

# JESUS' BIRTH A to Z



## Daily Devotions

### Welcome to Jesus' Birth A to Z Daily Devotional book!

This book is meant to begin on the First Sunday of Advent, and proceed daily into the season of Epiphany. Each day, get out your Bible and read the verses, answer the questions, and pray the prayers. You can do this in your own prayer journal, or with your spouse or family at morning devotions, the supper table, or before bed. God bless your journey through the story of Jesus' birth, from beginning to end!

In Christ,

Pastor Breen Marie Sipes

p.s. Get the Nativity set that goes with this devotion here: <https://familygodtime.wordpress.com/2018/12/19/a-to-z-nativity-set-christmas-2018/>

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## **Week 1: ZECHARIAH & the Angel**

### **Daily Devos Questions & Prayers**

#### **Sunday: Luke 1:5-7**

Have you ever prayed for a miracle? What are some impossible things that God has done for you?

Lord God, I know that you can do miraculous things. Make the impossible possible, so that all may know your power. Amen.

#### **Monday: Luke 1:8-10**

What do you pray about? What do you hope for when you come to a worship service at church? What do you think God desires from our worship?

Dear Lord, you are worthy of worship and praise. Help me to remember to honor you, on special days and every day. Amen.

#### **Tuesday: Luke 1:11-13**

Describe a time when you have been afraid. What or who helped you to get through that scary time? Does it make a difference to know that God is with you in times of fear?

Dear Jesus, I know that you show up when I am afraid. Help me to know that you are with me, no matter what. Amen.

#### **Wednesday: Luke 1:14-16**

Have you ever had a time in your life when you were tempted to do something wrong, and then turned away from

doing it? Have you ever helped someone else to get back on the right path?

God of all, I thank you that you lead me and guide me.

When I stray, help me to turn around, to turn always toward you. Amen.

#### **Thursday: Luke 1:17-19**

Have you ever been told that you were too young or too old for something? What did that experience feel like? What age of people do you think God likes to use?

Dear God, I thank you for the age that I am. Help me to do the impossible with the wonderful gifts you have given to me. Amen.

#### **Friday: Luke 1:20-22**

Have you ever had a time when you were unable to speak? What about a time when you took the time to listen? What would it be like to not be able to speak for nine months?

(Instead of using words in your prayers today, take the time to take five deep, slow breaths and listen for God to speak.)

#### **Saturday: Luke 1:23-25**

Have you ever had a time when people changed their opinion about you for the better? What about when your opinion was changed about someone else? What do think God's opinion was?

Dear Jesus, you know our hearts. Help me to look past the surface and give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Amen.

## **Week 2: MARY & the Angel**

### **Daily Devos Questions & Prayers**

#### **Sunday: Luke 1:26-27**

Who are some people that you are related to? Does who you are related to make a difference in how people interact with you? What reputation are you handing down to future generations?

Dear God, thank you for my family and those who have gone before me. Help my words and actions to reflect my identity as your child. Amen.

#### **Monday: Luke 1:28-29**

Have you ever had an encounter with an angel, or heard a story about someone who did? What is it like to know that God uses angels to send important messages to earth?

Dear Jesus, open my eyes, that I may see angels when you have a message to send. Help me to hear your word, and obey it. Amen.

#### **Tuesday: Luke 1:30-31**

What would it be like to find out that God wants you to be a parent to his Son? What about if it happened when you were only fourteen? What would you name a child, if you had a choice?

Dear God, I know that you have great plans for me. Guide my life, that my path and yours are the same. Amen.

#### **Wednesday: Luke 1:32-33**

What does it mean to you to know that Jesus is the king of heaven? How does Jesus' rule differ from human rulers? In what ways does Jesus make a difference in this world? Dear Jesus, I pray for the leaders of this world. Help them to model their life after yours, that all may be loved and at peace. Amen.

#### **Thursday: Luke 1:34-35**

Have you ever wanted to ask God a question? What does it mean to know that even Jesus' mom had questions about God's plan for her life? In what ways can you take your questions to God in prayer?

(bring your questions to God in prayer using your own words)

#### **Friday: Luke 1:36-37**

What are some things that you consider to be impossible? In what ways do you think God could make the impossible possible?

Dear God, I know that you make the impossible possible. Help me to believe in you. Give me the faith to know that I am safe in your hands. Amen.

#### **Saturday: Luke 1:38**

Have you ever made a big decision? What was it? How did you make it? In what ways can you say "Yes" to God? Dear God, I know that you call me to do great things in your world. Give me the courage of Mary, that I might step out in faith on behalf of those whom you love. Amen.

## **Week 3: ELIZABETH & baby John**

### **Daily Devos Questions & Prayers**

#### **Sunday: Luke 1:39-40**

Tell a story about a time when you went on a trip. What was the journey like? Who did you visit and why?

Dear God, please bless me when I travel. Bless all those who are on the road, or rail, or in the air today, that they may arrive at their destinations safely. Amen.

#### **Monday: Luke 1:41-42**

Have you ever gotten to feel a baby move in someone's stomach? What did it feel like? What do you think it means that John recognized Mary, even in the womb?

Dear God, watch over all of those who are pregnant today. Keep them and their children safe, and make it a joyful time of wonder. Amen.

#### **Tuesday: Luke 1:43-45**

When is a time when you were received as a guest? What made it comfortable to be a guest? Uncomfortable? In what ways can you work on being hospitable?

Dear God, as I prepare to be a guest and a host this season, help me to remember to take the time to prepare for your coming. Take the "bah!" out of my "humbug." Amen.

#### **Wednesday: Luke 1:57-58**

What do you think it would have been like to have been present at the birth of John? Do you know the story of your birth? What are your stories about children being born?

Dear Jesus, have care for all who are giving birth today. Help me to rejoice at the gifts of life that you constantly give through your great mercy. Amen.

#### **Thursday: Luke 1:59-61**

What is the significance of your name? Find out what it means, or why you were named what you were named.

Does it make a difference that God chose John's name?

Dear God, I thank you for my name. Help me to remember that names are powerful, and to use them kindly with those I meet. Amen.

#### **Friday: Luke 1:62-64**

What do you think it would be like to finally be able to speak after a long time of silence? Why do you think the first words out of Zechariah's mouth were praise of God? How do you use your speech to praise God?

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare your praise. Help me to always use my speech in a meaningful and holy way. Amen.

#### **Saturday: Luke 1:65-66**

What do you think it means that the hand of the Lord was with baby John? Do you think that the "hand of the Lord" has ever been with you? Could this phrase be tied to the presence of God's blessing?

Dear God, I ask for your blessing on my life today. Empower me to be a blessing to those you place in my path today. Amen.

## **Week 4: JOSEPH & the Angel**

### **Daily Devos Questions & Prayers**

#### **Sunday: Matthew 1:18**

What are the promises that people make to one another when they get engaged to be married? What would it be like to think that your significant other was lying to you about something very important?

Dear Lord, help me to keep the promises that I make, and make me faithful in all my relationships. Amen.

#### **Monday: Matthew 1:19**

What do you think that you would have done in Joseph's situation? What are some ways that you can do what is right, but also what is merciful?

Dear God, help me to know the right thing to do in sticky situations. Help me to show mercy to others, as you show mercy to me. Amen.

#### **Tuesday: Matthew 1:20**

What do you dream about? Do you listen to your dreams? Has God ever sent you a message through a dream? What was that experience like?

Dear Jesus, you are with me when I am awake and when I am asleep. Grant me peaceful rest, and an open mind to hear your voice. Amen.

#### **Wednesday: Matthew 1:21**

The name Jesus means "God saves." Why do you think that this is an important name for the Son of God to have? How does Jesus save us from our sins?

(Take a few moments to think about the ways in which you have sinned and want forgiveness)

Dear Jesus, I ask you to forgive me completely, and to save me from my sins. Amen.

#### **Thursday: Matthew 1:22-23**

What does it mean that "God is with us" in the person of Jesus? At what times and in what places do you know that God is present in your life?

Dear God, I thank you that you are present in my life, in the good times, in the bad times, and everywhere in between. Help me to know that this is really true in my life. Amen.

#### **Friday: Matthew 1:24**

Tell your favorite story of a wedding. What do you think that it means that Joseph and Mary are making a lifetime commitment at this point in the story?

Dear God, I thank you for Joseph and Mary, and the commitment that they made to one another in uncertain times. Help me to reach out in love towards others. Amen.

#### **Saturday: Matthew 1:25**

In Bible times, when a father named a child, he was claiming it as his own. What do you think of Joseph for claiming Jesus as his son on earth? Who do you claim as your own? Who claims you?

Dear Jesus, I thank you for claiming me as your own in the waters of baptism. Help me to walk as a child of your light, now and always. Amen.

## **Week 5: SHEPHERDS & ANGELS**

### **Daily Devos Questions & Prayers**

#### **Sunday: Luke 2:1-4**

What are some advantages of your hometown?  
Disadvantages? Where do you think God is at work in your hometown?

Dear God, I thank you for the town that I call home. Bless and keep all of the towns that are close to my heart, and help me to be a good member of the community. Amen.

#### **Monday: Luke 2:5-7**

What would it be like to have a baby in a barn? What do you think that it means that Jesus was born, not just to humans, but also to the animals? What do you think that it means that Jesus, the King of Kings, was born in the opposite of a palace?

Dear Jesus, I am thankful that you were born on earth, and that you came to all creation. Help me to remember your humble birth in the midst of all of the holiday joy. Amen.

#### **Tuesday: Luke 2:8-9**

Why do you think that the angels came to visit the shepherds to tell them about the birth of Jesus, before anyone else? Who in our time do you think that the angel would have come to?

Dear Lord, I thank you that you are not afraid to bring the message of your love all the way to the edges of society. Help me to be brave in proclaiming your message. Amen.

#### **Wednesday: Luke 2:10-12**

What is the best news that you have ever received? Who gave you the news? What was your reaction? How do you think the shepherds felt?

Dear Jesus, I thank you for being the good news of great joy of Christmas. Make my words and deeds reflect your joy, from the inside out. Amen.

#### **Thursday: Luke 2:13-15**

Shepherds did not usually make midnight trips to town. Why do you suppose that they left their responsibilities that night? What kind of good news would be enough for you to drop everything and go?

(Spend a bit of time being quiet, and listening for God's voice) Dear God, when you call me, help me to drop everything and go. Amen.

#### **Friday: Luke 2:16-18**

Tell about a time when you talked to someone else about Jesus. Who else could you tell today?

Dear Jesus, I thank you for being born as a real human being. Help me to not keep this miracle to myself, but to share it with those whom you have prepared. Amen.

#### **Saturday: Luke 2:19-20**

The shepherds just can't get enough of Jesus! What is something wonderful that you want to experience again and again? How can you invite God into that experience?

Dear God, thank you for wonderful experiences in my life. Help me to treasure them, and to meet you there. Amen.

## **Week 6: SIMEON & ANNA**

### **Daily Devos Questions & Prayers**

#### **Sunday: Luke 2:21**

One of the important parts of circumcision is that it places a child on the family tree. Who are some important branches of your family tree for you? Where would Jesus fit on your family tree?

Dear Jesus, I thank you for placing me into a family. Help me to learn and to grow, both as a child of my family and as a child of God. Amen.

#### **Monday: Luke 2:22-24**

In the Bible, birth order is often very important. In what order were you and your siblings (if any) born? What makes your place in your family special? Annoying?

Dear God, I know that I was born at just the right time. Help me to see the advantages of my place in my family, and to live according to your Word. Amen.

#### **Tuesday: Luke 2:25-27**

This reading mentions that the Holy Spirit rested on Simeon, and that Jesus' arrival was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. Have you ever experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit? In what ways do you see God in your life?

Dear God, send your Holy Spirit upon me. Reveal your will to me, and guide my life. Amen.

#### **Wednesday: Luke 2:28-32**

What difference does light make to a dark room? What kind of a difference do you suppose the light of Christ is

making in our dark world? How are you being called to let your "little light" shine?

Dear Jesus, you came to be a light to the whole world. Help me to see your light in dark times. Empower me to reflect your light in those places that need it most. Amen.

#### **Thursday: Luke 2:33-35**

What do you think it was like for Mary and Joseph to meet Simeon? What would it be like to know that, because of your son, your future will sometimes be difficult? What prayers would you have for your child?

(Offer a prayer in your own words for your children, future children, or children who are dear to you)

#### **Friday: Luke 2:36-37**

What do you think it would have been like to meet Anna? How do you think she might be different from other older women that you know? How would she be the same?

Dear God, I thank you for the wise saints in my life. Open my ears, that I might absorb their wisdom. Open my heart, that I might offer what I can to those of older years. Amen.

#### **Saturday: Luke 2:38**

Anna had been waiting for many years for Jesus to arrive on the scene. What are you waiting for? When you wait, is it with patience or impatience, despair or hope? What does God have to do with us while we wait?

Dear Jesus, make me patient when I have to wait for something that is dear to my heart. Help me to wait with hope. Cast out my impatience and despair. Amen.

## **Week 7: WISE MEN & the Star**

### **Daily Devos Questions & Prayers**

#### **Sunday: Matthew 2:1-2**

What do you think it would have been like to travel all the way across the known world because of a sign in the stars? Where is a place to which you would like to travel? What journey is God calling you to take?

Dear God, guide my journey of faith. Keep all who are traveling safe, and give me the courage to go where I have never been. Amen.

#### **Monday: Matthew 2:3-4**

When Herod doesn't know what to do next, he seeks knowledge from the wisest people he knows. Where do you go to seek wisdom or knowledge? How do you know which sources to trust? For whom are you a source of wisdom or knowledge in your life?

Dear Jesus, give me wisdom and knowledge. Help me to trust, that I may be guided in your way. Amen.

#### **Tuesday: Matthew 2:5-6**

Bethlehem is a little like the towns that we live in. What would it be like if someone famous was from your town? What would you like our towns to be famous for? (Pray for your town using your own words.)

#### **Wednesday: Matthew 2:7-8**

When is a time that you can remember searching diligently for something? Did you find it? How did you find what

you were looking for? What do you think God is calling you to search for?

Dear Jesus, I know that you came to save the lost. Find me when I am lost, and help me to have the diligence to seek that which needs to be found in my life. Amen.

#### **Thursday: Matthew 2:9-10**

What would it have been like to get to the end of such a long journey? When is a time when you have been overwhelmed with joy? How does God bring joy to you? Dear God, I thank you for the end of long journeys, and the gift of joy. Fill me with a sense of joy that never runs out, that it may overflow to those I meet. Amen.

#### **Friday: Matthew 2:11**

The wise men bring gifts to show that Jesus is king, God, and sacrifice. What do you think Mary and Joseph thought of these gifts? What is the best gift you ever received? Dear Jesus, thank you for reminding me of just who you really are. Help me to be generous, both in giving and receiving. Amen.

#### **Saturday: Matthew 2:12**

When is a time when you had to take a detour, or travel by an unfamiliar road? What was it like for you and your travel companions? What do you suppose it was like for the wise men?

Dear Jesus, sometimes you ask me to travel on unfamiliar roads. Give me courage to persevere, and an open mind and heart to follow where you lead. Amen.



## **Week 8: FLIGHT to Egypt**

### **Daily Devos Questions & Prayers**

#### **Sunday: Matthew 2:13a**

Joseph is dreaming again! Have you been paying attention to your dreams this season? What do they have to tell you? Dear God, help me to listen to you, no matter how you choose to speak to me. Amen.

#### **Monday: Matthew 2:13b**

Have you ever had to get up and go without advance notice? What was that experience like?

Dear Jesus, my time is not always your time. Help me to follow your lead, even when it interrupts my plans. Amen.

#### **Tuesday: Matthew 2:13c**

What do you think it would have been like to unexpectedly have to move with a two-year-old for Mary and Joseph? What would it be like for you?

Dear God, sometimes unexpected things happen to me. When I am in the middle of something unexpected, help me to you that you are present with me. Amen.

#### **Wednesday: Matthew 2:14**

Have you ever traveled to a foreign country? What was that experience like for you? If you could travel somewhere, where would you go?

Dear God, today I pray for those who are traveling because of the threat of war or violence. Keep them safe on their

journey, and help them to know that they are always at home in you. Amen.

#### **Thursday: Matthew 2:15**

What would it have been like for Mary and Joseph to learn a new language, customs, and even cuisine? What would it be like for you to do so?

Dear God, today I pray for those who live far from home. Sustain them as they learn new things, and comfort them when they miss what is familiar. Amen.

#### **Friday: Matthew 2:16**

King Herod's actions against the children in Bethlehem are similar to Pharaoh's in Moses' time. Why do you think he chose to do this? Where are there places in this world where something similar is happening, even today?

Dear Jesus, today I pray for all children in the world, in our country, and in my community whose lives are threatened by violence. Help me to see this danger and act to bring peace. Amen.

#### **Saturday: Matthew 2:17-18**

Have you ever been so sad that you didn't know if you would ever stop crying? What was that experience like? What do you think it would have been like to lose a child to violence? How can you make a difference in the lives of those who are mourning loss? (Pray in your own words for people you know who are sad, mourning, or in pain today.)