



WHO IS JESUS?

ADVENT DEVOTIONS FROM BUCK RUN

WHO IS JESUS?

Advent is a season where we remember the incarnation of Jesus and look forward to his eventual return. The four gospel narratives of the Bible describe Jesus and his coming in a number of ways. This advent season, Buck Run is going to explore these descriptions together, and grow in our understanding of who Jesus is and what makes his birth so important.

Pastors and members of our church have written nine devotions for the weeks leading up to Christmas Day. Each devotion is accompanied by reflection questions and a song from our Advent Playlist. We have also produced a Parent's Guide for each devotion that includes discussion questions for kids and students, along with weekly video lessons on our Virtual Sunday School Playlist.

We would encourage you to set aside a specific time, three days each week to sit down with everyone in your household. Read the Scripture passages and the devotion, consider the reflection questions and sing the songs. Whether you are single, married, or have children in your home, we hope these devotions equip you to worship Jesus this Christmas season.

WEEK 1

King Jesus	Luke 1:26-38
Son of the Most High	Luke 1:32, 35
Son of David	Luke 1:32, Matthew 1:20-21

WEEK 2

Savior	Luke 2:8-20, Matthew 1:21
Salvation of All Nations	Luke 2:22-33
God's Revelation	John 1

WEEK 3

Ruling Shepherd	Matthew 2:1-12
Promised Messiah	Matthew 1, 2
Immanuel, God with Us	Matthew 1:20-24

ADVENT WORSHIP PLAYLIST





WEEK ONE



WHO IS JESUS?

READ LUKE 1:26-38

In this world, kings and kingdoms come and go. History tells us grand stories of kings and rulers like David, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar. Each rose to power and enjoyed great success before reaching the end of their life.

In Luke 1, the angel Gabriel promises a king and a kingdom that are unlike any the world has ever seen. He promises a king who will sit on the throne of David. But unlike David, this king will reign forever. Unlike the kingdom of Israel, his kingdom will never end. Gabriel promises a king who will not meet the same end as the great kings of human history. Jesus would be a king who would live forever and sit on his throne for eternity.

The rest of the New Testament confirms this promise. Jesus spends his earthly ministry proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. In the book of Acts, after his resurrection, Jesus speaks to the apostles about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3) and then they go out and tell the world about that kingdom (Acts 8:12, 14:22, 19:8, etc.). In Hebrews 1, the eternal kingship of Jesus is confirmed: "But of the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.'"

The baby boy who would be born to a virgin in Bethlehem would be the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He is the king to whom we owe allegiance today. When earthly kingdoms and rulers come and go, King Jesus remains on his throne. This should give hope to those he welcomes into his kingdom, and confidence to those who submit to his Lordship.

OTHER BIBLE VERSES ABOUT KING JESUS:

Isaiah 6:1-4; Matthew 2:1-12; John 18:33-37

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆How would you describe Jesus to someone who has never heard of him?
- ◆What in your life looks different because you submit to King Jesus?
- ◆How does the fact that Jesus is King affect your attitude toward current events?

SONG

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - How many American presidents can you name? What do they all have in common?

Every American president, and every human ruler that ever existed has seen their rule come to an end. No one can be president forever. Not even the most powerful kings in history could stay king forever. Except for King Jesus! Jesus was King in Bible times, he is still King, and he always will be King.

QUESTION 2 - If Jesus is the King, what does that make people like you and me?

We are subjects of King Jesus, made to serve him and to tell other people how great he is. Jesus is a good King who loves his people. His kingdom is a place where people are joyful because his way of ruling is always good.

QUESTION 3 - How is Jesus different than other kings and rulers in the world?

Jesus didn't look much like an earthly king when he was on earth. He was a teacher who was the humble son of a carpenter. Jesus said he came to earth to serve people and to give his life to save them. Once he had saved his people, Jesus ascended to the throne of God as the King. Jesus will always stay King. No one will ever take him off the throne. That means we can always trust that the Good King is in charge.

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - Who is the most unstoppable human king or ruler that you've ever heard of?

Even the greatest rulers like King David, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar eventually died and lost their kingdom. Every American president, every Roman Emperor, and every human ruler that ever existed has seen their rule come to an end. No one can stay on top forever. Except for King Jesus! Jesus was King in Bible times, he is still King, and he always will be King.

QUESTION 2 - If Jesus is the King, how does that affect the way you live your life?

If Jesus is King, then he calls the shots. That means that our lives ought to be lived according to his plan. We are subjects of King Jesus, made to serve him and to tell other people how great he is. It also gives a great joy and confidence in this life knowing that while we may have imperfect leaders in this life, we ultimately serve the Good King who loves us.

QUESTION 3 - What is the significance of the humility of Jesus' earthly life?

Jesus didn't look much like an earthly king when he was on earth. He was a teacher who was the humble son of a carpenter. Jesus said he came to earth to serve people and to give his life to save them. Once he had saved his people, Jesus ascended to the throne of God as the King. By humbling himself to the point of death on a cross, Jesus won a people to enjoy His kingdom forever.

READ LUKE 1:32, 35

Before sin even entered the world, God made a way for mankind to be saved. In Scripture, we see thousands of years of anticipation and waiting for the Savior, Jesus. The waiting was over when Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she had found favor with God and that she would conceive a baby. This baby was not like other babies, whose fathers were sinful and separated from God.

Gabriel said this baby would be great and would be called the Son of the Most High. The eternal Son of God was taking on flesh in Mary's womb. This child could live pleasing to God because he was the holy Son of God. He could save mankind because he became human like the rest of us. First Corinthians 15:21 says, "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead."

God did not send His Son for us to be silent about this gift of mercy and grace. "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!" Write a prayer of gratitude and praise for the wonderful gift our Heavenly Father has given us. Read the prayer out loud. He is listening.

OTHER BIBLE VERSES ABOUT JESUS AS THE SON OF THE MOST HIGH:

Isaiah 9:6-7; Mark 5:7; John 3:16; Revelation 4:11

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

◆ Why is it so important that our Savior was God's Son?

◆ What adjectives other than "Great" would you use, although none would offer sufficient praise, to describe Jesus?

◆ Think of an earthly gift you have given or received with great excitement. Meditate on how our Savior's birth, life and atonement for our sins are the greatest gifts we will ever receive.

SONG:

Silent Night

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - Who is the strongest person you know? What makes them strong? How is that person similar or different from God?

QUESTION 2 - Why is it a really good thing that God is Most High? Will God ever fail us? Does God always do what is right?

QUESTION 3 - Imagine you are the son of a King. Would you want to leave you palace to save those who disobey your Father? What does that tell us about what Christ did for us?

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - What are some qualities that you share with your parents?

Most of us share physical qualities with our parents, but we also tend to learn behavior, attitudes, and character from our parents. Learning the character and qualities of a son can teach us things about his father, and vice-versa. The description of Jesus as the Son of the Most High means that his behavior, attitudes, and character teach us about God the Father. In fact, Jesus would say that those who have seen him have seen the Father.

QUESTION 2 - What does Jesus being the Son of the Most High teach us about who he is?

Jesus is not just another human being. Some people have tried to describe Jesus as a regular human, born to an earthly father and mother. They say he was simply a good teacher and nothing more. But the Bible teaches us the deity of Jesus. He was not formed in Mary's womb like any other baby that came from a human father. He was placed in Mary's womb by God the Father Himself. Jesus is truly a man, but simultaneously truly God.

QUESTION 3 - Why is it so important that Jesus was the Son of the Most High and not just another human?

All of humanity is born with the sinful nature of their ancestors, Adam and Eve. Because of this, none of us can be the perfect Savior that the world needs. But Jesus, truly human, could identify with our weakness and humanity while living a life of perfection, being truly God. Because He was the only Son sent from the Father, He could live the life we could never live, and pay the penalty for our sins on the cross.

READ LUKE 1:32-33

“He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” (2 Samuel 7:13) The incarnation of Christ fulfilled many different prophecies about the Messiah: where he would be born, where he would grow up, the content of his preaching, and even how he would die. He was promised to be the seed of the woman, the offspring of Abraham, the prophet like Moses, and the new Joshua who would give rest to his people. No Messianic title, however, is more significant or more meaningful than “Son of David.”

When King David wanted to build a Temple for the Lord, God denied him that privilege, but promised that his son would do it instead. As God described all that the son of David would do, however, it becomes obvious to the reader that Solomon could not fulfill everything that God said the Son of David would do. Part of God’s promise is that David’s house and kingdom would last forever (2 Samuel 7:16), yet the Old Testament tells how eventually Israel was conquered by Babylon and there was no king after the exile.

The dissolution of Israel and the destruction of David’s throne is God’s way of making us gasp and wonder if God has failed to fulfill His promise. And that is precisely why Jesus must be a descendant, a Son of David, and why both Matthew and Luke take the time to recount the genealogy of Jesus, so we know that He is a royal descendant. He is the only One who can truly fulfill God’s promise to His people. He is the One who can build a lasting Temple of His people. He is the only One who can reign and rule in righteousness forever.

OTHER BIBLE VERSES ABOUT JESUS AS THE SON OF DAVID:

Matthew 1:1, 21:9; John 7:42; Romans 1:3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- ◇Why is it so important that Jesus was a descendant of David?
- ◇How does it make you feel to know that Jesus will sit on His throne forever?
- ◇How has God fulfilled His promises in your life in ways other than you expected?

SONG:

Son of David - Adrian Mathenia

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - What is a promise? Can you remember a time someone made a promise to you but did not do what they said? The things that God promised ALWAYS come true. Does that mean we can trust Him? Why?

QUESTION 2 - How long is forever? When did it begin? Or end? What does it mean that Christ will reign forever?

QUESTION 3 - What is the biggest building you have ever seen? The strongest? What is it made of? Can it be knocked down? Where do you feel safe? How is God like a safe "refuge" for us?

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - Do you have any ancestors that you admire, who you are proud to be descended from? Although Jesus was the Son of God, born to a virgin, his earthly heritage was very significant. King David was a hero of the Jewish nation's history and there were prophecies that a descendant of David would reestablish his kingdom forever. In addition to all of this, genealogies and the history of families were far more important to people in this time. It is very significant that Jesus was born into this important genealogy.

QUESTION 2 - How does the unexpected history of the fall of Israel serve to show God's glory as a God who keeps His promises?

God promised David that his Son would establish his throne forever. But in a few generations, the nation of Israel was split and was conquered not long after. The people of God were carried away into captivity by nations that did not know God. This complicated history makes it all the more amazing when God uses a descendant of David to save people from all over the world and to set up a kingdom with authority over all things. When mankind had no idea what was happening, God was working all of it to fulfill His promises.

QUESTION 3 - How has God fulfilled His promises in your life in ways other than you expected? The Bible is full of promises for those who believe in Jesus. He promises our ultimate salvation. He promises to never leave us or forsake us. He promises to always provide and work all things together for the good of those who love Him. Sometimes God works in ways that we would not have expected, but He never ceases to fulfill His promises.



WEEK TWO



WHO IS JESUS?

READ LUKE 2:8-20 AND MATTHEW 1:21

The Bible gives us multiple characteristics of and titles for Jesus Christ. One of these titles, Savior, seems simple and easily understood. But this description addresses something that we don't like to believe: we need saving.

We like to think we are capable, independent, and resourceful people. But there is only so much we can save ourselves from. Maybe you can change a tire on your car when it suddenly goes flat. Maybe you have gotten yourself out of a tricky situation or solved a problem by yourself. This sense of "saving ourselves" is surely satisfying.

But have you ever successfully saved yourself from your sin? Have you ever stopped sinning altogether simply because you decided you wanted to? Romans 3:23 tells us that sin is in our nature. It is impossible for us to save ourselves from it. And so, we see that we all need a Savior - someone outside of ourselves.

In the New Testament, we are told this salvation is through Jesus - the perfect, sinless human Son of God, who chose to sacrifice his life in obedience to God his Father, and in fulfillment of scriptures like Genesis 3:15, where we see the first promise of a Savior. Matthew 1:21 shows us that God sent Jesus to save his people from their sins. Luke 19:10 recounts Jesus explaining this truth about himself, saying he came "To seek and save the lost." Jesus' obedience and willingness to be our Savior gives us the opportunity to dwell with him in Heaven forever.

We all need saving. Perhaps there are things you can save yourself from, but sin is not one of them. Jesus came as the Savior of the world. He longs to be your Savior. Are you eager to find the One the Scriptures have told us about? Make haste! The Savior of the world has come.

OTHER BIBLE VERSES ABOUT JESUS AS SAVIOR:

John 4:42; Acts 5:31; Philippians 3:20; 2 Peter 3:18

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

◆Have you recognized Jesus as the Savior that you need?

◆Luke describes the shepherd going to find Jesus "with haste" (Luke 2:16). Is this how you seek your Savior? Or do you make excuses and try to fix things yourself?

◆Luke 2:18 describes the shepherds sharing the news about Jesus as soon as they could. Are you eager to tell others of the opportunity they have to be saved?

SONG:

He Who Is Mighty - Sovereign Grace Music

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - What color are your eyes? Can you change your eye color? We might be able to temporarily mask the color with contacts but we cannot change our eye color. In the same way, sin is a defining characteristic of who we are. Even though we may be able to cover up our sin temporarily we cannot stop sinning.

QUESTION 2 - What is sin? What are some ways that you sin?

"Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world He created, not being or doing what He requires in His law."
(New City Catechism #16)

QUESTION 3 - What does it mean to be saved? Why do we need God to save us? How does He save us?

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - Do you feel like you need to be saved? Why can it be difficult to feel this need sometimes? We all like to believe that we have our lives under control. We like to think that we are good enough people that God will let us into heaven based on the way we have lived our lives. The problem with this is that the Bible teaches that none of us are good enough on our own. We are actually in desperate need of a Savior. This might hurt our self-esteem and not feel great to hear, but it is a truth that is necessary for our salvation.

QUESTION 2 - Have you turned to Jesus as your only hope for your salvation? If so, what does that mean? Jesus says that no one comes to the Father except through Him. If you are putting your hope in anyone or anything else, it will not ultimately pay off. But we don't have to live hopeless. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. He bore the weight of sin and God's judgement on the cross for us so that we could have His perfection and life. For those who put their faith in Jesus, He has made a way to eternal life.

QUESTION 3 - If Jesus is our only hope for salvation, how should that change the way Christians live our lives? If we know the only thing that can save people from an eternity of suffering, we have to do whatever we can to let other people know about it. We are witnesses of the gospel of Jesus and our lives should be lived in a way that shows His gospel to others. There are billions of people around the world who have never heard this good news that we can be saved through Jesus. We have to go and tell them.

READ LUKE 2:22-33

As an elderly Simeon scooped up the child, Jesus, into his tired arms, his heart was flooded with a rush of gratitude, peace, and a passion for the lost. Simeon's affection for the Christ was the object of peace in his spirit, and the source of his zeal for the salvation of all nations. In this beautiful interaction between an aging saint and the Savior of the world we see an intersection of the Old and New Testaments as Simeon holds the means of our salvation in his hands.

The way the Scriptures describe the very reason for Joseph and Mary bringing Jesus to the Temple signals the exclusivity of salvation to this point. There were specific processes, procedures, and requirements of the law that brought the baby Savior to the temple. In a beautiful irony, these faithful Jewish parents brought their young son and offered sacrifices for him: the one who would ultimately satisfy the wrath of God, in a final and complete Sacrifice—one that would be for Jew and Gentile alike.

For generations the Lord had been silent and the people of God had been looking for the Sent One, just as Simeon had. In this little baby, God was fulfilling that far back promise, revealed now as the "glory to your people Israel." God had kept his word to Simeon and he was revealing the Word to us in keeping his promise from long ago. Jesus was at the Temple for his purification but He had come to earth for ours—The salvation of All Nations.

And who would have dreamed or ever foreseen
That we could hold God in our hands?
The Giver of Life is born in the night
Revealing God's glorious plan to save the world

"Who Would Have Dreamed"
Sovereign Grace Music

Other Bible Verses about Jesus as Salvation of All Nations:
Genesis 12:1-3; Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8

Reflection Questions:

- ◆How should your affection for Christ make you feel about the nations of the world?
- ◆How does it make you feel to know that Jesus won salvation for people from all nations?
- ◆How is God calling you to contribute to the spreading of the gospel to those around the world who have never heard it?

SONG:
Go Tell It on the Mountain

PARENT'S GUIDE

SALVATION OF ALL NATIONS

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - Have you ever had really exciting news that you wanted to tell? How did that feel? How is the birth of Christ the best news we have every heard?

QUESTION 2 - The Bible tells us that people from all parts of the world will be apart of God's forever family. Why is that a really, really good thing? How can people all over the world know and trust in God?

QUESTION 3 - Who do you need to share the good news of Jesus Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection to? Make a plan as a family of how you can share the Gospel with others this Christmas season.

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - How does loving Jesus make you care about the lost people of the world? When we love people, it tends to make us care about the things that they care about. Jesus loved the lost people of the world so much that he became a man and died for them. If Jesus cared about lost people so much, one of our deepest desires should be to see lost people saved. After all, each of us was a lost person that Jesus cared about.

QUESTION 2 - What does Simeon mean when he says Jesus is a "light of revelation to the Gentiles?" In the Old Testament, God chose the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as His chosen people. While God did reveal Himself to some people outside of that genealogy, His pattern was to reveal Himself only to His chosen people, Israel. But His purpose in choosing the people of Israel was ultimately to bless all nations. Jesus was the Savior who came from Israel to reveal God's salvation to the whole world.

QUESTION 3 - How is God calling you to contribute to the spreading of the gospel to those around the world who have never heard it? Every person has a part to play in God's plan to reveal Himself to all nations. Whether you are called to go yourself or to send others, you are called to advance that mission. Consider some ways that you may be able to contribute to this mission.

READ JOHN 1:1-18

Have you ever had to wait for a big secret to be “revealed?” Often the “planner” and attendees of a surprise party wait with great anticipation for the recipient to walk into the room to be met with the squeals of delight as the surprise is revealed and the celebration commenced.

Jesus is the revelation of the intentional “planning” of God throughout eternity, as foretold in the Old Testament, and as recounted in the New Testament. Jesus is the revelation of God Himself to all of us.

The Trinity – God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit - existed before creation; before time, matter and space were spoken into existence. But have you ever considered that the Word of God also existed before creation? I Peter 1:23 says the Word of God is “living and enduring.”

This “Word” – both Jesus and the inspired scriptures – reveals God. Jesus and the Bible make known His story, His character and attributes, His plans and purposes, His holiness and desire to have a relationship with us despite the sin that separates us. Amazingly, God has revealed His glory to us in both the flesh He placed on Jesus and the Word He graciously breathed-out. (II Timothy 3:16)

Hebrews 1:3 states: “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.” Jesus himself said: “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9b)

Through Jesus’ birth, God wonderfully allows us to know Him. All of God’s magnificent attributes and plans were wrapped up, delivered and displayed in that precious baby boy. What a gift as we come to Him in faith, salvation, praise and worship.

And the best part? He has already revealed much of the secret to us! We can intimately know God by reading His Word and getting to know His Son.

OTHER BIBLE VERSES ABOUT JESUS AS GOD’S REVELATION:

Isaiah 40:8, 1 Peter 1:25, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 1:3, John 14:9

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆How eager are you to open the gracious gift of the Word of God to get to know God more and more?
- ◆Do you read the Word as just another task or do you relish your time getting to know and understand God and His plans and purposes in your life?
- ◆Name a few characteristics and attributes of Jesus that reflect/reveal God the Father.
- ◆What do your words reveal about you?

SONG

King of Kings - Hillsong

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - What do you like to do with your friends? How do you make a new friend? Spend time with them? Learn about their likes/dislikes?

QUESTION 2 - How can we learn and know who God is? What do His words - the Bible - tell us about Him?

QUESTION 3 - Why is it important that we read and know the Bible? Are there people in your life that help you learn the Bible? How do you show that the Bible is important to you? Read Psalm 119:11. How can you hide God's Word in your heart?

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - Why do you think God would use the term "The Word of God" to describe Jesus in John 1? Throughout the Bible we see that God uses words to both reveal more about Himself and to powerfully accomplish His purposes. When Jesus came to the world, He was the perfect revelation of God Himself. He was able to say things like, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." He was also God's powerful work of salvation for His people. So like the words of God proceed from His mouth in power and revelation, Jesus came into the world in power, revealing God and His salvation.

QUESTION 2 - How can we encounter the revelation of God today? God has spoken to His people in the Bible. We can look at the pages of Scripture and see the very words of God that He uses to reveal Himself. Because of Jesus, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and helps us read and understand the Bible in a way that is powerful and transformative.

QUESTION 3 - What other Bible verses can you find that show us that Jesus is the perfect revelation of who God is? The Bible is full of these verses! Just a few include Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 1:3, and John 14:9.



WEEK THREE



WHO IS JESUS?

READ MATTHEW 2:1-12

The wise men in Matthew 2 were familiar with a prophesy regarding the coming Messiah, and they followed a star in order to seek Him. The chief priests and scribes quoted the prophets to Herod concerning the future birthplace of the Messiah: "...from you [Bethlehem] shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel" (Matthew 2:6).

The concept of Jesus as ruling Shepherd is woven throughout Scripture. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and His role as ruler of His people are foretold in Micah 5:2,4. Ezekiel also prophesied the coming Messiah, who would rescue His people and be their Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:22-24). In John 10:11-17, Jesus refers to Himself as the "good Shepherd" who "lays down His life for His sheep."

The role of a shepherd is a crucial one because sheep, like humans, can be dumb creatures who will perish if left to their own devices. What is the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep? King David, a former shepherd boy himself, penned Psalm 23. He uses the imagery of a shepherd to describe his condition and relationship to God. As our Shepherd, the Lord cares for His people by providing, leading, and guiding them. He actively pursues His people when they stray. He knows His sheep, and they know Him (John 10:27).

What is the role of the sheep? Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Jesus is also the door for the sheep; He is the only way for anyone to enter the sheepfold. This Jesus, our loving and gentle Shepherd, is also a mighty ruler. As the ruling Shepherd, He has sovereign control over all things. As His sheep, we have the joyous thrill of knowing that our Shepherd calls us and knows our name.

OTHER BIBLE VERSES ABOUT JESUS AS RULING SHEPHERD:

Psalm 23: 1-2, Ezekiel 34:23, John 10:1-30, Revelation 7:17

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- ◆Have you heard the Shepherd's call to repentance and responded?
- ◆In what ways have you experienced Jesus as Ruling Shepherd in your life?
- ◆How could you share the comfort that Jesus as Ruling Shepherd brings with someone who is struggling during these trying times? Provide a specific answer.

SONG:

Who Would Have Dreamed? - Sovereign Grace Music

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - What is a shepherd? Why is a shepherd needed? Do you think you need a shepherd?

QUESTION 2 - How is God like a shepherd to His people? How are you like a sheep?

QUESTION 3 - The Bible calls Him the Good Shepherd. What makes a shepherd good? How is God a good shepherd to us?

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - What are the duties of a shepherd? What do those duties teach us about what Jesus does for us? Shepherds guide, protect, and care for their sheep. As our Shepherd, Jesus guides us, whether it be beside still waters or through the valley of the shadow of death. He protects us from the attacks of the enemy and cares for every need that we have. The Bible repeatedly talks about Jesus as a Shepherd because He shows the strength to save and the love to care.

QUESTION 2 - Why are we compared to sheep throughout the Bible? Sheep are fluffy, noisy, and not all that smart. But the Bible compares us to sheep because we, like sheep, are very needy. Sheep are in constant need of guiding. They are in constant need of protection. They tend to wander off and they need to be sought out. They fall over and they need to be helped up. We, like sheep, are in constant need of a Shepherd. We need someone to seek us when we are lost, save us when we are in danger, and guide us when we don't know where to go.

QUESTION 3 - Matthew 2:6 describes Jesus as a "ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." What do you think about Jesus being described as both a ruler and a shepherd. As important as shepherds were to the safety of the sheep, they were not well-respected in Jesus' time. For a shepherd to be a ruler would be quite unusual. But Jesus would fulfill both of these roles, taking on the role of Shepherd by guiding, protecting, and caring for His sheep, but also the role of Ruler by gaining authority over all things as the eternal King.

READ MATTHEW 1-2

Every year at this time, we begin to feel the anticipation that the Christmas season brings. We look forward to meals with family, time to rest, exchanging gifts and many other Christmas traditions. Sometimes it seems as if we can hardly wait! Imagine what the people of God felt as they waited for the promised Messiah to come.

After God's final revelation in the Old Testament, there were 400 years of silence. God did not speak and the people merely had to wait for what seemed like forever. Then comes Matthew's Gospel. Matthew wrote his gospel to give an account of the life of Christ and to show that Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, fulfilling all of the promises of God.

In chapter one (vv.1-17) he gives a carefully curated genealogy of Jesus, demonstrating the lineage of Christ and solidifying his connection to the Old Testament promises. By beginning his gospel this way, Matthew explicitly ties the story of Christ into the Old Testament story from Genesis to Chronicles (the last book in the Hebrew bible and heavy on the genealogy). Matthew presents Jesus as the culmination of the promises of the Old Testament.

He is the redeemer born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23). He is the Shepherd rising from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1-6). All nations will bring gifts and bow to this King (Psalm 72:10, Matthew 2:1-12). He is the Son called up out of Egypt to lead His people to the promised land (Hosea 11:1, Matthew 2:15).

The first two chapters of Matthew clearly present Jesus as the Messiah, the son of David, the son Abraham. He is the true and rightful King of the Jews and the one through whom salvation will come to the nations. He is the answer to all of the promises of God. This Christmas season, we rejoice that God has kept His promises in Christ, and we await, with growing anticipation, the final culmination of those promises in the future return of Christ.

OTHER BIBLE VERSES ABOUT THE PROMISED MESSIAH:

Isaiah 7; Psalm 2; Psalm 72, Micah 5:2

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- ◆ Why is it important to see that Jesus is the fulfillment of so many Old Testament promises?
- ◆ What does it say about God's character that, even after 400 years of silence, he kept the promises he made through the Old Testament prophets?
- ◆ What is God calling you to do with his promises while you wait for Christ's return?

SONG:

O Holy Night

PARENT'S GUIDE

PROMISED MESSIAH

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - What does it feel like when you haven't heard from someone for a long time? Would you be sad or disappointed?

QUESTION 2 - When God did not speak for 400 years did He still care for His people? Can you give examples from the Bible or Bible stories for your response?

QUESTION 3 - What does it look like to wait patiently? Who is patient with you? How has God been patient with you?

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - What about the Christmas season do you look forward to? How many of these things help you love and appreciate God more? Christmas brings all sorts of wonderful things to enjoy like music, food, presents, and movies. But as our anticipation for Christmas Day builds, our anticipation for Jesus' return should also build. Consider some things that you can do to make Christmas a time of waiting for Jesus.

QUESTION 2 - What does Matthew's Christmas account teach us about God that we can still look forward to today? By sharing so many prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, Matthew teaches us that God keeps His promises to save His people and to work His plan throughout the course of human history. This can give us hope today because we look forward to His fulfillment of the promise of Jesus' return, when He will make all things new.

QUESTION 3 - How is God calling you to seek Him while you wait for Him to fulfill His promises? As we wait for the return of Jesus, God is calling us to join the mission of making disciples of all nations by bearing witness to His gospel. We should not sit around and twiddle our thumbs while we wait for His return. We should go and tell people the good news of Jesus, and we should live our lives in a way that advances that mission.

READ MATTHEW 1:20-24

Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus Christ is short. However, the enormity of the impact of those few words cannot be underestimated. Consider the promise, "They shall call him Immanuel, God with us."

In Matthew 1:16 we are introduced to Joseph, a direct descendant of King David. Verse 20 states it again, "Joseph, son of David," emphasizing the kingship and earthly lineage of Jesus. Nonetheless, Joseph is told that the child Mary is carrying is not of this world. No! It is the one and only Creator of the universe! The very One that created all things. The One that has always been and forever will be. It is He that walked in the garden with Adam. It is He that called Abram and later gave him the name Abraham. It is He that provided a ram for Isaac, wrestled with and blessed Jacob.

He protected Joseph from family and foe, then delivered him to providentially preserve a land for his people. Again, God protected and provided for Moses so that he could deliver his people from Egypt to the Promised Land.

He continued providing by conquering many enemies and establishing the Kingdom of Israel: a physical land and a spiritual people. Through the millennia, He provided, protected and delivered with judges, priests, kings and prophets until the right time. His time.

And now, He brings the ultimate deliverance: His appearance on the earth He created. A few decades later, this Creator who took on flesh would give Himself up to save His people from their sins. This is who Jesus is: our King who reigns eternally, our Savior who rescues mercifully, our Shepherd who guides faithfully, the perfect revelation of God Himself, Immanuel, God with us.

OTHER BIBLE VERSES ABOUT JESUS AS GOD WITH US:

John 1:1-5, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:3

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

◇What does it say about God's character that he would take on flesh as a baby to save his people from their sins?

◇Do you often think about Jesus as the Creator of all things? How is this different from how the world sometimes portrays him?

◇Considering all the ways the Bible describes the coming of Jesus, how would you describe his role in your life?

SONG:

God With Us - All Sons & Daughters

PARENT'S GUIDE

IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US

Help the whole family know who Jesus is and why it matters.

KIDS

QUESTION 1 - Have you ever had to do something by yourself that was really scary? Who did you wish were with you? Sometimes we just feel so much better by just having our Mom or Dad or even a friend with us. Why do these people make us feel safe/better?

QUESTION 2 - The Bible calls Jesus Immanuel, which means "God with us." How is God with us? Can we see Him? Talk to Him?

QUESTION 3 - Jesus came down from Heaven to live and walk with people. Did He have to do this? How did His physical presence in the world change things? How can we know that God is with us?

STUDENTS

QUESTION 1 - What does it make you feel when you read that God Himself became a man to dwell with people like us? It would be difficult to find a more life-changing claim than this. If God Himself became a man, we have no choice but to listen to that man and live our lives based on what He said and did. What makes it even more significant is that God Himself became a man in order to save us. God descended to be with us so that we could ascend to be with Him forever.

QUESTION 2 - Consider all of the names and titles the Bible gives to Jesus. Which of these has been impactful to you as you walked through this devotional?

QUESTION 3 - How is God calling you to respond to these truths of who Jesus truly is?



MERRY CHRISTMAS

WHO IS JESUS?

THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS DEVOTIONAL PART OF YOUR FAMILY WORSHIP THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON. KNOWING WHO JESUS REALLY IS GIVES SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS SEASON AND TO ALL OF LIFE. WE HOPE THIS DEVOTIONAL HELPED YOU AND YOUR FAMILY REMEMBER THE INCARNATION OF JESUS AND LOOK FORWARD TO HIS EVENTUAL RETURN. BUCK RUN BAPTIST CHURCH WILL BE SHARING A SPECIAL VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE AT 5 P.M. ON BOTH THE BUCK RUN FACEBOOK PAGE AND YOUTUBE PAGE. WE WOULD LOVE FOR YOU TO JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT BUCK RUN BAPTIST CHURCH VISIT WWW.BUCKRUN.ORG.

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