

FORETOLD

AN ADVENT
DEVOTIONAL

614CHURCH

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Day 1 - The Seed of the Woman

**“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel.”
(Genesis 3:15)**

This verse contains the very first announcement of the Gospel. When God declares the curse moments after sin enters the picture of God's creation, He addresses first the serpent, then Eve, and lastly Adam. Although one could look at this as the now comment and natural enmity between mankind and snakes, there is a larger foreshadowing here of the plan of God to redeem His people. God has never left us without a plan, even when at first we chose to disobey the words of God, by not eating from that tree, God already announced a plan. From the seed of Eve, from her will come one who will crush the head of the serpent.

Sitting on this side of the coming of Jesus, we can see how God orchestrated things, through the seed of Eve, then Seth, there is a trace through the ages of how her seed, Jesus, defeated the works of Satan, defeated death, and made a way for mankind to have a relationship with God. Though Satan has struck the heel, and has inflicted pain and suffering throughout the ages, the ultimate strike was that of Jesus defeating death, and we continue to wait for his return at which point the final act will take place.

As you reflect in this season of advent, prepare your heart to fix your gaze on the seed that came, on Jesus who came to save, to heal and to deliver. With every soul who comes into relationship with God, another strike takes place, with every decision you make that aligns yourself with the will and the ways of God, another strike on the head of the serpent takes place. This is also known as the Kingdom of God advancing! Take courage, the end of the book shows the final act of victory, and we know who wins. In the beginning of the book it was prophesied, and we live in the final days of this great victory!

Day 1 - The Seed of the Woman

Prayer: Our Father in heaven, thank you for your great plan of salvation. Thank you for the proclamation of victory from the very beginning. Today I fix my eyes on You and though I often feel the bite of Satan at my heel, I stand on the victory in the name of Jesus and declare His crushing over the works of the enemy today. I hold on to you Father, and I celebrate your victory in Jesus name. Amen.

Reflection:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Day 2 - The Son of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

"And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Genesis 12:3)

God repeats a promise that He gave to Abram in Genesis 12:1-3. Abram would certainly become a giant of faith, yet he did not start this way. We see Abram as an example of growing in faith and obedience. God's promise was still alive and active regardless of Abram's lack of full obedience. The fulfillment of the promise was delayed until Abram was ready to do what the Lord asked of him.

More important than Abram's faith was God's promise. Notice how this verse says "I will". Genesis chapter 11 is all about the plans of man while chapter 12 is all about the plans of God. God promised Abram a land, a nation, and a blessing. Not only was Abram promised a blessing, but God also promised to make him a blessing, even to the point where all the families of the earth would be blessed. This amazing promise was fulfilled in the Messiah that came from Abram's lineage. God's blessing to Abram was not for his own sake, or even the sake of the Jewish nation to come. It was for the whole world, for all the families of the earth through Jesus Christ.

Today, reflect on God's promises and blessings. We live in a world created by God, a God who wants to partner and share with us, His image bearers. What God wants to do in the world, He wants to do it in partnership with His people. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas in your life where you lack full obedience and faith. God can use even a seed of obedience and faith. But God wants all of us, He wants our full faith and obedience. When God blesses us, it's not just for us and not supposed to stop with us. When God blesses us, it's for the spread of His blessing. Just as God shows grace to us, it's not intended to stop with us. Just as God chose to use Abram, He is trying to use us as well. Are you allowing Him?

Day 2 - The Son of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Prayer: God, thank you for being a God who is constantly pursuing me. I praise you for being a God who wants a relationship with me, a God who wants to bless me and use me for the good of your Kingdom. Holy Spirit, reveal to me the areas of my life that I am not full of faith or constant in obedience. Thank you for your promises and blessings. Today, I choose to surrender all of me to you. Use me as you used Abram. I love you, Lord. Amen.

Reflection:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page or a sheet of stationery.

Day 3 - The Scepter

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples." (Genesis 49:10)

When Jacob blesses his sons, we see this incredible act of a father speaking blessings over his children. These aren't simply nice words of encouragement, they are prophetic words that in a sense speak destiny over each of his sons. For most of them, he takes an attribute that each particular son already displays and speaks that over the generations that will follow each one.

Judah receives a blessing from his dad that points much further down the line, this blessing will eventually be for all mankind. The "scepter" and the "ruler's staff" are symbols of Kingship.

He's speaking in part of the great kingdom of David that would come through Judah's lineage, and the greater kingdom that would then come through the Messiah, Jesus who also comes from this same lineage. This includes "the obedience of the peoples", which refers to His rule and reign as His kingdom advances to not only the people of Israel, but also to the gentile nations around them.

We don't always like to think of Jesus as a King with a scepter, as a ruler, where obedience is the language of love. Today, think of Jesus who comes to seek and save, to heal and set free, to build up, yes, but also to rule and reign.

He is God who knows us, created us, and knows the beginning from the end, and therefore His perspective on our lives should be valued greatly.

Day 3 - The Scepter

Prayer: Jesus, my Lord, my Savior and my King! To you I will yield today. I will learn the love language of obedience with full trust that you have the whole world in your hands! Please help me to hear your voice today, to yield to your Holy Spirit that lives within me, that my life will be a glorious declaration of your goodness. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 4 - A Star

"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel." (Numbers 24:17)

This prophecy given through the words of the wicked prophet Balaam is an almost comical story. The pagan king, Balak, afraid of the people of God, offers the prophet Balaam a significant sum of money to speak a curse over the people of God. Interestingly, Balaam goes to God to inquire about this and God tells him that the Israelite people are a blessed people, and that he is not to speak a curse over them. This story starts in Numbers 22 and is a fascinating read.

Balak comes back and offers him even more money, and God allows Balaam to go with them, but still is not permitted to speak a curse over God's people. The story goes back and forth a number of times, and everytime Balaam opens his mouth to give a curse, the Spirit of God comes upon him, and he speaks nothing but blessings over God's people. History remembers Balaam as a wicked man, because through his council, they led the Israelites astray through marrying foreign women and worshipping foreign idols.

This prophecy in Num 24:17 however speaks of a star, and a scepter. Again images of authority and rule. In the midst of wicked kings trying to speak curses over the people of God, God speaks words of blessing and words of destiny over His people. From Jacob will come the star. This is speaking firstly of the kingdom of David that came to defeat Moab, their immediate threat, but speaks ahead of the King of Kings that will also come through this lineage, and be the ruler of all things in heaven and on earth. The Star in heaven, the Scepter on earth, and we can see how this pointed to Jesus, the Messiah.

If you are surrounded by troubles and strife, surrounded by an enemy, hold on to this story. Though the enemy wishes to destroy you, God will surround His people, God will sustain you, and God has provided you with a King who rules in the heavens and on the earth. Don't take the answer into your own hands trying to coerce God or anyone; know that your Father loves you, and has already spoken destiny over your life.

Day 4 - A Star

Prayer: My Father, I believe, but help me in my unbelief. Sometimes the road feels too hard, too long, but I know you are faithful, and you have never let me down. Today I will reflect on your constant provision in the time of need, and towards the generations that follow you, I now see that I am a part of your story of redemption. I lift my eyes to see the Star, the Savior, my Jesus! Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 5 - A Spokesman for God

“I will raise up a prophet from among their country- men like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.”
(Deuteronomy 18:18)

These words spoken by Moses, the author of the first 5 books of the Bible, are very significant. Moses, considered a prophet, says that another prophet will be raised up from amongst them, and God says that He will put His own words in this prophet, and He will speak God's words and do all that God says to do.

Leading up to the time of Jesus, prophets were raised up over and over, and often would lead people back to the will and ways of God, which would then lead to the prosperity and health of the nation. However, their hearts often became hard, and as they took on the practices of surrounding nations, offering sacrifices to idols, and abandoning the laws of God, the nation would then suffer, often being taken captive for long periods of time.

Eventually, the ultimate prophet, the Son of God came, and as we read through the Gospels, we see how Jesus said what He heard His Father say, and did what He saw His Father do. He said He comes in the authority of God the Father, and He was a true reflection of the Father.

Jesus is the Son of God, but came as a prophet, as a priest, and as a king, fulfilling multiple prophecies about Him, but taking the place as the Messiah, seated at the right hand of God!

This prophecy should firstly give us great comfort that Jesus is who He says He is, as He came to fulfill prophecies from thousands of years before Him. We should also look at this very soberly. Will we act like the people of Israel who neglected listening to the words of the prophets, and then went astray, or will we listen to the words of Jesus which are the very words of God, and orient our lives around His truth, THE TRUTH. When we read the red letters of the Bible, consider them, and the whole Bible to be the words of God Himself, and commit yourself to learning them, and following Jesus!

Day 5 - A Spokesman for God

Prayer: Father, thank you for sending the ultimate prophet who was unafraid of speaking your words in truth and in love. I echo the words of Jesus when He asked you to sanctify us in the truth, and that your words are truth itself (John 17:17), and I commit myself today to meditating on your words of truth. Amen.

Reflection:

Day 6 - The Son of God

"I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'" (Psalm 2:7)

Here the anointed King of Psalm 2:7 is not David the psalmist or his son Solomon, but a promised king who will rule not just Israel, but also the Gentiles. We read in this Psalm that the Lord's anointed recalls what God the Father spoke to Him, identifying Him as the Son of the Father and emphasizing His standing as begotten of the Father.

Begotten is an important idea. Jesus was not created; rather He created everything that was created (Colossians 1:16-17). Begotten describes a relationship between two beings of the same essential nature and being. However, we create things of a different essential being and nature than ourselves. A man creates a statue but begets a child.

God the Father is proclaiming that Christ is His chosen, anointed King. God's promise to David that a man would sit upon his throne forever is realized in the Person of Christ. This is done through His sacrifice on the Cross and His glorious Resurrection. Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father—the unique Son, who alone had the ability to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins.

"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-10).

This is a powerful reminder for us today of who is truly in control. With this confidence we can endure anything the world throws at us, knowing the ultimate victory is in Christ Jesus, God's begotten Son.

Day 6 - The Son of God

Prayer: Jesus, I am overwhelmed by the sacrifice you made on the cross and I praise you for it. Your glorious Resurrection makes it possible for me to worship a God who is alive and living and is in control of all things. I confess areas of my heart where I forget that you are on the throne. Thank you for your grace and mercy. You are the Almighty God who rules over all and I surrender my life to you today. Amen.

Reflection:

Day 7 - The Son of David

“Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.” (2 Samuel 7:16)

These words form a part of the covenant that God made with David. A glorious promise that God will secure the legacy of David forever, that David’s kingdom will endure through his sons and through his bloodline.

This promise has two levels. At a practical level, we see this to be true, we see how the Kingdom that David ruled over, in some way continued through the generations.

The same cannot be said of every generation and kingdom from those times through today. The Jewish people have endured much hardship at the hands of other “kingdoms” over the years, but it has remained, and will remain, forever.

At a deeper level however, this spoke of the coming Messiah, who would come through the line of David, and not just establish the kingdom of David, but come to establish a Kingdom that will never end for all eternity. Through the Messiah that was to come from the Kingdom of David, God has chosen to establish HIS KINGDOM, which will know no end.

This is something to ponder on today. We often have a very fleeting view of history, and view current troubles as much larger in scope than they are.

Imagine that the iPhone is less than 20 years old, a very short history indeed, so when you look at life, let's consider the fact that thousands of years ago, God spoke this promise over David, his family, and the families of the world - a Savior would come, and His Kingdom will last forever.

Day 7 - The Son of David

Prayer: Father, I thank you that your words are true, and your words are faithful! What you promised you would do, you did, and we get to benefit from the establishment of your rule and your Kingdom. Help me today to understand my place in your kingdom, and to remember daily that when things get overwhelming, you are the King of your Kingdom and nothing escapes your eye. Thank you Father. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 8 - The Sovereign Lord

"You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet." (Psalm 8:6)

Psalm 8 is a beautiful psalm of praise. "*Oh Lord, Our Lord, How majestic is your name in all the earth*" says the first verse, and it just carries on from there. It talks about the glory of God and the glory of His creation!

We then come to verse 6, where he talks about how God was mindful of man, gave man dominion over God's creation, and gave man authority. This certainly is true, especially looking at the account of creation. What gives this verse an extra prophetic dimension however, is that this verse is quoted by Paul and by Jesus.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:27 For "*God has put all things in subjection under his feet.*" But when it says, "*all things are put in subjection,*" it is plain that He is expected to put all things in subjection under Him. Paul is talking about Jesus to whom all authority in heaven and earth was given, that Jesus is the ruler over all things, and over all things!

Jesus gave us His great commission in Matthew 28, but starts by quoting a part of this verse when He says "*All Authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*"

David, in giving God the praise for His wonderful works, taps into the ultimate plan of God to give all things to Jesus - His Son! So when Jesus' followers heard him use this language, they knew there was a connection, they knew the psalms, and they knew the Messiah was here!

Today, when you think of God, think of His glory, His power, and His greatness! Set your mind on His glorious works and His glorious plan, in which all things were given to Jesus, who then in turns commissions us with that same authority of which David spoke, to do the works that God has called us to do. We can minister, because He has the authority. We can preach, pray, heal, deliver, love, because He has the authority, and we do all things in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior!

Day 8 - The Sovereign Lord

Prayer: Jesus, I thank you that when you sent us out, you sent us out under your authority, and with your authority. I thank you that nothing is too far from you, nothing is impossible for you, nothing is more powerful than you, and in that I rest today. Amen.

Reflection:

Day 9 - Separated for our Sin

“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.” (Psalm 22:1)

This Psalm starts abruptly, with a disturbing scene: someone who knows and trusts God is forsaken, and cries out to God in agony. Forsaken here means abandoned, deserted, or forgotten. This is a Psalm of David, and there were many instances in the life of David where he might write a poem like this. Before and after taking the throne of Israel, David lived in seasons of danger and deprivation. While this psalm was true of King David's life experiences, it, like many psalms, is even truer of Jesus the Messiah. Jesus deliberately chose these words to describe His agony on the cross (Matthew 27:46).

The cry “My God” shows that the forsaken one truly did have a relationship with God. We may easily imagine a situation in the life of King David where he experienced this. Many times he found himself in seemingly impossible circumstances and wondered why God did not rescue him immediately.

Yet, this agonized cry and identification of Jesus with these words are some of the most intense and mysterious descriptions of what Jesus experienced on the cross. Jesus had known great pain and suffering (both physical and emotional) during His life. Yet, He had never known separation from God His Father.

On the cross, a holy transaction took place. As the Apostle Paul would later write, *God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him* (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus not only endured the withdrawal of the Father's fellowship, but also the outpouring of the Father's wrath upon Him as a substitute for sinful humanity. Jesus chose to stand in the place of guilty sinners. He, who never knew sin, made the infinite sacrifice to become sin and receive the punishment that each of us deserve. He did this out of love. Love for you and I.

Day 9 - Separated for our Sin

Prayer: Jesus, I come before you in great adoration and surrender. Acknowledging that you are God. Acknowledging that you chose to die on the cross knowing that you would be separated from the Father and endure the weight of sin. You are more beautiful than I could ever describe. Thank you for what you did to make it possible for me to have a relationship with the Father. I give you my all. I give you my life. You deserve all that I have. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 10 – Scorned by Men

“But I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people.” (Psalm 22:6)

The intensity of the conflict made David feel not only ignored, but insignificant. God seems to help other men, but seems to give no help to worms. The low standing he had in his own eyes and in the eyes of others added to his agony. This was dramatically fulfilled in the greater with Jesus, that on the cross He was a reproach of men, and despised by the people. People mocked Jesus in His greatest agony (Matthew 27:39-44). David felt to compare himself to a helpless, powerless, worm. Passive while crushed, and unnoticed by those who trod on him.

This too can be applied to any child of God, you and me. So often people are pressed down and overwhelmed with grief and sorrow and fear. In the first words of Jesus' complaint, He poured out his soul before God when he was on the cross (Matthew 27:46). Being truly man, Jesus felt a natural unwillingness to endure such great sorrows, yet His zeal and love for the Father and for His people prevailed. Jesus declared the holiness of God in His deepest sufferings.

The Gospel message says that we cannot save ourselves but need Jesus to become a spotless lamb and a worm for us. We are not worthy of what Jesus sacrificed and endured on the cross. In this, we too are like worms. But when we are in Christ, we are seen as adopted children of God.

This is what makes the difference in how we see ourselves and live our lives. David knew he was chosen, despite his failings. We can know that we are chosen as his children despite our sins. Our self-esteem comes to us not because we are worthy but because Jesus Christ is worthy. Reflect today in the ways that you doubt who you are and how powerful being a child of God really is. You are a son or daughter of the Most High King and nothing can change that!

Day 10 - Scorned by Men

Prayer: Jesus, I submit to you and honor you as my savior. I am unworthy of your sacrifice on the cross. Thank you for the adoption into your family that I am given because of what you did on the cross. I am chosen. Thank you for loving me, showing grace and mercy to me where I fall short. I am a child of you. I give my life to you today. Thank you for who you are. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 11 - A Stone Rejected

“The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone.” (Psalm 118:22)

We don't know exactly what the psalmist was experiencing when writing this. Perhaps it was a prophetic statement, claiming something that will come in the future, or maybe it was a statement out of hope. Regardless, it was fulfilled by the work of Jesus!

The definition of cornerstone is *“an important quality or feature on which a particular thing depends or is based.”* In the days before steel beams, stones were a main construction material chosen to strengthen structures. Builders inspected stones to determine their best use and some stones were rejected and unusable for construction.

The strongest stones were selected to be used in the foundation of the building. The chief cornerstone was the strongest and best stone of all because it would be used to support the weight of the entire building. A cornerstone is the rock upon which the weight of the entire structure rests. Jesus is the cornerstone of our lives, and the world. HE is the person everything is based from, and He was and is the only way to salvation.

Today we celebrate the goodness of God and His faithfulness to his people. It can be easy to make other “cornerstones” in your life. Some other thing or person that the weight of your life and who you are rests upon.

Let today serve as a reminder of who your true cornerstone is. Jesus is THE strongest stone. Jesus is the only way to salvation and freedom. So, whatever things may be taking the place of the chief cornerstone and making your structure wobbly, lay it down at His feet today.

Day 11 - A Stone Rejected

Prayer: Jesus, I rejoice and celebrate in your goodness and faithfulness. I confess areas of my life that I have made something or someone the chief cornerstone of my life. Today, I recognize that you are the only one who can save, you are the only one who can offer total freedom, and you are the only one that will provide a strong and stable structure for the rest of eternity. You are the only thing that will last. You are the cornerstone of my life, Jesus and I love you. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 12 – A Sign

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

God sent a message of hope to Israel despite their unbelief and false idolatry. The Son of God was coming and He would save His people from their sins. A virgin would conceive and give birth to the Savior, who would be called Immanuel, God with us. In this verse, Isaiah foretells that the promised Messiah, Jesus, will be born of Mary, who will conceive without the involvement of any human father.

In the New Testament, Mary's fiancé, Joseph, learned his future wife was already pregnant. An angel said to him, "*Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:20–21). Then Matthew noted (Matthew 1:22) that this was happening to fulfill Isaiah's words, a reference to this verse (Matthew 1:23).

God was on His way to meet His people where they were and strip them from the darkness they were living in. He was coming to people like you and I. Many of the Jews believed that God was going to send His Messiah. They probably didn't assume that God would send himself. The beauty of Christmas is that God didn't send a proxy to do His work but He came Himself. He came as Immanuel, God with us.

This prophecy was a message of hope to the people of Israel. Just like the people of Israel, our lives present us with streams of opportunities to trust and hope in who God is and what He promises. What are you putting your hope in? Are you trusting that God is a good Father who wants good things for His children? Today, reflect on areas in your heart and your life that you have unbelief or lack hope in the Father.

Day 12 - A Sign

Prayer: Jesus, thank you that you are Immanuel. Thank you that you are with me. Thank you that you are a God who sees my pain and understands the suffering I have experienced. Father, today I choose to walk in assurance and courage knowing that you are with me. You are all I need. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 13 - A Stone of Stumbling

"But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." (Isaiah 8:13-14)

Peter, the apostle makes this connection between the Lord, the one you should honor as holy, being Jesus Christ Himself. We can read that in 1 Peter 3:15. So, if the Lord, the Lord of Hosts who we are to honor as holy is Jesus Christ, let us consider the rest of this verse.

There is a fear, a 'holy fear' of sorts that is needed, that is required when thinking of how we honor Jesus. When He becomes a sanctuary, He is a hiding place, He is a place of worship, He is the place of honor in our hearts and in our lives.

The stone of offense, and the rock of stumbling - well some might call these 'fighting words', but before we get offended, let us understand why we have the potential of offense. It is because Jesus is THE Lord, and the Father decided that the only way for us to enter into the sanctuary, into the presence of God in the new covenant, is through Jesus Christ.

This is a stone of offense to those who didn't want to receive this word, they didn't want to receive this message, and therefore they didn't want to receive Jesus! So yes, it has become a stumbling block, to Israel, to Judah.

The question we are faced with in this advent, is where do we stand with this question of who Jesus is? Do we receive Him as the Lord of Hosts? Do we honor Him as holy? Do we fear Him with a holy fear, with a holy reverence? This is not the sort of warm and fuzzy question we like to snuggle up to the fire with, but it is of utmost importance! Jesus is holy, and Jesus is Lord, and therefore Jesus is to be honored as such.

Day 13 - A Stone of Stumbling

Prayer: Jesus, I believe in you, but help me in my unbelief. Where I have had too small a view of you and your position as Lord of Hosts, I humble repent and ask you to reveal more of yourself to my heart. I wait, and I anticipate your coming in this season of advent. Amen.

Reflection:

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Day 14 - A Son for Us

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us....” (Isaiah 9:6a)

Isaiah used repetition here to emphasize his point that a child will be born FOR us. This glorious prophecy of the birth of Messiah reminds Israel that the victory-bringing Messiah would be a man. The child had to be born. What an amazing mystery! There is nothing weaker, more helpless, more dependent than a *child*.

Theoretically, the Messiah could have come as a fully-grown man, created as an adult even as Adam was created. But for Jesus to fully identify with humanity, and to display in His life the servant nature that is in God, *He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men* (Philippians 2:7).

We needed a perfect, infinite Being to offer a perfect, infinite atonement for our sins. We needed *Immanuel, God is with us* (Isaiah 7:14). If Jesus were not fully man, He could not stand in the place of sinful man and be a substitute for the punishment man deserves. If He were not fully God, His sacrifice would be insufficient. If Jesus is not fully God and fully man, we are lost in sin.

The fact that Jesus is both God and man tells us that man really is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). You are made in the image of God! This means you take the likeness of God.

Each of us have fallen short of the glory of God and because of what Jesus did on the cross, we get to have victory over sin. This is amazing news! Jesus conquered sin! Each of us has the power to choose holiness and turn away from sin. Today, reflect on this truth and the ways that you can choose holiness over sin, recognizing and remembering that you are the likeness of God.

Day 14 - A Son for Us

Prayer: Jesus, thank you that you came to earth as a child to be with us. Thank you that you were the most perfect human to ever exist and set the tone for all of humanity. You are the truest representation of holiness. Holy Spirit, come into my heart and life today as I choose holiness and turn away from sin. Thank you for your mercy and grace as I navigate this truth. Amen.

Reflection:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Day 15 - The Sovereign King

“And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6b)

Perhaps you’ve heard the saying: “heavy is the head that wears the crown”? The truth is, it is heavy, being over all of creation, the governing, the ruling and reigning of the Kingdom of God was a task that could only sit with God Himself.

Too often we see that when people get into leadership, the position either goes to their head and they lord it over others, or it weighs them down and exposes the shortcomings of their character.

The Kingdom of God was given to Jesus, and on His shoulders it sits, and it sits well. So much so, His name is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

There is no end of the amount of attributes and accolades that could be ascribed to Jesus. That’s the King we serve, that is the Sovereign King who came and who saved those who call upon His name.

Today as you reflect on His second coming, take heart! He doesn't buckle under the responsibility, He is wise, He is our counselor, He is mighty, He is Sovereign.

Jesus is eternal, and Jesus is Peace. Does this help settle your fears and your worries about the future, about your current situation?

Day 15 - The Sovereign King

Prayer: Father, I don't know where I would be without knowing that someone good is in control of it all. I don't always remember this, but today I do, and I pray for the strength to always remember who you are in the middle of whatever may come! Amen.

Reflection:

Day 16 - A Shepherd

“Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.” (Isaiah 40:11)

In the preceding verse, we see the Glorious Lord come in as a conquering king, a generous benefactor, and here in this verse a gentle shepherd. The contrasts are striking, but such is the nature and character of Jesus!

Jesus referred to Himself as the “good shepherd” in John 10, and this imagery is one that deserves some diving into. Isaiah describes some of it.

He will tend His flock - this means He will look after His people. A good shepherd does, He does! He will gather the lambs, the weak, the young, the spiritually new, and He will carry them. This imagery of being carried “in His bosom” is so intimate, so close. He will gently lead us. This sort of shepherd one who so clearly knows His sheep. Jesus also says elsewhere that His sheep know Him, and they know His voice. This is developed in intimacy with Jesus.

Today, take some time to simply ‘sit with Him’. Quiet yourself, your prayers, your worries, your dreams, and sit with Him and listen. He says you are able to know His voice, but so often we have so many voices speaking to us, it's hard to discern. This is why we need times of quiet to learn to discern His voice, the voice of the good shepherd!

Day 16 - A Shepherd

Prayer: Dear Jesus, here I am, and here I want to stay. All day long, in your presence; all day long aware of your presence with me. Help me to quieten the lies, the voices, the noise, the drama around me, and fix my gaze upon you! Amen.

Reflection:

Day 17 - The Servant of the Lord

“Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.” (Isaiah 42:1)

This verse kicks off the first of four ‘Servant Songs’ that are fulfilled in Jesus! Much of the words here will be best understood in context as God is contrasting His Son, His Servant with the idols of the nations around them. Before God said “Behold, you”, referring to the idols, and “Behold, they” referring to the idol-worshipping nations, here God says “Behold, My Servant” and presents Him as the only hope for the nations.

This ‘Servant’ is God’s chosen one, the one in whom God delights. He states that God’s Spirit will be upon Him as opposed to the ‘empty wind’ in the previous chapter. The human world is too easily impressed by the wrong strategies, the wrong things, when God is showing us His Servant will be the one to bring forth justice and hope to the nations. In the person of Jesus, we see the Spirit of God came upon Him, in the womb, at His baptism, and as He ministered - the Spirit of God was with Him.

The Messianic Servant is the only hope for a truly just world. This Messiah will bring not only individual spiritual forgiveness and health but also the establishment of perfect justice throughout all earthly governments.

Today as you reflect on this promise, and the fulfillment in the person of Jesus, rest securely when you look at the chaos in the world. The Kingdom of God is advancing, and the King is coming! He will bring forth justice to all nations, including those we read of daily in the news that are kingdoms in conflict. The true King is coming!

Day 17 - The Servant of the Lord

Prayer: Father I am so very thankful to you! I chose to place my eyes on you and the promise of your word. Sometimes I get overwhelmed with the worries in the nations, but here I know that you are God, and you will reign. I trust you, and I pray for your coming to haste! Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 18 - Set Apart

"I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison." (Isaiah 42:6-7)

Whenever I read something like "I am the Lord", it feels like something we should definitely pay attention to. It's like 'I have spoken'! God the Father, speaks to the one whom He will appoint as a covenant, as a light, as healer, deliverer and rescuer! Just read that one more time and consider the implications.

"I am" says that this will happen, it is as confirmed and secure as God Himself is. He promised, He spoke it into being.

Fast forward to Jesus on earth, and as He begins His ministry, He reads from the same Isaiah scrolls and turns to what we call chapter 61. He says the Spirit of God is upon Him, and includes similar words. To heal, to proclaim liberty, and to rescue those who are in prison (figuratively speaking).

The ministry of the Messiah, the one the Father foretold in these verses, represents a living reality for believers today. He is our covenant - because of Jesus we have hope and a covenant with God! He will open blind eyes, set people free, and bring us into freedom.

Reflect on this description of Jesus today, and raise your expectation for the reality of living in this new covenant.

Day 18 - Set Apart

Prayer: Father, I raise my eyes and my expectation to know and experience the fullness of who you are. You are my healer, my deliverer, my rescuer, and I live in that reality today. Amen.

Reflection:

Day 19 - The Sorrowful One

“He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried.” (Isaiah 53:3-4)

It would be wrong to think of Jesus as perpetually sad and morose since He certainly showed great joy (such as in Luke 10:21). Yet, He knew sorrow and grief so intimately that He could be called a Man of Sorrows. This, among other reasons, made Him despised and rejected by men. Thus, being made sin for us, He underwent the sentence sin had subjected us to. His condition was sorrowful. Jesus never once felt sorry for Himself. His sorrow was for others, and for the fallen, desperate condition of humanity.

Some of mankind's reaction to Jesus was to withdraw from Him, to despise Him, and to hold Him in low esteem. When we don't see it, we can reject the ones God accepts. When we are more concerned with ourselves, our opinion, our lives, we can easily miss out on what the Holy Spirit is revealing around us.

We all have pain and sorrows, if not right now, we have definitely experienced that feeling in some form. Jesus took our pain upon himself. He made our griefs His own, our sorrows as if they were His. The image is that He loaded them up and carried them on His back, so we wouldn't have to.

How many people carry around pain, griefs, and sorrows that Jesus really carried for them? Do you have experience with this? He took them from us, but for it to do us any good, we must release them. What emotions is the Holy Spirit asking you to release today and how can you be obedient to that and walk in the truth that Jesus already carried them for you?

Day 19 - The Sorrowful One

Prayer: Holy Spirit I welcome you into my heart and emotions today. I surrender my pain and sorrow and circumstances to you. Thank you Jesus for making my griefs and sorrows your own. Thank you for selflessly carrying them for me. Today, I release my emotions and heartaches to you. I choose to walk in the truth that you carry them so I don't need to. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 20 - The Sacrifice for Us

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

Jesus was stricken and afflicted. Here, the prophet Isaiah explains why. It was for us. It was for our transgressions and our iniquities. It was in our place that Jesus suffered. Here, Isaiah announces that provision for healing is found in the suffering of Jesus. In Matthew 8:16-17, this view seems to be of physical healing.

In 1 Peter 2:24-25, this view seems to be of spiritual healing. We can conclude that God has both aspects of healing in view, and both our physical and spiritual healing is provided in the suffering of Jesus.

We can say without reservation that perfect, total, complete healing is God's promise to every believer in Jesus Christ, paid for by His stripes and the totality of His work for us. But we must also say that it is not promised to every believer right now, just as the totality of our salvation is not promised to us *right now*.

The Bible says that we have been saved (Ephesians 2:8), that we are being saved (1 Corinthians 1:18), and that we will be saved (1 Corinthians 3:15). Even so, there is a sense in which we have been healed, are being healed, and one day will be healed.

God's ultimate healing is resurrection, and it is a glorious promise to every believer. Every healing in this present time anticipates the ultimate healing that will come. We are called to be sons and daughters who pray boldly and trust God's goodness and mercy in granting gifts of healing now, even before the ultimate healing of resurrection. Where do you need to ask for healing right now?

Day 20 - The Sacrifice for Us

Prayer: Jesus, you are the ultimate healer. Thank you for saving me. I ask that you continue to sanctify me, making me more holy and more like you. Thank you for the promise of heaven, where pain and suffering and affliction are impossible. Thank you for being a God who wants to heal. I ask that you heal _____ area of my life. I pray this boldly and with confidence. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 21 - Spirit-Empowered

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners." (Isaiah 61:1)

When Jesus Himself quotes a verse from 700+ years before He was born, and reads it to proclaim who He is, and why He came, it is safe to say this verse was a prophecy about the coming Messiah! Not only do we get the assurance of this continuity between scripture written generations apart from each other, we also take note of the content.

This here speaks of the ministry of Jesus. Firstly, to preach the good news to the afflicted, in other words all of us. Jesus comes with a proclamation of the gospel, the good news of God's plan of salvation for all who call on His name.

Second, to heal the inner man, those hurting, in pain, those who have experienced so much trauma. Jesus cares so much about your wholeness as a person, in your body, your soul and your mind and emotions.

Thirdly, to bring liberty to the captives which means deliverance, liberty from spiritual oppression. We don't have to walk around believing the lies the enemy speaks over us, or be bound in spiritual chains, because HE speaks liberty over us. Lastly, to bring freedom to the prisoners. We're in spiritual and physical bondage, and His ministry is to speak life and liberty over us.

Interestingly, it's the Spirit of God that is upon Jesus and empowered Him to say these things, and to do these things in His earthly ministry. It's the same spirit that is here to empower you and I to do the work of the ministry! The Spirit of God enables us to preach, to heal, to deliver in the authority of Jesus.

Do you know the Holy Spirit in this way? Ask the Father for His Holy Spirit, and the Father will give you this gift. That is what the word of God promises us

Day 21 - Spirit-Empowered

Prayer: Father, today I ask you to empower and fill me with your Holy Spirit. May I be filled, and emboldened to continue the ministry of Jesus that He has called me to do. May I preach with compassion and truth, pray with boldness, and seek the wholeness in my life and others as Jesus leads me. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 22 - Stable-Born

“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.” (Micah 5:2)

God would raise up a great Ruler from a humble place. This place is Bethlehem. Bethlehem was well known as the hometown of David, Israel's greatest king; yet it was never a great or influential city. It was truly little among the thousands of Israel. Yet God chose it as the birthplace of the Messiah. Bethlehem means House of Bread, and Jesus is the Bread of Life (John 6:35).

Micah's prophetic voice declared that though Jesus came from Bethlehem, He did not begin there. His goings forth are from eternity past. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:13). This means from the very beginning, Jesus was there.

There was never a time when Jesus did not exist. Before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He existed as the Second Person of the Trinity (John 17:5, 17:24). Before Bethlehem, Jesus was the Creator of all things (Colossians 1:16-17, John 1:1-3).

Jesus is before all things and He is the Creator of all things. All beings but God have been created but whatever is not created is God. Jesus is the Creator of all things, therefore he is God.

Knowing that Jesus' goings forth are from everlasting shows us the glory of Jesus, that He is far more than a man. It shows us the love of Jesus, that He would leave the glory of heaven for us. And it shows us the nature of Jesus, that He would add humanity to His deity, His divine nature. Reflect today on the deity, divine nature, of God. How does this set Him apart? Why does this matter to humanity?

Day 22 - Stable-Born

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you that in your grace, you have told us the end from the beginning, for your Word is true and your promises stand forever. Forgive me for the times when my faith fails. Help me to keep my eyes on Jesus, who was born in the little town of Bethlehem and who is my Redeemer and Savior. I look forward with hope to the wonderful day when He comes back, and His glory will be fully revealed. Amen.

Reflection:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

Day 23 - The Sun of Righteousness

"But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall." (Malachi 4:2)

In the previous verse (Malachi 4:1) God promised a judgment of fire for the proud, but God also said that those who fear His name will be saved. Many Christians have regarded the Sun of Righteousness as a reference to Jesus. Here, Jesus is not only a sun, but the Sun of Righteousness who brings healing. The wings of the sun are the rays or sunbeams it sends out. They bring healing, joy, and wholeness. When the Sun of Righteousness shines, we need no other light or warmth. Imagine trying to light a candle on a sunny day to help out the sun. That makes as much sense as trying to "improve" the work of Jesus for us with our own righteousness.

Mercy and comfort are given to those who fear the Lord. We as humans don't want fear, but the fear of God has nothing to do with being scared of God. How can we have an intimate relationship with someone we are afraid of? God's number one desire for us is to have an intimate relationship with Him! The fear of God is not a fear that repulses us, but a fear that draws us. It's awe and reverence for the King. It's adoration and protection. The Bible not only reveals the love of God, but also reveals the intense holiness of God with his love at the center.

In Romans 1, Paul said that in the last days we are going to reduce the image of God down to man or four-footed beasts. Our society doesn't worship four-footed beasts but we do worship man. Have we created a Jesus that is more like us so that He will give us what we want, instead of really seeing who the real Jesus is at the right hand of the Father? The fear of God opens our eyes to who He really is. It's knowing the gravity of His glory and being in awe of it. Lots of people love Jesus, but do they really know Jesus and the extent of His holiness? Even John the baptist, the closest person to Jesus, saw Jesus in all His glory and fell down. Reflect today on the glory of God and how He is the Sun of Righteousness. He is the most beautiful Light and our glorious King.

Day 23 - The Sun of Righteousness

Prayer: Jesus, you are the most beautiful and glorious Light. You are the Sun of Righteousness. I confess all the ways I forget the gravity of your glory and power. I want to be someone who really knows you and fears you. I am in awe of you, God. I bow down to your holiness and to your glory. Fill me with your power and light today. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 24 - The Son of the Most High

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” (Luke 1:31-33)

Mary, a teenager, promised in marriage to Joseph, receives a visit from an angel with a message that would change her life forever, as well as the lives of anyone born in the world after this point! I can't actually imagine being in her shoes, but try with me. This prophecy carries so much weight to it, and calls on Old Testament language and prophecy adding to the significance of this moment. She knew she had not “known” her soon to be husband at this point, she understood something miraculous was being prophesied. We all get to benefit from this moment.

The term “Most High” is a term first used in Genesis 14:18-22, where Melchizedek, king of Salem, identifies Yahweh as “God Most High”. From there, whenever the term God, Most High is used, it is used to refer to the true God. YHWH! The God of Abraham, the God of Jacob, the God of David.

The Son of this God, Most High, is Himself God. Jesus, born to Mary, is God, and the Son of God Most High. The throne given to Him, the throne of David then fulfills other prophecies where David was promised that from His line, from His throne, the Kingdom will be established, the Kingdom that would have no end.

Today as you prepare yourself for the gifts, the Christmas eve celebrations, the pajamas, the hot chocolate, consider who sent His Son. God Most High did. God Most High loves you so that He sent His Son. God Most High knows you so intimately, that He knows the only thing that is to save you, is His own perfect Son. Allow that to lead you to worship Him with all your heart!

Day 24 - The Son of the Most High

Prayer: God Most High, I am overcome with gratitude. Your love is more than I could comprehend. Your gift is more than I could ever ask for. Thank you for your Son, thank you for your Love. Amen.

Reflection:

[illegible]

Day 25 - The Savior of All

“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)

This is it! This is the day! The Savior of the world has arrived. On this day everything changed, and we get to celebrate this fact today, and everyday since! Was Jesus actually born on December 25th? No, more than likely not. Some evidence points people to think it was around September. The Church of the latter day saints believe its April, others think in the summer. The Bible doesn't tell us, so therefore it's not important or relevant. What's relevant is the fact that He was born. That Mary was His mother, that He lived, that He died, and that He rose from the dead.

Don't worry too much about exact dates, let's focus on the fact that He came. These verses highlight 3 incredible words.

Savior - He is the Savior, He is the one who has come to save us all. The bible tells us that all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. This is the promise, this is His name!

Christ - this is not Jesus' last name. Christ is the Greek word for Messiah. This is a title, not a name. Jesus, the Christ; Jesus, the Messiah; has come!

Lord - The astonishing announcement, probably not fully grasped by the shepherds, is that this Messiah who has been born as a baby is also the Lord God Himself.

As you celebrate His birth, contemplate the meaning of these three words. Savior, Messiah, and Lord of all. Then personalize this for yourself, He is your Savior, the promised Messiah, and the Lord of all things, and the Lord of your life.

Day 25 - The Savior of All

Prayer: Thank you Father, for sending your Son! Thank you Jesus, for being the great rescuer, the Savior of my soul, and the Lord of my life. I put my trust in you not only for this day, but my whole life, and for the lives of all around us. You truly are who you said you are! Happy Birthday! Amen.

Reflection:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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