

Readings for December 2018

Sunday 2nd December 2018

Jeremiah 33:14-16

The LORD said:

I made a wonderful promise to Israel and Judah, and the days are coming when I will keep it.

I promise that the time will come
when I will appoint a king
from the family of David,
a king who will be honest
and rule with justice.

In those days,
Judah will be safe;
Jerusalem will have peace
and will be named,
"The LORD Gives Justice."

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

How can we possibly thank God enough for all the happiness you have brought us? Day and night we sincerely pray that we will see you again and help you to have an even stronger faith.

We pray that God our Father and our Lord Jesus will let us visit you. May the Lord make your love for each other and for everyone else grow by leaps and bounds. That's how our love for you has grown. And when our

Lord comes with all of his people, I pray that he will make your hearts pure and innocent in the sight of God the Father.

Luke 21:25-36

Strange things will happen to the sun, moon, and stars. The nations on earth will be afraid of the roaring sea and tides, and they won't know what to do. People will be so frightened that they will faint because of what is happening to the world. Every power in the sky will be shaken. Then the Son of Man will be seen, coming in a cloud with great power and glory. When all of this starts happening, stand up straight and be brave. You will soon be set free.

Then Jesus told them a story:

When you see a fig tree or any other tree putting out leaves, you know that summer will soon come. So, when you see these things happening, you know that God's kingdom will soon be here. You can be sure that some of the people of this generation will still be alive when all of this takes place. The sky and the earth won't last forever, but my words will.

Don't spend all of your time thinking about eating or drinking or worrying about life. If you do, the final day will suddenly catch you like a trap. That day will surprise everyone on earth. Watch out and keep praying that you can escape all that is going to happen and that the Son of Man will be pleased with you.

02/12/2018

Sunday 9th December 2018

Malachi 3:1-4

I, the LORD All-Powerful,
will send my messenger
to prepare the way for me.
Then suddenly the Lord
you are looking for
will appear in his temple.
The messenger you desire
is coming with my promise,
and he is on his way.

On the day the Lord comes, he will be like a furnace that purifies silver or like strong soap in a washbasin. No one will be able to stand up to him. The LORD will purify the descendants of Levi, as though they were gold or silver. Then they will bring the proper offerings to the LORD, and the offerings of the people of Judah and Jerusalem will please him, just as they did in the past.

Philippians 1:3-11

Every time I think of you, I thank my God. And whenever I mention you in my prayers, it makes me happy. This is because you have taken part with me in spreading the good news from the first day you heard about it. God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain that he won't stop before it is complete on the day that Christ Jesus returns.

You have a special place in my heart. So it is only natural for me to feel the way I do. All of you have helped in the work that God has given me, as I defend the good news and tell about it here in jail. God himself knows how much I want to see you. He knows that I care for you in the same way that Christ Jesus does.

I pray that your love will keep on growing and that you will fully know and understand how to make the right choices. Then you will still be pure and innocent when Christ returns. And until that day, Jesus Christ will keep you busy doing good deeds that bring glory and praise to Go

Luke 3:1-6

For fifteen years Emperor Tiberius had ruled that part of the world. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was the ruler of Galilee. Herod's brother, Philip, was the ruler in the countries of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was the ruler of Abilene. Annas and Caiaphas were the Jewish high priests.

At that time God spoke to Zechariah's son John, who was living in the desert. So John went along the Jordan Valley, telling the people, "Turn back to God and be baptized! Then your sins will be forgiven." Isaiah the prophet wrote about John when he said,

"In the desert
 someone is shouting,
'Get the road ready
 for the Lord!
Make a straight path
 for him.
Fill up every valley
and level every mountain
 and hill.
Straighten the crooked paths
and smooth out
 the rough roads.
Then everyone will see
 the saving power of God.'"

09/12/2018

Sunday 16th December 2018

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Everyone in Jerusalem and Judah,
celebrate and shout
with all your heart!
Zion, your punishment is over.
The LORD has forced your enemies
to turn and retreat.
Your LORD is King of Israel
and stands at your side;
you don't have to worry
about any more troubles.

Jerusalem, the time is coming,
when it will be said to you:
"Don't be discouraged
or grow weak from fear!
The LORD your God
wins victory after victory
and is always with you.
He celebrates and sings
because of you,
and he will refresh your life
with his love."

The LORD has promised:
Your sorrow has ended,
and you can celebrate.
I will punish those
who mistreat you.
I will bring together the lame
and the outcasts,
then they will be praised,
instead of despised,

in every country on earth.
I will lead you home,
and with your own eyes
you will see me bless you
with all you once owned.
Then you will be famous
everywhere on this earth.
I, the LORD, have spoken!

Philippians 4:4-7

Always be glad because of the Lord! I will say it again: Be glad. Always be gentle with others. The Lord will soon be here. Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel.

Luke 3:7-18

Crowds of people came out to be baptized, but John said to them, "You bunch of snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming judgment? Do something to show that you really have given up your sins. Don't start saying that you belong to Abraham's family. God can turn these stones into children for Abraham. An axe is ready to cut the trees down at their roots. Any tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into a fire."

The crowds asked John, "What should we do?"

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John told them, "If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn't have any. If you have food, share it with someone else."

When tax collectors came to be baptized, they asked John, "Teacher, what should we do?"

John told them, "Don't make people pay more than they owe."

Some soldiers asked him, "And what about us? What do we have to do?"

John told them, "Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone. Be satisfied with your pay."

Everyone became excited and wondered, "Could John be the Messiah?"

John said, "I am just baptizing with water. But someone more powerful is going to come, and I am not good enough even to untie his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His threshing forks in his hand, and he is ready to separate the wheat from the husks. He will store the wheat in his barn and burn the husks with a fire that never goes out."

In many different ways John preached the good news to the people

Sunday 23rd December 2018

Micah 5:2-5

Bethlehem Ephrath,
you are one of the smallest towns
in the nation of Judah.
But the LORD will choose
one of your people
to rule the nation—
someone whose family
goes back to ancient times.

The LORD will abandon Israel
only until this ruler is born,
and the rest of his family
returns to Israel.

Like a shepherd
taking care of his sheep,
this ruler will lead
and care for his people
by the power and glorious name
of the LORD his God.

His people will live securely,
and the whole earth will know
his true greatness,
because he will bring peace.

Let Assyria attack our country
and our palaces.

We will counterattack,
led by a number of rulers

Hebrews 10:5-10

When Christ came into the world, he said to God,

“Sacrifices and offerings
are not what you want,
but you have given me
my body.

No, you are not pleased
with animal sacrifices
and offerings for sin.”

Then Christ said,

“And so, my God,
I have come to do

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what you want,
as the Scriptures say.”

The Law teaches that offerings and sacrifices must be made because of sin. But why did Christ mention these things and say that God did not want them? Well, it was to do away with offerings and sacrifices and to replace them. That is what he meant by saying to God, “I have come to do what you want.” So we are made holy because Christ obeyed God and offered himself once for all.

Luke 1:35-45

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God’s power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. Nothing is impossible for God!”

Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant! Let it happen as you have said.” And the angel left her.

A short time later Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah’s home, where she greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, her baby moved within her.

The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. Then in a loud voice she said to Mary:

God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. Why should the mother of my Lord come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became happy and moved within me. The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise.

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24th December 2018 Christmas Eve

2 Samuel 7:1-5 :8:11-16

King David moved into his new palace, and the LORD let his kingdom be at peace. Then one day, as David was talking with Nathan the prophet, David said, "Look around! I live in a palace made of cedar, but the sacred chest has to stay in a tent."

Nathan replied, "The LORD is with you, so do what you want!"

That night, the LORD told Nathan to go to David and give him this message:

David, you are my servant, so listen to what I say. Why should you build a temple for me?

David gave these to the LORD, just as he had done with the silver and gold that he had captured from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and from King Hadadezer of Zobah.

David fought the Edomite army in Salt Valley and killed eighteen thousand of their soldiers. When he returned, he built a monument. David left soldiers all through Edom, and the people of Edom had to accept him as their ruler.

Wherever David went, the LORD helped him.

David ruled all Israel with fairness and justice.

Joab the son of Zeruiah was the commander in chief of the army.

Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud kept the government records.

Acts 13:16-26

Paul got up. He motioned with his hand and said:

People of Israel, and everyone else who worships God, listen! The God of Israel chose our ancestors, and he let our people prosper while they were living in Egypt. Then with his mighty power he led them out, and for about forty years he took care of them in the desert. He destroyed seven

nations in the land of Canaan and gave their land to our people. All this happened in about 450 years.

Then God gave our people judges until the time of the prophet Samuel, but the people demanded a king. So for forty years God gave them King Saul, the son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. Later, God removed Saul and let David rule in his place. God said about him, "David the son of Jesse is the kind of person who pleases me most! He does everything I want him to do."

God promised that someone from David's family would come to save the people of Israel, and that one is Jesus. But before Jesus came, John was telling everyone in Israel to turn back to God and be baptized. Then, when John's work was almost done, he said, "Who do you people think I am? Do you think I am the Promised One? He will come later, and I am not good enough to untie his sandals."

Now listen, you descendants of Abraham! Pay attention, all of you Gentiles who are here to worship God! Listen to this message about how to be saved, because it is for everyone.

Luke 1:67-79

The Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah, and he began to speak:

Praise the Lord,
the God of Israel!
He has come
to save his people.
Our God has given us
a mighty Saviour
from the family
of David his servant.
Long ago the Lord promised
by the words
of his holy prophets
to save us from our enemies
and from everyone
who hates us.

God said he would be kind
to our people
and keep

his sacred promise.

He told our ancestor Abraham
that he would rescue us
from our enemies.

Then we could serve him
without fear,
by being holy and good
as long as we live.

You, my son, will be called
a prophet of God
in heaven above.

You will go ahead of the Lord
to get everything ready
for him.

You will tell his people
that they can be saved
when their sins
are forgiven.

God's love and kindness
will shine upon us
like the sun that rises
in the sky.

On us who live
in the dark shadow
of death

this light will shine
to guide us
into a life of peace.

December 25th 2018 Christmas Day

Isaiah 9:2-7

Those who walked in the dark
have seen a bright light.

And it shines upon everyone
who lives in the land
of darkest shadows.

Our LORD, you have made
your nation stronger.

Because of you, its people
are glad and celebrate
like workers at harvest time
or like soldiers dividing up
what they have taken.

You have broken the power
of those who abused
and enslaved your people.

You have rescued them
just as you saved your people
from Midian.

The boots of marching warriors
and the blood-stained uniforms
have been fed to flames
and eaten by fire.

A child has been born for us.
We have been given a son
who will be our ruler.

His names will be
Wonderful Advisor
and Mighty God,

Eternal Father
and Prince of Peace.

His power will never end;
peace will last forever.

He will rule David's kingdom
and make it grow strong.
He will always rule
with honesty and justice.
The LORD All-Powerful
will make certain
that all of this is done.

Titus 2:11-14

God has shown us how kind he is by coming to save all people. He taught us to give up our wicked ways and our worldly desires and to live decent and honest lives in this world. We are filled with hope, as we wait for the glorious return of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. He gave himself to rescue us from everything that is evil and to make our hearts pure. He wanted us to be his own people and to be eager to do right.

Luke 2:1-14

About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

Mary was engaged to Joseph and travelled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, and while they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son. She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David's hometown a Saviour was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said:

"Praise God in heaven!
Peace on earth to everyone
who pleases God."

Sunday 30th December 2018

1 Samuel 2:18-20,26

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The boy Samuel served the LORD and wore a special linen garment and the clothes his mother made for him. She would bring new clothes every year, when she and her husband came to offer sacrifices at Shiloh.

Eli would always bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "Samuel was born in answer to your prayers. Now you have given him to the LORD. I pray that the LORD will bless you with more children to take his place." After Eli had blessed them, Elkanah and Hannah would return home. Each day the LORD and his people liked Samuel more and more.

Colossians 3:12-17

God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient. Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

Each one of you is part of the body of Christ, and you were chosen to live together in peace. So let the peace that comes from Christ control your thoughts. And be grateful. Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him.

Luke 2:41-52

Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for Passover. And when Jesus was twelve years old, they all went there as usual for the celebration. After Passover his parents left, but they did not know that Jesus had stayed on in the city. They thought he was traveling with some other people, and they went a whole day before they started looking for him. When they could not find him with their relatives and friends, they went back to Jerusalem and started looking for him there.

Three days later they found Jesus sitting in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was surprised at how much he knew and at the answers he gave.

When his parents found him, they were amazed. His mother said, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried, and we have been searching for you!"

Jesus answered, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I would be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he meant.

Jesus went back to Nazareth with his parents and obeyed them. His mother kept on thinking about all that had happened.

Jesus became wise, and he grew strong. God was pleased with him and so were the people.