
GOOD NEWS

Advent, December 2022

Sketches of Salvation

THE ADVENT SEASON IS UPON US!



How to use this guide:

- 1) Work through it with **family or on your own**. Each week has questions that can be answered in personal study or discussion with your family. It's up to you how you want to approach it!
- 2) Work through each week **in one sitting or throughout different days of the week**. There are several different sections that can be completed at your own pace.
- 3) **Pray!** At the end of each section there is something to think on and pray through with Jesus.

I am thrilled to have this Advent Devotion in your hands. I pray it is a resource that brings you much joy this season.

The birth of Jesus is the turning point of human history. As the angels declared to the shepherds in Bethlehem 2000 years ago, Christ's birth was, "Good news of great joy for all of the people!" And yet this "news" wasn't entirely new. For centuries, God had been preparing His people for the coming of His Son. In this series, we are exploring how this good news was promised and prefigured in the lives of four of Jesus' ancestors. Our desire for this series is that our trust in God might deepen and that our hope in His promises would grow as we see His faithfulness throughout history.

Take what you are learning in worship on Sunday mornings and use it to work through this guide. Find a time that works best for you. There is no certain day this must be done, but I do encourage you to make a plan. In the kit you will find a weekly devotional guide that walks you through the text with questions to consider that lead you to a deeper understanding of God's promises to his people.

Merry Christmas,
Rodrigo Reis and Sarah Black
S2 High School and Middle School
Directors

ABRAHAM



Christmas Connection

God always keeps his promises. We see that in this week's story. However, we also know that God promised to save his people through a certain offspring.

- 1) Read Genesis 3:15. This promise was given to Adam and Eve at the very beginning. Who is this verse talking about?
- 2) These two promises both to Adam and Eve and to Abraham are connected. For the savior of the world promised to Adam and Eve would come through Abraham's offspring. Read Matt 1:1-17.

Week 1, The Promise of Faith Genesis 15

This first week we will start our sketches of salvation advent guide with the father of Israel- Abraham- and the promise that was given to him that would change the course of history for God's people.

A bit of background here, God had promised Abraham years ago that from him would come a great nation. This nation would mark the start of a nation devoted to God. However, up until this point Abraham and Sarah (his wife) had been given no children. This is where our story picks up.

Read Genesis 15:1-6

- 1) How did the word of the Lord come to Abraham? How would you react if God started speaking to you this way? Would you believe what was being said?
- 2) What did God promise to Abraham in this text? How many children will he have?
- 3) V. 6 is quoted four times in the New Testament. This verse is key! What does it mean to be counted as righteous? Had Abraham done anything up until this point to prove his righteousness? How does the text say Abraham was counted as righteous?
- 4) How, like Abraham, are we counted as righteous before God?

Read Genesis 15:7-21

Abraham is now concerned with the land that would be needed for God's people to live in. God begins a ritual with Abraham to covenant with him that what he says will happen.

- 1) Look up a definition of covenant. How is this different than just a promise?
- 2) V. 12-14 tell of events that have not happened yet. Do you know what these events are? Read Exodus 12:40 & 13:30.
- 3) How did God show Abraham he would keep his promises? As those who know the full story, did God do what he said he was going to do? Read Deut. 10:22.

Personal Reflection

- 1) Have you put your faith in the promises of Jesus as Abraham put his faith in the promises of God? If you have, what has also been credited to you? Read Galatians 3:5-9 and Romans 3:22-24.
- 2) God's people had to wait thousands of years to see his promises fulfilled. What are you currently waiting on God for? Maybe to heal your family or a sickness. How does this week's story give you faith that God will answer these prayers?
- 3) Spend time in prayer this Christmas season dwelling on these promises given to God's people and to you. Thank God for the fact that he is faithful to keep his promises and bring us to him!

RAHAB

Week 2, The Promise of Adoption Joshua 1-2



Christmas Connection

God always keeps his promises! We see that again in this weeks story. Hundreds of years have passed since Abraham's promise, and hundreds more will pass until God's people receive their ultimate savior.

- 1) Read Matthew 1. Who from this weeks story is listed there? Who is her great-far off grandson?
- 2) How does this weeks story fall into the bigger story of God's salvation for his people?

In this weeks story, hundreds of years have passed since God covenanted with Abraham. However, we see how God is continuing to fulfill his promises he made to Abraham. He has given him a nation of offspring as numerous as the stars, he has delivered them out of the hands of slavery (just as he had promised in last weeks story), now he will deliver them into the land he had promised them.

The person by which this promise is fulfilled being a surprise to many who read her story. Take note that this city was not one devoted to God. The expression of faith we will see from Rahab is a work of God in her heart; both a blessing to her family and to God's people.

Read Joshua 1

- 1) What all does the Lord command his people to do in v. 1-9? List all the commands.
- 2) This is no easy task that God is asking of his people. But God frames these commands with promises from himself. What are they? (v.5 & 9)?
- 3) How does Joshua respond to God? (v. 10-15)
- 4) God has promised this land to his people. However, what is their responsibility in claiming this land?

Read Joshua 2

- 1) Who's house do they come to? How is she an unexpected character in God's story?
- 2) What does Rahab do to protect these men? What is she risking by doing this?
- 3) Why does Rahab do this? What has she come to believe? v. 8-11.
- 4) What does she request of these spies for her faithfulness? How do the spies promise to do this?
- 5) God told his people to destroy the entire city. Yet, these spies promise that God will spare her family. Why is God gracious to them?
- 6) Read Joshua 6:23-25. How does God reward Rahab's faith? How does God fulfill his promise for his people?

Personal Reflection

- 1) Has God ever asked you to do something scary? If you are following what God has asked you to do, what can you be sure that God will be doing for you just as he did for his people in this story?
- 2) Do you think Rahab expected to be used by God in the magnificent ways she was? Do you think other people believed this? How do you believe God can use you despite what you or others believe about yourself?
- 3) Rahab's faith was rewarded by God. How have you seen your faith in God rewarded? An answer to prayer or a feeling of peace? Spend time in prayer thanking God for the blessing of faith in him.

RUTH



Christmas Connection

The story of Ruth in the Bible is a beautiful account of redemption which highlights Naomi's great suffering and distress, Ruth's loyalty to Naomi, and Ruth's redemption through Boaz as the "kinsman redeemer." We see God's provision all over this wonderful account in bringing salvation to a suffering family.

Correspondingly, the story of Ruth points to a future salvation that took place around 1200 years later when our Lord Jesus, a direct descendant of Ruth, was born bringing an even greater redemption to fallen humanity through his life, death, and resurrection.

- 1) Read Matthew 1. Who from this week's story is listed there? Who is Ruth and Boaz' great-grandson?
- 2) How does the story of Ruth point to Jesus as our Great-Redeemer? Think of specific characteristics of Ruth and Boaz that are exemplified in Christ.

Week 3, The Promise of Redemption Ruth 1-4

Brief Summary: A man named Elimelech moved his family to the pagan land of Moab because there was a famine in the land of Israel. He took his wife Naomi and their two sons. In time, Elimelech died and his sons married women from Moab, but it wasn't long before the sons died too. This left Naomi all alone with her sons' widows, Ruth and Orpah. Naomi, then, decides to return to Bethlehem accompanied by Ruth, who kindly stays with her Mother-in-Law.

Now back in Israel, we are introduced to a very important character by the name of Boaz who was a wealthy farmer. Ruth begins working in his fields to make a living for herself and Naomi, and she also learns that Boaz was a near relative of Elimelech. Spurred by Naomi's instructions, Ruth makes a desperate attempt to ask Boaz to be her "kinsman redeemer," which is successful. Boaz, then, buys all of Naomi's inheritance from Elimelech and marries Ruth. Naomi and Ruth who were once desolate and empty-handed now have a wonderful redeemer in Boaz pointing to God's sovereign provision for them throughout the entire story.

Read Ruth 1-2

- 1) Who is Naomi and what happens to her in the first two chapters?
- 2) Who is Ruth and what is the important decision that she makes?
- 3) Who is Boaz? How does he treat Ruth as one of his workers?
- 4) Boaz was a close relative of Elimelech and one of Naomi and Ruth's redeemers. What does it mean to be a redeemer in that culture? (Look up a Bible commentary to answer this question)

Read Ruth 3-4

- 1) What does Naomi instruct Ruth to do?
- 2) What is Boaz' decision? Why is such decision important to Ruth and Naomi?
- 3) At the end of the book, Naomi blesses the Lord for his provision. Can you identify God's sovereign providence to Naomi and Ruth throughout the entire story?

Personal Reflection

- 1) Although not mentioned directly, we see Yahweh (Lord) functioning as a present active force in the lives of Naomi and Ruth. He provides for them in the midst of suffering; therefore, Naomi blesses Him at the end of the book. Make a list of ways that the Lord has provided/is providing for you and your family. What are reasons to be thankful in this Advent Season?
- 2) Both David and Jesus are direct descendants from the line of Ruth and Boaz. The redemption that Boaz brings in this story is nothing but a glimpse of our future redemption in Christ. Personally, what is your story of salvation? How has Jesus redeemed you?
- 3) Would you take some time to pray in gratitude for God's providence and salvation in your life?

DAVID



Christmas Connection

This story depicts David, a mere shepherd boy, being anointed as the King of Israel by the Prophet Samuel. We learn an important principle in the story: the Lord cares for the heart over mere appearances; thus, choosing David to be king over his brothers. We see the same pattern in the story of Jesus who was born in a manger into a poor family but is anointed by the Holy Spirit and chosen by God to be the Savior of the World and King of kings.

- 1) Read Matthew 1. Who from this week's story is listed in the genealogy of Jesus?
- 2) Throughout his ministry, how does Jesus model prioritizing the heart over appearances?

Week 4, The Promise of the Good King - 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Brief Summary: In this story, the Lord commands the prophet Samuel to go to Jesse the Bethlehemite and anoint one of his sons as King of Israel. When Samuel arrives at Bethlehem, he meets with seven of Jesse's sons and none of them are chosen by God to be the new king of Israel. Surprisingly, given that "the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart (I Sam. 16:7)," Samuel is oriented by God to anoint David, the shepherd boy, who was the youngest of Jesse's sons and "had beautiful eyes and was handsome (16:12). Since then, the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward (v.13).

Read I Samuel 16:1-5

- 1) In the first few verses, the reader is introduced to two very important characters. Who was king Saul? Who was Samuel—the prophet?
- 2) What is God's command to the prophet Samuel?
- 3) What does it mean to consecrate oneself before the Lord in the context of the Old Testament? (look up a Bible commentary to answer this question).

Read I Samuel 16:6-13

- 1) In verse 7, God reveals to Samuel something astounding regarding Eliab not being the new king: "But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart (v.7)." When was the last time you judged someone based on his/her appearances? How can you grow in this area?
- 2) In what ways are we tempted by our culture to judge a book by its cover? In other words, how are we incentivized to value appearances over the matters of the heart?
- 3) Read the previous chapter (I Sam. 15). What is the reason for Saul's rejection as king of Israel?

Personal Reflection

- 1) We learned from this week's story that God values that which is in our hearts more than our physical appearances. With that in mind, let's do a self-assessment: Do you follow God's principle when it comes to your relationships? What do you value in yourself and others? Why do you think it is harder to care for the heart over appearances?
- 2) God valued David's inner qualities while most of Israel was concerned with impressive physique and good looks. Practically, How do you daily cultivate being more like Jesus? How are you different than your non-Christian friends and family members?
- 3) Prayer: spend some time praying over II Peter 1:3-15, asking God to work out those qualities in your life. Also, Read John 15: 1-17, and pray that God would change your heart through the Holy Spirit as you abide in Christ. .

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

We hope that this Advent Season was full of joy for you and your family! It is our desire to come alongside you with gospel centered resources that point to Christ as our great Shepherd and Redeemer as we seek to live faithfully unto Him. If you used and enjoyed this kit, please let us know. We would love your feedback! You can send an email to sblack@sojourneast.com or rreis@sojourneast.com.

The **S2 Students Advent Guide** highlights the ministry approach we use with our students during our weekly gatherings on Wednesdays and Sundays nights. We gather for large teaching, discussion questions, and activities each week as we learn how every story in the Bible points to Christ and calls us to live in love and obedience before Him.

You can learn more about S2 on our webpage:

<https://sojourneast.com/students>



SERVE

If you enjoy spending time with teenagers and have a desire to serve with middle or high school students by becoming an S2 leader, please contact Sarah Black or Rodrigo Reis to find more info about how you can serve. You can access our **contact information on the website through the QR code.**

RESOURCES

ESV Study Bible:

<https://www.amazon.com/ESV-Study-Bible-Bibles-Crossway/dp/1433502410>

New Bible Commentary (IVP-NB Commentary)

© 1953, 1954, 1970, 1994 by University and Colleges Christian Fellowship

Bible Knowledge Commentary (BK Commentary)

by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck

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