

AN ADVENT BIBLE STUDY



PREPARE HIM  
*John*

STUDYwithFRIENDS





## INTRODUCTION

- Advent is the time to remember the birth of our Lord.
- This is a tradition not a command.
- Advent is the time to prepare (be reminded, reflect upon) the birth of Christ, yet we know this has already come. The already/not yet aspect of our faith shows up in a lot of different ways. Ponder that mystery this season as you work through the study.
- Different traditions practice Advent in different ways but we will use the weekly themes of Hope, Faith, Joy, Peace.
- Each week we will use a scripture to anchor us in the birth of Christ and help us to reflect on it in a different way.

*Why do you think the Advent tradition became popular?*

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*Do you think the Advent tradition is still an important tradition? Why?*

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— WEEK ONE

STUDYWITHFRIENDS.ORG | 3

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST



LUKE 1:5-18

**5** In 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. **6** And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. **7** But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

**8** Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, **9** according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. **10** And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. **11** And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

**12** And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. **13** But 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. **14** And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, **15** for 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. **16** And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, **17** and 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.”

**18** And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”

**19** And 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.

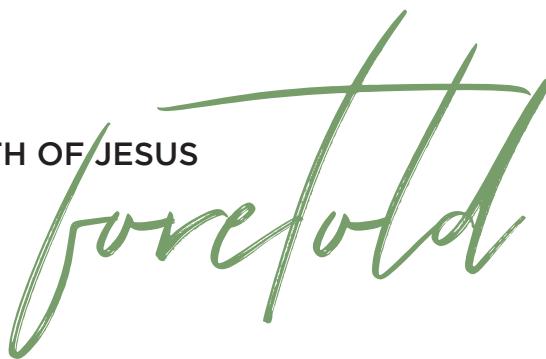
**20** And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.”

**21** And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.

**22** And 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. **23** And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. **24** After 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.”



THE BIRTH OF JESUS



LUKE 1:26-38

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

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

**35** And 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. **36** And 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. **37** For nothing will be impossible with God.” **38** And 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.



MARY VISITS  
*elizabeth*

LUKE 1:39-45

**39** In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, **40** and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. **41** And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,  
**42** and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! **43** And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? **44** For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. **45** And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”



# WEEKLY reflections

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*Compare and contrast the reactions between Zacharia and the birth of John the Baptist (Luke: 1:12-20) and Mary and the birth of Christ (Luke 1:28-38).*

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*What happens as a result of each of their responses?*

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*What are some ways God is calling you to be something/do something/believe in something right now?*

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*How can understanding the differences between the responses of Zechariah and Mary (blessing vs consequence) affect the way we respond to God's calling this week?*

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*What is the importance of hope in the life of a believer?*

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Faith

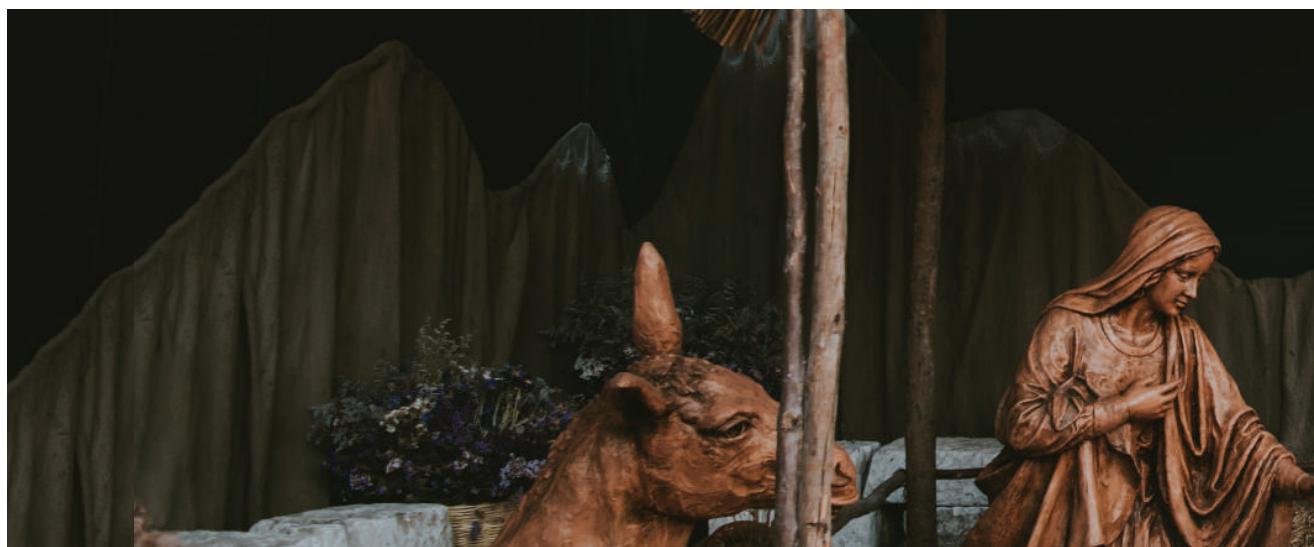
MICAH 5:2-5A

WEEK TWO —



MICAH 5:2-5A

- 2** But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
    who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
    one who is to be ruler in Israel,  
whose coming forth is from of old,  
    from ancient days.
- 3** Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
    when she who is in labor has given birth;  
then the rest of his brothers shall return  
    to the people of Israel.
- 4** And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the  
Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great  
    to the ends of the earth.
- 5** And he shall be their peace.



# Christ

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

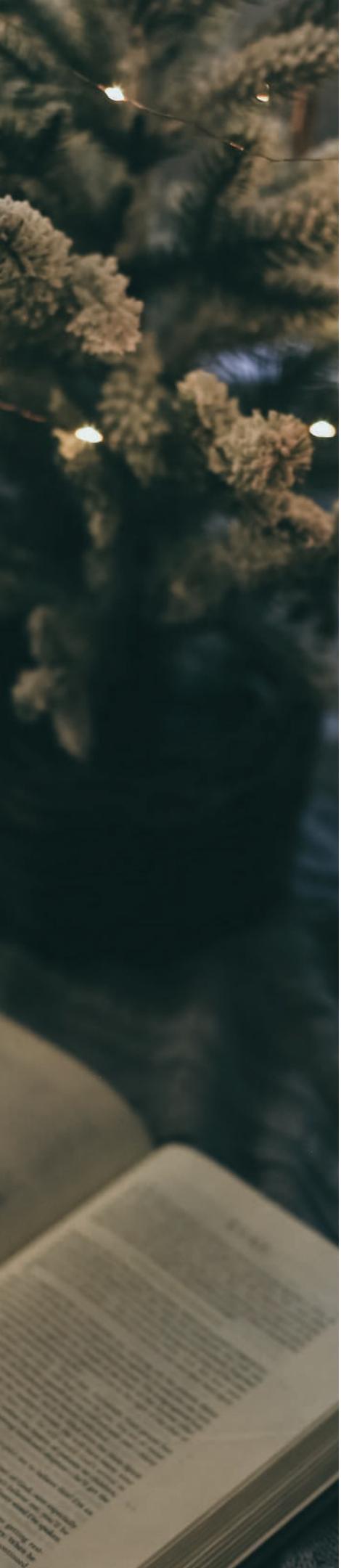
LUKE 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2** This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

**4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, **5** to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. **6** And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

**7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.





# WEEKLY reflections

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*What city did Joseph's family come from and why did they go to Bethlehem?*

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*How does fulfilled prophecy factor into your faith?*

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*What are the things that solidify your faith?*

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*Jesus came because God wants to be known. What are some other ways that God shows His desire to be known by us? (cf. Luke 20:36, Job 38:1-7, Isaiah 6:1-8, 2 Peter 2:11)*

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*Joy*

LUKE 2:8-21

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WEEK THREE

## THE SHEPHERDS AND THE

*angels*

LUKE 2:8-21

**8** And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. **10** And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, **14** “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” **15** When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” **16** And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. **17** And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. **18** And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. **19** But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. **20** And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. **21** And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,  
AND ON EARTH PEACE AMONG THOSE  
WITH WHOM HE IS

*pleased*

LUKE 2:14



WEEKLY

# reflections

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*What is the people group that is first told of the birth of Christ (Luke 2:15-20)?*

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*Why do you think this announcement was made this way and to this group?*

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*Does this remind you of any other biblical announcement and God's choice in whom to get the news first?*

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*Why would the shepherds be frightened when an angel of the Lord stands in front of them? (cf. Luke 20:36, Job 38:1-7, Isaiah 6:1-8, 2 Peter 2:11)*

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*Why are the angels praising God? How are they showing Him praise and adoration? Are they expressing joy?*

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*Does this change the way you think about your own worship of God? (cf. Luke 20:36, Job 38:1-7, Isaiah 6:1-8, 2 Peter 2:11)*

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Peace

ISAIAH 53:5

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WEEK FOUR



ISAIAH 53:5

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*

JOHN 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

JOHN 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace.  
In the world you will have tribulation.  
But take heart;

I HAVE OVERCOME  
THE *World*

EPHESIANS 2:14

For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.



WEEKLY

# reflections

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*What does peace mean biblically and personally?*

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*What are your reflections on how Christ brings us peace?*

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*Are there ways that Jesus disrupted the peace of people in his time?  
What about now?*

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*Ultimately, what peace does Christ provide?*

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CHRISTMAS DAY

*journal*

*Write your reflections on any new or fresh impact this Advent season has had on you and your faith:*

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\*All scripture is quoted from the ESV unless otherwise noted.