead, will defeat our enemies in 2010. Rejoice greatly therefore, for there is no one like our God! Amen!