

The Promised One

Advent Devotional and Reading Plan



Contents

Introduction:	4
Week 1:	6
Week 2:	8
Week 3:	10
Week 4:	12
The “Jesus Storybook Bible” Family Reading Plan	14

Introduction:

Expectations

Here we are at the Christmas season again. Like me, I'm sure there are plenty of images that burst into your brain with just the mention of the word. Family and friends gathered, decorations hung, gifts exchanged, delicious food eaten, and stories of snowmen, reindeer and jolly elves. But I wonder if we could, just for a moment, set aside these thoughts and imagine: What would life be like without Christmas?

Would it be just like now, but with a little less cultural baggage? If so, our expectations for Christmas are a little misguided. Of course all these things are fun and even near to our hearts, but something should trouble our hearts as Christians at the thought of life without Christmas. Because, you see, there's something significant about this event that goes deeper than being a cultural phenomenon. Christmas celebrates a promise that was kept. A promise that changed all of history.

So over these coming weeks, let's journey together through the Bible and watch the wonder of how this promise unfolds, the desperation of the people who sorely need it, and the holiness and grace of the One who makes it. And as we read each day and meet each week, let's not be passive observers in the audience, but actively engage this story, because we're a part of this story, too.

May God work mightily in our hearts and fill us with hope in Him as we look back on the coming of the promised One, so that we will eagerly and with holiness wait for His return.

Week 1:

The Seed

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

-Genesis 3:15

IN THE BEGINNING, nothing existed. Then God, who had always existed, spoke, and everything began to exist at His command. He formed the earth, the waters, the stars, the plants and animals, and us. We as God’s creatures lived with Him, the Creator, with unhindered love and obedience, doing the very thing we were created for: knowing God, enjoying God, and representing God to all creation. And it was perfect, until... we rejected Him, choosing to serve ourselves instead of our King. And so it was that sin came into the world. All that was good was now stained, twisted, and marred by sin.

The problem with the way we look at this story now is that we have a wrong view of sin, that determines guilt by what kind of sin that’s been done. “Sin A” is worse than “Sin B.” However, the Bible determines guilt, not by what kind of sin is committed, but who is sinned against. As David Platt says, “If you sin against a rock, you’re not very guilty. If you sin against your spouse, you’re very guilty. If you sin against an infinite and perfectly holy God, you are infinitely guilty.” So where does that leave us? Finite people that are infinitely guilty before our Creator. And God is holy, which means He is completely separate from sin, which means that we are now completely separated from Him, the author of life, the source of true joy. Furthermore, we deserve an eternity of death that is so horrific that human language fails to describe it. And as Sally Lloyd Jones says, we would think that that this would be “The End.”

...But the story continues. Into this hopeless situation of guilt, shame, and fear, God promises something to fallen humanity. Rather, God promises someOne. And according to God’s plan, this promised One will undo the curse of sin, break the power of death, and reconcile the people of God to Himself forever. But the big questions are: 1) Who is this promised One? and 2) When will he come?

Bible Reading for Week 1:

Day 1: Psalm 19, Hebrews 1

Day 2: Genesis 1, Genesis 2

Day 3: Genesis 3

Day 4: Genesis 7

Day 5: Genesis 11

Day 6: Genesis 18:1-15; Genesis 21:1-7

Week 2:
The Sacrifice

Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided."

-Genesis 22:14

The story of Abraham and his son Isaac is a famous one. Like all famous stories, we can hear it enough that we begin to mentally separate it from reality. But this is a real story. Abraham was a real man, that really loved his only son. And in this story we find Abraham on the verge of doing the unthinkable.

Abraham walked out of his house that morning with a heavy heart. The Lord's words still rang in his ears, "Take your son, your ONLY son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one the mountains of which I shall tell you." What could have been racing through his mind as he walked with Isaac to Mt. Moriah? We don't know. The Bible simply says, "So Abraham arose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took... his son Isaac." He obeyed. Whatever questions he may have had, he still trusted the Lord above all things. Even as he built the altar, even as he bound his son, even as he laid him out on the altar, and even as he reached out his hand and took the knife, he trusted God. Not because Abraham was great (he wasn't), but because this real man knew the real God and He is great.

And this real God had a great plan. A plan through which He would provide a sacrifice for Isaac, and in the fullness of time, a Sacrifice for the world.

Bible Reading for Week 2:

Day 1: Genesis 22

Day 2: Genesis 29

Day 3: Genesis 45

Day 4: Exodus 12, Exodus 13

Day 5: Exodus 14, Exodus 15

Day 6: Exodus 19:16-25, Exodus 20:1-21

Week 3:

The King

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God [sees] not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

-1 Samuel 16:7

Haven't you heard? Appearance is everything. From what we wear to what we drive, or even where we live, our lives seem to be ruled by this. It's not a new thing, either. Though the trends may change, the game stays the same. You are what you appear to be. Israel was caught up in this game too.

"We want a king! Everybody else has one. We don't want to look different. We want to look like everyone else." This desire led them to where we see them in 1 Samuel 16. The king they so desired wasn't everything he appeared to be. Though he looked like a king, his heart wasn't right. Instead of trusting the Lord, he trusted in himself. So the Lord rejected him, and sent His prophet, Samuel, to Bethlehem. There, Samuel would anoint a new king, one that the Lord had chosen for Himself.

When Samuel found the family that God had directed him to find, the father brought forward the "most eligible" candidate. Even Samuel was convinced, but not the Lord. Then, one by one, the father brought forward each of his sons and each one was rejected. "Then Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.'"

...wait. The sheep herder? The runt of the litter? Really? How could God choose this son as king?

Because, in spite of what this world thinks, appearance isn't everything.

God wanted a king that would love Him and lead his people to love Him, too. And as time would reveal, David was a king after God's own heart. And from his descendants, God would provide a King that, despite His appearances, would rule with the purest heart, forever.

Bible Reading for Week 3:

Day 1: Joshua 3, Joshua 6

Day 2: 1 Samuel 16

Day 3: 1 Samuel 17

Day 4: 2 Samuel 7

Day 5: 2 Kings 5:1-20

Day 6: Isaiah 9:1-7; Isaiah 53

Week 4:
The Son

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

-Hebrews 1:1-2

Burning bushes, a pillar of fire, and donkeys... well, just one donkey. God had been speaking in all these different ways through all these different means. That was then.

But everything changed on that quiet night in Bethlehem. The Promised One had come. The One all of creation had been waiting for. He became a man, the one and only Son of God. He was victorious over sin and Satan, the promised Seed. He suffered and died on the cross, the perfect Sacrifice for the world. And He rose again, and reigns beside the Father in heaven, the pure-hearted King.

If we believe the Bible is true, and that Christ came just as the Bible says, then a season dedicated to celebrating this must have an impact on us. When we started this journey together, we pondered the question: What would life be like without Christmas? Perhaps, instead we should ponder: Is your life and mine different because of Christmas?

Bible Reading for Week 4:

Day 1: Daniel 1:1-6; Daniel 6

Day 2: Jonah 1, Jonah 2, Jonah 3, Jonah 4; Hebrews 1:1-2

Day 3: Malachi 3, Malachi 4

Day 4: Luke 2:1-40

Day 5: John 1:1-18

Day 6: Matthew 2:1-12

The “Jesus Storybook Bible” Family Reading Plan

- Week 1** Day 1 *The Story and The Song*
Day 2 *The Beginning: A Perfect Home*
Day 3 *The Terrible Lie*
Day 4 *A New Beginning*
Day 5 *A Giant Staircase to Heaven*
Day 6 *Son of Laughter*

Daily stories from
The Jesus Storybook Bible
that match your reading
plan.

Great for Family Worship!

- Week 2** Day 1 *The Present*
Day 2 *The Girl No One Wanted*
Day 3 *The Forgiving Prince*
Day 4 *God to the Rescue*
Day 5 *God Makes a Way*
Day 6 *10 Ways to be perfect*

- Week 3** Day 1 *The Warrior Leader*
Day 2 *The Teeny, Weenie, True King*
Day 3 *The Young Hero and the Horrible Giant*
Day 4 *The Good Shepherd*
Day 5 *The Little Servant Girl and The Proud General*
Day 6 *Operation “No More Tears!”*

- Week 4** Day 1 *Daniel and The Scary Sleepover*
Day 2 *God’s Messenger*
Day 3 *Get Ready!*
Day 4 *He’s Here!*
Day 5 *The Light of The World*
Day 6 *The King of All Kings*

*Behold, our righteous King who reigns
Redeemer, who alone can save
The Father's faithful Servant, Son
Whose suffering our vict'ry won
The One that we've been longing for
He has come, the Promised One*