

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Dec 24

### MONDAY

Yesterday, in our Christmas Worship, besides enjoying the Choir singing a cantata, we also looked at the angel's announcement to the shepherds out keeping their sheep on the hillside. He announced that the baby being born that night in the city of David (Bethlehem) was the Savior, Christ the Lord. All three designations tell us of Jesus' ministry to us. As Savior, Jesus saves us from our \_\_\_\_\_. As Christ, which means anointed one, He delivers us from the \_\_\_\_\_ of that sin. And as Lord, He is to be \_\_\_\_\_ of our lives. So put them together and Jesus saves us from sin; and delivers us from sin's dominion and consequences; and assures us a place in His eternal Kingdom. No wonder the shepherds were filled with great joy! No wonder they made their way to the stable and back again telling others of the good news to all mankind that was declared that very night! Let us be sure that telling others of the story is part of our own Christmas celebrations. Let's make much of the Savior's birth

### CHRISTMAS DAY

I'm sure it's a busy day for you. I want to encourage you to read through at least some part of the Christmas story. Perhaps you might have the opportunity to read it aloud with family gathered around. Or as a couple. Or even independently. No matter how it is read, allow the wonder of God's plan to provide a Savior for you fill your heart once more. Pay attention to the details – all of them arranged by God long ahead of time in preparation for the perfect moment, the moment of the birth of His son to the virgin Mary. All that planning and arranging was so that the way would be provided for us to be brought into His family and Kingdom. So celebrating Christ-mas includes a celebration of our salvation at the same time. Unto us a Savior has been given and unto us salvation has been provided!

### WEDNESDAY

Let's continue with our daily reading in II Kings. Back in Israel's northern kingdom, King Joram leads an attack on Edom because the Edomites had revolted against his kingship. The attack is not successful, and it fails to quench the spirit of rebellion in Edom. Later, Joram dies and his son Ahaziah rules in his place.

#### **READ: II Kings 8:20-24**

The rebellion spoken of here means that territories which, at one time or another, had come under Israel's control were now rebelling against that, and re-establishing themselves as independent nations. Both Edom and Libnah are mentioned here. The greatness of the nation Israel when she followed the Lord is decaying as the kings and the people forsake God. That decaying process reminds me of Hosea's mention of the moth and the lion: sometimes slowly, and sometimes rapidly, God brings judgment upon those who forsake His ways and His commandments. Following the Lord always brings reward as we live in the place of blessing. That was true for Israel and is true for us today.

### THURSDAY

Back in Judah, the southern kingdom, Jehoram's son Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became king, and he ruled for only one year. In that year, he did evil in the sight of the Lord. He united with King Joram of Israel and they attacked Assyria whose king, remember, was now Hazael. Joram was wounded in that battle, so later, Ahaziah goes to visit him where he's staying.

#### **READ: II Kings 8:25-29**

We see some movement here towards the re-unification of Israel and Judah. The two nations join forces in fighting a common enemy, and then the king of Judah travels to Jezreel to check on the well being of Israel's king. It's an un-even marriage. Israel is much further along its path of idolatry. Joining with them is a huge mistake for Judah. In our lives, there are relationships we must stay clear of, for what fellowship can light have with darkness. Do you feel the influence of a friend pulling you from God? It's time to choose this day whom you would serve.

### FRIDAY

Elisha sends one of the prophets-in-training to see Jehoshaphat's son Jehu. He is to take Jehu aside, pour oil over his head, declare him anointed of God to be the next king, and then get out of there as fast as his little legs can carry him.

#### **READ: II Kings 9:1-3**

Interesting twist here, don't you think? Do this, say this, and then run for it! It's a reminder that we should not presume upon the Lord for protection or safety. God, of course, can protect us supernaturally, and I believe that He sometimes does that, but more often than not, safety is related to seat belts, good locks on the door, and a healthy measure of discretion. In a sense, God provides safety for us in providing these and other things. Sometimes divine protection is as simple as getting out of there ASAP. Be wise and buckle up! And thank God for His protection.

### SATURDAY

The prophet-in-training does as Elisha instructed him, and we get more details. As he declares him to be the next king, the young man tells Jehu that he is to destroy the house of Ahab for the sins of Jezebel. She herself must be killed and dogs will eat her body.

#### **READ: II Kings 9:4-10**

The Lord will avenge the deaths of those prophets and others who were killed by Jezebel. You see, the Lord is serious about being the Just Judge of the universe. His justice will not be mocked. We are called upon to allow God to be the avenger. Vengeance belongs to Him. Therefore, we do not need to carry out our personal vengeance. We are able to forgive and forgive freely. "How can I forgive him for doing such a thing?" someone may ask. Because God will execute perfect justice in His time and in His way. Trust Him in that.

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