



Week 4 Reading Plan

December 18- December 23, 2023

December 18	1 Samuel 2:1-10
December 19	Luke 1:5-38
December 20	Luke 1:46-56, 67-80
December 21	Psalm 113
December 22	Psalm 98
December 23	Luke 6:17-26

3 Things to Look For in this Weeks Reading...

- How does God display his care for the lowly and weak?
- Notice the significance of songs when people respond to God's victory.
- Do these songs line up with, or challenge, your thoughts about the meaning of Christmas?

December 18th

***Look For:** Hannah was unable to have children, and this made her life very hard for her. She prayed earnestly that God would give her a son, and that if he did, she would give him to God. God granted her request, and her son became the prophet Samuel. Like Mary, God gave Hannah a miraculous birth. Remember Hannah's song this week, and look for similarities with the rest of this week's readings.*

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Hannah's Prayer

¹And Hannah prayed and said,

“My heart exults in the Lord;

my horn is exalted in the Lord.

My mouth derides my enemies,

because I rejoice in your salvation.

² “There is none holy like the Lord:

for there is none besides you;

there is no rock like our God.

³Talk no more so very proudly,

let not arrogance come from your mouth;

for the Lord is a God of knowledge,

and by him actions are weighed.

⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken,

but the feeble bind on strength.

⁵Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,

but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.

The barren has borne seven,

but she who has many children is forlorn.

6 The Lord kills and brings to life;

he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;

he brings low and he exalts.

8 He raises up the poor from the dust;

he lifts the needy from the ash heap

to make them sit with princes

and inherit a seat of honor.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,

and on them he has set the world.

9 "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,

but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,

for not by might shall a man prevail.

10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;

against them he will thunder in heaven.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;

he will give strength to his king

December 19th

Look For: How is the announcement of John's birth similar to the announcement of Jesus' birth?

Luke 1:5-38

Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

⁸Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

¹⁸And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." ²¹And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²²And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. ²³And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, ²⁵“Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

December 20th

Look For: How are these songs similar to Hannah's song from yesterday's reading?

Luke 1:46-56

Mary's Song of Praise: The Magnificat

46And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

50 And his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

51 He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones

and exalted those of humble estate;

53 he has filled the hungry with good things,

and the rich he has sent away empty.

54 He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

55 as he spoke to our fathers,

to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

Luke 1:67-80

Zechariah's Prophecy

67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has visited and redeemed his people

69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us

in the house of his servant David,

70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

71 that we should be saved from our enemies

and from the hand of all who hate us;

72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers

and to remember his holy covenant,

73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us

74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,

might serve him without fear,

75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people

in the forgiveness of their sins,

78 because of the tender mercy of our God,

whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace."

80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

December 21st

Look For: How is this Psalm similar to the songs of Hannah, Zechariah, and Mary?

Psalm 113

Who Is like the Lord Our God?

1 Praise the Lord!

Praise, O servants of the Lord,

praise the name of the Lord!

2 Blessed be the name of the Lord

from this time forth and forevermore!

3 From the rising of the sun to its setting,

the name of the Lord is to be praised!

4 The Lord is high above all nations,

and his glory above the heavens!

5 Who is like the Lord our God,

who is seated on high,

6 who looks far down

on the heavens and the earth?

7 He raises the poor from the dust

and lifts the needy from the ash heap,

8 to make them sit with princes,

with the princes of his people.

9 He gives the barren woman a home,

making her the joyous mother of children.

Praise the Lord!

December 22nd

Look For: How does this Psalm remind you of Mary's song?

Psalm 98

Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord

A Psalm.

¹Oh sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things!

His right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.

²The Lord has made known his salvation;
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

³He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

⁴ Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

⁵Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!

⁶With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!

⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who dwell in it!

⁸Let the rivers clap their hands;

let the hills sing for joy together

9before the Lord, for he comes

to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness,

and the peoples with equity.

December 23rd

Look For: How do Jesus' words and actions in this passage remind you of what Mary sang when his birth was announced?

Luke 6:17-26

Jesus Ministers to a Great Multitude

17And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, 18who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. 19And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

The Beatitudes

20And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

Jesus Pronounces Woes

24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

25 “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.
