

# DECEMBER 2021

## PRAYER GUIDE

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### HOW TO USE **THIS PRAYER GUIDE**

These devotions with prayer prompts are intended to assist our church family as we seek Christ personally in our daily time with Him and corporately during our monthly family prayer service. It is vital that we pursue the Lord in prayer with a humble heart and depend on His guidance and leadership.

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## Day 1 - Who Was Lottie Moon?

**Key Scripture:** *Revelation 7:9-10 "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

Last month, our guide focused on praying for our mission partners here in our country and around the world. These individuals and families are committing their time, talents and treasures to bring the Gospel to unreached people, often in unfamiliar and sometimes dangerous places. They make true sacrifices as they heed the call to "make disciples of all Nations."

We continue our focus on missions as we enter into the Christmas season. In the church, this season is marked by a special offering taken to support international missions - **the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering**. It was named by the Women's Missionary Union as a memorial to the missionary who urged churches to give generously and sacrificially to fund the Great Commission. But who was Lottie Moon?

Lottie Moon was a Southern Baptist teacher and evangelist with the Foreign Mission Board. She spent decades living and working in China, from 1873 until her death in 1912. During that time, China faced political revolution, war, famine and plague. These issues greatly affected mission work, and many of her colleagues were forced to return to the safety of their homes. But Lottie saw the great need among the people of China and refused to give up, even as funding from the mission board decreased drastically. Consequently, she shared her own personal finances and food along with the Good News of salvation in Christ.

Sacrifice is always a part of a missionary's life. Lottie Moon's extraordinary courage and sacrifice manifested itself in countless lives changed for the Gospel. Her efforts are honored as we take up the Christmas offering in her name to support funding for overseas missions.

### Prayer Prompts:

- Father, help us to remember that all that we have is Yours, a gift from You, given to us to do Your will and Your work.
- Lord, we pray for strength and perseverance for our brothers and sisters who sacrifice so much to bring the news of salvation to those who would have no hope.
- God, help us all to heed Your call to spread the Gospel, whether it is to PRAY, to GIVE, or to GO.

## Day 2 - Lottie Moon's Life

Charlotte "Lottie" Moon was born in 1840 on her family's tobacco plantation in Virginia. Her parents were firm believers and dedicated to Christ, but for years, Lottie rejected the Gospel.

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Lottie did not live the life of a typical, sheltered southern belle. Lottie's parents valued education, and she and her sisters were encouraged to pursue advanced degrees. Lottie was one of the first females in the South to earn a master's degree. It was during her time at college where she attended a revival and received Christ as her Savior.

Although she was a well-respected teacher and church worker, Lottie longed to become a missionary for the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board, a position that had never been open to unmarried women. However, after much persuasion and financial support from influential Baptist women, Lottie was appointed by the SBC to missionary service in China in 1873.

In China, her opportunities were limited by her gender, but Lottie accepted teaching as a way to carve out a women's ministry. She took every chance to learn the language and honor the Chinese customs, including adopting the clothing of the country. Lottie was elated when she won the trust of the Chinese, was invited into their homes and allowed to share the Gospel, teach them hymns, and tell the children Bible stories. When possible, Lottie traveled great distances outside her village, staying courageous in the face of death threats and opposition from both sides of the civil war being raged around her. Moon outlasted most of her female AND male missionary colleagues and refused to bow to the persecution she faced as she planted churches and created disciples.

When funds from the FMB dwindled, Lottie used her own money to support her mission efforts. She wrote home to the Baptist women and suggested they take up an offering at Christmas to fund the women's missionary efforts overseas. By October 1888, the Women's Missionary Union and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering were established.

Lottie died at the age of 72, after almost 40 years of missions work in China. Her role in the establishment of the WMU and the annual Christmas offering undoubtedly changed the face of missions as it increased women's presence on the mission fields overseas.

### Prayer Prompt:

- Lord, help us to follow the example of Lottie – a tireless servant for Your kingdom.

### Day 3 - Lottie Moon's Legacy

Lottie Moon dedicated all she had to spreading the Gospel. At the time of her death, there were thirty-two churches in the Pingtu and Laichow areas. Schools she established became seminaries. The first Southern Baptist missionary hospital in China cared for the sick while the missionaries under Lottie's direction cared for their souls.

By 1912, Lottie became physically and emotionally spent due to her years of living in primitive circumstances. She passed away on Christmas Eve, on a ship bound to take her home to America.

Lottie has been described not just as teacher or evangelist, but as a diplomat for missionaries and a guardian-friend of unreached nations. Those who worked alongside her admired her intelligence, perseverance and power of persuasion. Those among whom she lived and worked would describe her as teacher and friend.

Monuments to missionaries dot the globe. They usually consist of statues depicting their likenesses, or a plaque detailing their biographies. But, Lottie's monument was different. Inside the walled yard of the Tengchow Baptist Church in China, a staff was inscribed with her name and the title, "American Missionary". The inscription simply said, "How She Loved Us."

There is no doubt that Lottie Moon's dedication to the Great Commission forever changed missions and how they are funded. Since 1888, the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering has raised over \$4.8 billion to support missions overseas. Richland Creek is honored to participate in this endeavor.

This year, the Southern Baptist Convention has set a goal to collect \$175 million for missions around the world. You can give to this life changing fund through Richland Creek during the month of December.

Write your check and place it in one of the specially designated offering envelopes available in the foyer. Or you can securely give online through the Richland Creek website. Go to GIVING, choose Mission Fund, and enter "Lottie Moon" in the memo section. 100% of your gift goes to provide for these dedicated missionaries.

Will you be a part of Lottie's legacy?

#### Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, help me to heed the urgent call of the mission field. Whether I PRAY, GIVE, or GO, let it be for Your glory and the good of those You love.
- Strengthen my walk so that I do not hesitate to give what is Yours for those who need to hear of Christ's saving work on the cross.

## Day 4 - What is the Old Testament?

**Key Scripture:** *Exodus 3:15, God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.”*

The Bible is God’s progressive revelation of Himself. Without the Bible we would know nothing about God. Martin Luther explains, “God lowers himself to the level of our weak comprehension and presents himself to us . . . in simplicity adapted to a child, that in some measure it may be possible for him to be known by us.” Unfortunately, many believers today view the majority of the Old Testament (OT) as boring, outdated, and irrelevant. Yet, if we really understood what the OT is, says, and does, we would be thrilled and inspired to diligently read and study it.

The Old Testament consists of thirty-nine books with over twenty-three thousand verses! It is divided up into four sections: the Pentateuch (the first five books), the historical books, poetry, and prophets. All together these sections make up 75 percent of Scripture.

The Old and New Testaments are really the Old and New covenants. *Covenant is an agreement between two parties that governs the terms of their relationship.*

Beginning in the first book of the Bible (Genesis), we are introduced to the one true God who creates, orders, and blesses this world. Moreover, this one true God is the same God we find in the NT (Malachi 3:6). Furthermore, the infamous words, “In the beginning God created the heavens and earth” sets in motion a story narrating God’s gracious plans of establishing us (His people) in His land under His rule. As a matter of fact, the OT announces what we so cherish and discover in the NT—the good news of Christ. In this way, the OT and the NT are intimately connected. The OT promises a Messiah, and the NT reveals the Messiah.

### Questions to Consider:

Have you invested in your faith and relationship with God by studying the Old Testament Scriptures? When was the last time you studied Scripture from the Old Testament?

### Prayer Prompt:

- Lord, I thank you for revealing yourself in the Bible. Open my eyes to the truth of Your Word and transform my heart as I discover more about You.

## Day 5 - What Does the Old Testament Say?

*Key Scripture: John 5:39, "You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me."*

Perhaps the most important lesson we can learn about the Old Testament is that its purpose is not so much to tell us about history, stories, laws, or rituals but rather to communicate God's self-revelation to us. We learn, through careful study of the OT, who God is, what God does, and what God is like.

Graeme Goldsworthy brilliantly summarizes the whole message of the Bible in these short but insightful words, "God's people, in God's place, under God's rule." Yes, from the very beginning, God's plan was to create a people with whom He dwells and relationships. Sadly, this relationship was broken by the very people He creates. As Adam and Eve revolt against God in the garden so does all their progeny thereafter leading the entire human race into sin and death (Rom 5:12). This sin renders people "dead in their sins" (Eph 2:1). The rest of Scripture takes us on a rather long and winding story of God's plans to restore creation and humanity to "very good." So, while God's original purposes in creation have been *complicated* by sin, they are never *overwhelmed* by sin.

What is this plan of redemption introduced in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament? Simply this: "The whole work of God in redemption is to undo the tragic effects of that foul revolt and to bring us back again into right and eternal relationship with Himself" (A. W. Tozer). How does this plan unfold in the OT? Over the course of 39 books, by means of characters, events, stories, rituals, and even objects, God reveals that a Savior will come to rescue His people out of sin and slavery. Alec Motyer clarifies, "*The OT is, in many ways, a book standing on tiptoe, straining forward into the future.*"

### Questions to Consider:

What one book can you study to start to familiarize yourself with the story of God's plan to restore people back to Himself?

### Prayer Prompts:

- *Your Word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens (Psalm 119:89).*
- Grant me wisdom and discernment as I learn more about your plan of redemption in the Old Testament.

## Day 6 - Prophecy and Prophets

**Key Scripture:** *Malachi 3:1, “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.”*

Prophecy is simply a message from God. Often thought of as “predictions” of the future, a better understanding of prophecy is simply the proclamation of God’s plans meant to prompt a response on the part of the nation of Israel. *Prophets were the people who delivered these messages from God.* Their fundamental role is that of a divine spokesman. They are covenant protectors who look out for God’s interests.

Why are there prophets and prophecies in the Bible? In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel looked upon their heritage (as God’s chosen people) as a birth certificate with irrevocable blessings. They felt guaranteed God’s protection and blessings just because they were God’s chosen nation. Yet, their relationship with God was **not** a “no strings attached” relationship. Quite the contrary, it was a relationship governed by a covenant—an agreement between God and Israel. Failure to keep the covenant brought curses. Quite clearly, Israel broke the covenant with God (Hosea 6:7). What was God to do? Nothing? Who does nothing when someone you love runs towards death and destruction?

Consequently, God implements the curses of the covenant. Yet all along the way, God sent prophets to warn, rebuke, and scold the people towards repentance. Sadly, Israel ignored these warnings; thus, God sends the prophets to speak of what He will do to punish the people for their adulterous behavior (Hosea 7:4). This is not so much predicting the future (as prophets are often thought of doing) as it is God fulfilling His promises about the curses for those who break the covenant. Remember, God always punishes for a purpose—to call back those He loves, to bring them back to Him from whom they have fled.

By God’s grace, He also sends prophets to encourage the people as well. This encouragement comes in the form of announcing the future arrival of a Savior who will deal with the issue of sin, restore the people’s hearts, and establish them in the land under God’s rule.

### Questions to Consider:

What role do the prophets play in salvation history? What is the Messianic hope of the prophets?

### Prayer Prompt:

- *Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law (Psalm 119:18).*

## Day 7 - Exile/Exodus Theme

**Key Scripture:** *Exodus 29:46, “They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God.”*

One theme that dominates the Bible is this idea of deliverance out of exile. To be sure, “The Exodus of God’s people out of Egypt is ‘the greatest redemptive event in the Old Testament’” (Don Carson). Moreover, the exodus does not only refer to the crossing of the Red Sea alone. God doesn’t just rescue people out of slavery; He welcomes us into relationship with Himself. The rescue has a purpose—relationship.

The “pre-history” of Israel in the Old Testament (OT) shapes the New Testament (NT) narrative. In the NT, this same exodus experience is present. Jesus delivers us out of slavery to sin (John 8:34–36). The OT exodus anticipates and points to the greatest redemption from slavery imaginable—Jesus Christ.

These messianic prophecies herald the One who will deliver mankind out of slavery to sin and into abundant life in Christ. As we begin to embark on twenty days of prophecy, ending with the magnificent messianic prophecy in Isaiah 53, we must remember the who and what of these prophecies. The who is Jesus—Jesus is the coming Messiah of whom these prophets spoke. But what is He coming to do? He comes to deliver us out of slavery and set us free. John 8:34–36, “*Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.’*” That is what all these messianic prophecies are pointing to—Jesus—who has “*delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son*” (Col 1:3).

### Questions to Consider:

When is the last time you reflected on your salvation? Do you daily give God praise and worship for your deliverance from death to life? From darkness to light?

### Prayer Prompt:

- Jesus, I thank You that You are the founder and perfecter of my faith (Hebrews 12:2). I was in darkness and dead to my sins, but You (by Your own grace and mercy) rescued me to a restored relationship with You and eternal life.



## Day 8 - Messiah Would Be Born of a Woman

**Key Scripture:** *Genesis 3:15 “And I [the Lord God] will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”*

The Old Testament contains hundreds of prophecies concerning Messiah—who He would be, from what lineage would He come, where He would be born, etc. There is no earlier prophecy, or prediction, of the promised Messiah than Genesis 3:15. In this passage, God is pronouncing a curse on Satan and simultaneously promising Eve that a male descendant from her line would crush the head of the serpent (i.e., the Devil himself). This passage announces that the Messiah would be born of a woman and also, by its silence, that He would have no earthly father.

The apostle Paul writes of this prophecy being fulfilled in Gal 4:4, “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman.*” This should bring comfort to us because we know that all mankind has also been born of women. The Messiah will be like one of us in this manner.

Christians today can have peace and certainty in a Savior named Jesus because He has fulfilled not only the prophecy of being born of a woman, but each and every prophecy concerning His life. “*Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift*” (2 Cor 9:15).

### Questions to Consider:

Will you believe in the Messiah who has fulfilled every Old Testament prophecy concerning Him? Will you trust in the Messiah for salvation?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for boldness to share with others concerning the Messiah who was prophesied about and who fulfilled that prophecy.
- Pray for many to come to Messiah this Christmas season.

## Day 9 - Messiah Would Be Born in Bethlehem

**Key Scripture:** *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.”*

*Luke 2:4-6 “And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.”*

There are certainly times in Scripture when God chooses not to reveal everything entirely to us, and we trust in Him that He knows what is best for us. However, to ask the question, “Where was Jesus born?” is not one of those times where Scripture is silent. In fact, through His Word, God tells us many things about the Messiah, and Scripture is very clear in multiple places about where Jesus was born. The birthplace of Jesus is the fulfillment of just one of the many prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. In Micah 5:2, we see prophecy revealed that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah, the ruler of Israel. This prophecy was written about 700 years before the birth of Jesus—700 years!

There were actually two locations known as Bethlehem at the time of Micah’s writing, which shows us that having the word “Ephrathah” is significant as it points to Bethlehem in Judah, where Jerusalem was located. Bethlehem was not considered to be significant; in fact, it was considered a small town of no account—yet it would produce the Messiah.

Connecting Old Testament prophecy with the New Testament, we also see Jesus’s place of birth in Bethlehem is mentioned in Luke 2:4-6 and Matthew 2:1-6. Here it describes the birth of Jesus as the fulfillment of Micah’s prophecy and quotes the Scripture from Micah.

How beautiful to see this prophecy from 700 years’ prior being fulfilled in Christ!

### **Question to Consider:**

Do you see the connection with OT prophecy to the NT?

### **Prayer Prompt:**

- Lord, thank you for allowing us to see the fulfillment of prophecy through your Word.

## Day 10 - Born of a Virgin

**Key Scripture:** *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.”*

Conception is astonishing in itself, but the birth of Jesus goes beyond astonishing to positively miraculous. Clearly, Jesus’s birth is no normal birth. In Isaiah 7:14, this “son” shall be called Immanuel, which means God is with us. To fulfill prophecy, this son, Immanuel, must be born of a virgin—a virgin who had favor with God. Mary was met by the angel Gabriel and was told that the Holy Spirit will come upon her, the power of the Most High will overshadow her, and she will carry a child.

Our faith teaches us that from conception, Jesus was fully God and fully man. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin. The virgin birth is a central and essential doctrine of our faith. Jesus’s arrival through the virgin birth has been divinely ordained since Genesis 3:15. How great is our relational God, that He would leave Glory, to be born into this world? What a humble God we serve!

### Questions to Consider:

How can your worship reflect the prophecy of the virgin birth? How will you explain the importance of the virgin birth to your lost friends and family?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that your life will reflect your belief in this prophecy. Thank God for fulfilling this prophecy and bringing you to faith.
- Pray that during this season, your lost family members will come to faith in Jesus Christ.

*Luke 1:31 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.”*

## DAY 11 - Messiah is From the Lineage of Abraham

**Key Scripture:** *Genesis 12:1-3* “Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed’.”

The Lord is a sovereign, covenant-keeping God. He chose Abraham, the first patriarch of the Hebrew people, and made an unconditional promise. God planned to form a nation from Abraham’s descendants (Israel) and to preserve the line of Abraham’s offspring through it. Obstacle after obstacle appears to jeopardize the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham as the Old Testament unfolds. Nevertheless, God’s great purpose to have a people for Himself, living in right relationship with Him, in the place He created for them, prevails.

From Israel came the promised offspring of Genesis 3:15—the One who would crush the Serpent. Matthew S. Harmon wrote, “The New Testament begins by clearly identifying Jesus as the promised Serpent-crusher. He is the promised descendant of Abraham through whom God will bless all the nations.”

*“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Matthew 1:1*

*“To [the Israelites] belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.” Romans 9:5*

Jesus didn’t just spring up out of nowhere. All of history was leading to Him! All of the Old Testament points to Him. We cannot fully appreciate the wonder of the incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ apart from the Old Testament. Jesus is the blessing!

*“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” Galatians 3:29*

### Questions to Consider:

Have you recently read through Matthew 1:1-17? Genealogies are important. What is God telling us about Himself and Jesus? How is this passage a triumph of grace?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Praise the Sovereign Lord for being a faithful, covenant-keeping God. Give thanks, for we are blessed in Christ. It is possible only because He became a curse for us (Gal 3:13).

## Day 12 - Descendant of Isaac

**Key Scripture:** *Genesis 17:19, But God said, “No, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”*

*Genesis 21:12, But God said to Abraham, “Do not be distressed because of the boy and your slave woman; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.”*

God promised Abraham that he would have a son, whom he was to name Isaac. Then, God promised Isaac that a great nation would come through him. Isaac is such a significant figure in the Old Testament because it is through him and his descendants that Jesus came (Luke 3:34). Abraham’s promised son Isaac is the one God uses to bring about the Messiah. It is through Isaac that God will establish an everlasting covenant with His people.

One of the beauties of the Scripture is that God’s promises are always fulfilled. Paul, in Rom 9:7, uses Gen 21:12 to display the fact that Jesus came through Isaac and that the promise of the Lord was fulfilled. If we understand the promises of the Lord, we understand that Jesus came to offer salvation to all men and to establish an everlasting covenant with all who would believe upon Him for salvation. Isaac was simply used by God to accomplish His great plan of offering salvation to all mankind. It makes me excited to know that God also desires to use me.

### Questions to Consider:

Have you ever thought about how God has used ordinary people to accomplish something as significant as bringing about His own Son? If God used an imperfect, yet obedient person like Isaac to bring about the Messiah, what could He accomplish with your obedience? When was the last time you thought about all the Old Testament promises, reflected on their fulfillments, and worshiped God because of them?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the Lord would help you be faithful and obedient even in the small things.
- Pray that the Lord would build your faith as you reflect on His promises.
- Pray and ask the Lord to stretch your faith this month as you seek to glorify Him with your whole life.

## Day 13 - Descendant of Jacob

**Key Scripture:** *Numbers 24:17 "I see him, but not now; I look at him, but not near; A star shall appear from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall smash the forehead of Moab, And overcome all the sons of Sheth."*

This is a fascinating passage where God promises that the Messiah will come from Jacob. He will be a King who reigns with a scepter and is like a lion (Num 24:9) that will crush His enemies. The "star" that comes forth is significant because in Rev 22:16, Jesus calls Himself the "Bright morning star." Also, this King is coming but not yet; He is still far off. In Isaiah 46:13, when speaking of the coming of Jesus, Isaiah says He is not far off, meaning the time for the coming of Jesus was closer than before. God also revealed to Jacob that the Messiah would come through him in Genesis 28. Additionally in Matt 1:2, we see that Jacob is in the genealogy of Jesus.

*Luke 1:33 says, "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."*

These passages all point to the fact that God fulfilled His promise to Jacob and brought about the Messiah through Him. They also point to the eternal reign of Jesus and how God's plan all along has been for Jesus to be the one true Eternal King.

### Questions to Consider:

Do you view Jesus as the one, true, eternal King who reigns over all things? Are you currently trusting in the Lord to accomplish His sovereign plan? When was the last time you rejoiced greatly because of all that the Lord has done? Are you waiting expectantly for Christ's return to gather His people and to crush His enemies?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray and ask the Lord to reveal any areas of your life with which you might not be trusting Him.
- Pray that the Lord would prepare you for His coming, and that you would be found faithful when He returns for judgment.
- Pray that the Lord would help you rest in His sovereign plan.

## Day 14 - Tribe of Judah

*Key Scripture: Genesis 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people."*

*Hebrews 7:14 "For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood."*

The tribe of Judah was the leading tribe of the Kingdom of Judah. David and the royal line belonged to this tribe, and the line continued even after the fall of the Kingdom of Judah to Babylon. The traditional Jewish belief is that the Messiah will be of the Davidic line, based on Yahweh's promise to David of an everlasting throne for his offspring (Isa 9:6–7; Jer 33:15–21; 2 Sam 7:12–16; Ps 89:35–37).

In Genesis 49:9–12 Jacob speaks of the preeminence of the tribe of Judah. The promise of the "scepter" indicates that Judah would exercise rulership. The scepter that belongs to the Messiah is one of peace, justice, and righteousness. This was fulfilled in King David and his descendants, ultimately being fulfilled in the rule of the Messiah. The ruler from Judah will also receive the "obedience of the peoples"—that is, all nations, both Jewish and Gentile. And Jesus will do exactly that and receive the obedience of the peoples as the Sovereign ruler of all.

The New Testament also describes Jesus as a member of the tribe of Judah by lineage (see Matt 1:1-6 and Luke 3:31-34). Therefore, prophecy of the Messiah coming from the tribe of Judah is fulfilled in Jesus. Hebrews 7:14 explicitly traces Messiah's descent from Judah, while Revelation 5:5 calls Jesus "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

### Questions to Consider:

Do you think of Jesus as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah?" Consider the imagery of Jesus as a "lion"? Does it give you an impression of ultimate rule?

### Prayer Prompt:

- Pray that you will see Jesus as One who holds ultimate rule on Earth and in Heaven. As you begin to understand that Jesus fulfills prophecy, worship Him for who He is.

## Day 15 - Heir to King David's Throne

**Key Scripture:** *2 Samuel 7:12-13* “When your days are finished and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

*Isaiah 9:6* “For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”

As we see from 2 Samuel, God promised David that David's descendant would establish God's kingdom and reign on His throne forever. We also see in Isaiah 9 that His name would be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” Luke 1:32 says, “He will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.” Luke clearly understood that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise made to David. Paul displays his understanding of the Scriptures in Romans 1 when he talks about how the prophets spoke of Jesus coming from David.

It is awesome how the Scriptures work together to display the wonderful plan of the Lord! All throughout the Scripture, God reveals aspects of His plan to bring about salvation for the nations through Jesus. As you pray today, think about Jesus' names in these verses as well as His position as Eternal King and Savior of the world.

### Questions to Consider:

Would anything change in your prayer life if you approached God like the “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace, Son of the Most High” was sitting on the throne? Are you currently living your life as though the Lord is reigning on His throne?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray and focus on the Lord as being your Prince of Peace, your Wonderful Counselor, and your Eternal Father, and then praise Him for all that He has done in your life.
- Ask the Lord to help you align your prayers with His will and His desires for your life.



## Day 16 - The Messiah Would Be Called Emmanuel

**Key Scripture:** *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 birth of Jesus fulfills many Old Testament prophecies like the one in Isaiah 7:14. This prophecy was made more than 700 years before it was fulfilled. The word "Emmanuel" or "Immanuel" means God with us. Those in the Old Testament did not understand that this prophecy meant that God would literally become flesh and dwell on the earth. However, we know from reading the Gospels (see Matthew 1:23) that Mary *did* conceive in a miraculous way and did give birth to a son, Jesus. Emmanuel is an accurate description of who Jesus is and what He did for us. Jesus was God in the flesh. He left Heaven, took on humanity, and came to be with us. He walked on the earth, identified with our struggles—but without sin—took our sin upon Himself. Jesus paid the penalty we deserved and died an atoning death on the cross, was buried, and three days later rose victoriously, completing what we could never do for ourselves by making us right with Him.

Because of Jesus's death and resurrection, for those who place their faith and trust in Him, He gives them the free gift of "God with us." We can rest in knowing He is with us and will never leave us and that one day we will be with Him face to face forever.

### Questions to Consider:

This Christmas will you be rejoicing over presents and food or over the birth of the Saviour of the world who became God with us? Have you accepted God's free gift of life with Him forever?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Thank God for His Word, which teaches us about God with us.
- Lord, in the craziness of the season, may we not forget whom and what we are celebrating.

## Day 17 - A Messenger Would Prepare the Way for the Messiah

**Key Scripture:** *Isaiah 40:3* “A voice cries in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

God chose to reveal Himself and His unfolding plan of history to a particular people—the nation of Israel. Israel’s role was to display the glory of God to the nations. However, Israel turned from God and neglected to heed the warnings of the prophets to turn back to God, severely suffering as a result of their sins. The covenant people of God (Gen 17:1-4), who were to be a light for the nations (Isa 42:6-7; 49:6), found themselves at a dark point. They needed a Savior.

In their dark hour, God sent a message of comfort and hope to His disobedient people through Isaiah, who prophesied of a coming “voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord” (Isa 40:3; Malachi 3:1).

Roughly seven hundred years later that messenger—John the Baptist—preached, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near” (Matt 3:2). John’s message for repentance was a call for sorrow over their sin, with a turn from sin toward God. Repentance prepared their hearts for the coming Messiah and His Kingdom. This Kingdom of God was inaugurated in Christ’s ministry, His death, and His resurrection. Now Christ reigns and rules to rescue people from every nation out of the kingdom of darkness, into His Kingdom (Col 1:13).

History continues to unfold. Just as all who have gone before, we must address our sin. The people of Isaiah 40 looked forward to the coming Messiah. We now look back at the cross. The Messiah, Jesus Christ, is the solution for sin; no one comes to the Father except through Christ (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

### Questions to Consider:

Am I sorrowful over my sin? Have I trusted Christ for the forgiveness of sin? Am I a voice of witness of the Messiah, so that others may repent and believe?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Father God, thank you for your free gift of eternal life for all who believe in the name of Jesus.
- Please provide opportunities for the gospel and give me boldness to share the good news message (Col 4:3; Eph 6:20).

## Day 18 - Messiah Would Spend a Season in Egypt

*Key Scripture: Hosea 11:1 “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”*

Many prophecies are obvious in their fulfillment. For example, Micah prophesied of the Ancient of Days from Bethlehem who would rule (5:2). Fulfillment occurred when “Jesus was born in Bethlehem” (Matt 2:1). At other times, prophecies make clear something formerly in the shadows. Those prophecies actually fulfill and bring to light something more.

In our passage, Hosea reminds the reader of an earlier time God delivered His chosen people out of Egypt. His people, Israel, were in bondage and slavery at the hand of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, (Deut 7:6-9). God set His love on His people, His chosen treasured possession, and delivered them. Israel was to worship and serve God and to be His light to the nations (Isa 42:6). Sadly, Israel turned from God to worthlessness; and became worthless (Jer 2:5). Israel failed to fulfill its purpose.

Centuries later, Matthew describes another Egyptian delivery. An angel of the Lord warned Joseph in a dream of the impending annihilation of Jesus. Joseph fled with his young family down to Egypt to escape the destruction ordered by King Herod. Joseph remained with his family in Egypt until the Lord called him out, following Herod’s death. Matthew recounted a prophecy fulfilled as the Lord called His Son out of Egypt: “And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son” (Matt 2:14-15).

Matthew’s account brings to light Jesus as the true Son of God, the one prophesied from the Old Testament. Matthew connects the Old Testament prophecies with Jesus’ birth, life, and death, and in so doing, reveals Jesus is the true Son of God, the true Israel called out of Egypt.

Hosea’s prophecy is fulfilled during Jesus’ escape and return from Egypt. This fulfillment makes clear Jesus is the true Israel, the true Son of God, who fulfilled the Father’s will.

### **Question to Consider:**

Do I realize when Jesus is referenced in the Old Testament?

### **Prayer Prompt:**

- Thank you, Father, that in Christ you did for me what I cannot do for myself.

## DAY 19 - Messiah Would Be A Prophet

**Key Scripture:** *Deuteronomy 18:15* “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him...”

*Deuteronomy 18:17-19* “The Lord said to me: ‘...I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.’”

John H. Walton and Andrew E. Hill wrote, “People commonly think of prophets as those who utter mysterious predictions about the future.... One of the problems with this view is that it obscures the role of God.”

According to the Scriptures, prophets received and proclaimed the very words of God. Prophets communicated God’s perspective and God’s plan, not their own. Case in point, Acts 7:38 tells us that the great Old Testament prophet, Moses, “received living words to pass on...” God called Moses to speak everything He commanded to Pharaoh and to the people of Israel. They did not listen.

In Deuteronomy 18, Moses doesn’t just tell God’s people to expect a prophet greater than he. With the authority given him by God, Moses also commands Israel to “listen to Him.” In the New Testament, all three Synoptic Gospels use this same phrase in their account of the transfiguration of Jesus Christ. Peter, James, and John witnessed “His glory” as Jesus spoke to Moses and Elijah. A bright cloud covered them all and they heard a voice saying, “This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to him!” (Luke 9:35). God Himself affirmed that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18. The Living Word is the prophet greater than Moses!

*“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)*

### Questions to Consider:

How does God speak to His people today? Read Hebrews 1:1-3. What is His message? What are the consequences for not listening to His Word?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Read John 7:37-44. Praise God for His faithful fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in Christ.
- Pray that God will renew your sense of awe and wonder at the way He works and reveals Himself through His Word.

## Day 20 - Messiah would be declared the Son of God

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 2:7 "I will announce the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have fathered You.'"*

Each prophecy of the Messiah is meant to take us deeper in our understanding of who is worthy to fulfill this title. In Psalm 2:7 it is declared that the Messiah would be the "Son of God." This points to His deity and His humanity and blends these roles perfectly. The title "Son of God" first points us to His deity because any son of a deity is also considered a deity himself. This is important because no man could fully take on the penalty of the world's sins; only God can offer salvation and only God Himself could fully reveal Himself to man. This title also points to His humanity by pointing out the incarnation or when Jesus was born as a man. The passage states, "Today I have fathered you," which points to the day Jesus was born. He had to come as a human or He could not have taken our place as a sacrifice for our sins. He also was able to demonstrate how we are to be fully obedient to God the Father.

Then in the NT we see Christ fulfill prophecy as God declares at Jesus's baptism "*This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased*" (Matt 3:17). Christ demonstrates His sonship by being obedient to God the Father at all times. It is through the incarnation that we see Jesus, the Messiah, as the perfect sacrifice in order to provide salvation to man. This is why God makes a point to declare at Jesus's baptism "*This is My Beloved Son.*"

### Questions to Consider:

Do you proclaim both aspects of God's nature when you think and speak? Do you ponder more about God's humanity or His deity? Why is it important to understand both?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that God would show you a deeper understanding of why He needed to be both fully man and fully God.
- Thank God for sending His only Son to be with us and die for us.

## Day 21 - Messiah would be Mocked and Insulted

**Key Scripture:** *Psalm 22:7 “All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads.”*

Have you ever been mocked by more than one person? Maybe at your workplace around people who don't follow Jesus, you stood up for Christ among your co-workers, only to find that they later ridiculed you and mocked you behind your back.

In Luke 22:63-65 we read the account of Jesus who had been arrested, denied by His disciples and beaten and mocked by Roman officials. Was this mockery fair? Did those unjustly treating Jesus know that their mockery was actually helping fulfill Old Testament prophecy? Probably not, but Jesus rightfully fulfilled what we read in Psalm 22—namely, He would be insulted, beaten, and mocked as the Messiah. The Messiah was not treated as He deserved, but that didn't change His mission. Although He was ridiculed and suffered in our place, we know that through Jesus's obedience to the Father and through His humility, He is ultimately exalted as Lord (Phil 2:8-10).

Knowing Jesus was mocked, rejected, and insulted, how does that change your perception when others mistreat you? Read 1 Peter 2:21-23 and look to Jesus as our example for how to rightly respond:

*“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”*

### Questions to Consider:

Does seeing Jesus as one who encountered ridicule and mockery help me when others may treat me the same way? Are there any Scripture passages I should memorize to help me cling to in situations where I may be put down or mistreated by others?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Thank the Lord for the example Jesus gives us in humility, perseverance through suffering, and for His sacrificial death in my place.
- Ask the Lord to give you wisdom in how to respond when others mistreat you.

## Day 22 - The Suffering Servant

**Key Scripture:** *Isaiah 53:11* “*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.*” (Read Isaiah 53)

Under foreign rule and exiled out of their land, the faithful few Israelites find a source of comfort through the writings of Isaiah (Read Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:47; and 53.). Their sin landed them in what seemed to be a hopeless situation—exile. Isaiah writes of the One who will intercede for them, bear their sin, and make an offering for their guilt. This One “cut off out of the land of the living” (meaning death) would make the unrighteous, righteous. The news of the Messiah must have been such a great hope to the exiled. Quite clearly the Israelites (as well as all people) have a sin problem. Yet, Isaiah 53 tells of a Servant of the Lord who will willingly suffer beatings and death for sins He never committed. This Suffering Servant came to do the will of the Lord “*for it pleased the Lord to crush Him putting Him to grief if he would render Himself as a guilt offering.*”

The prophecy of Isaiah 53 was fulfilled in the life of Jesus. He was rejected by the Jewish leaders, committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten; when He was mocked, He remained silent. Yes, this great servant continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins when he suffered on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. The message of Isaiah 53 brought hope and comfort to the exiled Israelites.

### Questions to Consider:

Christ has suffered and died in your place. Christ made the perfect offering for guilt. Have you trusted in this One who suffered for you? This message of hope in Jesus Christ is available to you, too.

### Prayer Prompt:

- Father God, thank you for sending your Servant, Jesus to die for my sins, that I would be able to be in right relationship with you.

## Day 23 - Messiah Would Be Rejected By His Own People

**Key Scripture:** *Isaiah 53:3, “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”*

The prophet Isaiah describes a Suffering Servant who dies for the sins of those who reject him and then is exalted by God. This is shocking news to the Jews. The Jews looked at Jesus and said, “This can’t be the Messiah because He is not going to enter like this.” They were fixated on appearance and success. And Jesus was not what they had in mind.

This Servant would not suffer for any evil He had done, but rather for the evil others had done. This is a new concept to the people: a righteous King would suffer, die, and be a substitute for His people. However, again, the Jews have an adverse reaction to Jesus in His beginnings, in His life, and especially in His death. They were consumed with self-righteousness and pleasing God by being good and religious, by doing good works. But Jesus comes, claims to be the Messiah and the King, and instead of being triumphant He’s despised and forsaken of men. He is simply the opposite of their definition of a Messiah.

No specific name for this person is given in Isaiah 53 other than to call him the Servant of God. His role is simply described. Jesus fits the portrait. The New Testament proclaims this in several texts—Mark 6:1-6; Luke 4:16-30; John 1:11; 7:5 to name a few. Isaiah 53 contains the gospel if we only have eyes to see and ears to hear.

### Questions to Consider:

Do you accept Jesus as the true Messiah? Have you received His substitutionary death in your place?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Lord, please help us to accept Your humble sacrifice for us.
- Give us confidence to share the good news of your life, death, and resurrection with a world that is currently rejecting You.



## Day 24 - Messiah's Hand and Feet Will Be Pierced

**Key Scripture:** *Isaiah 53:5 "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed."*

You may be wondering why we are talking about the Suffering Servant here at Christmas time, instead of the birth of Jesus Christ? But without the suffering, death, burial, and resurrection of the Suffering Servant (Jesus Christ) there is no celebration, only eternal separation from God.

God is holy and just. He must punish sin, just as a good earthly judge punishes people who break the law. We are sinners and break God's law daily; therefore, because God is just and righteous, He must issue judgment on the law breakers. But God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment of our sins. Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, who never sinned, took the penalty of our sins upon His body, by being beaten and nailed to a cross. Scourging was the painful process of being beaten by someone using a whip with pieces of bone or metal on the end to inflict more pain. 1 Peter 2:24 states, *And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.*

The Son of God left His rightful place in heaven to take the punishment of our sins upon Himself to satisfy the penalty of our sins against a Holy God. By His scourging, or some versions say stripes, we are healed!

God created us in His image to be in right relationship with Him, but since we broke the relationship through disobedience, God provided a way for reconciliation through His Son Jesus Christ. Romans 5:19, *For as by the one man's disobedience [Adam] the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience [Jesus] the many will be made righteous.*

### Questions to Consider:

Have you accepted the gift of salvation freely given of God to you? If not, what is keeping you from accepting this gift?

### Prayer Prompt:

- Thank you, Father God, for sending your Son Jesus to take the punishment of my sins against you, so I can be in a right relationship with You.

## Day 25 - Messiah Would Be Silent Before His Accusers

*Key Scripture: Isaiah 53:7 “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.”*

If Jesus was the victim of misunderstanding and was unjustly accused and condemned to die, why didn't He seek to defend Himself? God's Suffering Servant would not cry out to protest His innocence. He would not defend what his life clearly demonstrated—a life of perfect righteousness. No, He would remain silent (see Matthew 26:61-63; 27:12-14; Mark 15:3-5). He would fulfill prophecies spoken of Him in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Jews hardened their hearts and refused to accept that they were sinners in need of a Savior. They also refused to believe that Jesus was the Savior prophesied in the Old Testament. This was in spite of all facts to the contrary. Why should Jesus answer their accusations? Was there any more He could say or do? They had enough proof. He would say no more.

The prophecies of the Messiah here in Isaiah 53 were written hundreds of years before Jesus came, and yet they describe Jesus as a Savior who will be silent before His accusers. Jesus realizes He is coming as God in the flesh for one purpose—to offer His life in exchange for sinful mankind.

### Questions to Consider:

What is your response when someone accuses you of things that you did not do? Will you consider all that Jesus has done for you and point others toward Him, even if you are opposed by friends and family?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray for the opportunity to share the Messiah with those who do not know Him.
- Lord, give me boldness to sometimes remain silent when I should, even in the face of false accusations.

## Day 26 - Messiah Would Be Buried In a Rich Man's Grave

*Key Scripture: Isaiah 53:9 "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."*

Followers of Jesus are extremely blessed to have the full canon of Scripture available to us, especially when we read passages like Isaiah 53 and then are able to flip over to the Gospels in the NT and see parallels. Do not take for granted how blessed we are to have all 66 books of the Bible before us in our own language.

In Isaiah 53 the writer acknowledges the Suffering Servant, specifically how He would die in innocence (vv. 7-9), ultimately be vindicated, and reign victoriously (vv.10-12). In verse 9 there is a beautiful prophetic look towards Jesus Christ. Specifically Isaiah states this servant would die with the wicked, yet be buried with the rich. It is important to know historically speaking, "In the view of the prophets of Israel, the rich were often equated with the wicked. The authorities no doubt intended to dispose of Jesus's body in a common pit with criminals" (*Apologetics Study Bible*). Although the plan would have been for Jesus's body to be disposed of with criminals in a pit, God had ordained by the time of Isaiah's writing that Christ would be buried with the rich man. Do not miss the sovereign hand of the Father at work in the details of how the physical body of the Son would be handled after His death.

We also note in this passage that the servant who would suffer and die would do so as one who had done no violence and with no deceit in his mouth. "The servant is thus described as a person of total moral purity, the true substitute for sinners" (*ESV Study Bible*). This prophecy was completely fulfilled in the death of Jesus and the Father was glorified (John 19:38-41).

### Questions to Consider:

How necessary was it that Jesus be sinless and die an innocent man? Does the reality of Jesus's suffering and sacrificial death personally impact you? Does it change the way you worship, obey, or pray?

### Prayer Prompt:

- Father, help me respond rightly to your Word, knowing that Jesus died for me.
- Thank you, Father, that Jesus did not stay dead but rose again victoriously.

## Day 27 - Messiah Would Be a Sacrifice for Sin

**Key Scripture:** *Isaiah 53:5-6; 12* “*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by 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.... Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.*”

Isaiah 53 is a key passage connecting the Old Testament with the coming of the Messiah who would be the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sins. Isaiah prophesied that this coming Messiah would bear the sins of many—that the punishment and wrath for our wickedness would be poured out on Him so that we may have peace.

There were many different types of sacrifices mentioned in the Old Testament, yet, Scripture tells us in Colossians 2:17 that all of those sacrifices were “a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.” They all pointed to the cross—where the final and perfect sacrifice would be. Jesus would offer His life in our place as **payment** for our sin.

This is also confirmed with the truth of Scripture in the New Testament where Romans 5:6-8 tells us that “*For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”

God’s love for us was displayed through His only Son’s atoning death on the cross where the final sacrifice was made once and for all.

### **Question to Consider:**

As you pray, consider that there **had** to be a payment for your sins. Do you consider Jesus to be the ultimate, final sacrifice for your sins?

### **Prayer Prompt:**

- Lord, thank you for sending your only Son to be the perfect sacrifice for the sins of many to make a way for us to be in right relationship with you.

## Day 28 - Messiah Would Be Crucified With Criminals

*Key Scripture: Isaiah 53:12 “Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the plunder with the strong, Because He poured out His life unto death, And was counted with wrongdoers; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the wrongdoers.”*

In Isaiah 53:12 it is prophesied that the Messiah would be crucified with criminals. The Messiah was to be one who would not sin, but who would bear the sins of many. He was to be someone seen as having done wrong, yet was sinless. Isaiah states He would be placed in a group of criminals and would pour His life out for those who were actually doing the crimes. Not only would the Messiah be charged as a criminal but also be crucified with them. Isaiah 52-53 talks about the suffering servant yet paints a completely different picture about the Messiah than what people expected. The Messiah was most often thought of as one who would take over as ruling king. This aspect of the Messiah is one we will see at the second coming; however, He first came as a suffering servant.

In the New Testament we see this prophecy fulfilled at the end of Jesus's life. The Gospels portray the scene that Jesus was taken before the Jewish leaders and charged as a criminal for heresy. He then was crucified between two criminals. Matthew paints the picture when he says, “At that time two rebels were being crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left.” Christ shows us that He came to make a way for everyone when He offers salvation to the criminal next to Him who admitted he deserved his punishment while acknowledging that Christ did not. It is important to note that Jesus was the one who knew of the prophecy and the will of the Father and willingly poured out His life for the sins of the world.

### Questions to Consider:

What do you think of when you think of a criminal? Why did Jesus have to be categorized as a criminal? Was Jesus forced to die?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Thank God for making a way to salvation through taking on our sins as a criminal.
- Pray for others to ask for salvation from their sins as the criminal on the cross next to Jesus did.

## Day 29 - Scripture in History

*Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53:10; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11*

*Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 "For I delivered to as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he rose on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."*

We have meditated on Isaiah 53 and what Christ went through for us. Today we look closer at Isa 53:10 in connection with 1 Corinthians 15. The Suffering Servant was to be put to death as a sacrifice for sins and buried in a borrowed tomb. More than likely, it would have been a bit odd to the readers to hear that he would also "see his offspring," "prolong his days," and make "the will of the Lord prosper." These are all things that living people do! Prophecy can be a bit veiled in the OT (see Eph. 3); however, the sign of resurrection is surely here.

Paul would pick up on this in 1 Corinthians 15. He says twice that the Christ would die and rise "in accordance with the Scriptures." He also cements this as a real historical event by appealing to eyewitness accounts. Finally, we have our own testimonies of the power of the risen Christ at work in our lives. So, when the world tells you that belief in Jesus is outdated, a waste of time, or just plain false, or if your heart tempts you to disbelieve, you have solid reasons to believe that your faith is true. The Gospel is grounded in historic fact as much as, if not more than, any other fact in history.

### Questions to Consider:

How does Paul pointing out living eyewitnesses of the resurrection in their day help the people to whom he was writing? How does it help us? In what ways have you encountered doubt in your life or from other people? Who do you know that needs to hear the good news of the resurrection?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Spend some time praising God for the new life given to you through His resurrection.
- Pray for friends, coworkers, and relatives who need to hear the gospel, and pray that the Lord would make you ready to share with them.

## Day 30 - Lord Over Death

*Scripture Reading: Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 21:1-5*

*Key Scripture: Isaiah 65:19-20 “I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.”*

Jesus was a man of singular focus—to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). Through His resurrection He made a way for us to return to the Father and have everlasting life; Jesus offers to us His perfected and redeemed humanity. Isaiah provides a glimpse of this in chapter 65 when he talks about the restoration God will bring. He says the former things will be remembered no more. God says that he will make all things new. This is the power and beauty of the resurrection. As Adam’s sin brought death to the world, so Jesus’s resurrection brought restoration and eternal life (Romans 5).

This new life in Jesus extends even beyond us to all of creation. John in Revelation 21 tells us there will be no more death, no more pain, no more mourning. God will wipe away from our eyes the last tear we will ever cry. We are often too easily distracted or depressed by the things of this world. We often forget that this is not our home. One day there will be no more illness, no more medication, no more saying goodbye to loved ones. There will be no more hatred, no more social factions, and no more war. All of these will be a distant memory, and we will “*be glad and rejoice forever*” (v. 18).

### Questions to Consider:

How important is it in your daily life to remember what awaits you in eternity? What things cause you to lose focus on this matter, and how can you fight against that?

### Prayer Prompts:

- Pray that the Lord would help you view your circumstances in light of eternity.
- Pray that He would fill you with joy and hope as you await His return.

# Thank You

We praise the Lord for all those who contributed to make this prayer guide possible. We are so grateful for the faithful servants who have dedicated their time and talents to writing this prayer guide.

To God Be the Glory!

## **1 THESSALONIANS 5:12-13**

*But we ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who diligently labor among you and are in leadership over you in the Lord, and give you instruction, and that you regard them very highly in love because of their work.*

*Live in peace with one another.*