

Monday, December 2. Read Genesis 3:15. Did you know the first promise God ever made was about Christmas? In Genesis, we read that when Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden, mankind was separated from God's presence. Sin robbed us of innocence and made us unclean. Because He is holy and perfect, God cannot be in relationship with what is unclean. This separation broke God's heart because He loves us more than we could ever know. God immediately formed a plan for our reconciliation with Him. From the very beginning of human existence, Jesus was going to be a part of the story. God let Satan know that day what he had coming. He said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel." (Genesis 3:15) Somewhere along the line, among Eve's offspring, there would come a Savior who would forever rid Satan of his power to separate God from man. Satan would try to stop Him, but the Savior would crush his head. There's no coming back from that! Christmas marks the beginning of God's process to restore our relationship with Him through a New Covenant. The world waited thousands of years for God's promised Savior, and then, finally, He was here. The One who would forever defeat sin and death became God with us. As we enter this Advent season, focus on the fulfillment of God's first promise. Recognize that God is true to His Word, and meditate on the truth that He loves you so much that He sent His perfect Son to be born into a sinful world so that He could have a relationship with you.

Tuesday, December 3. Read Isaiah 7:14. After God first gave the promise of the Savior, He began revealing specific truth about the King who was to come through human vessels: prophets. More than 680 years before the birth of Jesus, God told the prophet Isaiah that the Savior would have a virgin mother and would be God Himself in the flesh. The accuracy of this one claim alone is miraculous, especially given how many years the world waited for the fruition of the promise. But this prophecy is only one of 108 that were fulfilled through the birth and life of Jesus. In 1958, renowned mathematics and astronomy professor Peter Stoner studied and calculated the chances of the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies. He concluded that the probability of even 8 of those 108 prophecies coming to pass is, conservatively, one in 100,000,000,000,000,000. That's one in one-hundred quadrillion. Just EIGHT out of 108! This makes Christmas one of the most significant miracles in history. As we celebrate this remarkable holiday, try wrapping your mind around the odds stacked against Jesus coming to earth as predicted. It's pretty much impossible to fathom! Our only logical response is worship—in gratitude and total awe. The Word tells us there is no limit to God's power, and these numbers are certainly proof of that. He is worthy of our wonder.

Wednesday, December 4. Genesis 17:19, Genesis 18:10-14, Genesis 21:1-7 & Luke 3:23-24. You've probably heard the proverb, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick." But did you know Jesus was born because God redeemed a long-deferred hope? In Genesis, we read that Abraham and his wife Sarah longed for a child for decades, but Sarah was unable to conceive. When Sarah was 90 years old, God appeared to Abraham and promised that Sarah would give birth to a son, and that through this child, He would establish an everlasting covenant between Him and Abraham's descendants. Sarah actually laughed when God said this, because she thought, "How could a worn-out woman like me enjoy such pleasure?" Yet Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Abraham named him "Isaac," which means "laughter," because God brought Sarah great joy and redemption through what appeared to be an impossible situation. Isaac's son was Jacob, and Jacob had 12 sons, one of whom was Judah. Out of the tribe of Judah came King David, and because Jesus' mother Mary was a descendent of David (as was His earthly father Joseph), the Savior became the fruit of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah. As God healed Sarah's body and fulfilled the desire of her heart, He planted a seed that would ultimately reconcile mankind to Himself, establishing a covenant that would last forever. Sarah's ability to give birth in her old age gives us another reason to be in awe of the miraculous story of Jesus' birth. If you are facing deferred hope today, rest assured that God has redemption for this season and will bring about a greater return than you can imagine. Though you can't see the purpose in it now, one day, you will. Hold on to God's promises! Like Sarah, you will experience that, "A longing fulfilled is a tree of life."

Thursday, December 5. Read Micah 5:2, 1 Corinthians 1:27, 2 Corinthians 12:9. Bethlehem was a small town, insignificant in comparison to bigger cities in the area. In the Message Paraphrase of Micah 5:2, Bethlehem is referred to as "the runt of the litter." Why would God choose to come to earth in such an unimportant location? Does it seem like a worthy birthplace for the King of Kings? The thing is, God has never been interested in the world's definition of greatness. Wealth, fame, popularity, power—none of these are noteworthy to God. Paul told the Corinthians, "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." What He can do in someone's life is not limited by their earthly status. If Bethlehem was "the runt of the litter," how much more glory would God receive for establishing the life of His Son there? Where Jesus' journey began did not determine what He could accomplish for the Kingdom. Isn't it the same with us?

Friday, December 6. Read Zechariah 9:9, Romans 3:10, Romans 1:17, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 5:8. In a prophecy found in Zechariah 9, God promised that the future King would come with salvation and bring His righteousness. This means that on Christmas, God brought us “His righteousness” to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. This is exactly what the world needed (and still needs). In Romans 3:10, the apostle Paul describes the sad condition of humanity: “None is righteous, no, not one.” We are all in the same situation, born with a sin nature and unable to make ourselves righteous. But in Romans 1:17, Paul says, “The righteous shall live by faith.” Christianity is not about earning righteousness, it’s about receiving the righteousness of Jesus “by faith.” It’s not about who we are, it’s about who He is. After Jesus was born, He continued to live in righteousness His entire life. He was perfect, staying close to God and following His Father’s plan without hesitation. On the cross, He made a transfer. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” When Jesus died for us, He took on all of our unrighteousness and put it to death, giving His righteousness and intimacy with God to us. Remember, God’s love for us is not based on anything we do or do not do. It’s based only on what Jesus has already done. Romans 5:8 says, “God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The Righteous One was born on Christmas to show us God’s love in the most powerful way possible, by making us righteous in His sight. Adapted from <https://www.churchofthehighlands.com>

Dec 2 Prayer: Father, I’m amazed that Your first response to our sin was a promise that it would not keep us apart forever. Thank You for choosing from the very beginning to send Jesus to make a way for us to be in relationship with You. As we approach Christmas this year, give me a deeper revelation of what You accomplished as He came into the world. Let me experience the joy You felt when Jesus was born and the fulfillment of Your promise was set in motion.

Dec 3. Prayer: Father, You are amazing. I can’t even begin to understand how You wove the story of Jesus together before He was born. I am in awe of Your infinite power and wisdom. Thank You for the miracle of Your Son. Help me never lose sight of how great You are.

Dec 4 Prayer: Father, thank You for being a God of Your Word. Just like You fulfilled Your promise to Sarah, I trust that You will fulfill Your promises to me. Thank You in advance for using the difficult seasons of my life for a greater purpose. I am honored to be a part of the work that brings You glory

Dec 5 Prayer: Father, thank You for not allowing the lowest points of my life to limit my potential. Thank You for giving divine purpose to someone as imperfect as me. I praise You for Your amazing power that carries me in moments of weakness. I know that no matter where I started, You will take me where You want me to go. Thank You, Jesus, for showing me that incredible things begin in humble places

Dec 6. Prayer: Father, You are full of amazing grace! I receive Your righteousness today by faith in Your Son, Jesus. I realize that You are pleased with me only because of what Jesus has done for me. Thank You, Jesus, for covering me. Strengthen me with the confidence that I am secure in Your Righteousness. Help me remember I haven’t earned it myself so I can serve You with humility and gratitude all my life.