
THE BOOK OF

JONAH PLUS

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JONAH 1:1-3

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Jonah 1:1-3 (NIV)

The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." 3 But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...to flee from the Lord."

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week pray that God will reveal his plan for your life. Ask him to also reveal His plans and direction to those on the road as they work to listen to and rest in the plan God has given each of them.

MESSAGE

Message: The Lord had a big job to do, and he chose Jonah to be part of the plan. A town with over 100,000 people lost sight of God and was living in wickedness. God asks Jonah to travel to this town and be his special messenger to remind them of God's love and mercy. What is Jonah's response? "Not me, God! I refuse to tell your story to those people. In fact I am going to run from town and you and go as far away as I can so that I do not have to talk to these people or to you." While I do not think Jonah really believed he could run from God, he was running from God's plan for his life.

How about us? When we get clear direction on what we should be doing, what is our response to it? Do we move quickly to execute the plans and goals God has set before us? Or do we, like Jonah, flee from God? As we will see it is God who will win in the end, so it seems best to both start and end with his plan.

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JONAH 1:3-9

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Jonah 1:3-9 (NIV)

But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD. 4 Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish."

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."

Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" 9 He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week pray for those on the road that they will not only believe in God and his plan, but will both rest in God's power, it and tell others about it. Pray for those at home that they will support their traveling family member in prayer and love this week.

MESSAGE

Jonah has run, but God is still close at hand. Jonah has boarded a ship going the opposite direction from what God had requested, and God is loudly knocking at the door asking Jonah to respond. As the boat is hurled in the sea, all the sailors are calling to their gods with no answer to be found. Jonah is taking a nap trying to ignore the whole world. When the sailors finally find him they are anxious to find out if Jonah can help. This is the great part... Although Jonah is running from God's plan, he boldly proclaims God as God and proclaims God's power and majesty. Jonah may be a reluctant traveler, but he is a firm believer in God and His power. "I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land."

What about us? Do we have that faith in God? Have we wholly accepted who he is and what he has done? And do we continue to have difficulty in doing what he wants us to do? Well, we are not alone. God continues to remind us that he is there to give direction, AND power to all who believe, even those who don't seem to listen to all the details he has already supplied.

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JONAH 1:10-16

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Jonah 1:10-16(NIV)

This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) 11 The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" 12 "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you." 13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"At this the men greatly feared the Lord..."

14 Then they cried to the LORD, "O LORD, please do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O LORD, have done as you pleased." 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week focus your prayers for those who are far from home. Ask God to supply the needed strength as they feel the emotional pull from home and family. Ask God to be close to all of those away from family.

MESSAGE

Jonah, the reluctant traveler, knows the right thing to do in the midst of the storm. He tells the others to throw him overboard to save themselves. These sailors, even though they did NOT know Jonah's God and DID know he was running from Him, did not want the guilt of killing a man. In fact, they worked harder to row to shore in an effort to avoid throwing Jonah overboard. Finally, when they could see that it was impossible to get the ship to shore, they did as Jonah had asked and threw him overboard to his certain death. Once they had done this the seas became calm. Immediately these sailors gave credit to God and both worshipped and sacrificed to Him. So Jonah, running from the Lord's plan, is a part of God's plan to save all the sailors, both physically and spiritually. Jonah, the reluctant traveler and reluctant preacher, is used by God in the midst of his disobedience.

How do you see God? Is He the one interfering with what you want done, or is He the one you have knelt before and asked for direction, strength, and mercy?

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JONAH 1:17-2:10

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Jonah 1:17-2:10(NIV)

17 But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights. **Jonah 2** **Jonah's Prayer** 1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. 2 He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry. 3 You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week pray for those traveling that they may look inwardly at their emotions and ask what God is trying to say. Ask God to let them hear Him clearly so they can seek His will alone.

14 I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' 5 The engulfing waters threatened me the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. 6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God. 7 "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. 8 "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. 9 But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD." 10 And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God."

MESSAGE

Well, being thrown into the sea is no great pleasure, and Jonah knows his fate, but once again God has a different plan. Rather than a quick death by drowning, God has a plan for salvation by a fish. (A really BIG fish!) We have seen Jonah as a reluctant and disobedient man. Now we see his emotions sink into a great depression. In verses 1 through 10 of the second chapter we see Jonah cry out to God several times. With his world crashing in around him, he is forced to acknowledge his total dependence on God. After three days in the belly of the whale, Jonah finally understands that God alone is the one who can save, and he reaches out to God for salvation AND God provides.

While we may not need a long weekend inside a whale, such as Jonah did, to bring us to a state of anger, depression, and dependence, we can all learn from the emotions God has given us. He desires our attention and will bring us to whatever state necessary for us to listen to HIS love and will for our life. What state of mind has God brought you to this week? Are you listening and responding, or still fleeing from God and His will for your life?

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PSALM 100

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

psalm 100(NIV)

A psalm. For giving thanks.

1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. 5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week may your prayers be prayers of thanksgiving for all God has provided!

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

MESSAGE

“As we begin Thanksgiving week, I want to share Psalm 100, a psalm of praise and thanksgiving that reminds us of our great blessings in Christ. This week, meditate on (and maybe even memorize!) this worship song.

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JONAH 3:1-10

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Jonah 3:1:10(NIV)

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." 3 Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. 4 On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." 5 The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." 3 Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. 4 On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." 5 The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. 6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7 Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh:

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week pray that those traveling will hear the word of the Lord as shown by the modern day "Jonahs" we encounter. Praise God for His compassion and mercy in our lives.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

: "Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord..."

MESSAGE

RESULTS!! That is what Jonah gets once he acknowledges God's will and acts on it. God asks (for the second time) for Jonah to go to Nineveh, and this time Jonah goes. The first time he flees, and the sailors are converted. This time he obeys, and the entire city, including the KING, are repentant and turn to the Lord. Now, this is quite a display of evangelism. Jonah does exactly what God asks him to, and all of the city's inhabitants respond and praise God. They turn from their sin and turn to God.

That is a great triumph. Today's thought is not about Jonah, but about the Ninevites. Have you been shown God's compassion and mercy? What is your response? Their response was to repent and to worship God.

What is God's response? He shows them compassion and mercy. The expected (and deserved) punishment of death was not given. Instead, they were allowed to live and worship the Lord God, their Creator

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JONAH 4:1-11

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Jonah 4:1:11(NIV)

1 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.
2 He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" 5 Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city

6 Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?" "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die." 10 But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week pray that those traveling will hear the word of the Lord as shown by the modern day "Jonahs" we encounter. Praise God for His compassion and mercy in our lives.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

MESSAGE

This is a tough chapter. What a dialogue between Jonah and God! Jonah has just done exactly what God wanted with the BEST result that could be expected. How did Jonah respond? He responded in anger, telling God something like, "I knew you would not kill these people; that's why I did not want to come here in the first place!" Then, in an act of TOTAL selfishness, he goes up on a hill and waits to see if maybe God will destroy them and NOT show His boundless mercy. As Jonah waits for the destruction, God provides some shade for Jonah who selfishly sits in anger and depression. God then chooses to make the point that He is in charge, and He takes away the vine shading Jonah. What is Jonah's response to this? "I am angry enough to die."

Wow! As Jonah arrogantly sits and waits for God to dole out justice to others, he is angry that God's mercy is not given to him personally, 24X7. God's response to Jonah is simple, "Is your comfort more important than the 120,000 plus people who have turned from evil and now worship me so that I can choose to show my mercy and compassion?"

Jonah: a reluctant evangelist and a self-centered man, but USED by God. So, what attitude will you choose as God's success is delivered through YOU?

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JONAH 1-4

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE**Jonah 1-4 (NIV)****Jonah 1**

1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." 3 But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD. 4 Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish." 7 Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" 9 He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." 10 This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) 11 The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" 12 "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you." 13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before.

14 Then they cried to the LORD, "O LORD, please do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, O LORD, have done as you pleased." 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him. 17 But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 2

1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. 2 He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry. 3 You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. 4 I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' 5 The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. 6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God. 7 "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. 8 "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. 9 But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make. Salvation comes from the LORD." 10 And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Jonah 1-4 (NIV)

Jonah 3

1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." 3 Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. 4 On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." 5 The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. 6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7 Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9 Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." 10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

Jonah 4

1 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. 2 He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4 But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" 5 Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?" "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die." 10 But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

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PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

BY DAVID HEWETT

This week thank God for rescuing you and those in your household. Take time this week to allow God to show you where He has given mercy and where He is reaching out to change you into His servant.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me.”

MESSAGE

: Jonah is the story of a man who was reluctant to do God's will. Yet he was a believer and follower of God. He struggled with his emotions and God's character openly and aggressively. Jonah could be a man described with the following characteristics:

- § A believer, a worshiper of God (Jonah 1:9)
- § A preacher/evangelist (Jonah 1:1)
- § Disobedient (Jonah 1:3)
- § Selfish and self-centered (Jonah 4)
- § Angry with God (Jonah 4:9)

All of these are a part of Jonah's character and emotions, but one thing is certain:

Jonah was used by God.

The lesson to see in Jonah is that just like us, he was not perfect. But just like Jonah, we can be used by God. God does not take perfect specimens and make them better. He takes all of us and allows us the opportunity to be His children. The choice is yours: rather than become frustrated with your shortcomings, why not become focused on God's results both through you and in spite of you, by surrendering all to Him?

God is in control whether we want Him to be or not. This week, try letting Him have His way.

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LUKE 2:1-20

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1-20 (NIV)

1In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3And everyone went to his own town to register. 4So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." 15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

: This week pray that God gives you the ability to see what He has done for you. Ask God to allow your heart and your thoughts to be fixed on Him. Pray that the actions and activities you are involved in bring glory to God. Continue to pray for those that may have to travel during this busy week. Ask God to let them focus on Him and not the concerns of travel.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"Glory to God in the highest..."

MESSAGE

: This week's passage is the familiar account of the birth of Jesus Christ from the gospel of Luke. I would like to look at two things as we meditate on this passage. First is the condition of Joseph and Mary. They were, just as we are, travelers on this earth. They had just completed a journey of over 70 miles by foot and on donkey, with Mary being nine months pregnant.

I know we can all relate to the trials of travel, but I am certain that the situation we see here rivals even the worst of the frequent flyer stories any of us can recall. Even with this as the background, we see the work of God at hand.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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MESSAGE

Later in the text, we read about the angels announcing the Christ and the shepherds' visit to Joseph, Mary, and the newborn baby. And the message in it all: "Glory to God in the highest!" As we are in the midst of "the holiday season," as it is now so affectionately referred to, let us fix our minds on Christ Jesus. Not only the Baby Jesus of the manger, but Christ the King, and let us remember that we need to give all glory to God and God alone. This week focus on how you can give God glory no matter what the circumstances. This week bow before the Creator and give Him your worship.

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JOHN 1:1-18

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

John 1:1-18 (NIV)

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning. 3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

6There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. 8He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. 9The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

: This week pray that others will see Christ as John saw Him. Ask God to open your eyes to His power and might and His awesome touch in the wonders of this world. Pray for those on the road that they will be able to make it safely home for a time with their family. Ask God to give them the desire of their heart: time with those they love.

10He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- 13children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" 16From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. 17For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"Through Him all things were made..."

MESSAGE

: As we approach Christmas, a day of reflection on the birth of our Savior, this is a great passage to help us understand the majesty, glory, and power of Christ. Of the many names we see for Christ throughout the Bible, here is the one that is foundational: "The Word". We also get a glimpse of the Trinity as well as the reality of our inability to fully understand God. John tells us, "...the Word was with God, and the Word was God..." We are able to see the awesome power of God not only in our life, but since the beginning of time.

Verse three says it all, "Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made." What a statement! NOTHING that has been made was made without Him. Many times we get caught up in our own power or the "power" of humanity and the complex things we have been able to do, yet the reality is that all has been done because of the mighty power of Christ alone. As we view Christ this Christmas, let's reflect all the way back to "The Word" and remember that all that has been made has been made through Him.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

LUKE 2:8-20

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

luke 2: 8-20 (NIV)

8And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...news of great joy....glorifying and praising God..."

15When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 16So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

: This week let your prayers be those of praise and glory to God. Continue to thank God for His Son, Jesus, and the gift of His birth. Praise God for all He has done for you and those in your family and others around you. This week give God the glory He deserves for the works HE has done in YOUR life.

MESSAGE

: Last week we looked at Christ as the eternal Word of God. This week as the "Christmas season" begins to wind down and the New Year is well in view, let's continue to focus on Christ and our response to Him. The passage in Luke is the traditional story of Christmas. We see the angels appearing to the shepherds to announce the birth of Christ and then their visit to see the Christ Child. Two things become evident as we look closely at this story. First, the message of the angels. Their message was about GREAT JOY! Read verse 10 again. The focus is on the Joy that has been given to ALL people.

We must remember that this is the reason for Christ's birth: JOY! The second thing to see is the response by the shepherds once they have seen the "Joy" described by the angels. In verse 20, "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God..." That should be our response as we consider the birth of Christ AND all year long. Our response to God should be that of glorifying HIM and praising HIM. How about you, can you take the message of the angels and glorify God this week...and beyond? Let the JOY of Christmas be your response all year long.