



# ADVENT

*Songs of the Incarnation • 2025 • Prayer Guide*



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# INTRODUCTION

Luke includes the songs of the Incarnation in his account of the life of Jesus because they both stir up our faith in Jesus and our worship of God. As we study, meditate, and reflect on these passages, keep both of those goals in mind. The purpose of our studying these songs is to join these two purposes to the purpose of Advent: We celebrate Jesus coming to us to offer us forgiveness by his sufficient sacrifice (worship) and we wait eagerly and expectantly for Him to come back to fully and finally deal with Satan, sin, and death (faith). It's not necessary, but you'll get the most out of this resource if you keep a journal as you go through each day.



In the season of Advent, as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Messiah, we always recount this beautiful story and song of His mother Mary. "My soul magnifies the Lord," she proclaims, "my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46). Her response to this huge task of carrying the Son of God in her womb – before she's even married Joseph – is a reflection of the hope that was instilled in all of Israel through the prophet Isaiah: *"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel [ God with us ]."* (Isaiah 7:14). For Mary, she had just witnessed the fulfillment of this prophecy. God was physically stepping into humanity, as He once was in the Garden. Israel was being restored!... But there was more.

Not only was Mary witnessing the promised coming of the Lord, she probably reminded of the even wider purpose of Immanuel. *"I am the Lord; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a Light for the nations,"* (Isaiah 42:6). Not only was Immanuel coming to rescue His chosen people of Israel, but He was coming to rescue all of humanity!

For Christians today, we can read Mary's song of praise in Luke 1 with even more hope. Church, we are the generation she sang of in verse fifty! We have been given mercy in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, our Immanuel. *"But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed,"* (Isaiah 53:5). Not only do we live in the forgiveness and victory over sin and death, but we also now have been *"sealed with the promised Holy Spirit"* indwelling us (Ephesians 1:13-14), a never-seen-before closeness to God that we experience today.

**Brothers and sisters, let us consider then, how we can rejoice as Mary did that the Lord was faithful to come, is faithful to stay, and will be faithful to return.**

## WEEK 01

### DAY 02: STUDY

Read Luke 1:46-55

Is there anything new you learn about God, humanity, and the relationship between both? What does this passage reinforce about what you already know about God? How is God working to keep his promises? How does the passage call you to respond? Consider some of the specific elements of the passage, like the words “*blessed*” and “*Savior*”, as well as the phrase “as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.”

What might Mary know (from Scripture) about these words/phrases that informs her worship in this passage?

Which of the elements of this passage strike at your heart the most? Name the attributes of God’s character and being stated in this passage and try to connect each one to one specific display of that attribute; then, thank God for that. What elements of God’s character and being cause you to long for healing? How does this passage tell us about God’s Covenant Faithfulness?

Mary believed that God’s favor was enough for her, do we? What does this passage say to you about your spiritual hunger and the sources you run to to be filled? How has God shown strength and might in your life that you have neglected to praise him for? What does it mean for God to give mercy to those who fear him? Do you share with others the mercy God gives to you?

Read the following passages to better understand the author’s meaning and how our main text relates to the rest of redemptive history. As you read, consider this week’s theme of hope.

1 Samuel 2:1-10 • 2 Samuel 7:12-16 • Psalm 1:1-2, 72:17

Luke 6:20-26 • Galatians 3:23-29

# WEEK 01 | PRAY LUKE 1:46-55

## Day 03: Read

Holy Father,  
I identify with Mary's song in many ways and still struggle in others.

Her faithfulness in choosing to praise You in difficult circumstances -  
Thank You. Help me.

Her humble sacrifice of giving herself to serve You -  
Thank You. Help me.

Her example of fearfully following and longing for Your ways -  
Thank You. Help me.

I desire to walk in Mary's humble, hopeful, example and identify with King Jesus. You are full of mercy - choosing to love without condition.

Thank You. Help me.

You are mighty - powerful but gentle.  
Thank You. Help me.

You fill my life with good things; faith, mercy, hope eternal.

Thank You, Holy Father.

## Day 04: Practice

Perhaps Mary had been told - from previous generations - of the "greatness of the Lord".

Perhaps she had a glimmer of faith, of hope -

And perhaps the Lord's favor now resting on her solidified what she had been told - Mary now **knew** of the greatness of the Lord.

Mary could confidently now say, "My soul magnifies the Lord!"

Can you confidently say you magnify the Lord on a personal, soul-level?

What experiences have caused you to **know** the Lord?

What has solidified your faith, hope, trust in Him?

Remember. Rejoice.

Reflect on what is happening in your life currently.

Pray and ask for more faith to know Jesus more because of these circumstances.

## Day 05: Reflect

Write a list or say out loud the character and being attributes of God you've learned about this week. As you write or say them, reflect on what those words mean. Do more research on any that you find particularly confusing or interesting.

Is there a single word, phrase, or concept that your attention has repeatedly been drawn to this week?

Reflect on why, and write it down or share it with someone.

Scripture helps us to see God, ourselves, and one another more accurately. How has your perspective on each changed from this week's study?

Zechariah, was a righteous and blameless priest. But he questioned the message from God's Angel that his "old" barren wife would have a child—not just any child, but one who would signal a new day of rejoicing. This doubt caused him to become mute. Imagine a preacher who can't speak! He couldn't tell of his joy of his baby. He couldn't shout from the rooftops that he will have a son!

Everyone expected the baby's name would be Zech, Jr. But, Elizabeth told the people, "*He shall be called John.*" Zechariah confirmed it by writing on his tablet, which was his act of faith. The Holy Spirit restored his voice. That's where we get this song, this prophecy, from Zechariah's lips over John. Zechariah speaks – he preaches – like he has never preached before! We believe that our children are special, but this was a unique and powerful God-anointed-special calling. He would be the "*prophet of the Most High*" and would "*go before the Lord to prepare His ways.*" (Malachi 3:1) His "*success*" would be preparing the way, announcing Jesus, God's only Son, to the world. John would tell all the people of the fulfilled promises from all those old testament prophets we remember (and those we don't remember!). John will preach repentance and faith, and welcome the Messiah, God's Son, the Savior of the world, the Promised One!

John's ministry announces the ability for all people to approach God through the new High Priest, Jesus, and they can "*serve Him without fear... all our days*". Jesus's ministry gives renewal, fresh peace, and strength. The "*tender mercy of our God,*" gives salvation to His people, "*the forgiveness of their sins*". It gives promised Light in the darkness. It gives the promise of eternal peace for all people. Zechariah's Song is a Holy Spirit inspired praise and prophecy, full of light for our lives. The work of the Spirit, and those filled with the Spirit like Zechariah and John, is to shine this Light, to speak God's Word, and to point people to Christ, to prepare them to receive the Lord as Savior.

**How can you share the promise of a life that can live without fear to approach God, walk in His Light, and accept His tender mercy as His child?**

## WEEK 02

### DAY 02: STUDY

Read Luke 1:67-79

Is there anything new you learn about God, humanity, and the relationship between both? What does this passage reinforce about what you already know about God? How is God working to keep his promises? How does the passage call you to respond?

Again, consider the specific elements of the passage. What is significant about words like "redeemed", "salvation", and "rescue" being found in a poem alongside those like "house of his servant David", "holy covenant", and "oath he swore to our father Abraham"?

What does this passage reveal about the identity of Jesus?

Which of the elements of this passage strike at your heart the most? Name the attributes of God's character and being stated in this passage and try to connect each one to one specific display of that attribute; then, thank God for that. What elements of God's character and being produce faith? How does this passage tell us about God's Covenant Faithfulness?

Zechariah's prophetic song in this week's passage were some of his first words after God loosened his tongue. How does God's mercy on Zechariah teach you about God's mercy to you? How does God's continued faithfulness to his plan and promise preach the same good news to you? Consider how you might be prone to disbelieve God to keep his promises and confess these thoughts and feelings to him.

Read the following passages to better understand the author's meaning and how our main text relates to the rest of redemptive history. As you read, consider this week's theme of promise.

Genesis 22:15-18 • 2 Samuel 7:12-16  
Isaiah 40:1-5 • Joel 2:25-32 • Hebrews 9:11-15

# WEEK 02 | PRAY LUKE 1:67-79

## Day 03: Read

Lord, if it was not for you, I would still be sitting in the darkness of my sin and, more than likely, being content in it. I would not know what true light is. I would not know peace. Apart from you, I have no salvation. But Lord, in your kindness and mercy, you made a way for us to see light and receive forgiveness of sins through your Son. Thank you for your messenger, John, who you raised up to prepare the way for this salvation. In humility, he saw himself as nothing so that Jesus would be everything. Would you give us this same heart posture? Would you put praises on our lips, like Zechariah, that proclaim the joy to be had in receiving this fulfilled promise of deliverance. And God, would you guard us by the Holy Spirit—the same power that released Zechariah’s mouth to speak again—from falling back into darkness. Would the salvation you bring change our hearts to desire you more and more. Less of me and more of you, Father. Would you, by your Spirit, lead me in this way. Amen.

## Day 04: Practice

What promises of God that show up in Zechariah’s prophecy have implications for your life and the church’s life today?

Is there a single word, phrase, or concept that your attention has repeatedly been drawn to this week? Reflect on why, and write it down or share it with someone. Scripture helps us to see God, ourselves, and one another more accurately. How has your perspective on each changed from this week’s study?

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## Day 05: Reflect

What promises of God that show up in Zechariah’s prophecy have implications for your life and the church’s life today?

Is there a single word, phrase, or concept that your attention has repeatedly been drawn to this week? Reflect on why, and write it down or share it with someone. Scripture helps us to see God, ourselves, and one another more accurately. How has your perspective on each changed from this week’s study?

We all love being part of inside jokes, don't we? My wife and I have more of them than I can count. For instance, when a song comes on that says the word "smile," I cannot help but impulsively look at her with a weird grimace. To the onlooker crossing our path it looks odd (and maybe even you feel the same as you read this), but for us there is no mystery as to what's going on! I am sure you have your own with your friends and family.

The incarnation of Jesus is by no means an inside joke! But like an inside joke, only a few at the time really knew the weight of what was happening when Jesus was born. The shepherds and the wisemen had an idea. John the Baptist knew even in Elizabeth's womb. And of course, Mary and Joseph felt the weight. But then you have two others who knew but might be a little more unassuming: a man named Simeon and Anna the prophetess.

What exactly did they know?

Simeon was a righteous and devout man. And as he greets baby Jesus and his parents in the temple complex, he could barely contain his excitement. He was not only grateful to see the "Lord's Christ," but his gratitude spilled into a prophetic song that proclaimed what this baby came to do:

*"for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."*

*Luke 2:30-32*

Simeon, and similarly Anna (2:36-38), knew Jesus came to bring salvation to ALL people. The weight of Jesus' birth would soon be felt by everyone! As Simeon warned Mary, some will accept with joy and others will reject with a passion (2:33-35). Whether we realize it or not, his birth demands from us this kind of decision. Being neutral is just rejection masked with ambiguity.

What we learn from this song of gratitude is for those who believe in Jesus, we are no longer left out of an "inside joke", blinded from reality. Reality is that we need a Savior and God being rich in mercy sent his Son—King Jesus—to save us.

**And just like Simeon and Anna got to worship their King, one day we too will get to join them in praising Him forever.**

## WEEK 03

### Day 02: Study

Read Luke 2:22-38

Is there anything new you learn about God, humanity, and the relationship between both? What does this passage reinforce about what you already know about God? How is God working to keep his promises? How does the passage call you to respond? Does this passage remind you of any other parts of Scripture? Simeon's song uses a lot of sight language - Why might that be?

Which of the elements of this passage strike at your heart the most? Name the attributes of God's character and being stated in this passage and try to connect each one to one specific display of that attribute; then, thank God for that. What does this passage say about God's salvation?

Read the following passages to better understand the author's meaning and how our main text relates to the rest of redemptive history. As you read, consider this week's theme of salvation.

Leviticus 12:2-8 • Isaiah 52:9-10  
Isaiah 8:14 • Isaiah 9:1-2  
1 Peter 2:7-8

God's promise of salvation has always included the nations, even those that rebelled against him and worked to destroy his people. How does this concept and passage confront the way that you relate to people who might be your natural enemies? How does it confront the way that you respond to conflict?

## WEEK 03 | PRAY LUKE 2:22-38

### Day 03: Read

Father, you sent your son Jesus, declared through prophecy and fulfilled entirely. You named Him before his face was shown. You entrusted Him to Mary's womb and breast and Joseph's arms. Lord, you through Moses established the law that He and all shall be yours. Thank you, Lord, for the dedication and sacrifice of Christ.

Through prophetic word and deed Lord you, by the Holy Spirit, called Simeon and Anna to see with their human eyes the Promised One, the promised Son, the one called Jesus. Lord, you brought glory to yourself as Simeon and Anna saw the years of waiting come to be fulfilled in the birth of Christ. May we await the King once more as Simeon and Anna once did, with hopeful anticipation and expectation that you will fulfill your promises to your people.

Lord, thank you for sending your Spirit to minister to us. May the Spirit continue to reveal your Word to us. May you continue to amaze through the revelation of prophecy as Mary and Joseph were amazed. Lord, allow your ways to always amaze us.

Amen

### Day 04: Practice

Attempt to imagine a decades old prophecy being fulfilled in your life, sent to you through the Holy Spirit. This is the wonder Simeon and Anna awaited the greater part of their lives, and finally received at Christ's birth. With this in mind, pray in gratitude that the Lord fulfilled the prophecy of His Son and brought indescribable joy and a resurgence of hope to His people. Ask the Lord to flood your mind and heart with this sort of joy and hope in Christ—He was, He is, He is to come.

Lord, give us trust like we see in Luke 22. Give us fulfillment in your Spirit-sent prophecies. Give us more of you, Lord, and allow us to be amazed by you and what you've done and will do.

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### Day 05: Reflect

How has God blessed you by exposing the truth, providing safety in a dark world, and redeeming and restoring what was lost? Is there a single word, phrase, or concept that your attention has repeatedly been drawn to this week? Reflect on why, and write it down or share it with someone. Scripture helps us to see God, ourselves, and one another more accurately. How has your perspective on each changed from this week's study?

In my childhood home, scripture was only ever read at Christmas... this scripture. Luke's account of Jesus' birth is no doubt the most pivotal, most read verses in the Bible. Jesus WAS in Genesis, prophesied plenty in the Old Testament, and here in Luke's account... born. That night, God's goodness, His mercy, His faithfulness, His Good News was all wrapped up in a swaddled baby. What took place that night, that Holy night, should stir-up in us an awe, knowing God used the lowliest to announce Glorious, and they (the shepherds) were instantly and completely changed. They went quickly, they witnessed, they proclaimed, and they worshiped! What testimonies! What examples to us!

But Luke added something very interesting about Mary (no doubt she told Luke this herself) she "pondered" these things in her heart. Mary pondered, and treasured (like mothers do) all the things the shepherds had experienced that night, and you can only imagine how everything she had been told from God (before she was even pregnant) flooded her emotions. Mary must have been utterly overwhelmed. Mary had an enormous amount to ponder that night, and many nights to come.

Jesus, the much anticipated Messiah, born in a stinky, dirty stable to teenagers, announced around town by the lowest of men, born to save the World! He lived a simple life, until it wasn't. His appointed time came, and then a merciless, horrific death... then RESURRECTED! Glory! Prophesied, purposed, planned before time. Witnessed, worshiped, followed, sought, believed. Hated, pursued, tortured, crucified...LIVES!

All these things need pondering in our hearts as well, because this history continues, it's not over, so we wait, we live expectantly.

Read these verses today not like a story you've read every Christmas, but in grateful anticipation, because that night in a field, in a stable, weren't just shepherds, not just young, scared parents, they were witnesses, witnesses!

**This is good news of great joy for you believer! Our Savior came, He fulfilled, He will return! Glory to God in the Highest!**

## WEEK 04

### DAY 02: STUDY

Read Luke 2:8-20

Is there anything new you learn about God, humanity, and the relationship between both? What does this passage reinforce about what you already know about God? How is God working to keep his promises? How does the passage call you to respond?

How many ironic parts of this passage can you find (for example: savior of the world laying in a manger)? What other Scriptures share similar images? What is meant by the word “sign” in verse twelve?

Which of the elements of this passage strike at your heart the most?

Name the attributes of God’s character and being stated in this passage and try to connect each one to one specific display of that attribute; then, thank God for that. What does this passage say about God’s glory? What was it that stirred the shepherds to glorify God? What does this passage communicate about God being worthy of worship?

Jesus tells a parable in Luke 14:7-11 that confronts our tendency to want glory for ourselves rather than offer it to God. In what ways do you need God to humble you so that you can give God glory regardless of your status or circumstances? In what ways do you steal glory from God by doing good things in order to feel better about yourself? Ask God to help you see yourself more clearly.

Read the following passages to better understand the author’s meaning and how our main text relates to the rest of redemptive history. As you read, consider this week’s theme of glory.

2 Kings 6:8-17 • Isaiah 7:14  
Mark 9:2-8 • Acts 7:54-60  
2 Corinthians 3:7-11,18

# WEEK 04 | PRAY LUKE 2:8-20

## Day 03: Read

Father, I often ignore or look down on people the same way the shepherds of Jesus' time were made to be outsiders of their communities. Forgive me for showing partiality and valuing people based on my opinion, rather than the fact that they carry your image. It's incredible that you would choose to reveal yourself first and most gloriously the lowly and outcast. In your love, wisdom, and omniscience. You see who we really are inside and still choose to love us.

God, you also gave the shepherds faith to respond to this glorious proclamation. I tend to doubt the gift of faith you've given me and explain away miracles you've done right before my eyes. Please, forgive me.

Holy Spirit, please continue to do the work of sanctification in me so that I would grow in faith that produces action. Please continue to grow my affections and desire for Jesus that leads me to worship privately and publicly. Please, God, bear in me and this church the fruit of good works, spiritual maturity, and gifts of the Spirit. Father, you have forgiven us of our rebellion. Jesus, you have washed us of the poison of sin. Spirit, you have kept us until now and you will not let us go.

Glory to the Father! Glory to the Son! Glory to the Holy Spirit!  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever! Amen!

## Day 04: Practice

Praying Scripture is best done after reading a few times, meditating, and taking notes. Ultimately, your prayer will seem like you're restating the Scripture's meaning but in your own words and from your own point of view. Here are some helpful thoughts: When you see elements of God's character, praise him. When you see God's promises, thank him and ask him to fulfill them. If you notice themes of salvation, deliverance, forgiveness, justification, etc. emphasize that in your prayer. Confess sin, repent, and express humility.

## Day 05: Reflect

These verses demonstrate how God's ways are not our ways. He worked outside our preconceived boxes and ideologies as the most important day in history unfolded. I loved how the angel proclaimed that this news is for "all of us"...how life changing is that? We can take from this passage that encountering Jesus requires an action, a response. How has the "good news" of Jesus made your life a life set apart? Marinate in these verses and ask God to show you something you've never seen before in them. He will.

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