

Signs of The
KINGDOM

Advent
Devotional

2021

by
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How to use this devotional

DAILY READING AND REFLECTIONS

This devotional contains a short Scripture reading and reflection questions for each day of Advent, as well as a weekly hands-on activity.

In the first two weeks of Advent, we will look at Jesus' parables and teachings on the Kingdom of God, as well as signs of the presence of God's Kingdom. In week three we will reflect on some of the imagery and prophecy around what it means for the Messiah to come. In week four we will walk through the Christmas narrative, reflecting on the reality of God coming into the world as one of us to usher in his kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is mentioned more than 80 times in the New Testament. Like any kingdom, the Kingdom of God is the realm where the king reigns. In God's kingdom, God is sovereign over all. Jesus sits on the throne forever. His kingdom never ends (Luke 1:33).

The Kingdom of God is both a future and a present reality. God is sovereign, and Jesus is now on his throne, seated at the right hand of God. Yet, we wait for the second advent, when all of creation will be redeemed. Advent is a time of preparing for the birth of the Messiah, but it is also a reminder that we are still awaiting the fulfillment of God's kingdom, when it will come in its fullness.

ROCK PAINTING – HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

Each week there is an optional hands-on activity to help you reflect on the truths of Advent.

As a visible reminder that we are still waiting for God, our rock, and our redeemer (Psalm 19:14), to complete the work he has begun, we will paint a rock for each week of Advent. This is a meaningful activity for adults, but it is also a great way to involve children in Advent devotionals. You will need four rocks per child or family member. You can use any rock from outside, or purchase a rock painting kit like this one online:

https://www.amazon.com/Rock-Painting-Outdoor-Activity-Kids/dp/B07HBDB5RC/ref=sr_1_16?keywords=rock+painting&qid=1637685827&sr=8-16

Or simply go to Amazon and search for "rock painting." You have many different options.

You can do the rock painting at any time during the week! Perhaps you'd like to do it on Sundays after church as part of your sabbath rest or on Saturdays when the whole family is home. Maybe a week night is a good time for you to sit down and reset with an activity that focuses your hands and your mind on God. Do what works for you!

Week 1

ROCK PAINTING Activity for the week...

God reigns forever, and his kingdom never ends. This week as you think about God's kingdom, you can paint your rocks with words or symbols related to the idea of a kingdom. What thoughts about a kingdom bring you comfort or hope?

Ideas for painting your rock: a crown, throne, scepter, or castle; words like "royal," "reign," "king," "ruler," "forever," etc.

READING AND REFLECTION

Sunday – November 28

Read: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like someone who planted good seed in his field. While people were sleeping, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and went away. When the stalks sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared." *Matthew 13:24-26*

Reflection:

- Do you think of yourself as good seed planted by God?
- How does the enemy plant weeds in our lives?
- In what ways do good grain and weeds grow together in our world?
- Are we always able to tell the good from the wicked?
- Remember that God is doing a good work in the lives of his children despite the weeds of life.

Monday – November 29

Read: "The servants of the landowner came and said to him, 'Master, didn't you plant good seed in your field? Then how is it that it has weeds?'"

"'An enemy has done this,' he answered." *Matthew 13:27-28a*

Reflection:

- Do you ever struggle with the existence of evil in the world? Do you want to say to God, "Didn't you make a good world?" or, "God, if you are good, how can there be evil in the world?"
- How does the master answer this question in the parable?
- Our world exists in a state of brokenness, and evil exists as a result. This is not the way God intended for things to be. Remember that when God's Kingdom comes in fullness, there will be nothing that is evil.

Tuesday – November 30

Read: “The servant said to him, ‘Do you want us to go and gather them?’

“But the landowner said, ‘No, because if you gather the weeds, you’ll pull up the wheat along with them. Let both grow side by side until the harvest. And at harvesttime I’ll say to the harvesters, ‘First gather the weeds and tie them together in bundles to be burned. But bring the wheat into my barn.’” *Matthew 13:28b-30*

- Why does the landowner not want to gather the weeds?
- How do you feel about good and evil being allowed to exist together? Does it feel fair or unfair?
- There is some challenging imagery in the parables of the kingdom, but we can also see that God shows grace by letting good and evil continue to exist side by side. God is full of grace.

Wednesday – December 1

Read: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and planted in his field. It’s the smallest of all seeds. But when it’s grown, it’s the largest of all vegetable plants. It becomes a tree so that the birds in the sky come and nest in its branches.” *Matthew 13:31-32*

Reflection:

- What does “someone” do with the mustard seed before it can grow?
- When a seed is first planted, it seems hopeless, even dead. It is gone under the soil, and we don’t know what will happen to it. But we have faith that it will grow.
- Have you experienced growth in your walk with God? How does God bring new life out of something “dead” and buried?
- How does this promise give us hope?
- God can take something tiny and hopeless, then turn it into a means of comfort and grace, a place to nest in safety.

Thursday – December 2

Read: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in a bushel of wheat flour until the yeast had worked its way through all the dough.” *Matthew 13:33*

Reflection:

- Like the mustard seed that grows into a large plant, yeast is something tiny that causes big results. A tiny bit of yeast causes a whole batch of dough to rise.
- Yeast seems insignificant at first, it can’t be distinguished from the rest of the dough, but the result is food for many people.
- In what ways can God’s Kingdom seem insignificant or hidden?
- What does God promise will happen when his Kingdom is complete, like the baking of the bread?
- In God’s Kingdom, Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:35), nourishment for all believers.

Friday – December 3

Read: “Jesus said all these things to the crowds in parables, and he spoke to them only in parables. This was to fulfill what the prophet spoke: I’ll speak in parables: I’ll declare what has been hidden since the beginning of the world.” *Matthew 13:34-35*

Reflection:

- This is a reference to Psalm 78, and points to Jesus as the promised Messiah.
- What about parables makes them good for teaching?
- How can parables help us understand the Kingdom of God better?
- Much like the mustard seed was hidden in the ground, and the yeast was hidden in the dough, Jesus is teaching truths that were hidden since the beginning of the world. Through his parables, he is bringing truth to light.

Saturday – December 4

Read: “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one very precious pearl, he went and sold all that he owned and bought it.” *Matthew 13:45-46*

Reflection:

- Is the kingdom of heaven like the pearl, or like the merchant in search of fine pearls?
- Who is the merchant?
- The Kingdom of God is not passive, it is searching for us, like a merchant searching for a fine pearl.
- At Christmas, Jesus gave up everything and came for us. You are a priceless treasure to God.

Week 2

ROCK PAINTING Activity for the week...

In parables, Jesus says the Kingdom of God is like many different things. Is there one image or parable that stands out to you the most? This week, choose an image or symbol from one of the parables to paint as a reminder of God's Kingdom. Ideas: a pearl, wheat, a fish, or bread. Jesus also says that the greatest in the kingdom must become like a little child. You may want to paint something that reminds you to be childlike, perhaps a word like "joy," "fun," "laughter," "trust," or "faith."

READING AND REFLECTION

Sunday – December 5

Read: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that people threw into the lake and gathered all kinds of fish. When it was full, they pulled it to the shore, where they sat down and put the good fish together into containers. But the bad fish they threw away. That's the way it will be at the end of the present age." *Matthew 13:47-49a*

Reflection

- What about the Kingdom of God is like a net?
- In many of these parables we see a separation between the good and the wicked. Does this give you comfort? Does it make you uncomfortable? Why?
- Why did the people pull the net to the shore?
- Take heart knowing that God's plan is good, and will be completed when the time is right.

Monday – December 6

Read: "When Jesus finished these parables, he departed. When he came to his hometown, he taught the people in their synagogue. They were surprised and said, 'Where did he get this wisdom? Where did he get the power to work miracles? Isn't he the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother named Mary? Aren't James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas his brothers? And his sisters, aren't they here with us? Where did this man get all this?' They took offense at him." *Matthew 13:53-57a*

Reflection

- Where did Jesus get his power and wisdom?
- Why did knowing Jesus' earthly family make people in his hometown doubt him?
- Does knowing that Jesus was fully human make it easier or harder to believe that he is the Messiah that will reign forever?
- In what ways do we take offense at Jesus?
- Jesus' humanity made some question him, but it is what enables him to save us.

Tuesday – December 7

Read: “Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side of the lake while he dismissed the crowds. When he sent them away, he went up onto a mountain by himself to pray. Evening came and he was alone. Meanwhile, the boat, fighting a strong headwind, was being battered by the waves and was already far away from land. Very early in the morning he came to his disciples, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified and said, “It’s a ghost!” They were so frightened they screamed. Just then Jesus spoke to them, ‘Be encouraged! It’s me. Don’t be afraid.’” *Matthew 14:22-27*

Reflection

- This story comes after Jesus miraculously feeds a crowd of over 5,000 people. Jesus has gone from being doubted in his hometown to performing astounding miracles.
- What is it that is so spectacular about walking on water? Why does this miracle often capture our imaginations?
- Why were the disciples terrified, and why did they assume they must be seeing a ghost?
- How does Jesus’ power over nature show us that this world is part of his kingdom?
- Jesus tells them to be encouraged! The power of Jesus over all of creation should cause us to feel encouraged and not afraid.

Wednesday – December 8

Read: “When they had crossed the lake, they landed at Genesaret. When the people who lived in that place recognized him, they sent word throughout that whole region, and they brought to him everyone who was sick. Then they begged him that they might just touch the edge of his clothes. Everyone who touched him was cured.” *Matthew 14:34-36*

Reflection

- How does healing show us that God’s kingdom is here?
- Who is it that receives healing? What do they have to do?
- Note that the people first had to recognize Jesus.
- Healing flows from Jesus in such a way that even the hem of his garments cures the ill. Jesus is a good king, and healing is a sign of his kingdom.

Thursday – December 9

Read: “The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus. In order to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. But he replied, ‘At evening you say, “It will be nice weather because the sky is bright red.” And in the morning, you say, “there will be bad weather today because the sky is cloudy.” You know how to make sense of the sky’s appearance. But you are unable to recognize the signs that point to what the time is.” *Matthew 16:1-3*

Reflection

- What are some examples of ways we “read signs” in a situation?
- Are we looking for signs of God’s kingdom?
- Are there ways we might be missing signs of God’s kingdom?
- Wherever healing, mercy, justice, goodness, righteousness, and faithfulness increase, these are signs that God’s kingdom is there.

Friday – December 10

Read: “Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them to the top of a very high mountain. He was transformed in front of them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.” *Matthew 17:1-2*

Reflection

- Though he is fully human, this episode of Jesus being transformed (often called the transfiguration) shows us a glimpse of his true glory.
- Do you tend to think of Jesus more as human, or as the king of glory? (Psalm 24)
- Which image of Jesus do you find more comfortable? Why do you think that is?
- How does the transformation of Jesus on the mountain give us a glimpse into God’s kingdom?
- Both the human form of Jesus and the transformed shining Jesus are his real identity. He is not more God than human, nor is he more human than God, but he is fully both. We, as fully human, are the citizens of his kingdom.

Saturday - December 11

Read: "At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' Then he called a little child over to sit among the disciples and said, 'I assure you that if you don't turn your lives around and become like this little child, you will definitely not enter the kingdom of heaven. Those who humble themselves like this little child will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.'" *Matthew 18:1-5*

Reflection

- Why do the disciples want to know who will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Do you also want to know?
- When we think of kingdoms, or countries, who are the most powerful and most important people? Does this reflect God's kingdom?
- What does Jesus say that is unexpected, and even shocking, in answer to their question?
- How do we humble ourselves to be like children?
- God's kingdom is "upside down" in its structure. What we so often seek as power and authority on earth may be what keeps us out of God's kingdom. God calls us instead to humble ourselves and live as followers of Jesus and citizens of his kingdom.

Week 3

ROCK PAINTING Activity for the week...

This week we will look at Scriptures that talk about the coming of the Messiah. Scripture tells us that the Messiah will “make straight paths.” This is a symbol of justice, bringing down those who are raised up, and raising those who are down low to meet on level paths. We’ll also see that Jesus is called “the Word,” and “a light in the darkness.” This week, paint your rocks with some of these words or images. Keep them to remind you that God’s Kingdom is perfect and just, and Jesus is bringing light into all the dark places of this world.

READING AND REFLECTION

Sunday – December 12

Read: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.” *Isaiah 9:6-7a*

Reflection

- What words are used here to describe God’s kingdom and the reign of Jesus?
- How can Jesus be both Mighty God and the Prince of Peace?
- What two things will have no end?
- The last sentence says that the Kingdom of God will be upheld with justice and righteousness forever. These are not just signs of God’s kingdom, but they are foundational. Everything will be made right.

Monday – December 13

Read: “‘Comfort, comfort my people,’ says your God. ‘Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.’ A voice of one calling: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.’” *Isaiah 40:1-5*

Reflection

- God was seeking to bring comfort to the people and to speak tenderly to them. Why do you think the people needed comfort? In what ways do you need comfort from God?
- This is a prophetic passage about the coming of John the Baptist. What will the “voice of one calling” say?
- How does that reflect what we have already learned about God’s kingdom?
- Had the glory of the Lord yet been revealed?

Tuesday – December 14

Read: “The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way, a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’

So, John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.” *Mark 1:1-5*

Reflection

- Here in the Gospel of Mark we see a reference to the Isaiah passage we read yesterday.
- What did John the Baptist preach?
- Why is repentance necessary?
- How did people respond to John the Baptist? How do you feel about repentance?
- We read many parables about the good and the wicked being separated at the final coming of the kingdom. There is no room for wickedness in a kingdom of peace and righteousness. God desires for us to enter into his kingdom, and he invites to repent and be made clean.

Wednesday – December 15

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

Reflection

- If the Word is Jesus, what does it mean that the Word was in the beginning?
- If all things were made through Jesus, what does that mean about you?
- In Jesus is the light of life, and it shines in the darkness. How have you seen the light of life shining in the darkness recently? Have you looked for it?
- Be encouraged that the darkness has not—and cannot—overcome the light. Anywhere God’s light shines, we can see his kingdom.

Thursday – December 16

Read: “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.” *Isaiah 11:1-4a*

Reflection

- This prophecy tells us that the Messiah will come from the family line of Jesse, the father of King David.
- What words describe the Messiah in this passage? What Spirit will rest on him?
- What kind of picture does this give us of Jesus as Messiah and king? Do any of these descriptors stand out to you? What do you find comforting or challenging about this passage?
- Descriptions of the Messiah and of God’s kingdom in the Old and New Testaments always show a kingdom of righteousness, a place where nothing evil will live.

Friday – December 17

Read: “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.’ Therefore, Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.”
Micah 5:2-4

Reflection

- Once again, we have a prophecy about the coming Messiah, this time with a specific place mentioned. Why do you think Jesus was born in a small place like Bethlehem?
- What does it mean that his origins are from of old, from ancient times? Re-read the John 1 passage from Wednesday.
- How will the people live under this Messiah?
- Though Jesus was born in the small town of Bethlehem, how far will his greatness reach?
- How does a Messiah born in Bethlehem relate to a seed buried in the ground, or yeast mixed into dough?
- What was unclear to the world will become clear when the light shines in the darkness. What was buried will grow. What comes from humble beginnings will reach to the ends of the earth.

Saturday – December 18

Read: “In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, ‘Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.’

“Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.’”
Luke 1:26-33

Reflection

- The angel Gabriel came to Mary at a very specific time and place. What does the angel say about Mary?
- Why do you think Mary was greatly troubled at the angel’s greeting? How would you have felt?
- What do you think Mary would have thought about her son being given a throne, and his kingdom never ending?
- Have you ever tried to place yourself in Mary’s shoes? Why is it significant that Jesus was conceived miraculously and born from a woman?

Week 4

ROCK PAINTING Activity for the week....

This week we will look at the birth narrative of Jesus. It is a reminder that God's kingdom is not far off, because God came in the flesh as one of us to live among us. Our king is not distant or disconnected from us. He has walked among us and knows what it is like to live in this world. This week paint a reminder that Jesus is fully God and is seated on the throne to reign forever; however, he is also fully human, and was born to a specific woman, in a specific town, at a specific time. Paint any symbols of the Christmas story that remind you of the humanity of Jesus. Ideas: sheep, shepherds, manger, Mary and Joseph, a baby, a star

READING AND REFLECTION

Sunday - December 19

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

"So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child." *Luke 2:1-5*

Reflection

- The prophets said that the Messiah would be a king from the line of David and would come from Bethlehem, so the lineage of Joseph and the setting of Jesus' birth is important.
- The gospel writer is making sure we know that Jesus is really the heir to the throne.
- Though Jesus was born king, what other powers were ruling on earth when he was born?
- What powers are ruling now?
- How do we live as citizens of God's kingdom while still living under earthly authorities?

Monday – December 20

Read: “While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.” *Luke 2:6-7*

Reflection

- Though we often picture the manger as being in a lonely stable, archeology of the area tells us it was likely a part of the family home. Culturally, we would expect that Mary and Joseph would have been welcomed by Joseph’s family, and though the guest room might already be full of other traveling family members, they could have stayed in the main family room, which housed a manger to hold animal food at one end and an entry area where the animals would come in at night.
- Does it change your view of Jesus if he was born surrounded by Joseph’s extended family?
- Jesus was placed in the manger for a bed. What is significant about this?
- Whether the King of Kings was born in a quiet stable or an overcrowded family home, his birth was humble and very human. He is not just God, but God in the flesh.

Tuesday – December 21

Read: “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’” *Luke 2:8-12*

Reflection

- What did the angels say to the shepherds?
- How is the birth of the Savior good news for all the people? How is it good news for you?
- A sign that the Kingdom of God has come is that a baby wrapped in cloths is lying in a manger.
- What does this sign tell us about God’s Kingdom?

Wednesday – December 22

Read: “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.’

“When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’

So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” *Luke 2:13-20*

Reflection

- In heaven Jesus’ birth was a major event, heralded by a host of angels! On earth, people made no fanfare or royal announcement. Why was there such a big contrast between how the angels saw his birth and how the world saw it at the same time?
- How can this baby be king of a world that doesn’t recognize him?
- Many signs are given to a few people, the shepherds and Mary in particular. Why was Jesus’ kingship revealed to only them?
- How does this story connect to any of the parables of the kingdom we read have read?
- God sought our salvation and came to us in the flesh. Though his identity was revealed to only a few people, his message soon spread throughout the area and, eventually, the world.

Thursday – December 23

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

Reflection

- The Magi remind us that, even though Jesus was born quietly in Bethlehem, his coming affects all people.
- At the time of Jesus’ birth, Herod had been appointed “King of the Jews” by the Roman senate. He was so afraid of being overthrown that he was murdering people to defend his title. How does Jesus being *born* king of the Jews compare to Herod?
- What is the significance of the star?
- The Magi knew this birth was so important that they left their homes and traveled a great distance. How important is the birth of Jesus to you? Does it cause you to do anything different in your life?

Friday – December 24

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

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

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” *Luke 2:22-32*

Reflection

- Simeon, though very old, had been promised he would see the Messiah and had been faithfully waiting.
- How does Simeon react to seeing the baby? What words does he use to describe Jesus?
- God’s kingdom has come in the person of Jesus. The reality of his identity as king forever is not clear to the whole world yet, but it is at least partially clear to us! He has delivered our souls from death, and welcomed us into his kingdom forever. For now, in his grace, God allows the wheat and the weeds to grow, but one day all things will be redeemed, and all wickedness will be destroyed. Then the whole world will worship him. Let us remember the work that has been set in motion this Christmas, and to whose kingdom we belong.

Saturday – December 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Peace on earth and good will towards all mankind.