

Friday, Dec. 22: Read [*Isaiah 53*](#)

This chapter, known as “the suffering servant passage”, graphically describes one who would suffer “like a lamb to the slaughter”. Ancient Jews were uncertain who this depicted (as evidenced by the Ethiopian Eunuch’s question to Phillip in [*Acts 8:30-35*](#)). We share in this ancient wonder as we celebrate the incarnation at Christmas -- realizing that the baby was God in a human body, and that this body would receive the corporal punishment of the sins of humanity as mysteriously described here in Isaiah 53. What a great gift God has given the world at Christmas!

Notes:



- *Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.*
- *Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.*
- *Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.*
- *Think about what you’re reading. Ask:*
 1. *How does this apply to me?*
 2. *Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?*
 3. *What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?*
- *Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.*

Spiritual Disciplines Weekly Readings

Monday, Dec. 18: Read [*Isaiah 1*](#)

With Christmas just 7 days away, let’s take some time this week to go back to the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, and revisit the Jewish concept of a coming Messiah (Savior) as predicted by one of God’s premier prophets. Chapter one describes the condition of God’s people some 700 years before Christ. As today, we see the cause and effect relationship between rebellion and demise, obedience and blessing. Verse 19 stands out as the offer of cleansing from sin that would ultimately be fulfilled in Jesus’ death.

Notes:

Monday Pray for:

1. *My relationship with God.*
2. *My life roles*
3. *My personal needs/weak areas*
4. *Goals and objectives*

Pray for Our Missionaries

Juan & Adriana Palacios (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Robert Newkirk** (Jesus Film), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Mike & Fran VanBruggen** (South Africa), **Sue Sanders** (Detroit, MI), **Matt Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezonski** (Wycliffe), **Danielle Tucker** (France), **Andrew & Sara Williams** (New Tribes), **Brad Babjack** (Intervarsity), **Salomon Guzman** (Tijuana), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Interserve USA)

Tuesday, Dec. 19: Read [Isaiah 9](#)

Isaiah 9:2-7 is traditionally read each year as one of the classic Christmas passages. Much of the prophet's message in his book relates to the consequences of sin and pending judgment for Israel's idolatry. Here, however, Isaiah offers a glimpse of hope, deliverance and a coming kingdom. Verse 6 is an outstanding revelation of the divine nature of this promised Savior. As stated in [Isaiah 7:14](#), he will be Emmanuel God among men! And he will be wonderful, mighty, eternal and peaceful! Read verse 6 again and ask God to give you a greater appreciation for all that Jesus is and all that he can do for you.

Notes:

Pray for family and friends by name.

Wednesday Dec. 20: Read [Isaiah 11](#)

One of the titles of Christ is "The Root of Jesse". Jesse was the father of King David out of the tribe of Judah. The Messiah was promised to arise from Judah's line ([Genesis 49:9-10](#)). Isaiah 11 predicts a coming day when David's descendent will assume the throne and rule gloriously. Note the Psalm of praise that proceeds in chapter 12.

Notes:

Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church (Consider fasting one, two, or all meals this day.)

- a. Pastors: Pray for God's grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David's ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC.
- b. Worship: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.
- c. Fellowship: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers.
- d. Discipleship: ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries here at BGCC.
- e. Outreach: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ.
- f. Future Faith Goals: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for God's clear leading in 2017 and beyond.

Thursday, Dec. 21: Read [Isaiah 42](#)

We skip forward in Isaiah to chapter 42. Here the prophet describes the saving work of a man endowed by the Spirit with both grace and power. Note the similarity to [Isaiah 61:1-2](#) as quoted by Jesus in [Luke 4:16-21](#). Again, this chapter not only predicts coming salvation through Jesus, but also the consequences of rejecting this redemption by continued disobedience (verses 17-25).

Notes:

Thursday Pray for "My World"

- Neighbors • People who live around me.
- People at Work • Others God brings into my life. Begin to take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help. Who can I invite to church this Sunday?
- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County. Pray for the area churches and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation.
- Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America.