

PRAYER GUIDE

OF KINGS &
PROPHETS
& PROSTITUTES

December 2018



MEMORIZATION

And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

November 24th & 25th

Jeremiah 33:14-15 - *“The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. “In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; He will do what is just and right in the land.”*

Family. Is there any other group of people on earth that contains as many conflicting realities? On one hand, family is often the most significant source of comfort, enjoyment and security for us. Yet, nearly every family can point to deep pains, heavy burdens, and ongoing struggles that stem directly from current or past generations. We call this dysfunction, and no family is immune. In fact, every family since Adam and Eve has some measure of dysfunction simply due to our inherited sin nature. Is it comforting to know that Jesus' family tree is full of dysfunction, too? He descended from a long line of complex characters. Some are described as heroic, while others had shady reputations or were known to be all-out evil. Nevertheless, God's plan to bring Jesus and salvation into the world was accomplished right on time and within all of the prophesied circumstances. That fact should bring us comfort, too. What God sets out to do, He accomplishes. He is not dependent upon man's righteousness, obedience or cooperation. It's His faithfulness and His character that enable all things to work together for good. So, today let's praise Him for His sovereignty that redeems the bleakest situations. Let's thank Him for working in our lives even when we're not walking the path of obedience. All of the struggles stemming from our families are firmly in His care and providence.

Personal Reflection: _____

December 1st & 2nd

Matthew 1:1 - *This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham...*

Matthew begins his gospel carefully detailing over 40 generations of people who formed Jesus' ancestral line. He started with Abraham, the father of the Jews, and made his way to David, the king of Israel with an everlasting throne. Then, with careful precision, Matthew traced Jesus roots through Israel's Babylonian captivity, back to the land God gave them, and through the final ten, seemingly ordinary, generations that culminated with Joseph, a carefully chosen man who honorably married Mary after her immaculate conception. Why would Matthew start his gospel with a list? Prophecy, historicity, and proof. As a first-hand witness to the person of Jesus, His ministry and the kingdom He came to establish, Matthew wrote his gospel account to convince his Jewish audience—and us—that Jesus is the promised Messiah. So, he introduces Jesus, in his very first sentence, as "the son of David, the son of Abraham." This introduction solidifies Jesus both as coming from God's chosen people and as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah's line. But, we know that David's throne is not occupied today in a worldly sense. That's because Jesus came to establish much more than an

earthly nation or political power. In fact, one of the main proofs that Jesus is the Messiah is that everything He did was nearly the exact opposite of what all earthly kings would do. He did not amass material riches, nor did He associate with those who did. He did not come to be served, but to serve. In fact, He did not come to establish something for Himself at all, but rather to re-establish the right relationship between God and His people. He is Immanuel. Because of Him, we can be with God again. Jesus lived for what is beyond, and He calls us to do the same.

Personal Reflection: _____

December 8th & 9th

Romans 4:1-3 - *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

Jesus' family tree can be traced back to Adam and Eve. The Bible provides all the generational details needed to show how God immediately began the process to bring Jesus, the Solution to the sin problem that started there, into human existence as the way He would be reconciled to His creation again. God has always wanted to be with us, and through Jesus, Immanuel, He bridged the gap of separation caused by sin. But because original sin so completely and absolutely corrupted us, it took thousands of years of preparation and all the events of the Old Testament for humanity to be made ready for its Deliverer. Even the spiritual heroes in Jesus' ancestral line, like Abraham, who were called out and placed in covenant relationship with God, were deeply flawed and inconsistent in their faithfulness. Yes, Abraham followed God into an unknown land and was even willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac, for God. But, Abraham lied when he thought he himself might be sacrificed (Genesis 12:11-13). He also slept with a servant when he doubted God's ability to give him a son with his wife (Genesis 16:3-4). Then, he abandoned that servant and the son he had with her when the consequences of his actions became difficult to live with (Genesis 21:9-14). So, as far as holding up his terms of the covenant, Abraham was a failure. God was the faithful One. The truth is: without God in his story, Abraham was an unfaithful, deceitful and selfish person. Add God to his story, and Abraham becomes a great man of faith and a "friend of God" (2 Chronicles 20:7). The same is true for us. Whatever our story is, however sporadic our obedience, God is the covenant keeper who has not, and will not, break His promise of forgiveness, restoration, and transformation through Jesus. Without God, we can do nothing. But, with God, all things are possible (Matthew 19:26)!

Personal Reflection: _____

December 15th & 16th

Matthew 1:3 - *Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram...*

Many Christians believe that God's purposes can only be achieved through faithful obedience to His will. But, the story of how Jesus came to earth as Savior is riddled with people who acted in direct opposition to His plan. Yet, God's promise was never thwarted. For example, the promised Messiah was to be a descendant of Abraham and David, which includes an ancestral line through Jacob's son, Judah. Judah was one of Joseph's brothers, the one who suggested and convinced the others to sell Joseph into slavery. After causing this family trauma, he moved away from them and began a life with a forbidden

Canaanite woman. With her, Judah had three sons, the oldest of which married Tamar. When Judah's first two sons died without producing any children because they were found "wicked in the LORD's sight" (Genesis 38:7 & 10), the custom was for Tamar to have a child with Judah's third son in order to continue the family line. But, after Judah's wife died as well, he feared losing his remaining son which caused him to deny the union with Tamar. Desperate for a son who would care for her, the widowed Tamar schemed to become pregnant by Judah himself. By disguising herself as a prostitute, her scheme worked, and she had Perez, a forefather of David and Jesus. This sad story of Judah and Tamar continues from there like a soap opera, and we're left wondering how our perfect, sinless Savior had any hope of coming from such a sordid family tree. The hope is found in God. Thankfully, God was not—and is not—limited by man's sinfulness. If the promise of eternal salvation were not dependent upon God's character and power alone, what kind of promise would it be? But, since God's promises are sure (Philippians 1:6), then we can live in cooperation with His will realizing we cannot lose, even when our walk is weak or even a bit wayward.

Personal Reflection: _____

December 22nd & 23rd

2 Samuel 7:16 - *Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before Me; your throne will be established forever.*

The providence of God and the grandeur of His plan is beautifully demonstrated in the establishment of His covenant with David. At that time, David had expressed his desire to build a temple in which God would live. In response, God spoke through the prophet, Nathan, to say no to the temple, but yes to much, much more. The covenant revealed God's plan to establish an everlasting kingdom through David's son—a dynasty that would last forever. David's reaction is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:18-29 in the form of a prayer. It's filled with gratitude, awe, and humble acceptance. David knew these blessings were given to him in order that Israel and the world would benefit, yet he had no idea of the magnitude of God's plan. See, David wanted to build a temple for God to live in, but God was creating a way to live in people's hearts (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). David's plan was to build "a house of cedar" for God (2 Samuel 7:2), while God was building David's house of descendants (2 Samuel 7:11-12). Ultimately, David's earthly dynasty ended within four centuries, but Jesus, his direct descendant, became the fulfillment of this covenant and reigns eternally. We can be like David, too. We attempt to build our own temples of holiness through righteous behavior and good works, while God wants to build holiness within us so that He can work in greater ways through us. David could not have foreseen Christ's eternal throne, but he was surrendered to God and His plan enough to say, "Do as You promised, so that Your name will be great forever" (2 Samuel 7:25-26). If God has said no to an earnest request of ours, it's only because He has a greater work in mind. It takes just as much faith to carry out a yes from God as to accept a no from Him. So, let's follow David's example of gratitude, humility and acceptance as we pray, "Use me", so that Your name will be great forever.

Personal Reflection: _____

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