

Christmas

WITH ISAIAH



A DAILY GUIDE FOR ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2023

Christmas

WITH ISAIAH

Merry Christmas!

This year, our Advent/Christmas sermon series will center around the Spirit-inspired words from the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah prophesied about the coming Messiah more than any of the other Old Testament prophets. He foretold of a coming King who not only would redeem Israel, but who would come to redeem the entire world.

During the month of December, we often get overly distracted by the holiday rush. We scurry around between stores, holiday events, parties, and the traditional obligations of the season. We rush to make everything seemingly “perfect.” And, in all the rushing, we tend to forget the whole point of the Christmas season.

This year, we want to encourage you to resist the rush. Over the next few weeks resist the temptation to overfill your schedule. Resist the urge to create stress all in the name of manufacture the “perfect” holiday. The truth is, it’ll never be perfect. And actually, half the fun is found in the whimsy and spontaneity of the season.

One way to resist these temptations is to intentionally prioritize time with God in prayer and scripture. Likewise, we encourage you to make time of worship and fellowship with other believers a priority. This booklet is meant to help you with both.

Each day, there’s a short scripture reading and a reflective thought to prompt your time in prayer and worship. Also, you’ll see all the opportunities we have this month to gather together in worship and fellowship at BF for

Christmas.

The Bible reading plan is meant to be paired with the “NIV Jesus Bible Journal: Isaiah.” But, you can use any hard copy Bible or your favorite Bible app on a phone or tablet. The days around December 25th feature readings from the New Testament. You can use your own Bible or Bible app for those days. We also have included those texts at the back of this booklet.

You’ll notice that Saturdays are left as “catch up” days. Don’t get discouraged or distracted if you miss a few days of reading. Instead, to get back on track read the correct readings for the corresponding date and then use Saturdays as a time to go back and catch up on anything you missed during the week

You’ll also notice that this reading plan extends until January 5th. There are two reasons for this: First, it allows us to stretch out the readings so that most days we only read 2 or 3 chapters. But second, this is an attempt to observe the full 12-day festival of Christmas that begins on December 25th and ends during the first week of January.

Here’s the charge to you: We challenge you to spend twenty minutes each day in the scriptures and in prayer. Turn off the TV, put your phone on “do not disturb,” find a comfortable spot with minimal distraction, and open your heart to hear from God through His Word.

And here’s our prayer for you: We pray that this December, God would richly bless you in every way. We pray that the Holy Spirit will meet you and speak to you on every page of the scriptures. And we pray that your “Christmas with Isaiah” will be a life-changing experience for your entire family.

Merry Christmas! We love you!

-Pastors Seth & Katie Drewry

Sunday, December 3rd

ISAIAH 1-3

Read the intro on pages 2-3 of your Isaiah Bible Journal and the note on page 9, "No More War." In what areas can the Holy Spirit bring more peace into your life this holiday season?

*Join us this morning for
Sunday Morning Worship • 10:30am*

Monday, December 4th

ISAIAH 4-5

Read the note "The Branch" page 15. What would it look like for Jesus, "the Branch" to breathe new life into your spiritual walk?

Tuesday, December 5th

ISAIAH 6-7

The note on page 23, "Immanuel," we read about Jesus' role as "God with us." How can you better acknowledge the presence of God throughout your day today?

Wednesday, December 6th

ISAIAH 8-10

Read "A Light Has Dawned" on page 29. What are some areas of darkness, sadness, shame, or grief in your life? Invite Jesus into those areas asking Him to bring His warmth and light.

Thursday, December 7th

ISAIAH 11-12

Chapter 12 is all about giving praise to God. Take time to write out a few praiseworthy things that come to your mind about Jesus.

*Join us tonight at 7pm for
Christmas with Eddie James: A Night of Worship, Encounter,
Healing, & Deliverance*

Friday, December 8th

ISAIAH 13-15

Chapter 14 speaks about the fall of the prideful. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any prideful thoughts or tendencies in your own life. Take time to pray and give those areas over to the Lord.

Saturday, December 9th

CATCH UP DAY

Men's Fellowship Breakfast • 8:30am • BF Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 10th

ISAIAH 16-18

The note, "Zion," on page 55 tells us about the coming day where all tribes and nations will fall down in worship to Jesus. But why wait? Be sure to take time today to give God the worship he deserves.

*Join us this morning for
Sunday Morning Worship • 10:30am*

Monday, December 11th

ISAIAH 19-21

Today's reading includes prophecies against the massive worldly empires that are completely opposed to God's Kingdom and God's ways. What can you learn from this? How can you live a more Kingdom-oriented life that is not conformed to the patterns of the world (Romans 12)?

Tuesday, December 12th

ISAIAH 22-24

These chapters speak of God's promise to judge evil and forever deal with the powers of darkness. Because of Jesus, we can look forward to that day. Remember that whatever evil or darkness you face today, God has promised to make it right in His good timing.

Wednesday, December 13th

ISAIAH 25-26

Read, "Waiting," on page 75. The season of Advent is all about waiting. Just as Israel awaited the coming of the Messiah we now await his return at the end of the age. What does it look like for you to faithfully wait on the Lord?

Thursday, December 14th

ISAIAH 27-28

Read, "A Precious Cornerstone," on page 79. Is Christ the one-and-only cornerstone in your life? Ask yourself, 'Is my life being built on the solid rock of Jesus Christ (Matthew 7.26)?'

Friday, December 15th

ISAIAH 29-31

We're now in the full-swing of the busy holiday season. But, God's Word commands us to "rest and trust." (See the note on page 87.) How can you push "pause" on the busyness of life today and remember these truths?

Saturday, December 16th

CATCH UP DAY

Sunday, December 17th

ISAIAH 32-34

Read, "The Beauty of the King," on page 97. Take time to reflect on the beauty of King Jesus. What comes to mind?

*Join us this morning for
Sunday Morning Worship • 10:30am*

Monday, December 18th

ISAIAH 35-37

Chapter 35, "The Joy of the Redeemed" describes the joy believers can have in the safety and security of Christ. Remember who you are in Christ, and choose to walk in that joy today.

Tuesday, December 19th

ISAIAH 38-40

Read, "Comfort for God's People" on page 113. The classic Christmas carol tells of the "tidings of comfort and joy." Invite Jesus into the areas of your life today that need His comfort and joy.

Wednesday, December 20th

ISAIAH 41-42

The note on page 123, "Healing the Broken," is a reminder that Jesus is our great physical, spiritual, and emotional healer. How can you carry his healing message and power to people around you today?

Thursday, December 21st

ISAIAH 43-45

Take time to reflect on Christ as "King and Redeemer" (page 131). What is your King and Redeemer speaking to you to in this season?

Friday, December 22nd

ISAIAH 46-47

Page 141 reminds us that God is "Declaring the End from the Beginning." What promises has God given you that are yet to be fulfilled? Ask the Holy Spirit to increase your faith to believe God and His promises.

Saturday, December 23rd

CATCH UP DAY

Sunday, December 24th

LUKE 1-2

**A copy of this text is printed in the back of this booklet*

It's Christmas Eve! It's sure to be a busy day full of fun and memories. But don't forget to give God the worship and devotion He deserves. Join your church family at Believers Fellowship this morning at 10:30am for a special candlelight communion worship service. Then, before the day is over, gather the family together, open up your Bible, and read the Christmas story in Luke 1-2 out loud together.

*Join us this morning for
Candlelight & Communion Service at 10:30am*

Monday, December 25th

MATTHEW 1-2

**A copy of this text is printed in the back of this booklet*

Merry Christmas! We have arrived at the big day but the festival of Christmas is not over yet. We'll continue our reading of Isaiah through the 12 days of Christmas. Enjoy your day with family and find time to read about Matthew's account of the nativity and the arrival of the Magi.

Tuesday, December 26th

JOHN 1

**A copy of this text is printed in the back of this booklet*

We read John 1 today as a reminder that God has come and "dwelt among us." Not only does this mean that Christ understands our struggle, but also that He is with us in the struggle. Remember today & always, you are not alone.

Wednesday, December 27th

ISAIAH 48-49

Sometimes people struggle with the post-holiday blues. But, we can continue to celebrate the arrival of our King at Christmas. And now, we are called to carry His light to the nations. Read "A Light for the Gentiles" on page 149. Who is Christ calling you to reach with His love and light?

Thursday, December 28th

ISAIAH 50-52

Isaiah 52:7 speaks of the joy we experience when we receive Good News. Likewise, we are to carry that Good News wherever we go. How can you share the Good News of Jesus Christ with someone else today?

Friday, December 29th

ISAIAH 53-54

Take a moment to reflect on the promise and joys of eternity. Read "The Future Glory of Zion" on page 165. What are you looking most forward to in the eternity to come?

Saturday, December 30th

CATCH UP DAY

Sunday, December 31st

ISAIAH 55-57

Read "An Invitation" on page 167. Take time to pray or write out a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His invitation to forgiveness, salvation, healing, and eternity.

*Join us this morning for
Sunday Morning Worship • 10:30am*

Monday, January 1st

ISAIAH 58-59

Happy New Year! Page 175 reminds us of the "Fasting that God Accepts." Many Christians take time to fast and pray each January. Is God calling you to a season of fasting? Make a commitment to God to further devote yourself to Him in 2024.

Tuesday, January 2nd

ISAIAH 60-61

Read "Year of Jubilee" on page 183. The Year of Jubilee is all about a fresh start in the grace and mercy of God. How can 2024 represent a fresh start for you? What are some things you hope to reset and renew in this new year?

Wednesday, January 3rd

ISAIAH 62-64

Read "Punishment Leading to Repentance" on page 191. Even when our Heavenly Father disciplines us, He is always motivated by love and His goal is always redemption. In your new year season of fasting and prayer, are there any areas of your life that require repentance? What old habits or tendencies is God calling you to leave in the past as you walk into His good plans for your future?

Thursday, January 4th

ISAIAH 65-66

The last note in your Bible Journal, "Final Warnings" (page 201) reminds us that God's Word will go forth without fail. As you finish this reading plan, how can you devote yourself the rest of the year to obedience to God's Word?

Friday, January 5th

HEBREWS 1:1-12

**A copy of this text is printed in the back of this booklet*

We end the 12 Days of Christmas with a reading from Hebrews 1 about the supremacy of Christ. As we close out this Christmas season, will you accept the call to live a life completely devoted to the Supreme Lord, Jesus Christ?

LUKE 1

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST FORETOLD

⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and

many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

¹⁹ The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”

²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

²³ When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵ “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

THE BIRTH OF JESUS FORETOLD

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord

should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

MARY'S SONG

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their
inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.”

⁶¹ They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.”

⁶² Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him.

ZECHARIAH’S SONG

⁶⁷ His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸ “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and
redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn ^z of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David

⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

⁷¹ salvation from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us—
72 to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,
73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear
75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our
days.

76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the
Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the
way for him,
77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from
heaven
79 to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit;
and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared
publicly to Israel.

LUKE 2

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor
rests.”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into

heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

²¹ On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

JESUS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.” ^j

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all
nations:
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”

³³ The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. ^u She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

THE BOY JESUS AT THE TEMPLE

⁴¹ Every year Jesus’ parents’ went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the

custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”

⁴⁹ “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” ^d ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

MATTHEW 1

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS THE MESSIAH

¹This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham:

²Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

³ Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

⁵ Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

⁶ and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

⁷ Solomon the father of Rehoboam,

Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

Abijah the father of Asa,

⁸ Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,

Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,

Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

⁹ Uzziah the father of Jotham,

Jotham the father of Ahaz,

Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,
Amon the father of Josiah,
¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his
brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

¹² After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,
Abihud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor,
¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Akim,
Akim the father of Elihud,
¹⁵ Elihud the father of Eleazar,
Eleazar the father of Matthan,
Matthan the father of Jacob,
¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of
Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who
is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from
Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to
Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

JOSEPH ACCEPTS JESUS AS HIS SON

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came
about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to
Joseph, but before they came together, she was found
to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because
Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did
not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in
mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the

Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, ^t because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” ^w (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

MATTHEW 2

THE MAGI VISIT THE MESSIAH

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ “ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of

Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.”

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

THE ESCAPE TO EGYPT

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” ⁿ

¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill

all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ “A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.” ¹⁹

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

JOHN 1

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through

Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

JOHN THE BAPTIST DENIES BEING THE MESSIAH

¹⁹ Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders ^h in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.' " ^m

²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

JOHN TESTIFIES ABOUT JESUS

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said,

‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

³² Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

JOHN’S DISCIPLES FOLLOW JESUS

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”

They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

³⁹ “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).

JESUS CALLS PHILIP AND NATHANAEL

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

⁴⁶ “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

⁴⁸ “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

⁵⁰ Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” ⁵¹ He then added, “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.”

HEBREWS 1:1-12

GOD'S FINAL WORD: HIS SON

¹In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

THE SON SUPERIOR TO ANGELS

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father”?

Or again,

“I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son”?

⁶And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,

“Let all God's angels worship him.” ^s

⁷In speaking of the angels he says,

“He makes his angels spirits,
and his servants flames of fire.” ^t

⁸But about the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your
kingdom.

⁹You have loved righteousness and hated
wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your
companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.” ^x

¹⁰ He also says,

“In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of
the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

¹¹ They will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.

¹² You will roll them up like a robe;
like a garment they will be changed.
But you remain the same,
and your years will never end.”

DECEMBER EVENTS

- **CHRISTMAS WITH EDDIE JAMES**

DECEMBER 7, 2023

7PM | BELIEVERS FELLOWSHIP

- **MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST**

DECEMBER 9, 2023

8:30AM | BF FELLOWSHIP HALL

- **LADIES' CHRISTMAS PARTY**

DECEMBER 10, 2023

5:00PM | BF FELLOWSHIP HALL

- **CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP**

CHRISTMAS EVE • DECEMBER 24, 2023

10:30AM

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