

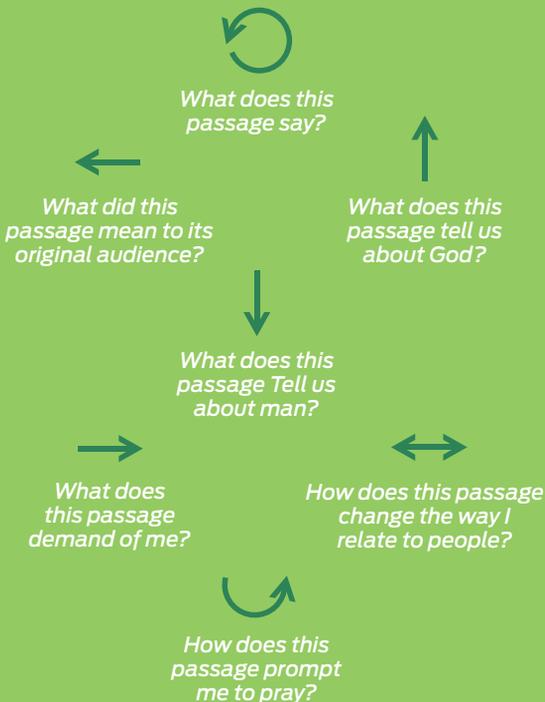
Daily Devotions



Day 1

Luke 2:8-14

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Let us not allow the familiarity of the Christmas story involving the shepherds to numb our hearts to the absolute wonder of God’s grace. It should still strike our hearts that God chose to announce this glorious message to poor shepherds—to peasants, the outcasts of society.

In the narrative, there are several points of which we need to take note. First, in the presence of the angels, the shepherds moved from the dark coldness of night into the brilliant light of God’s glory (2:8-9). In the proclamation of the good news, the Shepherds traded in their “great fear” for “great joy” (2:9-10). The great joy is a response to the good news of Jesus Christ, good news “for all the people” (2:10,14).

God’s salvation moves us from the darkness of sin into the glorious light of his righteousness! His salvation moves us from being outcast peasants in fear to experiencing the riches of joy in fellowship with God!

In what ways has believing the gospel moved you from fear to joy?

Luke 2:15-20

The narrative of Jesus' birth is a striking account of twists and turns. At the beginning of chapter 2, the story begins with Caesar Augustus, a world ruler announcing a decree from his high and lofty throne. However, there is another announcement in chapter 2. And this time, it came from messengers of God. The angels declared with great joy that Christ, the King, had come!

It is interesting how God works. On one level, it was a man's schemes (Augustus) who brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem; but it was God—working through Augustus, Joseph, and Mary—who orchestrated the whole event of Christ's birth in order to bring about His will.

Jesus has come, and He has come to deliver His people from the burdensome rulers of this world, rulers greater than Caesar—sin and death. God works out His will in order to allow for the good news to be made known to those humble enough to search and find Jesus.

How does the birth of Jesus the Messiah shape and influence the way we see world leaders and events today?

Luke 2:21-24

One may find it odd that Luke includes a mention of Jesus' circumcision in the narrative of His childhood, even if in passing. However, modern readers must understand that during the Old Testament period it was customary for males among God's people to be circumcised on the eighth day according to the law as a covenant sign (Gen. 17:12).

What does a covenant sign signify? In Genesis 17, God promised that Abraham would become the father of many nations. Circumcision was a sign to remember God's promise to Abraham, and the covenant that God made with Israel.

How does Luke's recording of details like Jesus' circumcision instill confidence in you about the reliability and historicity of Luke's gospel?

Luke 2:25-32

Up until this point Simeon was restless, yearning for the comfort and salvation of his people. Simeon had waited his whole life to see the Messiah. And then, at last, the Christ-child was handed to him. In this one breathtaking moment, all of his longings were fulfilled; he held the life of the world in his arms.

As you read this, Simeon is now at rest. Simeon was like a watcher who has now left his assigned post. His duties have been fulfilled. As the passage tells us, Simeon's life came to an end with him at peace because he had seen the fulfillment of God's long-awaited promise.

Isn't it amazing that Luke includes this little narrative in his Gospel account, like a personal note? Consider the testimony of a faithful man who searched his whole life for the Savior whom He was eventually allowed to hold in his arms.

In what ways should our longing for salvation be similar to Simeon's?

Luke 2:33-38

Simeon made a prophetic announcement to Mary in verse 34. It was a prophetic word. As we learn later, Jesus would divide Israel.

Jesus lifted the humble and brought down the self-righteous. The contrast between Simeon (a devout man) and the religious leaders later on in the Gospel accounts is astounding. Simeon accepted Jesus in his arms with joy, whereas many in Israel would reject Him in their hearts (Isa. 8:14-15).

Jesus causes division because Jesus compels us to make personal decisions about Him. In Israel, those who rejected Him saw to it that He was crucified, then dismissed accounts of His resurrection. Those who accepted Him ultimately understood why He was crucified and were later thankful for His resurrection. One day, He will return to separate the righteous and unrighteous, once again causing many to rise and fall.

How will we face division with the culture on some level with respect to who Jesus is and what we believe about Him?