

And You Shall Call His Name

“JESUS”

A Christmas Prayer Journal

24 Days of Prayer and Scripture Exploring the Biblical Names of Jesus

By Rev. David Kling

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301 Drake Avenue, SE | Huntsville, AL 35802

www.covhsv.org

Sunday Services at
8:30AM (Contemporary) and 11:00AM (Traditional)

2017 CHRISTMAS EVENTS AT COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN

December 1, 6:00PM	Parent's Holiday Night Out
December 3, 9:45AM	Children's Play & Reception "With Every Christmas Card I Make"
December 3, 5:00PM	Tuba Christmas Concert
December 7, 7:00PM	Women's Coffee, Confections and Carols
December 8, 7:00PM	Mariners' Christmas Party
December 10, 9:45AM	"The Road to Bethlehem" Children's Education Experience
December 10, 11:00AM	Choral Cantata
December 14, 9:30AM	Preschool Christmas Pageant
December 16, 7:00PM	Benjamin Britten's "Ceremony of Carols" – Harp & Choir
December 18, 7:00PM	Brass Band of Huntsville Christmas Concert

Christmas Eve Services

December 24, 11:00AM	Family Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 7:00PM	Traditional Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 9:00PM	Jazz Christmas Eve Service
December 31, 11:00AM	New Year's Eve Worship

An updated online calendar with locations and additional details may be found at covhsv.org/media/calendar

DECEMBER SERMON SERIES

Join us for worship on Sundays in December at 8:30AM or 11:00AM to hear Pastors Hal Oakley and David Kling preach through the original Christmas story in Luke's Gospel.

INTRODUCTION

My desire in writing this brief devotional is that you would explore the scriptures and consider the identity of Jesus during this Christmas season. Each day identifies a name given to Jesus by a particular verse in the Bible. I then offer some reflections on the context, history or the Greek and Hebrew connected to that name.

Children in the children's program at Covenant Presbyterian have been assigned these same scripture verses along with fun activities, so if you are reading these scriptures as a family, you may find in these pages additional "meat" to engage in conversation.

This season brings many joys and many activities into our lives. But at its core – it is an invitation to grow more deeply in relationship with the one who is both Alpha and Omega, King and Servant, Bread and Light, Lamb and Savior.

Read these short reflections at a time that works for you each day and then consider how this name of Jesus impacts your life. Pray that the name of Jesus for that day would be true for your neighbors and friends.

May Jesus bless you and your family during this Christmas season, I can't wait to hear what happens next!

David

Advent 2017

Day 1 | Friday, December 1, 2017

ALPHA and OMEGA

Revelation 1:17–18 (ESV)

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last,¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”

The words Jesus uses here to describe himself in a vision to John the Revelator are “I am the first and the last.” In Greek these are the words “protos” (πρῶτος) and “eschatos.” (ἔσχατος). Jesus uses these words to open the book of Revelation and will repeat himself at the end of the book with the words “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).” Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. So Jesus is effectively saying that he is the “A and the Z.” Jesus’ claim on humanity is comprehensive. He is not an “extra” that can be tacked on to the left over bits and pieces of our lives. Rather he is the source and destination of our being.. We are human because he is human. We have fellowship with God because he has fellowship with God. We live in creation because all things were created through him.

Today think about how Jesus is the first and the last.

Day 2 | Saturday, December 2, 2017

IMMANUEL

Matthew 1:23 (ESV)

²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

This verse in Matthew is a quotation from the Old Testament Prophecy Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The Hebrew word for “God” in the name Immanuel is the word “*El*” (אֱלֹהִים). It is seen often in the form “*Elohim*.” In the Old Testament this name of God is associated with God’s nature as holy, all powerful, all knowing, all seeing. Genesis 1 is a good example of this name. It shows God creating the entire cosmos without lifting a finger – simply through the utterance of a word. The extraordinary thing is that such a distant God, dwelling in the highest heavens, could become close to earth-bound human beings. This is the miracle of Jesus’s birth: that the one who lives in unapproachable light would choose to be God *with* us. This Christmas, know that you are celebrating the deep paradox of creation – the one who is both near and far, mighty and vulnerable, just and merciful: Immanuel.

Today think about how Jesus is God with us.

Day 3 | Sunday, December 3, 2017

JESUS

Matthew 1:21 (ESV)

²¹ *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*

The name Jesus is the Greek name *Iesous* (Ἰησοῦς), which is a Hellenization of the Hebrew word *Joshua* (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ), which translates at “God is help.” The word for “God” in this name is the Hebrew “Yah,” which is taken from the famous name Yahweh or Jehovah. This beautiful name has been written and preached on extensively. It represents a more intimate and visceral side of God’s dealings with humanity. This name is used in Genesis 2 when God forms man and woman from dirt and bones and breathes life into them (like divine CPR into their nostrils). It is also the name that God reveals to Moses on Mount Horeb in the burning bush in Exodus 11 – the name that God would use to liberate Israel from slavery and to defeat the wicked Pharaoh. It is this name that Jesus bears – the God who breathes life into the dust and sets us free from evil.

Today think about how Jesus is the God who Saves.

Day 4 | Monday, December 4, 2017

CHRIST, THE MESSIAH

Matthew 16:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

The name Christ is the Greek word *Christos* (Χριστός), which translates as the “anointed one.” It is used in the New Testament to be equivalent with the Hebrew title Messiah, which comes from the Hebrew word *Mashiach* (מָשִׁיחַ). Anointing refers to the practice in the ancient world of pouring oil on the head of someone (or something) who has been marked for a special purpose. This could include a prophet, a priest or a king. It was a tangible symbol, like a crown or badge, that signified that this person was acting on behalf of God. This makes Peter’s declaration that Jesus is both “Christ” and “Son of the living God” more understandable. As the Christ of God, Jesus was anointed to perform the royal task of inaugurating God’s Kingdom on earth. In the course of this divine task, Jesus dealt with Satan, sin, and death once and for all through his death on the cross and resurrection from the tomb.

Today think about how Jesus is God’s anointed one.

Day 5 | Tuesday, December 5, 2017

BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:35 (ESV)

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

Food and drink are part of the joy of the Christmas season. Many celebrate with chocolates, pies, cakes, roasts, eggnog, hot chocolate, hot cider and more. But Jesus is even more than these things. When he calls himself the bread of life he recalls the bread of heaven (manna) that God gave fresh each morning to Israel when they wandered through the foodless desert for 40 years. Without God, we may feel that life is a spiritual desert: lacking purpose, flavor and life. Jesus offers himself to us fresh each day to sustain our hearts, minds and bodies. The Greek word for bread in John 6:35 is *artos* (ἄρτος), it is here equivalent with the Hebrew *lechem* (לֶחֶם). The meaning here extends far beyond just “bread,” meaning any kind of food, nourishment or anything that sustains life. Christians believe that this sustenance through the sacrifice of Jesus continues not only in the present life but even after death, offering eternal life for God’s children.

Think today about how Jesus is the bread of life.

Day 6 | Wednesday, December 6, 2017

THE VINE

John 15:5 (ESV)

⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

In Huntsville a wonderful Christian counseling center is called “The Vine.” The image comes from one of Jesus’s names for himself in John 15:5. It is a beautiful image of how all life, love and power flows to Christians through Jesus. It also shows how all Christians are connected through Jesus. The Greek word here is *ampelos* (ἄμπελος). Think about all the millions of branches exist in a single vineyard. If the wind blows or a hand tears one away from the main stalk, nutrients and water from the soil can no longer flow to the branch. It withers fruitless. In contrast, think of the thousands of grapes clustered on a single branch that draws its sustenance from the main vine. Christmas is a time of abundance for many families. Other families may struggle to pay bills during the Christmas season. Every family, however, can receive abundant life in Jesus Christ, the true vine and bear abundant fruit through the power of the Holy Spirit by blessing their friends and neighbor with the fruits of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22–23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

Think today about how Jesus is the Vine.

Day 7 | Thursday, December 7, 2017

LAMB OF GOD

John 1:29 (ESV)

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

This is the declaration of John the Baptist when Jesus receives his baptism in the Jordan River. This is a powerful name that has many references, including the detailed language of sacrifice in the Old Testament. Religions in the ancient world connected to gods through the blood of animals sacrificed to that god. The logic was that if the gods were the source of life, then to deal with the God humans had to return some of that life back in the form of blood. In the Old Testament, however, the God of Israel declared that he would not require human blood (as some ancient cults did, see Leviticus 18:21 and Deuteronomy 18:10). Israel could relate to God saying “I love you,” or “I’m sorry” through the blood of an animal instead. A powerful example of this is in the story of the Passover, in which God passes over the homes of the Israelite slaves, which were marked with the blood of a lamb but kills the firstborn son of the Egyptian households not marked in blood. Through the blood of Jesus on the cross, God likewise passes over our sins and forgives us. Through the blood of Jesus on the cross we have access to the Father and he hears our prayers.

Think today about how Jesus is the Lamb of God.

Day 8 | Friday, December 8, 2017

TEACHER

John 13:13–14 (ESV)

¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

The word for teacher here is the Greek word *didaskalos* (διδάσκαλος) and may be a translation of the Hebrew word *Rabbi* (רַבִּי). The Hebrew word literally means “my master.” This makes Jesus' words in John 13:13-14 even more touching. He is the master and the teacher, yet he stoops down to care for our every need, to wash even our feet. The most powerful way he does this is through washing away our sins in his sacrifice on the cross. But Jesus as teacher has even more to offer us. Jesus desires that we would be full of the knowledge of God's truth and that we also would be able to share this teaching with others. In one of the prophecies of Jesus in book of Isaiah it says “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

Think today about how Jesus is the Teacher.

Day 9 | Saturday, December 9, 2017

SAVIOR

Luke 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

This is the joyful news of the angel in Luke's Christmas story. The Greek word for savior here is *soter* (σωτήρ). The word was used in Greek and Roman culture to denote gods, heroes, emperors and generals who healed, delivered and rescued. Note that here the angel uses the word next to the word "Christ" (see December 4th). At that first Christmas 2000 years ago the angels declared to the shepherds that the baby Jesus had already been chosen by God for the special job of saving, healing, delivering and rescuing human beings from our brokenness, failures, fears and death itself.

Think today about how Jesus is Savior.

Day 10 | Sunday, December 10, 2017

REDEEMER

Job 19:25 (ESV)

²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

Job speaks this sentence when everything has been taken from him: his family, his home, his wealth and even his health. These words point to a hope in a “Redeemer,” which in Hebrew has the noun form *go-el* (גֹּאֵל). In the Old Testament redeemers played an important role in restoring justice to the poor and needy. A redeemer could be a family member who married a widow in order to provide for her, as in the book of Ruth. A redeemer might be a person who forgave debts or who laid claim to a piece of property. Job points to a redeemer who can lay claim to his life and deliver him justice even when Job’s own life has been destroyed. Jesus is our redeemer. When we were least able to help ourselves, the most guilty, the most hopeless we put our redeemer on the cross. But in this supreme act of disobedience, God nevertheless laid claim to our lives. He paid the debts of our sins and restored our inheritance to us – eternal life in the presence of God.

Think today about how Jesus is your Redeemer.

Day 11 | Monday, December 11, 2017

PROPHET

Acts 3:22 (ESV)

²² Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.

Peter here explains who Jesus is to those gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. He cites a famous passage where God tells Moses: “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him” (Deuteronomy 18:18-19). This is who Jesus was. His words were God’s words. His commands are God’s commands. He leads us as God’s people stretching forth in time and space to enter God’s promised land of eternal life with him.

Think today about how Jesus is the Prophet like Moses.

Day 12 | Tuesday, December 12, 2017

GREAT HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 4:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

A “high priest” in Greek is an *archiereus* (ἀρχιερεύς). It denotes here the priest who had the authority to enter the most holy place in the temple or tabernacle to intercede for Israel’s sins once a year on the Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur* and to offer sacrifice upon the Mercy Seat. In the same way, Jesus is our High Priest. Indeed, the writer of Hebrews adds the Greek word *mega* to make Jesus the Mega High Priest, or Great High Priest. Jesus enters into the most holy place in the cosmos – heaven itself – and intercedes on our behalf before God the Father. More than this – he himself is the perfect sacrifice, shedding his own blood on the cross to restore our relationship with our heavenly father.

Think today about how Jesus is the High Priest.

Day 13 | Wednesday, December 13, 2017

KING

Zechariah 9:9 (ESV)

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The Hebrew word for “king” is *melek* (מֶלֶךְ) and the prophet Zechariah here addresses the daughter’s of Zion and Jerusalem. Jerusalem on top of mount Zion was the site of throne of King David. They represent the seat of royal authority for God’s people. In the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible, Zechariah declares that the King *veniet* or “comes.” This same word gives us the name of the Christmas season “Advent” where we celebrate the “coming” of King Jesus. Jesus himself brings the words of Zechariah 9:9 to life when he rides into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday (Luke 19:28-40). By riding in on a donkey Jesus declared that he was the true King and that he was the rightful heir to the throne. As our King Jesus has authority not only over the spiritual things in our lives, but over every aspect of our lives. He is the King of our thoughts, words and actions. He is the ruler of all the cosmos. And yet – just as he was born in a humble manger on Christmas – so, too, he rides to his coronation on a humble donkey.

Think today about how Jesus is the King.

Day 14 | Thursday, December 14, 2017

GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:11 (ESV)

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

It is fitting that at Christmas the first to hear the good news of Jesus's birth were not the kings, priests or merchants of Palestine, but rather the lowly shepherds. Shepherds were outsiders, hired hands who slept in the fields to protect the livestock from predators or thieves. The work was hard and required careful vigilance and courage. In the same way, there is no harm that can befall us, no disaster that can strike us, no hardship that can dog us that is outside of the sight and care of Jesus. He is vigilant for us. He is courageous in his defense on our behalf.

How is Jesus your Good Shepherd?

Day 15 | Friday, December 15, 2017

SON OF DAVID

Matthew 21:9 (ESV)

⁹ And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

David provides the model for the ideal king in the Old Testament. He is the “man after God’s heart” (Acts 13:22). David dances before the presence of God with all his might (2 Samuel 6:14). David defeats Goliath relying solely on the power of God (1 Samuel 17:46). David models repentance for sin, asking God “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Psalm 51). At the end of his life, God made a covenant with David saying that “your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16). This is why the crowds called Jesus the Son of David. Jesus returned to the royal city of Jerusalem to inherit the throne of David, the true King. Unlike David, however, when he died Jesus came back to life and is seated now on a heavenly throne. In this way, Jesus fulfills the Davidic covenant, a Son of David who reigns forever. It is Jesus who creates in us a clean heart and renews a right spirit within us. Jesus is the true man after God’s heart. Through him, we too experience the Father’s love and receive a royal commission as children of the heavenly King.

Think about how Jesus is the Son of David today.

Day 16 | Saturday, December 16, 2017

SON OF GOD

1 John 4:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

This is the key claim of Christianity, that Jesus is the Son of God. This short statement in 1 John powerfully captures the way that we relate to God through Jesus. The word “confess” here is the Greek word *homologeō* (ὁμολογέω), which combines the words “same” (*homo*) and “word/idea” (*logos*). To confess that Jesus is the Son of God is to take a radical step of agreeing with these mysterious words – of declaring that you hold the same idea as Peter (Matthew 16:16) and the centurion at the cross (Mark 15:39). Not everyone in history has confessed this idea when confronted with it. It is a difficult concept. To help the church gain clarity, hundreds of pastors gathered at the First Council of Nicaea in 325AD and wrote the following statement to be read in churches: “Lord JESUS CHRIST, [is] the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father.”¹ To confess that Jesus is the Son of God means to agree that Jesus is himself divine. On Christmas we celebrate not just the birth of son of Mary, but the birth of the Son of God.

Think about how Jesus is the Son of God today.

¹ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes: The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations*, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890), 59.

Day 17 | Sunday, December 17, 2017

PRINCE OF PEACE

Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The Hebrew of the title “Prince of Peace” is *Sar Shalom* (שָׂרֵי־שְׁלוֹמִים), which I find even more beautiful than the English. The Hebrew word for peace, *Shalom*, indicates not only the absence of conflict but also the presence of wholeness. The passage in Isaiah continues in verse 7 that this Prince of Peace will rule on the throne of David. As the Prince of Peace, Jesus not only eliminates evil from the world through his sacrifice on the cross, but he also is at work through the Holy Spirit to restore us to healed relationships with one another and with God the Father. As the Prince of Peace he is actively bringing goodness and wholeness to all creation.

Think about how Jesus is the Prince of Peace today.

Day 18 | Monday, December 18, 2017

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

John 14:6 (ESV)

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

This is one of the most challenging statements that Jesus makes – but it is also one of the most comforting. It is difficult because in a pluralistic society like America it is scandalous to claim that there is only one way to access God the Father. However, the comforting thing is that there *is* a way to access God, in spite of the ways we fall short individually and collectively. The road is not blocked. The truth is not hidden. The life is not threatened. All these are offered freely to us through Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection from the grave. As Presbyterians we believe, moreover, that God does not even abandon us to find the road on our own, but rather chooses us from before the foundation of the world to access the Father through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:4-5).

Think about how Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

Day 19 | Tuesday, December 19, 2017

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12 (ESV)

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

The Greek word for “world” here is *kosmos* (κόσμος). I often think about a globe or a picture of planet earth when I hear the word “world.” But the word *kosmos* (like the English word “cosmos”) can refer to all created reality. There is no aspect of our human existence that the light of Christ cannot shine on. There is no corner of the universe that is inaccessible to the light of Christ. We know that without light there could be no life on Earth. Plants would not grow. Animals would have nothing to eat. Humans would not be able to see. Jesus is the light of life. He is the fundamental source of our being. He is the flashlight illuminating the right choices for our lives. At Christmas, we celebrate the moment that this light was revealed in our midst in the Baby Jesus.

Think about how Jesus is the Light of the World today.

Day 20 | Wednesday, December 20, 2017

LORD

Acts 10:36 (ESV)

³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all),

Perhaps the earliest and shortest summary of the Gospel is that “Jesus is Lord” (Romans 10:9). The Greek word for Lord is *kyrios* (κύριος), and is used often by the New Testament writers to refer to God. At a more fundamental level, the word means “master,” “owner,” or “the person in control.” To say that Jesus is Lord, is to say that he is the one in charge. He owns our lives and has authority over the world. All things belong to him and all honor is owed to him. This is why we worship Jesus and praise his name. When we sing songs glorifying Jesus’s birth at Christmas we declare that Jesus is in charge: Jesus is Lord. This is the good news of peace for all the world.

Think about how Jesus is Lord today.

Day 21 | Thursday, December 21, 2017

SERVANT

Isaiah 49:3 (ESV)

³ And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

The remarkable thing is that Jesus is not only the ruler and Lord of all creation, but that he also takes the role of a servant. The book of Isaiah has promises about both. Isaiah tells of a coming King, but also of a suffering servant who will come and suffer on behalf of God’s people. The most famous passage about the suffering servant in Isaiah comes from Isaiah 53:5: “But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” Jesus could have chosen to use his power, intellect and divinity to take earthly glory for himself. Instead he chose to live a life in service to others. He told his disciples that he “came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”(Matthew 20:28) Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah’s suffering servant on the cross when he healed the sins of the world through his wounds.

Think today about how Jesus is the Servant.

Day 22 | Friday, December 22, 2017

THE WORD

John 1:2–3 (ESV)

² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

The Greek word for “word” is *logos* (λόγος). We see this word in the ending of words like biology, sociology, and anthropology. Logos can mean concretely a “word” or more abstractly an “idea.” John the Evangelist here uses the *logos* to recall the divine word spoken in Genesis 1 to create the heavens and the earth. However, in the light of Jesus Christ – indeed in the light of Christmas – John confesses that Jesus is the *logos*. Jesus is the person of God’s being who takes on the concreteness of flesh. In the same way, all creation takes on the concreteness of light and matter through Jesus. Jesus is not a creation of God the Father. He is rather co-eternal with God the Father, though he has particular roles in creation and redemption. Through Jesus all things are made. Without Jesus nothing is made. In Jesus all things are made new (Revelation 21:5)

Think today about how Jesus is the logos.

Day 23 | Saturday, December 23, 2017

ROCK OF AGES

1 Corinthians 10:4 (ESV)

⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

Just when it seemed like the people of Israel would die of thirst in the desert, God provided a rock with hidden water, called the Waters of Meribah. When Moses hit the rock, water gushed forth for the people. (Numbers 20:2-13). The Apostle Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 10:4 that Jesus was this rock. Jesus provides the sustenance for the life of God's people. Jesus tells the woman at the well: "but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14)." The waters of Meribah offered life for a single age. The waters of Jesus offers God's people life for this age and the age to come.

Think today about how Jesus is the Rock of Ages

Day 24 | Sunday, December 24, 2017

CORNERSTONE

Psalm 118:22 (ESV)

²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

On Christmas Eve we celebrate with joy the arrival of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago. The angels sang for joy. The shepherds marveled in wonder. Mary and Joseph treasured the moment in their hearts. But this baby was not born to be accepted in his short lifetime. Herod sought to kill the baby Jesus. Religious officials sought to kill the adult Jesus. At the end of his life the number of his followers could be housed in a small upper room of a house. But this man who was rejected by almost all who knew him was not discarded by God. Instead, God chose Jesus to be the foundation of his holy temple. So this Christmas remember “as you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵ you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”(1 Peter 2:4-5)

May God receive your spiritual sacrifices tonight and in 2018 through Jesus Christ,

As he builds you and your family into a spiritual house,

Upon the precious cornerstone of Jesus.

Merry Christmas