

The Journey

Daily Readings Week 1

Continue the Journey to Bethlehem by reflecting on these scriptures as you prepare for Christ's birth.

MONDAY 11.29.21 Luke 1:26-38

Picture the smallest, least important town you've ever seen. Nazareth was that kind of place at the time of this story. Mary was probably no older than fourteen, given what we know of Israel's marriage customs then, yet she was favored by God.

TUESDAY 11.30.21 2 Sam. 7:4-17

Gabriel told Mary her son would receive "the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32). For a devout Hebrew like Mary, that phrase brimmed with meaning. God had promised David that his house and kingdom would "endure forever." To human eyes, that wasn't happening—Rome ruled Israel. But the hope still lived. The Messiah, Israel believed, would be the promised "son of David."

WEDNESDAY 12.01.21 Jeremiah 23:1-6

By Jeremiah's day, David's kingdom was no more. The leaders had failed. The Assyrian Empire destroyed the breakaway northern tribes. The southern kingdom, Jeremiah's home, would soon be overrun by Babylon's army. The prophet said God would raise up "a branch" of David. He would be a Savior, a good shepherd to God's scattered people.

THURSDAY 12.02.21 Daniel 8:15-18, 9:20-23

God, Luke reported matter-of-factly, entrusted the angel Gabriel with the crucial message to Mary. (Luke first named Gabriel in Luke 1:19, which we'll read in two weeks.) But who was this divine messenger? Israelites knew. They'd become familiar with his name in the visions of the Old Testament book of Daniel, where he also brought messages from God.

FRIDAY 12.03.21 Isaiah 9:2-7

"To us," said Isaiah's prophecy, "a child is born, to us a son is given." His words had echoed through the centuries. "Wonderful counselor, mighty God....He will reign on David's throne, forever." Imagine Mary's feelings as it dawned on her that the "us" in that famous prophecy now meant her. She was the one who would bear the long-promised child.

SATURDAY 12.04.21 Isaiah 42:1-4

Isaiah said God's servant would do big things in quiet ways that might at first seem small to us. After Jesus grew up, his home town's reputation led Nathanael to ask, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" (John 1:46). Yet in that tiny town, God found a teenager with no husband and no social status. Through her, God entered decisively into human history. God didn't "shout"—but Jesus quietly changed the world in big, big ways.