

Monday  
**Luke 1:26–38**

At just the right time in human history, God sent the angel Gabriel to bring some important news to a young woman named Mary. The news: the time was right for God so send his Son to earth to save all people from all their sins. The Savior would be the Son of God, but he would be born to Mary.

Mary asked the angel how such a wonderful, remarkable thing could happen. But the angel simply reminded Mary, "Nothing will be impossible with God." And so Mary waited for the baby Jesus to be born. She waited just as we waited to celebrate his birth during the waiting period called Advent.

Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of baby Jesus at Christmas. For the people of God, preparing for Christmas includes preparing our heart. We prepare our heart by repenting of our sins. God's Word tells us that Jesus came long ago in Bethlehem, but one day he will come again. This time, he will take us to live with him forever in heaven.

Even though Advent and Christmas are over, we still need to prepare our hearts for Jesus every day by repenting of our sins and waiting to be with him forever.

Heavenly Father, thank you for being with me as I wait for Jesus to take me to heaven forever. Help me prepare my heart for him always. Amen.

Tuesday  
**Luke 2:8–21**

God's Son was born to Mary when she and Joseph were away from home in Bethlehem. Because they had difficulty finding a place to stay, they finally ended up spending the night in a barn where animals were kept. Here, the Savior of the world was born!

In the fields outside Bethlehem, shepherds were watching their flocks. On Christmas night, the angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in glory and frightened them. But the angel told them not to be afraid. He told the shepherds that the Savior, Christ the Lord, had been born in Bethlehem!

Suddenly, a great number of angels appeared and joined the first angel praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom is favor rests." When the angels went away, the shepherds quickly went to Bethlehem and found the baby lying in a manger, just as the angel had said. Then, filled with joy, the shepherds thanked and praised God and joyfully shared with others the news of these amazing events.

The news of these amazing events is still exciting and will always be the most important thing to know and share. Though Christmas is now passed, let's still follow the example of the shepherds and share their joy as they go to Jesus and find him where he is, and then share the joy of Jesus with others. Let us, too, go to Jesus where he is in his Word, find him and rejoice, then go and share this needed, exciting news of joy with others.

Thank you, Father, for sending your dear Son to suffer and die for me. Help me to always remember and share your great love. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Wednesday

## Matthew 2:1–12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, God displayed a special star in the sky. Far away from Bethlehem, some noble scholars called Magi (or Wisemen) saw this special star. They knew it meant a king had been born for God's people. They set out on a long journey to follow the star and go to find and meet the baby King Jesus.

The Magi traveled until they came to Jerusalem. There, they asked King Herod, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

Herod was angry when he heard this. He did not want anyone else to be king. He asked the teachers and priests to tell him where the new king was supposed to be born. They told him that the prophecies of God's prophet Micah hundreds of years before said that God's Ruler would come from the town of Bethlehem.

Then Herod told the Magi to go to Bethlehem to look for the new king. If they found him, Herod said, they should come back to Jerusalem and tell him where to find this new king. Herod said that he would go to worship him too. But Herod was lying. He did not want to worship Jesus. He wanted to kill him!

The Magi went on to Bethlehem. There, the special star stopped – right over the house where Jesus was. The Magi were so happy to find the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped Jesus. And they gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

God used the star to lead the Magi to Jesus, even though they were not from among the Jewish people. God wanted to show that Jesus came to pay for the sins of all people or all nations. Jesus paid for our sins, too. Because of Jesus, God forgives our sins. Because of this, we worship Jesus, too, and someday we will live with him forever in heaven.

- **Where did the prophet Micah say that Jesus would be born?**
- **What do the Magi's actions teach us about how to respond to Jesus?**

Close with prayer

Thursday

## Matthew 2:1-12

“Look at that star!” the Wisemen must have said. They studied stars, but they had not ever seen this one before. They knew this star was something special. “It must be the star that means a new king is born,” they concluded from promises from God that they had but no one else did. God sent the star to lead the Wisemen to Jesus. Even though the Wisemen were not Jews, not Israelites, not a part of the “nation of God’s people,” this newborn king was their Savior, too, the Savior of the whole world and all people. The Wisemen traveled many miles to go visit and worship this newborn king. Their trip took a long time. Finally, they got to the city of Jerusalem. The Wisemen went to the palace looking for the newborn king and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

Bad King Herod heard about the Wisemen and the king they had come to worship. He told the Wisemen that he wanted to worship this newborn king too. He was lying. He really wanted to kill this newborn king (Jesus) because he wanted to make sure that he remained king (and not Jesus). But Jesus was not in the palace in Jerusalem. He was living with his parents in the small country farm town where he had been born weeks earlier. The Wisemen went and followed the star to the town of Bethlehem. They found Jesus there. The long trip was over!

They presented Jesus gifts that cost a lot of money. They gave him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then it was time to go, but God warned the Wisemen not to tell King Herod where Jesus was. God wanted and planned to keep Jesus safe. Herod would not be able to destroy the plans God had for Jesus.

When Jesus grew up, he saved us and all people from our sins. Jesus was and is really a King – the King of the entire universe and everything in it!

Dear Father, thank you for sending your Son to defeat the devil so I can have forgiveness of my sins and eternal life with you. May the light of Jesus shine in my life and reflect his love to others. I ask this in his name. Amen.

Friday

## Matthew 2:13–23

Bad King Herod had told the Magi to let him know where the newborn King Jesus was, so that he could go and worship him too. But bad King Herod had not been honest in saying that he wanted to go and worship Jesus. He feared that this newborn King Jesus would grow up to take his kingdom from him. He wanted to find the child and kill him, so that he could not take his kingdom from him.

The Magi prepared to return and tell Herod. But the angel of the Lord appeared to them in a dream, and sent them home another way. "And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and wait there until I tell you, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

Joseph did not even wait until morning. He rose at once, and with Mary and the young Jesus, started by night on a long journey to Egypt to flee away from Herod. The Magi had given expensive gifts to Jesus, and those gifts were how God provided for the expenses of the journey and their stay in Egypt, until they were able to return to their hometown.

Herod was very angry when he found that the Magi had gone home another way without telling him where to find the newborn King Jesus. Yet he was determined to destroy Jesus. In his anger he sent soldiers to kill "all the children that were in Bethlehem . . . from two years old and under."

How strange that such a powerful man should be so afraid of a little child! What an awful scene this slaying of the innocent children must have been! Herod had done many cruel things before; but his wicked life was soon to end. He died a terrible death. Then Joseph and Mary were free and safe to take their child home.

Joseph and Mary remained in Egypt until after the death of Herod. Then the angel appeared to Joseph, and said, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go back to Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are now dead."

Joseph had hoped to make his home in Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, but once they got near to Judea, he learned that a son of Herod was now reigning in place of his father. This made Joseph afraid to go there, and he did not know what to do. God sent an angel to instruct him to go live in the town of Nazareth in the region of Galilee. So Nazareth is where Jesus grew up and was his hometown. (The Savior's birth in Bethlehem and that he would also be from Nazareth were both prophesied by God about Jesus hundreds of years before he was even born.)

But by sparing Jesus from the anger and jealousy of Herod, God spared all of us. God would not allow Herod or anyone else to stop the plans he had for Jesus and for us. That is still and always will be the case.

- **Why did Joseph take Mary and Jesus to Egypt?**
- **Why did they move to Nazareth?**
- **How does this story make you feel about God's plans and what God does compared to things we see going on around us in the world?**

Close with prayer