

A lit candle in a glass holder is the central focus, with a warm, glowing light emanating from it. Behind the candle, a large, semi-transparent starburst graphic is centered, with its points extending towards the top and bottom of the frame. The background is a dark, rich brown color, overlaid with a pattern of soft, out-of-focus circular bokeh lights in shades of orange and red. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

WAITING FOR A SAVIOUR

OUR DAILY ADVENT
READING GUIDE

Compiled and written by Suzanne Benner

Triads

As with our Lent series, you can use this reading guide on your own or in conjunction with a triad group. "Waiting for a Saviour" provides five readings per week for five weeks beginning November 22, 2021. Individually, you can read the Scripture passages and answer a few questions in about 15 minutes. Then plan to meet weekly with two others, for 30-60 minutes, to discuss what you learn and how God is at work in your heart and life.

Purpose: To study God's Word individually and come together to pursue God.

Make-up: Ideally three men or three women.

The Triad Process:

- A. Get into the Word** (individually). Read Scripture:
 - a. With an expectation that God wants to speak to you from His Word.
 - b. Asking God to reveal Himself to you through His Word.
 - c. Ready to be taught - Understanding that God's Word and His Holy Spirit have a desire to speak into your daily life, ideas, and even your traditions.
- B. Set a time and make a commitment to come together with your triad.**
 - a. Be prepared to ask each other and ready to answer a few simple questions:
 - How has God revealed Himself through His Word since we last met?
 - Share specific verses or insights that stood out to you.
 - How is your heart?
 - Is it yearning, breaking, joyful, weary, or anxious? Why?
 - b. Pray together:
 - Pray about yourself - This group is about your personal journey to know God, to be transformed by Him and to follow Him, so be comfortable with focusing your prayers on that. Pray about attitudes, character qualities, and motivation more than simply physical things.
 - Pray for your triad members. Pray specifically for the things they brought up during your sharing time. God hears your prayers.
 - Pray for the Church. Pray that we would be united in earnestly seeking God and humbly serving one another.
- C. Set a time for the next Triad gathering.**

How: A video calling app like Signal, WhatsApp, or Google Chat is a way to meet during COVID. Or we can make space available on weekdays for your triad to meet at the church.

Introduction

Immediately after the Fall – Adam and Eve’s rebellion – God began to reveal that He would send a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15). Later, He told Abram that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). With Moses and the exodus, God showed His people how He would free them from slavery to sin with the sacrifice of a perfect Passover lamb (Exodus 12:1-7). The Old Testament prophets spoke frequently about this Messiah and gave many details surrounding His birth, life, death, and resurrection. Jesus fulfilled them all. In this Advent guide, we will begin by reading passages – mostly from Isaiah – that describe the coming Saviour. Then, as we read the stories surrounding the birth of Jesus, we will connect them to the prophecies made many centuries previous.

Advent is the season of waiting.

Psalm 13:1-6 (ESV)

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,”
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

David, who penned Psalm 13, longed for the day when God would bring him justice. Yet, even in his suffering he trusted in God’s steadfast love and His promise of salvation. About 1000 years after David and 2000 years ago, the Saviour came. With His virgin birth, sinless life, voluntary death, and powerful resurrection, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin and offered us eternal life. He also broke the power of sin over us. By His Spirit, Jesus transforms us into His likeness and gives us the ability to obey. But as long as we live in this world, we still experience the presence of sin. So, like David, we suffer and long for the day when God will bring justice; the day when Jesus will triumph over all His enemies and complete salvation by freeing us from the presence of sin. That day is the day of Christ’s physical return.

Instead of waiting for the Messiah’s first coming, now we watch for His return. So, as you study God’s promises to send a Redeemer, think about the full picture. Many of the same passages that foretell the birth of Jesus, also speak of God’s judgment and a physical peace that is still to come.

This Advent, cry out in longing for Jesus to return.

Isaiah 9:1-7 (ESV)

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;

and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,

on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) both mean “anointed” and point to the One God promised to send to deliver His people.

According to these verses, what details do you see about who the Messiah is? (9:2, 9:7)

What will the Messiah be like? (9:3, 9:6)

Compare what Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah to what John said about Jesus, and what Jesus said about Himself:

- “The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world” (John 1:9 ESV).
- Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12 ESV).

Write a prayer asking Jesus to shine His light in your darkness:

Isaiah 11:1-9 (ESV)

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

What will the Messiah be like? What will He do?

Which part of this prophesy has been fulfilled?

Which part of this prophesy still awaits fulfillment?

*Where do you need the One full of wisdom, understanding, counsel, and might to speak into your life?
Write out your prayer:*

Jeremiah 33:14-22 (ESV)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a **righteous Branch** to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘**The Lord is our righteousness.**’

“For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.”

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: “Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.”

Circle the word “fulfill.”

Whose descendant will the Messiah’s be? (33:15)

What will the Messiah be called? (33:16) What does that mean?

How sure is God’s covenant promise? (33:20-21)

How can the permanence of God’s promise give you confidence today?

Write out a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness:

Isaiah 53:1-12 (ESV)

Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

What will the Messiah be like?

What are the similarities to the descriptions of the Messiah from the previous three days? (53:11)

What are the differences to the descriptions of the Messiah from the previous three days?

Write out your prayer to the suffering Saviour:

Isaiah 61:1-4 (ESV)

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.
They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

Who gives the Messiah power? (61:1)

List all the things that the Messiah has been anointed to do.

Which of these actions do you most need from Jesus right now? Write out your prayer:

Luke 1:5-17 (ESV)

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, **to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children**, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

Malachi 4:5-6 (ESV)

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will **turn the hearts of fathers to their children** and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

When would John be filled with the Holy Spirit? (1:15)

What was John's role to be? (1:16-17)

When did Malachi say that a prophet like Elijah would come? (4:5)

What is the "day of the Lord"?

(See Acts 2:19-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2; 2 Peter 3:10)

Write out any questions you have for God:

Luke 1:18-25 (ESV)

And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

Luke 1:57-66 (ESV)

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

Circle the word "fulfilled."

What reason did Gabriel give for striking Zechariah mute? (1:20)

When did Gabriel say his words would be fulfilled? (1:20)

Why is waiting difficult?

How did people react to Zechariah's mouth being opened after over nine months of silence? (1:65)

What was clear to everyone who heard about John? (1:66)

How can Zechariah's initial unbelief spur you on to believe in God's promises that are yet to be fulfilled? Express any struggle you have with unbelief or waiting in a prayer to God:

Luke 1:67-80 (ESV)

And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has visited and redeemed his people

and has **raised up a horn of salvation** for us

in the house of his servant David,

as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

that we should be saved from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us;

to show the mercy promised to our fathers

and to remember **his holy covenant,**

the oath that **he swore to our father Abraham,** to grant us

that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,

might serve him without fear,

in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you **will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,**

to give knowledge of salvation to his people

in the forgiveness of their sins,

because of the tender mercy of our God,

whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was **in the wilderness** until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

How is John described? (1:76) What would John do? (1:76-77)

Why did God promise to send someone ahead of the Messiah? (Look back at Day 6)

How is the Messiah described? (1:69) What will the Messiah do? (1:71-73)

Why did God send a prophet and the Messiah? (1:78-79)

How does knowing that God not only sent the Messiah, but also prepared the way for Him affect you?

Write a prayer of response to God:

Almost every phrase of Zechariah's Holy Spirit inspired (Luke 1:67) prophesy comes directly from Old Testament writings. Open your Bible to Luke 1:67-80 as you read through these Old Testament verses.

Psalm 132:17 (ESV) (see Luke 1:69)

There I will make a **horn to sprout for David**; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed.

Ezekiel 29:21 (ESV)

"On that day I will cause a **horn to spring up for the house of Israel**, and I will open your lips among them. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Jeremiah 23:5-6 (ESV) (see Luke 1:70)

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when **I will raise up for David a righteous Branch**, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: '**The Lord is our righteousness.**' (Compare with Day 3: Jeremiah 33:14-16)

Micah 7:20 (ESV) (see Luke 1:72-73)

You will show faithfulness to Jacob and **steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers** from the days of old.

Psalm 105:8-9 (ESV)

He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, **the covenant that he made with Abraham**, his sworn promise to Isaac,

Psalm 107:10 (ESV) (see Luke 1:79)

Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons,

Isaiah 42:7 (ESV)

to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who **sit in darkness**. (Look also at Day 1: Isaiah 9:2)

How can knowing that Zechariah's words are quotes from Old Testament prophets deepen our understanding of what he says?

From these verses, list all the ways Zechariah sees God fulfilling His promises:

Read Micah 7:18-20. How does knowing the prophets foretold God's forgiveness and mercy centuries before Jesus came impact you? Write a prayer of response to God:

Luke 3:1-6 (ESV)

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah **in the wilderness**. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

(See also Matthew 3:1-3; Mark 1:1-3; Matthew 11:7-14; Luke 7:24-27)

Isaiah 40:3-4 (ESV)

A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

Malachi 3:1 (ESV)

“Behold, I send my messenger, and he will **prepare the way before me**. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

Circle the word “written.”

Note that these events occurred many years after the birth of Jesus, when Caesar Augustus reigned and Quirinius was governor (Luke 2:1-2). In this passage, Tiberius Caesar reigns and Pontius Pilate is governor.

What was John’s purpose? (3:4)

What was the theme of John’s message? (3:3) See also Matthew 3:2.

How does repentance prepare our hearts for Jesus? (Look also at Day 6: Luke 1:17)

Why is repentance an essential element of our daily lives as we wait for Jesus to return?

Luke 1:26-38 (ESV)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, **you will conceive in your womb and bear a son**, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since **I am a virgin?**"

And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, **the virgin shall conceive and bear a son**, and **shall call his name Immanuel**.

Circle the phrase "according to your word."

As with Zechariah (Day 6), Gabriel's message to Mary contained words from Old Testament prophets about the Messiah. What is the significance of this?

How did Gabriel say Mary would become pregnant? (1:35)

What would Mary's son be called? (1:32; 1:35)

What does Gabriel say the virgin birth and pregnancy of a barren woman are examples of? (1:37)

The NIV translates Luke 1:37 as "For no word from God will ever fail." Where in your life do you need the reminder that God's promises will never fail?

How can this verse reaffirm to you the truth that Jesus will return?

Luke 1:39-45 (ESV)

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

Circle the word "fulfillment."

By the power of the Holy Spirit, what does Elizabeth proclaim? (1:43)

By the power of the Holy Spirit, what does John do? (Remember Day 6: Luke 1:15)

Review all the readings so far. List all the works of the Holy Spirit that you see:

Write a prayer of response to God and ask His Holy Spirit to be at work in you:

Luke 1:46-56 (ESV)

And Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done **great things** for me,
and holy is his name.
And **his mercy** is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown **strength with his arm**;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
he has **brought down the mighty** from their thrones
and **exalted those of humble estate**;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”
And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

How does Mary see herself? (1:48)

How does Mary describe God?

What is Mary's response to these attributes of God? (1:46-47)

What does it mean to magnify (ESV) or glorify (NIV) God?

Write your own prayer to magnify and glorify God:

Like Zechariah's prophesy, Mary draws on Old Testament passages to present her praise to God. So, open your Bible to Luke 1:46-56 as you read through and compare these Old Testament verses.

Psalm 71:19 (ESV) (see Luke 1:49)

Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens.
You who have done **great things**, O God, who is like you?

Deuteronomy 7:9 (ESV) (see Luke 1:50)

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and **steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,**

Psalm 89:1 (ESV)

I will sing of the **steadfast love of the Lord**, forever;
with my mouth I will make known **your faithfulness to all generations.**

Psalm 98:1 (ESV) (see Luke 1:51)

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things!
His right hand and **his holy arm have worked salvation for him.**

Ezekiel 21:26 (ESV) (see Luke 1:52)

thus says the Lord God: Remove the turban and take off the crown. Things shall not remain as they are.
Exalt that which is low, and bring low that which is exalted.

Isaiah 41:8-9 (ESV) (see Luke 1:54-55)

But you, Israel, my **servant**, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the **offspring of Abraham**, my friend;
you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners,
saying to you, "You are my servant, **I have chosen you and not cast you off**"

How can knowing that Mary's words are quotes from Old Testament prophets deepen our understanding of what she says?

From these verses, list all the ways Mary sees God fulfilling His promises:

*Which of the **blue** highlighted phrases impact you the most? Why? Write out your prayer to God:*

Matthew 1:18-25 (ESV)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "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." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

"Behold, **the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,**
and they **shall call his name Immanuel**"

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Circle the word "fulfill."

Matthew states outright what Luke only hints at – the virgin conceiving and bearing a son fulfills what was spoken by the prophet. Which prophet said this and where? (Look back at Day 11)

What two things does the angel command Joseph to do? (1:20; 1:21)

What does Joseph's obedience (1:24) say about him?

The name Jesus means, "The Lord is salvation." The name Immanuel means, "God with us." What is the significance of the names given by the angel?

Isaiah 59:16, 20 (ESV)

He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede;
then **his own arm brought him salvation**, and his righteousness upheld him.

"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the Lord.

Acts 4:12 (ESV)

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

What do these verses say about who Jesus is and what He has done?

In a prayer, tell God how these truths impact you:

Luke 2:1-7 (ESV)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called **Bethlehem**, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and **wrapped him in swaddling cloths** and **laid him in a manger**, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Micah 5:2-5 (ESV)

But you, O **Bethlehem** Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, **from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel**, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

And **he shall be their peace**.

When Caesar Augustus issued a decree, why did Joseph go to Bethlehem? (2:4)

Which, of the twelve tribes of Israel, did David come from? (Micah 5:2)

What details does Micah provide about the Messiah?

In what ways have you experienced security and peace in Jesus?

In what ways do you still wait for security and peace in Jesus?

Write out your prayer:

Luke 2:8-21 (ESV)

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For **unto you is born** this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find **a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths** and **lying in a manger**." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth **peace** among those with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to **Bethlehem** and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Circle the phrase "as it had been told them."

Which prophesy did the angel refer to when he said, "For unto you is born"? (Review week one)

When was the sign (2:12), which the angel gave the shepherds, fulfilled?

What did the shepherds have to do to see the sign fulfilled?

How did Joseph and Mary demonstrate obedience in these verses? (2:21)

What role does obedience play in our seeing the fulfillment of God's promises?

What was Mary's reaction to these events? (2:19) What was the shepherds' reaction? (2:20)

What is your reaction to these events? Records your thoughts in a prayer to God:

Luke 2:22-38 (ESV)

And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for [the consolation of Israel](#), and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
[a light for revelation to the Gentiles](#), and for glory to your people Israel.”

And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for [a sign that is opposed](#) (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for [the redemption of Jerusalem](#).

Isaiah 42:6 (ESV)

I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you;
I will give you as a covenant for the people, [a light for the nations](#),

Isaiah 8:13-15 (ESV)

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. And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.

Circle the phrase “according to your word.”

What had the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon? (2:26)

What does Simeon say the Messiah will be like?

How is Jesus still “opposed” and “a stone of offense”?

Write a prayer, confessing any ways you have taken offense at Jesus or His teaching:

Reread Luke 2:22-38 (Day 18)

Isaiah 40:1-2 (ESV) (See Luke 2:25)

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

Isaiah 57:18-19 (ESV)

I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and **restore comfort to him** and his mourners,
creating the fruit of the lips.
Peace, peace, to the far and to the near," says the Lord, "and I will heal him.

List all the things in these verses that God promises to bring His people through the Messiah:

What does consolation (Luke 2:25) mean?

What does redemption (Luke 2:38) mean?

How are consolation and redemption connected?

In what ways have you experienced consolation and redemption in Jesus?

In what ways do you still wait for consolation and redemption in Jesus?

Simeon and Anna spoke about what God would do in the future through Jesus. They believed that God had fulfilled His word by sending the Messiah, even though they didn't live to see the Messiah do anything. How can their faith stir ours to believe Christ that will physically return? Write out your prayer:

Matthew 2:1-12 (ESV)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born **king of the Jews**? For we saw his **star** when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

“And you, O **Bethlehem**, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for **from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.**”

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Jeremiah 30:9 (ESV)

But they shall serve the Lord their God and David **their king**, whom I will raise up for them.

Zechariah 9:9 (ESV)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, **your king** is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Numbers 24:17 (ESV)

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near:
a **star** shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;
it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.

Circle the word “written.”

Who does Herod consult with his question about the Messiah (the Christ)? (2:4)

Which prophet wrote the quote (2:6) and where? (See Day 16)

These words from Jeremiah, Zechariah, Moses (Numbers), and Micah all point to the Messiah (Note that Jeremiah lived and prophesied centuries after king David had died, so he talks about David’s eternal heir). Why would these prophecies trouble Herod?

How do these prophecies impact you? Respond to God in prayer:

Matthew 2:13-18 (ESV)

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

"A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

Hosea 11:1 (ESV)

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Jeremiah 31:15 (ESV)

Thus says the Lord:

"A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."

Based on Herod's edict in Matthew 2:16, how long after Jesus was born did the wise men probably arrive?

Circle the words "fulfill" and "fulfilled."

*Review your whole Advent reading guide. How many words and phrases have you circled?
(fulfill/fulfilled/fulfillment/written/according to your word/as it had been told them)*

List the variety of things that were foretold, from minor details to supernatural events:

How does this information affect you? Write a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God:

Jeremiah 31:1-3, 7-15 (ESV)

“At that time, declares the Lord, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people.”

Thus says the Lord:

“The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness;
when Israel sought for rest, the Lord appeared to him from far away.

I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.

For thus says the Lord:

“Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, save your people, the remnant of Israel.’

Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together; a great
company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back,
I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble,
for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

“Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’

For the Lord has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the
Lord,

over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more.

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness,
declares the Lord.”

Thus says the Lord:

“A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping.

Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no
more.”

Underline all the verbs (actions words) describing what God will do for His people.

How does knowing God acts in these ways impact you?

Matthew connects the slaughter of innocents in Bethlehem by Herod to Jeremiah’s prophecy. Yet paradoxically, when Matthew quotes Jeremiah 31:15, he is bringing hope. This terrible event, foretold centuries earlier, signalled the beginning of “the return” – the time of the Messiah.

How does the return of the Israelites to the promise land parallel our return to God when we confess our sins and seek Him for forgiveness?

How does the promise of Christ’s physical return help us endure our times of weeping?

Jeremiah 31:16-22 (ESV)

Thus says the Lord:

“Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears,
for there is a reward for your work,
declares the Lord, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy.
There is hope for your future,
declares the Lord, and your children shall come back to their own country.
I have heard Ephraim grieving,
‘You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined, like an untrained calf;
bring me back that I may be restored, for you are the Lord my God.
For after I had turned away, I relented, and after I was instructed, I struck my thigh;
I was ashamed, and I was confounded, because I bore the disgrace of my youth.’
Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he my darling child?
For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still.
Therefore my heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him,
declares the Lord.

“Set up road markers for yourself; make yourself guideposts;
consider well the highway, the road by which you went.
Return, O virgin Israel, return to these your cities.
How long will you waver, O faithless daughter?
For the Lord has created a new thing on the earth: a woman encircles a man.”

Jeremiah 31:31-34

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

What is the future hope Jeremiah speaks of in 31:17?

What new thing will God do? (31:22; 31:31)

The simplest understanding of “a woman encircles (or encompasses or protects) a man” (31:22) is pregnancy. A male child is surrounded and protected in his mother’s womb. Hebrews 8:8-12 and 10:16-17 use Jeremiah 31:31-34 to explain Christ’s sacrifice as the new covenant. So, the new covenant comes via a new thing – the virgin birth.

Ponder these ideas and write a prayer of response to God:

Isaiah 42:1-9 (ESV)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him; **he will bring forth justice to the nations.**
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:
“I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you;
I will give you as a covenant for the people, **a light for the nations**, to open the eyes that are blind, **to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon**, from the prison those who sit in darkness.
I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.
Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

How is the Messiah described?

God, speaking of the Messiah says, “I will give you as a covenant for the people.” (42:6) How does that connect to yesterday’s reading from Jeremiah?

Which part of this prophecy still awaits fulfillment?

*Draw a box around the word, “justice.”
Where in your life do you long for God’s justice?*

Express your desire for justice in a prayer to God:

John 14:1-3 (ESV)

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

What did Jesus promise his disciples? (John 14:3)

Acts 1:6-11 (ESV)

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Did Jesus restore God's kingdom to Israel with His death and resurrection? (Acts 1:6)

How do you know that?

Who determines the timing of the restoration of God's kingdom? (Acts 1:7)

When will Jesus restore God's kingdom to all who follow Him? (Acts 1:11)

We've spent the last five weeks reading about and pondering Jesus' birth into our world and how it fulfilled Scripture. We remember that with His virgin birth, sinless life, voluntary death, and powerful resurrection, He purchased our salvation. We continue to wait in hope for His return. As Pastor Alistair Begg says, “Hope is the assurance of the reality you have not yet fully experienced.”

Write a prayer to God of waiting in hope: