

THE *G*REATEST
RESCUE
MISSION



SIX DEVOTIONALS *for the* CHRISTMAS SEASON

FRANKLIN
GRAHAM



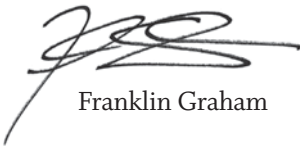
INTRODUCTION

Dear Friend,

Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ came to Earth on a rescue mission, to provide a way of escape for us from the bondage of sin and death. We desperately needed a Savior, and because of the Father's great love, He sent us His only Son. "*You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21, NKJV).

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in the little town of Bethlehem, and this joyful season is called Advent, which means "coming" or "arrival." As you prepare your heart for this special time of the year, I pray that these devotions will help you focus on God's Greatest Gift to us and lead you to worship Him—the real meaning of the season!

May God richly bless you,



Franklin Graham

CODE

RED

WEEK ONE



READ ROMANS 3:21-26

“But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift,

through the redemption that is
in Christ Jesus, whom God put
forward as a propitiation
by his blood, to be received
by faith. This was to show
God's righteousness, because in
his divine forbearance he had
passed over former sins.
It was to show his righteousness
at the present time, so that he
might be just and the justifier
of the one who has faith in Jesus."



“

All have sinned
and fall short of the
GLORY OF GOD,
and are justified
by his grace as a gift.

”

ROMANS 3:23-24

GOD CREATED the first people, Adam and Eve, to live in harmony with Himself and each other. The Bible says the Lord created them “*in his own image*” (Genesis 1:27) and gave them dominion over every living thing. Out of all creation, only they could enjoy a personal relationship with Him, marked by obedience, security, love, and acceptance.

However, through their disobedience (see Genesis 3), sin entered the world, poisoning the perfect environment and bringing the penalty of death and eternal separation from God. Adam and Eve suddenly felt shame as they realized their nakedness. In His grace, God made for them “*garments of skin and clothed them*” (Genesis 3:21). This was the first shedding of blood to cover sin—it was truly a “Code Red” situation.

Their fellowship with God was broken, and we all—as their descendants—inherited their sinful nature. Centuries later, the Apostle Paul wrote, “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23), and “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23). The deadly curse from the Garden has fallen on all of us.

But God did not leave them—or us today—without hope. He set plans in motion for a bold rescue.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for sending Your Son on a mission to save me. Help me to share this Good News with others who have never received Him in repentance and faith.

*D*ROP ZONE:
BETHLEHEM

WEEK TWO



READ LUKE 2:1-12

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.'"



“

For unto you is born
this day in the city of David

A SAVIOR,
who is Christ the Lord.

”

LUKE 2:11

JESUS CHRIST existed with the Father before creation. Paul wrote to the Colossians, “*For by Him all things were created, in heaven and earth ... all things were created through him and for him*” (Colossians 1:16).

Though He made us for His glory, humanity abandoned our created purpose—to enjoy right fellowship with Him. Adam and Eve chose to serve selfish purposes instead of following God’s plan. That original sin caused separation between us and our Creator, but because of His great love, He did not abandon us.

The Scripture says, “*God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son*” (John 3:16).

Jesus left His throne and glory in Heaven to launch a rescue mission to redeem us from sin’s curse. Submitting to His Father, He “*became flesh and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14). The King of all kings came to Earth as a helpless baby. He was born to common parents from a small town in a very humble way—laid in an animal’s feeding trough in Bethlehem “*because there was no room for them in the inn*” (Luke 2:7, NKJV).

God's holiness demanded a perfect sacrifice for sin. Only the Lord Jesus Christ could make atonement as a perfect, blameless substitute. He came to offer Himself so that you and I could be forgiven.

PRAYER

Father, how grateful I am for Your love. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for leaving Heaven, taking on flesh, and becoming my substitute.

OPERATION

DEATHBLOW

WEEK THREE



READ COLOSSIANS 1:13-22

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the

head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him.”



“

In him all the

FULLNESS OF GOD

was pleased to dwell, and through him
to reconcile to himself all things, whether
on earth or in heaven, making peace
by the blood of his cross.

”

COLOSSIANS 1:19-20

AFTER Adam and Eve listened to the lies of the serpent and disobeyed God, the first prophecy of Jesus Christ appears in Scripture. The Lord cursed the serpent, saying the woman's offspring "*shall bruise your head*"—but then showing the great cost He Himself would bear, He said to the enemy, "*you shall bruise his heel*" (Genesis 3:15).

In the Garden of Eden, the shadow of the cross was cast.

At that moment, God warned Satan that even though he would be allowed to bruise Christ's heel—which was a reference to the crucifixion—Jesus would bruise his head. He would strike a deathblow to the power and curse of the devil, sin, and death through His resurrection.

The miracle of Christmas culminates in the victory of Easter. "*And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross*" (Philippians 2:8). God sent His Son to live a sinless life and to die the death our sin deserved. The rugged cross at Calvary was the penalty for criminals, but the sinless Lord of the universe allowed Himself to be crucified there in our place. He willingly bore

the sin of the world upon Himself and shed His blood so that our relationship with Him could be restored.

The wickedness of sin and its destructive forces could not keep God from making a way to bring salvation to His people. This Christmas season, take time to thank the Lord for this amazing gift—*“redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”* (Ephesians 1:7).

PRAYER

*Father, thank You for sending Your Son at Christmas
to bear my sin on the cross at Easter.*

A *C*HANGE OF
COURSE

WEEK FOUR



READ JOHN 1:9-18

“The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the

only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth.
(John bore witness about him,
and cried out, 'This was he
of whom I said, "He who comes
after me ranks before me,
because he was before me."')
For from his fullness we have
all received, grace upon grace.
For the law was given through
Moses; grace and truth came
through Jesus Christ. No one
has ever seen God; the only God,
who is at the Father's side,
he has made him known."



“

But to all who did
receive him, who believed
IN HIS NAME,
he gave the right to become
children of God.

”

JOHN 1:12

THE BIBLE tells us that in His first message, Jesus boldly proclaimed, “*Repent and believe in the gospel*” (Mark 1:15).

The Lord offers a choice. We can continue in the path of sin, with its deadly consequences; or, we can obey the words of Christ. The way of the world leads to darkness and Hell. But the way of the Lord offers life, peace, and eternal security.

John, one of Jesus’ disciples, explained what a person must do in order to receive eternal life. First, we must “[*believe*] in His name.” That means we accept what the Scriptures say about Jesus Christ. He is God, Creator, Judge, Redeemer, Savior, and coming King. Then, we must personally receive Him, repenting of our sins and surrendering to Him as Lord of our lives. To people who do these things, John writes, “*He gave the right to become children of God*” (John 1:12).

All human efforts to seek righteousness on our own are fruitless. We can never measure up to God’s standard by good works or good intentions. Only by accepting what He provided through Christ can we enter God’s family, receive forgiveness of our sins, and experience the removal of its curse

and penalty. I'm so thankful the Lord Jesus Christ came to Earth on a rescue mission like no other.

PRAYER

Father, I pray with the prophet Jeremiah, "Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored!" (Lamentations 5:21)

*V*ICTORY
DECLARED

CHRISTMAS DAY



READ LUKE 2:13-20

“And suddenly there was
with the angel a multitude of
the heavenly host praising
God and saying,

‘Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those
with whom he is pleased!’

When the angels went away
from them into heaven, the
shepherds said to one another,
‘Let us go over to Bethlehem
and see this thing that has
happened, which the Lord
has made known to us.’

And they went with haste
and found Mary and Joseph,
and the baby lying in a manger.
And when they saw it, they
made known the saying that
had been told them concerning
this child. And all who heard it
wondered at what the
shepherds told them. But Mary
treasured up all these things,
pondering them in her heart.
And the shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God for all
they had heard and seen,
as it had been told them.”



“

When they saw it,
they made known the saying
that had been told them
concerning this child. And

ALL WHO HEARD

it wondered at what
the shepherds told them.

”

LUKE 2:17-18

WHEN THE angels appeared to the frightened shepherds, they announced the “*good news of great joy that will be for all the people*” (Luke 2:10). God could have announced the birth of His Son—the Savior of the world—to kings or rulers. But instead, He chose some of society’s most overlooked—lowly shepherds.

As soon as the angels left, these men got up and hurried to Bethlehem to find the baby. After seeing Him, the Bible says they “*told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child*” (Luke 2:17, NLT). Their experience with the newborn King motivated them to go with urgency and tell everyone they could about Him.

Good news is meant to be shared. This Christmas Day, as you thank the Lord for your salvation—for the victory Christ won for you on the cross—ask Him to give you open doors to share the Gospel with others. Don’t keep this lifesaving truth to yourself—boldly declare it! Think of your friends, neighbors, or family who don’t know Jesus Christ and start praying for them today. So many people around us are hurting and searching, and their hearts long for the

peace and victory found in Christ alone. *“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Corinthians 15:57).

The shepherds did not hesitate to become evangelists of this great revelation. I pray that we would be just as faithful today to do the same.

PRAYER

*Father, thank You for the wonderful gift of Jesus Christ.
Empower me to share this Good News with the same
urgency the shepherds did—and with as many
people as I can—in the coming year.*

*M*ARCHING
ORDERS

NEW YEAR'S DAY



READ ACTS 1:4-11

“And while staying with them [Jesus] ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, ‘you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’

So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'

And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'"



“

But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit has come
upon you, and you will

BE MY WITNESSES

in Jerusalem and in all Judea and
Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

”

ACTS 1:8

SHORTLY AFTER His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ physically ascended into Heaven right before the eyes of His disciples. “*Why do you stand looking into heaven?*” two angels asked them. “*This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven*” (Acts 1:11).

As we await His return, we have work to do. He left us with marching orders—to make disciples, obey His commands, and live boldly for His glory. Heading into this new year, let’s check our priorities and make sure we haven’t drifted from Christ’s urgent mission.

The world around us seems to be growing darker—rejecting God’s ways and embracing sin. But the Bible challenges us to choose godliness in these uncertain days. “*The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:11–13).

The Christmas season is filled with celebration as we remember the Savior's first coming. Today, on New Year's Day, we can rejoice in the promise of His triumphant, second coming. In the meantime, I pray that we will "*shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life*" (Philippians 2:15–16). We can be faithful, by the power of His Spirit, to honor Him and join Him in His mission of redeeming men and women, boys and girls, to Himself—until He comes!

PRAYER

*Father, thank You for the sure promise of Jesus' return.
Help me to live my life in light of that reality, and may Your
Spirit work in me to bear fruit for Your name.*

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FRANKLIN GRAHAM, president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse, proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ at events across the globe. The fourth of Billy and Ruth Bell Graham's five children, Franklin is the author of several books, including the bestselling autobiography *Rebel With A Cause* and the 2018 release, *Through My Father's Eyes*. He and his wife, Jane Austin, live in Boone, N.C., and have four children and 12 grandchildren.

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