

# 2011 Christmas Break Devotional



*Flood Student Ministries wishes to say a very special thank you to Scott James for Permission to use his Family Worship Guide.*

# The Expected One

Anticipating all of Jesus in the Advent

Scott James

## Introduction

Christmas is all about celebrating the birth of Jesus, right? Well, in one sense, that's exactly what it's about. The weeks leading up to Christmas Day are often a special time of reflection on God's gift to us: the child Jesus. Rejoicing in Jesus' miraculous birth certainly brings glory to God, but sometimes during this time of year we can forget that God didn't just send a child into the world; He sent a mighty Rescuer. Thinking of the child in the manger should fill our hearts with praise because we know of the purpose for which He came – to save His people from their sins. Knowing this purpose is not just for those of us who live after Jesus' time, though. The people of God have always known what Jesus' mission was. How did they know about this divine rescue plan before Jesus actually came? Because God promised the whole plan to them, and every single part of it was designed to become true in Jesus. God didn't just promise His people that a miracle child would be born, He promised them that this child would grow up to be the perfect Servant of God, the loving Shepherd of His people, the place-switching Sacrifice, the resurrected Lord, and the righteous King who rules forever. The Old Testament passages laid out here are meant to guide you through the wide range of promises that God gave to us regarding His Son. They are by no means comprehensive, and not every one of them was a direct prophecy of Him. Some were simply the shadow of what was to come. All of them do, however, point to Jesus, collectively unfolding the promises of His long-awaited coming, His marvelous birth, the life He would live, His terrible death, His glorious resurrection, and His ongoing rule as the eternal reigning King of All. While we long for the return of The Expected One, we must keep in mind the big picture of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. And this Advent season, as we look forward to celebrating His birth, let's worship Jesus as the fulfillment of all of God's promises to us, "For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

## Instructions

- Use this short devotional every day of Christmas break.
- Each day's page should take you less than 10 minutes.
- Use it to help you focus on the complete meaning of celebrating Christmas and Christ coming to earth.

# Part 1: The Promise of His Coming

## (Day 1)

### Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Although His perfect creation had just been corrupted by the arrival of sin, God promised that sin and Satan would not have the final victory. A Rescuer would come and deal a fatal blow to Satan, ending his rebellion against God.

### Isaiah 11:1

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

God chose the nation of Israel to be the people through which the Rescuer would come. Because of their disobedience, God sometimes referred to Israel as a cut down tree. From this stump, God promised that the Rescuer would shoot forth like a fruitful branch from the family of an Israelite named Jesse (King David's Father).

#### **Action:**

- Think about God's plan to send a Rescuer.
  - How does it make you feel to think that God planned to rescue us all along?
  - How does this idea impact the way you approach God today?
  - How will it impact you as you approach Christmas day?
  - Spend a few minutes thanking God for your Rescuer & asking Him to help you remember this idea as Christmas approaches in all you do.

## (Day 2)

### Jeremiah 23:5

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.

King David, who was the son of Jesse, was Israel's greatest king – but there would come another King from the line of David whose reign would be marked by a perfect righteousness.

### Ezekiel 34:23

And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.

This righteous King would watch closely over His people and protect them. Just like King David, He would be a servant of God and a great shepherd who cared for His flock.

#### **Action:**

- Does it make a difference to view a baby(Jesus) as a King and a Shepherd?
  - How so? How does Jesus function as your King and Shepherd?
  - In what ways, did Jesus replace David as the perfect King?
  - Think about the fact that God promised a King hundreds and even thousands of years before he came. Does this impact the way you view God's promises for your life.
- Spend time in prayer asking Jesus ways He wants to Shepherd and Rule in your life.

## (Day 3)

### Zechariah 3:8-9

Behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.... and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.

God said that His Servant would shoot up like a branch from among His people, but He would not come just to rule over them. He would come to take away the penalty for their rebellion against God. He would rescue His people from their sin.

### Part 2: His Birth

### Isaiah 7:14

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

The Expected One would have a miraculous birth that could only be God's doing. This miraculous birth would be the sign that God Himself is now with us – Immanuel. God gave this promise during a time in which it didn't even look like His people would survive; but He assured them that, as always, He had a plan for them.

#### **Action:**

- Would a king sacrifice himself for his people? Would he hurt himself to remove a penalty they rightly deserved? How does this thought impact you today?
- Sometimes, God's promises are crazy, but He never fails to back it up. What promise of God do you consider to be crazy, but you really need to happen in your life right now?
- Spend time thanking Jesus for taking away your sin and being faithful to His promises.

## (Day 4)

### Isaiah 9:6

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.

God would give His people a very special Son – He would be the Son of Man *and* the Son of God. This means that the Rescuer would be specially qualified to bring sinful people back to their Holy God. He would do His job so well that His name would be worthy of the same praise that God Himself receives.

### Micah 5:2

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.

The rescuing King, the One that God had been promising to His people from the very beginning, would come from a small town called Bethlehem. This was also the hometown of King David.

#### **Action:**

- Jesus is God. The OT promised he would be God. Have you really considered that Christmas celebrates God on earth as a baby?
  - Does this change any way you view Christmas? How?
- Where was Jesus born? God keeps his promises again.
  - This prophesy would have been at least 400 years before Jesus was born.
- Spend time in prayer talking to God praising Him that he controls the past, present and future.

## (Day 5)

### Malachi 3:1

Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me.

God promised that He would send a messenger ahead of the Rescuer in order to help God's people recognize Him. The messenger would announce His arrival. When the time actually came, the messenger would proclaim "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

### Part 3: His Life

#### Isaiah 11:2, 5

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.... Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

Unlike our lives of sin and rebellion against God, the Rescuer's life would be one of godly wisdom, righteousness, faithfulness, and respect for the LORD. He would live as God actually intended us to live.

#### **Action:**

- What is God doing right now to prepare His message to be heard in your life or others you know?
- Is there a message He wants to use you to tell someone in your life right now?
- Jesus came to live a perfect life. How hard do you think it was for Him?
- Spend time praising God for Jesus faithfully living out God's plan so you could be rescued.

## (Day 6)

### Micah 5:4-5

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.

The Rescuer would be a great and mighty shepherd to His people. He would lead them in the name and power of the LORD. In His care, the people of God would find safety and peace.

### Zephaniah 3:17

The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

The Expected One wouldn't just be sent *from* God; He would *be* God. God Himself would come into this world and would take great joy in saving His people.

#### **Action:**

- Do you view Jesus as weak or strong? How does Micah 5 impact that view?
- Do you find safety and peace in God? Why or Why not?
- Do you believe God takes joy in rescuing you from you sin?
- Take a few minutes and consider the many ways God has proven the joy he receives from you. You will find a few examples in the scriptures above.

## (Day 7)

### Zechariah 9:9

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.

The coming King would be able to save His people because of His perfect righteousness. Unlike most kings of this world, though, this mighty King would also humble Himself for the sake of His people. Shouts of joy would be heard from the mouths of those that He was coming to save.

### Isaiah 53:2-4

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.

He would not be the kind of savior that we would pick if given the chance. Most of the world, including many of His own countrymen, would reject Him because they would not believe that salvation could come from someone so plain.

#### **Action:**

- When you think about your king coming, what emotions or reactions do you feel?
- What should you feel?
- He humbled himself for you, how have you changed for Him?
- Do you think you would notice Jesus if he had come in our day?
- Spend time talking to God about how His plan can be different from our plans.

(Day 8)

## Part 4: His Death

### Exodus 12:21, 23

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb.... For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.”

Just as the Passover lamb died in order to save the lives of Israel’s firstborn sons, the Rescuer would die to save His people from the curse of death.

### Leviticus 16:15-16

Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people.... Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins.

The punishment for sin is death. Long before the Rescuer would come, God set up a yearly sacrifice that would take the punishment in place of His people. When the Rescuer would arrive, He would provide the final sacrifice – once for all.

#### **Action:**

- How serious does God view your sin?
- How does it affect you to think that all the sins you have committed and will commit have completely been paid for?
- Take some time to list sins that you have recently struggled with and ask God to pay their penalty and take your punishment. Be sure to thank him that you have permission to do such a bold act.

## (Day 9)

### Psalm 22:14-18

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet — I can count all my bones — they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

Though He would be innocent, the Lamb of God would take the punishment for sin upon Himself. God gave His people a picture of how He would die – surrounded by scoffers and unbelievers, exhausted in body and soul, His hands and feet would be pierced as they hung Him up to die, and His killers would disrespect Him so much that they would gamble for His leftover clothes.

### Isaiah 53:5-9

But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes 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.

Although His people had wandered away from Him, God would do what was necessary to bring them back. He would send His Servant, who would be crushed even though He was perfectly innocent. The Servant would suffer and die for the sins of God's people; He would do it willingly and without complaint. He would die with the wicked, and He would be buried in the tomb of a rich man.

#### **Action:**

- Take some time to list all the pain and feelings that Jesus would endure on the cross
- List the ways Jesus responded to the terror of his death.
- Spend a few minutes thanking Jesus for all He went through to die for your sins.

(Day 10)

## Part 5: His Resurrection

### Isaiah 53:10-11

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.

The Rescuer would be crushed, but that was the plan all along. By His death, God's people would be brought back from their slavery to sin. He would be counted as a sinner and would willingly take the punishment. By faith, God's people would be counted as innocent. God also planned that the Rescuer's sacrificial death would not be the end of His story – despite His death, God would prolong His days.

### Psalm 16:10

For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

After the Rescuer's death, God would not allow Him to waste away in the grave. The penalty for sin would be complete, and now it would be time for God to declare just how powerful He really is.

#### **Action:**

- How does it impact you that God promised hundreds of years before it happened that not only would the Rescuer die, but would also be brought back to life?
- What areas of your life are dead and need to be brought back to life?
- Pray and ask God to resurrect those weak and tired areas of your life that you believe are hopeless.

## (Day 11)

### Isaiah 25:8

He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

By bringing the Rescuer back from the dead, God would declare victory over sin, Satan, and death. All of the miserable effects of our rebellion against God would be swallowed up forever.

#### **Action:**

- This promise was especially powerful because it was made to Israel as they were under threat of war from powerful nations. How would you feel if you were in their shoes and heard this?
- How does this promise impact the way you think about pain or heartache in your life?
- In what ways does this verse make you think about Heaven?
- Spend a few moments thanking God for the victory he has given and will give .Be sure to ask him for victories in areas of sin in your life.

## (Day 12)

### Genesis 49:10

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

After finishing His great rescue plan, the King from the tribe of Judah would rule over the people of God and they would delight to obey Him. Unlike earthly rulers who eventually lose their power, God said that the True King's reign would never end.

#### **Action:**

- If Jesus' reign will never end, how does that impact the way you communicate with Him?
- How does it change the way you live?
- Spend some time praying about the ways God would have you to obey Him today and in the coming weeks and year.

(Day 13)

## 2 Samuel 7:16

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

God promised King David that his kingdom would go on forever. But David eventually died, and his kingdom wandered away from God. Through the righteous Branch from the house of David, God would keep His promise. His Kingdom would be strong forever.

### **Action:**

- How is God building His kingdom now?
- In what ways does God want to involve you in His kingdom building?
- Spend some time praying for God's kingdom to grow. Be sure to ask about your job in His kingdom and ask for it to be done in Jacksonville and through Kernan Blvd Baptist Church.

(Day 14)

## Isaiah 9:7

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.

Having saved His people, the Rescuer would rule as the promised King in the line of David. His would be no ordinary kingdom, however. Perfect righteousness, justice, and peace would mark His eternal Kingdom.

### **Action:**

- What does a perfect Kingdom look like?
- What does a Kingdom with perfect peace and justice look like?
- Spend some time listing injustices in today's world. List different ways you see unrighteousness happen in your town or other places you know of. Who do you know and where do you see people who have no peace in their lives?
  - Pray that God's rule and His kingdom would come to those people and places.

(Day 15)

## Daniel 7:14

And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

The Rescuer, the great Savior who would bring His people back to God, would take His rightful place as the everlasting King. His Kingdom would include people from every part of the world, and all of His people would love Him endlessly, giving Him the glory that He deserves.

### Action:

- In what ways do you give God glory?
- How are you serving God now? What are some other ways He wants you to serve Him?
- Take time to ask for God's help in serving Him and giving Him glory.

## Promises Kept

Many years after these promises were made, a man named Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He was born into the family line of King David, but His birth was a miracle because God Himself, through the Holy Spirit, brought it about. A man named John the Baptist announced the arrival of Jesus and pointed to Him as the one who would rescue our rebellious world from sin. Jesus lived His entire life in perfect obedience and submission to God the Father, showing that He was the promised Immanuel – God in our midst. The precious Son of God humbled Himself on our behalf as He walked the earth, calling people to turn away from their sin and follow Him. Most people did not believe that this lowly man could be the long awaited king, so they dismissed Jesus as a liar. Although He was perfectly innocent, Jesus laid down His life willingly as His accusers put Him to death. They pierced His hands and feet as they nailed Him to a wooden cross to die. But God intended this evil act for a greater purpose: by His death, Jesus became the True Passover Lamb, the ultimate Sacrifice of Atonement who took the penalty for our sin. Not only did He take our punishment on Himself, but he also gave us the credit for His perfect obedience to God, making a way for us to be brought back into God's family. God was so pleased with Jesus' perfect sacrifice that He raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to His rightful throne in heaven, where He reigns forever. Jesus, the long expected mighty Rescuer, has crushed Satan and now welcomes into His Kingdom all those who abandon sin and trust in Him completely.