



ADVENT



WEEK 1 NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 4	
Sunday	In Him We Find Hope (Hope Candle)
Monday	In the Beginning There Was a King
Tuesday	Give Us a King
Wednesday	The Promise of Justice
Thursday	The Promise of Restoration
Friday	The Promise of Peace
Saturday	Isaiah 9:2-7
WEEK 2 DECEMBER 5 - DECEMBER 11	
Sunday	In Him We Find Peace (Peace Candle)
Monday	The Kingdom Commission
Tuesday	Divided Heart/Divided Kingdom
Wednesday	A Kingdom Desperate for Peace
Thursday	A Kingdom Defiled and Restored
Friday	A Kingdom Determined to Follow God
Saturday	Isaiah 32:15-18
WEEK 3 DECEMBER 12 - DECEMBER 18	
Sunday	In Him We Find Joy (Joy Candle)
Monday	The Genealogy of the King
Tuesday	Son of David
Wednesday	Son of Abraham
Thursday	A King for the Nations
Friday	The Return of the King
Saturday	Psalms 98
WEEK 4 DECEMBER 19 - DECEMBER 25	
Sunday	In Him We Find Love (Love Candle)
Monday	The King is Coming
Tuesday	A Song for the King
Wednesday	The Name of the King
Thursday	A King Like No Other
Friday	Come Let Us Adore Him
Saturday	John 1:9-14

- *Optional addition: assemble a simple Advent wreath, including 5 candles, to light at designated times.*
- *Special thanks to Kristi Sullins, for writing this wonderful content. May it lead us to fix our eyes on Jesus!*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28

IN HIM WE FIND HOPE



“Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in HOPE of the glory of God.” **Romans 5:2**

The season of Advent, for all who believe in the promised Messiah, is meant to be a time of joyful anticipation. It is a practice of resetting our hearts to the promise of the coming King. “Advent” in Latin means “coming.” By returning to the story of the beginning of man, we are reminded of God’s promises (prophecies) to His people in the Old Testament. With the birth of Christ, the impossible promises of the Son of God becoming the Son of Man became reality. On that holy night of His birth, in the fullness of time, He came just like God said He would. Reflection of this first Advent is an act of worship meant to fill us with HOPE as we wait for the second Advent: the second coming of Christ, our King, and the restoration of God’s Kingdom.

Light the First Advent Candle

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son then an heir through God.

Galatians 4:4-7

Hope is both fragile and powerful. Holding to hope can lift us from the darkest pits. Losing hope can feel like losing life itself. Maybe that is why the Old Testament is saturated with the prophecies of hope. They are life to all who believe. But hope is not expectation. Hope is trust in the one making the promise. It is trust that His “fullness of time” is perfect. And while we may groan under the weight of this present world, we have hope because the King will return again in the fullness of time. So we wait with hope.

Reflect and Pray:

What has threatened to rob you of hope? Make a list of the attributes of God and acts of God in your life that remind you of why you can trust Him with your hope. Thank God for the hope we can have that only comes from Him. Thank Him for the Scripture He gave us, full of promises and fulfillments, so we can believe in Him with hope.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29



IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS A KING

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

Genesis 1:26

Mankind often believes that they developed the idea of kings and kingdoms. But the truth can be found in Genesis. In the beginning, there was a King.

Read:

Genesis 1:26-31

In the beginning, out of nothing, God created His kingdom. Each element of creation was designed by Him. And nothing was outside of His authority. He wrote the laws of gravity into existence, and set order through time and space. The kingdom He formed knew no conflict, and no detail was left to chance. Light and dark didn't war for dominance. The sea and land existed in peace, for the King had set their boundaries. In the midst of His good kingdom, God created Adam and Eve, His image bearers. To them, the triune God "let them" have dominion in His Kingdom. Only the King could share His authority. It was only by the invitation of God that humanity was allowed to reflect His image to creation. We were not given the power to make our own land, but to maintain an existing kingdom. With order established and all needs met, God proclaimed "very good" over His land. And for a time, God's earthly kingdom was at peace.

Advent Reflection:

Reread Genesis 1:26

God "let them have dominion". Any authority or leadership we have is given to us by God. How are you handling the people and areas you have been entrusted with? Are you displaying the kingdom of God or the kingdom of man?

For further study read: Genesis 1

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30



GIVE US A KING

“They said to him, ‘Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” **1 Samuel 8:5**

The wholeness of God’s kingdom would end when Adam and Eve decided that the authority God had given them was not enough. They wanted to be like the King. With the entrance of sin, the earth would trade peace for conflict, and provision for need. The brokenness of this world would not lead God’s people closer to Him. Generation after generation would seek their own solution, instead of seeking God’s, rejecting His authority and crying out, “Give us a King.”

Read:

1 Samuel 8:4-9, 19-22

Ever since the fall of man in the garden, history has recorded the failed attempts of humanity to rule as king. Towers of man’s achievement and might have risen and fallen. Men have enslaved one another in attempts to rule in authority, and yet all have failed. Exodus records the story of God displaying His authority over all of creation as He set about freeing His people from Pharaoh’s authority. As their King, God provided for them, protected them, and set their eyes towards a promised land. But like Adam and Eve in the garden, they rejected His authority time and again. Generation after generation, the Children of Israel would choose their own authority. Finally, in the time of Samuel, the priest, the Israelites rejected the unseen, absolute authority of God. They chose instead to have a flesh and blood king, like all the other nations. Through Samuel, God warned His people that the kingdom of man comes at a high cost, but they responded, “There shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” They chose a flawed human to do what God had done for them all along.

Advent Reflection:

In what area are you looking for human solutions instead of trusting God’s care? Are you relying on your own power, or trusting God? Pray for God to help you see the areas of rebellion in your life.

For further study read: Genesis 3, 1 Samuel 8

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1

PROMISE OF JUSTICE



“I have put my Spirit upon him: he will bring forth justice to the nations.” **Isaiah 42:1b**

The Israelites couldn't have imagined what their choice of a human king and a rejection of God's authority would cost them. No king could compare to God's perfect leadership, and their earthly kingdoms would all fall. But God did not leave them without hope. There would be a King to come, and He would usher in justice for His people.

Read:

Isaiah 11:1-5, Isaiah 42:1-4

A world led justly. Can you imagine it? What would it look like for every voice to be heard, for all people to matter, and to live in harmony? Our minds can not fathom it because it hasn't happened since the Garden of Eden. We know a world of tainted justice, spoiled by position and power. Being a conquered people, the Israelites could never find justice. They suffered under the rule of foreign leaders, having no say in their religion or their government. Mixed into Isaiah's prophecy for the judgment and oppression they would face, God gave His people a promise. There would be a King who would restore justice. Justice begins and ends with God. Because we are made in His image, and meant for a perfect kingdom, we will crave justice on this earth. And we are meant to be a people of justice. The prophet Micah made clear that all who are children of God are called to “act justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.” (Micah 6:8, NIV) While we are acting justly, we must guard against the idea that any human leader can bring righteous justice to this earth. It is impossible for earthly authority to bring about what can only be found with God. Justice was His creation. It was a part of His Kingdom, and we can hold fast to the promise that our King will restore justice to His people.

Advent Reflection:

Justice is about more than rights and wrongs. God's justice is full of compassion. He pursues justice with a heart full of grace for all. Take time now to thank God for the times that His justice towards you has been full of grace. If you are experiencing the injustice of this world, lift that struggle to Him. You can trust He will work all things together for the good of those who love Him. (Romans 8:28)

For further study read:

Isaiah 42:1-25, Isaiah 5:15-17

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2



PROMISE OF RESTORATION

What have you lost this year? Have you lost someone you love? Has your livelihood changed? Is your hope crumbling? Then Advent is meant for you. As we wait for the coming of Christ, we turn our eye to the promise of the King, who has come to restore all things.

Read:

Isaiah 61:1-4, Luke 4:17-21

To the Israelites held captive by Babylon, Isaiah's proclamation of the promise of restoration was a song of hope. A hope to return home. A hope for the return of the familiar and safe. A return to importance. And a hope for the return of God's favor. He would restore their land and they would be His. To these weary and broken people, God gave Isaiah the message to proclaim. But the prophet could only proclaim what the coming King would do. No normal man could restore the people of God. So can you imagine the atmosphere of the synagogue when Jesus stood before them, read the words of Isaiah, and then made His own proclamation: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."? The King had come to restore! And His restoration would begin with belief, and be complete in God's perfect time. His focus wasn't on making us comfortable here on earth. Jesus came with the mind to "save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10, NKJV). The King had come to begin the restoration of His Kingdom for it is only in the kingdom of God that His people could find all that they had lost to sin. Perhaps that is why He taught His followers to pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done." The time for restoration had come, and all who believe are invited to set their eyes on the kingdom of God, restored to this earth through Christ.

Advent Reflection:

Christ came to restore all that was lost. His heart is for wholeness and restoration for all who believe. Pray for restoration of the areas that are broken in your life. Close your prayer proclaiming the promise of restoration, found in Matthew 6:10, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

For further study:

Isaiah 60, 61

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3



PROMISE OF PEACE

For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulders, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Isaiah 9:6-7**

How do you define peace? Is it a time with no stress? A season without conflict or simply a state of mind? Most of us know that any time of “peace” has a time limit. Cease fires end. Arguments happen and stress will inevitably invade our peace of mind. We can not imagine peace because we have never known it. To understand God’s plan for peace, we have to return to the Garden.

Read:

Genesis 1:31, 2:1, Isaiah 9:6-7

Throughout the story of Creation we see the phrase “and God saw that it was good.” The Hebrew word for good is “Tov,” and it means so much more than good. In God’s proclamation of “Tov,” we see the world at peace. Tov means harmony, flourishing and wholeness. When God surveyed His Kingdom He saw completeness. All the world was at peace. Man and woman were complete in God. Animals were complete in nature. All heaven and nature were finished. There was no striving, no burdens and no need. Sin stripped away wholeness, ravaged our completeness and left humanity striving. Striving for power. Striving to meet physical needs. Striving for peace. Perhaps that is why God had Isaiah proclaim the title, “Prince of Peace” over the coming Messiah. Only the Son of God could bring peace. And Jesus did. Trace Christ’s ministry on earth and you will see that He restored peace wherever He went. In His presence, physical needs were met. Storms ceased. Sins were forgiven and everyone was equal. With Christ, striving could cease. He brought the Kingdom of God to earth through His presence. And through His coming we are able to live now in the presence of His peace. The world we live in will strive while we wait for the second advent of Christ. But through the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to live this life in peace. (John 14:17, ESV) Our King brought peace to all who believe and we wait with hope for the return of His kingdom of peace.

Advent Reflection:

To live in peace is to cease from striving. That requires us to rest in the authority of God. Christ promises us peace now, but we must choose to live in it. What are the things that rob you of your peace? What are the things keeping you from living in the fullness of God right now? Pray over these areas. Ask for the Holy Spirit’s strength to choose daily to live in God’s peace.

For further study:

Isaiah 57:18-19, John 14

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4



REFLECT AND REJOICE

Use this day to read the truth of Scripture and reflect on the hope we have because of the answered promises of God. Rejoice in our King, who is Hope for all who believe.

The people who walk in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them the light has shone. You have multiplied the nation; you have increased the 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 of 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 unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, 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 uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time and forever more. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

Isaiah 9:2-7

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5



IN HIM WE FIND PEACE (PEACE CANDLE)

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, goodwill toward men!"

Luke 2:13-14, NKJV

It was to the shepherds in the field that the angels proclaimed the return of peace to earth. For generations, kings and kingdoms had failed to bring peace to the people of God. Now on that quiet night, the true King had returned.

Light the First and Second candles.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **Romans 5:1**

For he himself is our peace.....And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. **Ephesians 2:14a, 17**

The genealogy of Christ gives record to human kings who sought their kingdoms and their version of peace using their limited power. Their authority was limited, and peace was dependent on others, and easily lost. The proclamation of the angel made clear that the person of peace had come. But Christ didn't come to make our lives calm. He came to be our peace. It is only through Him that we can be at peace with God through His righteousness. Because of Him we no longer have to strive through works to be made right with God. We live in God's kingdom now, and we are called to participate in bringing peace to our broken world. In Matthew 5:9 Jesus called His children to be peacemakers. It seems impossible to live in peace with those around us, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, we should pursue peace.

Reflect and Pray

The holiday season can be full of tension and frustration. Pray for peace to be in your house, within your family, and in your community. Pray by name for those with whom you are not at peace. If you are an enemy of peace by your words and actions, confess these areas to God. Thank God that, because of Jesus, we no longer have to strive to be at peace with Him. Ask for His strength to live at peace with those around you.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6



THE KINGDOM COMMISSION

“I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.” **Genesis 17:6**

Adam had failed in his commission to have dominion over the earth, but God did not abandon his plan for kingship here. All authority comes from God. He set the plan for our coming king into motion. Kings and kingdoms would rise and fall, but nothing would stop the return of the true king.

Read:

Genesis 17:1-9

Do these words seem familiar to you? The commission God spoke over Adam and Eve in the garden was spoken again generations later. But sin had changed things. To Adam, God extended an invitation to be fruitful and multiply, to join Him in kingship and dominion. (Genesis 1:28) Sadly, he traded shared authority for empty promises of power. To Abraham, God granted the right of dominion. He proclaimed, “I will make you fruitful. I will make you into nations.” Because of God, kings would come from Abraham’s line. Sin had stripped humans of the power of dominion, but God had made a way to restore the kingdom. This covenant with Abraham was the beginning of the “holy nation” that God would call the Israelites to be (Exodus 19:6). Their history is littered with kingdom failures, as their rulers tried to look like other nations instead of reflecting their King. Through the highs and lows of the history of Israel, we see that even when God’s people broke their promises, God held tightly to His covenant.

Advent Reflection:

God established this covenant with Abraham, knowing that He would have to sustain it. He knew man would not be blameless. He knew they would turn from Him. God knew the full story. And yet!!!! He chose to stand in covenant with Abraham, preparing the way for Jesus, our coming King. God knows that we too will fail Him. We will turn from Him. And He entered into a covenant with us, sustained only through Christ. Praise Him today for His love that led to an everlasting covenant of belonging.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7



DIVIDED HEARTS AND DIVIDED KINGDOM

And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my rules, then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever.

1 Kings 9:4-5a

God had honored the Israelites' demand for a king. Saul ruled with greatness until his pride caused God to remove His hand of blessing and call another king, David. Though David served God faithfully, sin still stained his legacy. God had promised kingship through the line of David. What would Solomon do with that kingdom?

Read:

1 Kings 9:3-9, 11:31-36

The story of King Solomon is a tale of two kings. When his heart was set on God, he was full of wisdom and success. Through Solomon the temple was built and the land of Israel was at peace. But God had made clear that the key to successful kingship could only be found walking with Him. And Solomon did...for a while. Then he let things turn his head and his heart. The great wealth and fame he amassed led Solomon to believe that he could rewrite the rules. He turned from God's law regarding marriage, and soon the land of God was filled with idols from the women in Solomon's life. God will share glory with nothing and no one! But Solomon wouldn't listen to God's rebuke. His divided heart towards the ways of God and the ways of this earth would lead to a divided kingdom. God made known to Jeroboam, a servant of Solomon, that he would tear the kingdom in two, giving ten tribes to Jeroboam, and leaving two for the line of David. When Rehoboam, Solomon's son, took the throne after Solomon, he had a chance to reign with wisdom and kindness. But after years of watching his father consume the resources of the land and build flawed alliances, Rehoboam had learned the practices of a dictator, instead of the heart of a king. God divided the land, and the temporary peace was destroyed. Conflict and corruption would mark the history of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. But even in punishment, God kept His covenant. There would be a King to come from the line of David, and there will be no end to His kingdom.

Advent Reflection:

Any king of this earth will fail us. Human leaders can not restore peace to this earth. But God did not leave us without the hope of peace. There is peace and mercy for all who walk now as a new creation (Galatians 6:15-16). Pray today for an undivided heart that seeks peace only from God. He is our faithful King.

For further study:

1 Kings 11:1-13, 1 Kings 11: 26-38, 1 Kings 12:1-17

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8



A KINGDOM DESPERATE FOR PEACE

O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. **2 Chronicles 20:12**

The southern kingdom was on its fourth king after the division that God had promised. Some had been good, others had been evil. And in the midst of them all God was faithful.

Read:

2 Chronicles 20:1-30

We want to believe we have control of our lives...that good comes because of our actions, and we can handle the hard things. Eventually we all learn that good things happen to 'bad people,' bad things happen to 'good people,' and we all will face things that are out of our control. King Jehoshaphat was a good king, who had done what was right in the sight of God. His obedience to God didn't mean that the kingdom was always at peace, but what it did establish is that Jehoshaphat knew where to turn when the struggle came. The king and all of Judah saw the armies headed toward them, focused on their destruction. Instead of mounting an attack based on their own might, King Jehoshaphat called all the people of Judah to join him before God. There Jehoshaphat didn't tell God why they deserved His protection or why they were worthy of living in peace. No, they proclaimed the past faithfulness of God. They admitted their dependence on God and asked God to move on their behalf. And then they waited. Standing there together, they trusted God for their peace. God did not let them down. He showed Himself more mighty than the army and more able than any king, to bring peace. The people of Judah watched their enemy be defeated by God, and they worshiped Him for all He had done. God brought peace to Judah in the midst of their enemies. That same peace in the face of turmoil is offered to us today. It was in Isaiah that God promised perfect peace to all who set their mind to God. And Christ echoed that promise of peace in John 14:27, when He gave us His perfect peace. We do not need might and power to live in peace. Instead, we need to set our mind and heart to God, and He will establish peace in us.

Advent Reflection:

There is a line in a familiar Christmas song, saying, "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me." For believers, peace always begins with God. How are you setting your eyes toward Him in this season? Are you seeking your own solutions and strength to bring peace to your world, or are you trusting in God? He has promised us peace, no matter what we are facing. Rest in His peace today.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9



A KINGDOM DEFILED AND RESTORED

And when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his father. **2 Chronicles 33:12**

Every good story has a villain - a character we love to hate. When they finally get what they have coming to them, we celebrate. Praise be to God that His heart is always bent toward restoration, and there is no one too far gone for Him!

Read:

2 Chronicles 32:33-33:20

Mannasseh was the fourteenth king in the line of Judah. There had been years of unfaithfulness and years of restoration under faithful kings. Mannasseh had been raised by a father who was faithful to God, but he had turned from his father's ways. During his 55 year reign, he committed every kind of evil against God. Instead of being a king that led his people toward God, he is credited with leading the people of Judah and all of the inhabitants of Jerusalem away from God. Warnings were given by God, but the arrogance of authority caused Manasseh to ignore them. God never lets our sin go unchecked, and Manasseh found himself bound and chained, a prisoner to the king of Assyria. What would seem to us like just punishment was going to be used by God to bring restoration. Manasseh humbled himself before God and prayed; God heard Manasseh and restored him. Some of us won't like that ending because it doesn't seem fair. God is rarely concerned with 'fairness,' and always focused on heart change. Manasseh was brought low because of sin. And he would be raised back to power because of God's great forgiveness. He celebrated God's forgiveness by tearing down all that had been built for other gods, and offering sacrifices to the one true God. In the story of this king of Judah, we find a precious truth. No one is too far gone to be restored by God, and God will go to great lengths to bring His people back to Him.

Advent Reflection:

If you feel far from God, know that there is nothing God cannot restore. His heart is for His children. What He requires from us is to humble ourselves, repent, and turn to Him. When He brings us low, we are in the perfect position for Him to restore us. Pray for yourself or for family members that are far from God. Pray for repentance and restoration. Thank God for His boundless grace and mercy for those who turn to Him.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10



A KING DETERMINED TO OBEY

And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord and keep his commandments and testimonies and his statutes, with all of his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book.

2 Chronicles 34:31

Twenty kings would reign from the time of Solomon to the final exile of God's chosen people. Their great idolatry had set the path for their destruction. But the last obedient king to reign before exile reminds us that the Word of God should lead us to repentance, and in repentance we can find peace.

Read:

2 Kings 22:1-13, 2 Chronicles 34:29-33

Named king at age eight, Josiah found himself leading the nation of Israel. Through the faithful reign of Josiah, the boy king, Judah would experience a revival - a revival that was brought on by the Word of God. Josiah was determined to do what was right in the eyes of God. By sixteen he was walking with Him. By twenty, he began to tear down idols and altars, leaving no room for false gods in the land of God's people. When he was twenty-six, the land was free of idols and Josiah turned his focus to repairing the house of the Lord. It was during these repairs that a copy of the Book of the Law was found. Josiah grieved how far the people had strayed from God. He repented, then he acted. He stood before the people of Judah and made a covenant with God to walk in His way and to follow His Word. King Josiah restored the Israelites' covenant with God that they had made so long ago. He brought back the Passover Feast, reminding them all of the faithfulness God had shown them. The repentance of King Josiah led to a revival in the land. During the time of his reign, the people of Judah did what was right in the sight of God. It may seem inconsequential since we know that Judah still fell. But it was during this time that Daniel was being raised. Daniel and his friends - Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah - who would stand firm in their faith. Daniel, who would obey God and honor Him, no matter what. For the first time in generations, children were raised to walk in the ways of God. Before they were taken into exile, God had raised up a king who would call them back to His law and remind them of His faithfulness. And it was Josiah's heart for repentance that enabled God to use him. His obedience didn't change the struggles they would face, but God did use it to prepare His people for exile, with the promise of restoration.

Advent Reflection:

Looking forward to the coming of the Messiah means preparing our hearts and minds for Him. The act of repentance is a part of our worship that brings us peace, because we are in right relationship with God. Spend time today preparing your heart through repentance.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11



REFLECT AND REJOICE

Use this day to read the truth of Scripture and reflect on the hope we have because of the answered promises of God. Rejoice in our King, who is Peace for all who believe.

Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,
And the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.
Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And
righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The
work of righteousness will be peace, And
the effect of righteousness, quietness and
assurance forever. My people will dwell in a
peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in
quiet resting places.

Isaiah 32:15-18

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12



IN HIM WE FIND JOY

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." **Luke 2:10**

Mankind had first-hand knowledge of the hardships of life. The knowledge of all good and evil had robbed them of the joy that comes only through God. But through the coming Savior, joy would be restored to His people!

Light the First, Second, and Third Candles

Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; You shall see disaster no more.

Zephaniah 3:14-15

The hope of joy is most needed in the darkest moments - those times when we desperately need the light of joy. Zephaniah spoke over the Jews a psalm of joy in the midst of his prophecy for coming judgment. The Israelites would know separation from their temple, from their land, and from their way of life. But they could still wait with hope because the King of Israel would come and once again be in their midst. God with them would restore their joy. On that night in Bethlehem, Christ came into their midst. The restoration of joy began in that moment, and continues even now for all who believe. The King is in our midst. Because of Him we can have joy now and await His coming with gladness.

Reflect and Pray

Make a list of the things that are bringing you joy in this season. What is robbing you of joy? Lift these things to God in prayer. Fear and worry can be thieves of joy. Ask Him to help you to trust Him. Take time to praise God for His goodness and the joy He restores to us.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 13



THE GENEALOGY OF THE KING

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham

Matthew 1:1, KJV

More than 400 years had passed since the last Old Testament prophecies, and Jews, scattered all over the land, were waiting for the coming of the Promised One. He was to be their Messiah, their Redeemer, their King. And to proclaim the story of Jesus, Matthew started at the beginning, tracing the line of the King.

Read:

Matthew 1:1-17

Before there were birth certificates and personal identification, there was genealogy. The Old Testament is rich with line after line of men of Jewish heritage and the family they “begat.” These lines showed belonging, and inheritance. They showed who could serve in the position of priest, and through the lines of Abraham and David, they would authenticate the coming Messiah. When you read Matthew 1:1 in the King James Version, you see the phrase, “The book of the generations”. This phrase is not common even when it comes to genealogy. The only other time you will find this line in Scripture is in Genesis 5:1 when the family line of Adam is recorded. Name after name is listed of men who came from Adam. They lived and died - a reflection of the legacy of birth and death. Romans 5:12 reminds us that Adam brought sin into the world, and with that sin, came death. In Matthew 1 we see the order shift, as death led to life; the last name listed in verse 17 is ‘Jesus,’ who is called Christ. He is the One who would defeat death and leave a legacy of life to all who believe.

Advent Reflection:

Take time to read through the genealogy again. Reflect on the names you recognize, and the stories you know about them. Praise God that He has given us life. Through the line of Adam, death reigned. But through Christ, life has been given for all who believe.

For further study:

Genesis 5, Romans 5:6-21

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14



THE SON OF DAVID

He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. **2 Samuel 7:13**

Let's return to Genesis 1:27 again and remember what God offered Adam and Eve. He told them to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and subdue it, and to have dominion over all things. The picture of the original kingdom was the blessing of belonging, and the authority of dominion. What Adam lost to sin, we see restored through the Son of David and Son of Abraham.

Read:

Matthew 1:1, 2 Samuel 7:8-16

Matthew starts his genealogy first by connecting Christ to David, because the Jewish people were looking for a king. For hundreds and hundreds of years, they had been ruled by whatever king and kingdom they were in bondage to. They were waiting for the Son of David - the Messiah - who would come and establish His kingdom forever. It was to David that God promised to build a kingdom from His line, a throne that would have no end. In David's last words, recorded in 2 Samuel 23:5, we see David proclaim this as a covenant promise - a promise that was established by God, and could only be fulfilled by God. And in the person of Christ, mankind saw the fulfillment of the promise. In David's hometown of Bethlehem, the Messiah had come. By tracing Christ to King David, Matthew displayed Christ's royal lineage. He also revealed another way God had kept His promise to the people of Israel. Though they had waited for generations, the promised Messiah had come, and His kingdom would have no end.

Advent Reflection:

The title "Son of David" reminds us that Christ came as King. He was not dependent upon anyone choosing Him to be king, and He can never be overthrown. With joy we can await Christ's second advent, when all authority will again be held by Him, and the nations will worship Him. (Daniel 7:13-14)

For further study:

2 Samuel 7:4-16, 23:5; Psalm 89:3-4, 28, 34-37

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15



THE SON OF ABRAHAM

And through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me. **Genesis 22:18**

Because of sin, Adam and Eve had lost intimacy with God. No longer did people have access to God, the blessing of being with Him. But through Abraham, God would begin to write the story of restoration, not just to the people of Israel, but to all nations.

Read:

Genesis 17:1-8; Genesis 22:17-18

Long ago God had made a promise to Abraham. This old man with a barren wife would be fruitful, and from him would come nations and kings. God established the covenant and set it as everlasting. Nothing would stop Him from keeping this promise. When Matthew listed Christ as the “Son of Abraham,” he proclaimed for all that the blessing promised by God had come. By reading Matthew 1:1, we are reminded that God kept His promise in His perfect time and in His perfect way. Abraham would wait until he was 100 years old before his promised son, Isaac, was born. He would never see the nations that would come from Isaac, but he believed that God would do what He said He would do. He was still living by faith when he died (Hebrews 11:13). Christ was the ultimate reality of that promise kept. He came to bless the nations. It was through Him that God’s everlasting covenant with His people would be kept. Christ is proof that every promise God speaks will be fulfilled.

Advent Reflection:

The advent season is all about waiting. In waiting, we can begin to doubt that God will do what He promised. Through Christ, the ‘Son of Abraham,’ we can stand in our faith. What are you waiting for in this season? Does it seem like God is not moving? Lift up your prayers with confidence that God sees, hears, and is working - even when we don’t see it.

For further study:

Hebrews 11:11-16

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16



A KING FOR THE NATION

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." **Luke 2:10**

Through Matthew's genealogy of the line of Christ, we see that problems within families, and the struggle with sin were as real then as they are now. Christ's line may be full of powerful men, kings, and rulers; but it is also marked with broken families, tainted backgrounds, and people diminished by the world around them. But in Christ, they find themselves a part of a greater story.

Read:

Matthew 1:2-10

Jacob was the patriarch who kept deceiving to get what he wanted. His son, Judah, had sons with Tamar who had to trick him to get him to do the right thing. You find Ruth, who was a Moabite, an enemy of the Jews, marrying Boaz, her kinsman redeemer. Then there is David, the king who fathered Solomon with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. She became David's wife after he killed Uriah to cover up his sins. There is Solomon, the womanizer. Rehoboam, the king of the divided nation... and the list goes on. We see good kings and wicked men in the line of Christ. There are Gentiles and Jews, men and women - all finding their place in the story of Christ. This should bring us great joy, because it is evidence that God uses all kinds of people in His plan. He used real people with real struggles to bring forth His Son.

Advent Reflection:

The story of Christ is for all mankind. He was willing to come as the Son of Man and be identified with broken people so that He could restore all people to Him. Let the names of Christ's genealogy encourage you. Christ didn't come to save the good. He came to be the joy of redemption, to all who put their faith in Him. Thank Him today for being willing to lower Himself to become a human, so that He could reveal God to all mankind.

For further study:

Philippians 2:5-11

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17



THE RETURN OF THE KING

They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. **Ezekiel 37:25**

The genealogy of Matthew reflects the consequences of their sin. The men listed went from kings to exiles from one generation to the next. But the story of redemption didn't stop with deportation to Babylon. God kept working even while He was silent, waiting until the fullness of time to send the true king.

Read:

Matthew 1:11-16, 22-23; Ezekiel 37:21-28

Because of their great sin, the children of Israel had been taken captive, living as exiles in foreign lands. The warnings of prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah had come to pass. They were held captive for 70 years, but for many, the exile lasted much longer. While in captivity, God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel to proclaim promises of hope to a desperate nation. God would not only return them to their land, He would also restore their land. He would cleanse them, and change them from the inside out. No longer would they be a divided kingdom. God would make them one people again. The covenant of peace would never leave them, and God would dwell with them forever. And He did. A woman named Mary bore the Son that was to be called "Immanuel," meaning "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). The King had returned to His people, and never again would they be separated from God.

Advent Reflection:

The promise of Christ's return is meant to bring us joy, even in the darkest of times. Prophecy displays the trustworthiness of God. If He came once, like He said He would, then we can know He will come again. We can celebrate the story of the nativity with joy, because in it we have evidence that our King will come like He said.



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

REFLECT AND REJOICE

Use this day to read the truth of Scripture and reflect on the hope we have because of the answered promises of God. Rejoice in our King, who will bring joy to all who believe.

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. The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn—shout for joy before the Lord, the King. Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity.

Psalm 98

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19



IN HIM WE HAVE LOVE

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. **John 3:16**

Jesus did return as King, but He also came as our Savior. His heart was to save His people from their sins. The motivation that led to the manger was love. Christ loves us so much that He took the form of humanity to ransom all who would believe.

Light the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Candles

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:9-11

God didn't have to save mankind. After Adam and Eve sinned, Almighty God could have wiped them out and started over. He didn't have to make a way for us to be restored to Him. God could have left us to our sin, but He didn't. His unfailing love compelled Him to write His own Son into the story of history, sending Him to be the payment for our sins. The manger is proof of God's love, because He sent His Son to die for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). He is not waiting for you to be good enough to love, or to get your act together. His love for you is now, and forever.

Reflect and Pray:

Ponder how God has shown you love. What mercy and grace have you seen displayed in your life? 1 John 4:11 reminds us that the love of God should flow through us as we love others.

How are you showing the love of God to those around you? Thank God today for His great love for you, and pray for a heart that is willing to show love to others.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20



THE KING IS COMING

“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.” **Luke 1:32**

When the fullness of time had come, the announcement of the coming king wasn't made to Roman authority or Jewish leadership. It was brought to a young Jewish woman who was willing to listen and believe.

Read:

Luke 1:26-38

Generations of Jews had told of the coming King. He was their whispered hope in captivity - the legend their restoration of hope rested upon. Jews were expecting God to send a mighty king. No one could have predicted how God chose to fulfill His promise. Through an ordinary young woman, the Son of God would take on humanity. He would restore the throne of David, and there would be no end to His kingdom. But there is nothing about the angel's proclamation that is reasonable. How can a virgin have a child? How could God be man? How can a man be holy? These questions are spoken over the story of the nativity. How can we believe such an unreasonable tale? The answer is that our God is not reasonable. He is above all, and constrained by nothing. He does not have to make sense to us. He is not bound by science, because He is the Creator. He does not have to work within our limits, because His ways will always be greater. The Jews expected the king to come in a reasonable time and in a predictable way. And He didn't. Christ came in the fullness of time, and in an extraordinary way. Mary didn't have to understand God's plan. She only had to believe, and she did.

Advent Reflection:

Think through the proclamation of Gabriel. Do you believe in the virgin birth? Do you believe that God truly became flesh and was born to a human woman? Or do you try to make the story of Christ's birth reasonable? Mary chose to believe what was unreasonable. What about the second coming of Jesus? Do you believe in the return of the King and the perfect kingdom of God, or is that a little too unreasonable, too? The wonder of the story of Christmas is that it reminds us that our all-powerful God will go to unreasonable lengths to restore His people. All we have to do is believe, because “nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21



A SONG FOR THE KING

“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my Spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” **Luke 1:46-47**

Before books and writing, the stories of people were kept through stories and songs. They told of the glories of kings and the fall of kingdoms. Songs and poems were used by different religions to spread their beliefs. So it is fitting that Mary’s song was recorded to remind us of the majesty of the coming King.

Read:

Luke 1:46-55

Often called “The Magnificat”, Mary sang this prophetic song on the doorstep of her cousin’s house, not the temple courts. It was not a prepared prayer, but words that poured from the overflow of her heart. We have set this song to beautiful music, and made it powerful and inspiring. But when we quietly read the words, we are reminded not of the worth and might of God’s people, but of the legacy and position of those who believe. The words of Mary can be found in the songs of Miriam and the praise of Hannah. We can trace it through the psalms of David, and the promises of the prophets. Our God is mighty, and from the beginning of creation He has cared for His people. He has made a way for the impossible. His mercy has been boundless from generation to generation. There has never been a time when He has abandoned His people, without hope. Mary’s song also reminds us that God is not expecting us to be mighty. He is the mighty one. Luke 1:48 (BSB) says, “He looks down with favor on the humble state of His servant.” God looked with favor upon Mary. He was not embarrassed by her age or station. He wasn’t disappointed in her lack of social power or authority. Mary didn’t have to better herself to be used by God, and she didn’t have to be seen as worthy by other people. God looked at her with favor because she believed in Him. She believed that He was the King. She believed He could restore and redeem the broken world she lived in. Mary didn’t have to know or understand the plan, because she knew the God who made the promise, and He had already proven Himself worthy of belief.

Reflect and Pray:

Mary’s song is a recording of what she knew to be true about God. It displays why she could believe the message from the angel, Gabriel. What do you know to be true about God? How has He shown Himself faithful to you in the past? How do you think God looks at you? Mary’s song reflects her unreasonable hope. What does your song reflect in this season? Lift to God a praise of all the ways He has proven Himself faithful and mighty.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22



THE NAME OF THE KING

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. **Matthew 1:21**

Shakespeare asked, “What’s in a name?” Maybe a rose would still be as sweet with another name. But when it comes to the Messiah, no other name would do.

Read:

Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:31

No other name has been packed with the kind of significance that can be found in the name of Jesus. Philippians 2:9 tells us that it is a ‘name above all other names.’ But the name, Jesus, would not have seemed foreign to Mary and Joseph. Jesus was not an uncommon name in Biblical times. The name means, “Yahweh Saves,” and this had been the hope of the people for hundreds of years. Parents had given the name to their sons, in hope and belief that there would be a Savior, and maybe this was Him. What was different for Mary and Joseph was WHO gave the name. By declaring His name as Jesus, God made clear that He had sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. When the angel revealed that the baby’s name was to be “Jesus,” he made clear that this was the child, this Jesus, who was the son of the Most High God. It was this boy who would reign eternal. And Jesus lived up to His name. He came to save His people, becoming a ransom for all who believe. It is only by His name that we can be saved (Acts 4:12). And when He comes again, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that truly He is King (Philippians 2:10-11).

Reflect and Pray:

In the Christmas carol, “O Come, Let Us Adore Him,” there is a line that says, “we’ll praise His name forever.” And we will! Before time, God was worthy of praise; but Jesus stepped into time; took on flesh; and by God, Himself, was crowned with the name, “Jesus.” He is our Savior. His very name declares the faithfulness of our God. He promised to save His people, and then made known the One who is our Savior. Take time now and declare the name of Jesus. Praise His Name forever!

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23



A KING LIKE NO OTHER

In the days of Herod, King of Judea... **Luke 1:5**

The line of David wasn't on the throne, but Judea had a king. Technically Arab, but a practicing Jew, Herod was seen as worthy enough to wear the crown. The Romans had given him the title of, "King of the Jews." But nothing would stop the return of the rightful King.

Read:

Matthew 2:1-8, 16-18

A king in ancient times had supreme rule over a land. He had power, might, and full authority. They were always facing the danger of someone trying to conquer them or kill them and take their kingdom. Cupbearers and food tasters protected the king from being poisoned. It was common for a new king to kill entire family lines of people they saw as threats to their throne. No king wanted to lose his kingdom. So imagine the terror Herod experienced when the wise men came to his door seeking the king of the Jews. They were not seeking an audience with Herod. These men had come to worship the rightful King of Israel. The kingdom of Herod was not God's plan; he ruled as a tyrant. Christ would be a Servant King. Herod's legacy would be marked by death. Christ would be the source of life. Herod would cling to power that did not belong to him, but nothing done by man would ever take Christ's power. Even facing death, Jesus reminded his followers that no one could take His life, without Him willingly laying it down (John 10:18). Herod, a human king, would die, and his legacy would dim throughout time. Jesus Christ, the true King, would come, willingly die, and come back to life. And the story of His greatness would spread farther with every generation. Many have tried to claim the title of 'king' of this land, but over this earth and over His people, there is only one true King, and there is none like Him!

Reflect and Pray:

Too often we put our faith in modern "kings." There are many who want to claim that they can make our lives better, give us security, and guarantee our happiness. No earthly leader can restore peace to this earth, but Jesus can. Reflect on the way that kings, kingdoms, and governments rise and fall. Thank God that He has made us a part of His kingdom that will never end.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24



OH COME LET US ADORE HIM

“For unto you has been born this day in the city of David a Savior,
who is Christ the Lord.” **Luke 2:11**

On that night in Bethlehem, to an unlikely group of men, the angels proclaimed the royal birth. Christ had willingly come to do what no one else could do - to save the world. At His coming, heaven rejoiced, and so should we.

Light all five candles.

Read:

Luke 2:1-16

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” **Luke 2:13-14**

The eternal Son of God entered this world as a baby. This child called “Messiah” fulfilled the promises given to Abraham, David, and Israel. This child is the shining light for those living in darkness. Jesus is good news of great joy, for all the people - the only child worthy to be called, “Lord.” He was welcomed to this earth by a host of heavenly warriors, singing and setting the sky on fire. This child named “Jesus Christ” is the King of all Kings. Rejoice, your King has come!

Reflect and Pray:

Today is a day for praise. On that day in Bethlehem, light came into the dark world, and it will never be extinguished. We set our eyes toward the day when the light in our world will come from the very presence of God, and we will praise His name forever.

“There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”

Revelations 22:5, NIV



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS

THE TRUE LIGHT, WHICH GIVES LIGHT TO EVERYONE, WAS COMING INTO THE WORLD. HE WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD WAS MADE THROUGH HIM, YET THE WORLD DID NOT KNOW HIM. HE CAME TO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN PEOPLE DID NOT RECEIVE HIM. BUT TO ALL WHO DID RECEIVE HIM, WHO BELIEVED IN HIS NAME, HE GAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, WHO WERE BORN, NOT OF BLOOD NOR OF THE WILL OF THE FLESH NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD. AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US, AND WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY, GLORY AS OF THE ONLY SON FROM THE FATHER, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.

JOHN 1:9-14

