



A LIGHT IN THE DARK  

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*Divine Readings for Advent*

AJ Sherrill

# A Light in the Dark

## Divine Readings for Advent

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### INTRODUCTION

Advent is my favorite time of year. I find this is true for many, but for various reasons. Some love the shifts in weather such as the presence of snow, or if you are in the Southern Hemisphere, the absence of cold. Others love the pace of the mall, jubilantly searching for the perfect gift to give away. Still others enjoy the smell of gingerbread, the annual arrival of egg nog, and the liturgy of trimming the tree.

For Christians, Advent is a delayed gratification — It calls us to wait with joy, to expect in hope, and to believe even in the dark places of life. To use the words of my dear friend, Bill Kerr, Advent is “a joyous anticipation.” It is a Holy longing for God to be with us. Few things worthwhile in life are received instantaneously. And in our impatience, we too often settle for cheap imitations, and less than satisfying substitutes.

For the next 4 weeks this formation guide aims to lead you into Sacred Scripture in an effort to embrace mystery, longing, and finally, Light. Each week follows the same structure for you to move at your own pace. The sections that will guide you are as follows:

1. Prayer of Opening - A simple prayer of turning toward God.
2. *Lectio Divina* - A contemplative posture reminds us that authentic spirituality is *not* primarily about knowledge but intimacy. This way of reading prioritizes relationship and rest with God.
3. Scripture Memory - When we ingest the text and commit it to memory, we carry it wherever we go. Further, we give the Scripture opportunity to do work within us when we memorize.
4. Commentary - Each week will have some textual explanation to deepen your understanding.
5. Application - Several questions will be posed to engage your heart, mind and will as you pray to integrate the profound impact of the infancy narrative into everyday life.
6. Closing Prayer - A communal prayer will end each week to unite you in spirit with others praying the same prayer.

A brief word on *lectio divina* —

In the sixth century, Saint Benedict developed a meditative approach to Scripture reading called *lectio divina* (Latin for “divine reading”). This method prioritizes what God is speaking to us just as much as what God spoke to our ancestors. In other words, *lectio divina* invites the Holy Spirit into the reading as it moves the reader in four distinct directions: READ, MEDITATE, PRAY, CONTEMPLATE

Simplified names for these are READ, REFLECT, WRITE, REST. Begin in this way:

Create an inviting/inspiring space. Perhaps this means lighting a candle, tidying a room, creating a playlist to underscore, and sitting in your favorite chair. Set a pen aside for the “Write” section. Open to the passage of Scripture, and give yourself to these four directions (20 minutes total, 5 minutes for each).

**READ** – Slowly read the selected text. Repeat until 5 minutes has concluded.

**REFLECT** – Select a word or phrase off the page that sticks out. Become curious as to why that word(s) is lifting off the page.

**WRITE** – Spend 5 minutes writing why you selected that word or phrase, crafting a prayer to God.

**REST** – Set a timer for 5 minutes, and sit quietly with God. Trust that God heard your worry, anxiety and/or longings from the writing section. Consider praying a repetitive word, connecting it with the rhythm of your breath. Or repeat the “Jesus prayer” —

*Lord Jesus Christ,  
The Son of God,  
Have Mercy on me,  
A Sinner*

May you experience the joy of God’s presence this Advent. And may you come to find that whatever you are currently facing, there will always be a light in the dark. Thanks be to God!

**Week 1**  
**Matthew 1:1-17**  
**A Theology of Genealogy**

*What love, What care, What fearless joy  
Has found us in the night.<sup>1</sup>*  
-Baxter Kruger

**PRAYER OF OPENING**

Holy Trinity, — Father, Son and Spirit —

Open us to new life, new hope, new possibilities this Advent season.

You always conquer the way we close up, close down, and close in.

Inhabit all our space this day, and invite us to become aware of your presence this moment.

**LECTIO DIVINA**

Read (5 minutes)

Matthew 1:1-17

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

**2** Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, **3** and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, **4** and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, **5** and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, **6** and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, **7** and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, **8** and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, **9** and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, **10** and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, **11** and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

**12** And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, **13** and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, **14** and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, **15** and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, **16** and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

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<sup>1</sup> Kruger, C. Baxter (2011-08-09). Across All Worlds: Jesus Inside Our Darkness (Kindle Locations 945-946). Kindle Edition.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

**Reflect (5 minutes)**

**Write (5 minutes)**

**Rest (5 minutes)**

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Vs. 16c - *Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.*

## COMMENTARY

Vs. 1 - *An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

The Gospel writer, Matthew, begins his account of the life of Jesus with a look at **Covenant**.

Notice he begins his genealogy with Abraham and not Adam. For Matthew, God is first and foremost covenantal — just as God initiated the Old Covenant with Abraham, God initiated the New Covenant with Jesus. A covenant is a relationship of promise between two parties.

Succinctly put, we serve a God of promise. A God who takes time, but nevertheless fulfills every word of the Covenant.<sup>2</sup>

Vs. 1 - *the Messiah*

“Messiah” (Hebrew: Mashiach) means “The Anointed One.” From the onset Matthew is clear that this is no ordinary narrative, and no ordinary king. This is the extraordinary work of God as never seen before, establishing the King of all kings. The use of “Messiah” does not leave room for any to perceive Jesus solely as an ethical teacher or exemplar. Although he is both of these things, one must come to terms with fully embracing Jesus as “the anointed one” who accomplished salvation for us.<sup>3</sup>

Vs. 6 - *And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah*

It is remarkable to consider the imperfection of the Messianic lineage. Jesus, the eternal *Word*, came through (among many things) the adulterous lineage of King David. For Matthew to include this means that we worship a God who redeems sin, and makes things that are broken beautiful. No matter what kind of family you are from, or what kind of circumstance you are facing, God has worked through Christ to redeem and lead you into the Kingdom.

Vs. 11 - *at the time of the deportation to Babylon.*

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2 *The Orthodox Study Bible*, 1266.

3 *Ibid.*

Generations after being freed from the Egyptian bondage, the people of Israel were sent back into exile due to their disobedience to the Old Covenant. The nation of Babylon scattered them away from Jerusalem. We see in this text that exile, scattering, and deportation was not the final plan of God. God permits hardships, but God will have the final word — and that final word is to bring all that has been scattered into one under the reign of Jesus.

*Vs. 16 - Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.*

Joseph was not Jesus' biological father. So why was he included in the lineage? Because "Old Testament marriage laws confer hereditary privilege on adopted as well as biological sons."<sup>4</sup>

The implication of this is astounding! In the same way, consider that all those in Christ have been grafted into the lineage of Jesus, the Son of the God. Just as Joseph was legitimately viewed as Jesus' earthly father, so God has adopted all in Christ to legitimately call Him "Father." Jesus would grow up to invite His followers (you and me) to pray, "Our Father..."

*Vs. 17 - Fourteen Generations*

These numbers reveal the precision of God despite the chaos of earth. Although the world often appears disordered, chaotic, and irredeemable, God is bringing creation back into a perfect, restorative plan.

## **APPLICATION**

1. Heart: Wherever there is darkness, disorder, and chaos in life, do you have hope that light in due time will pierce that darkness? If so, then how might that hope shape your attitude today?
2. Mind: Name the areas of life where all appears chaotic. Write a one sentence prayer of trust for each area.
3. Will: In a world shrouded by darkness, a simple word of encouragement can become a ray of light, illuminating someone's world beyond what we even know. Put the season of Advent on display by offering a word of encouragement to the people you engage today.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1267.

<sup>5</sup> The Episcopal Collect

**Week 2**  
**Matthew 1:18-25**  
**Radical Obedience, Real Consequence**

*You have more in the poverty of God's manger,  
than the riches any city could offer.*

**PRAYER OF OPENING**

Holy Trinity, — Father, Son and Spirit —

Open us to new life, new hope, new possibilities this Advent season.

You always conquer the way we close up, close down, and close in.

Inhabit all our space this day, and invite us to become aware of your presence this moment.

**LECTIO DIVINA**

**Read (5 minutes)**

Matthew 1:18-25

**18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. **19** And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. **20** But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

**23** “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). **24** When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, **25** but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

**Reflect (5 minutes)**

**Write (5 minutes)**

**Rest (5 minutes)**

**SCRIPTURE MEMORY**

**Vs. 23** “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

## COMMENTARY

### Vs. 18ff - *Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit who sent Jesus into the world (Matthew 1:18) is the same Holy Spirit Jesus sends into the world after the work of His cross, resurrection, and ascension are complete (Acts 2).

### Vs. 19 - *Joseph, being a just man*

Betrothal carried the same moral implications and obligations as marriage (i.e. fidelity). A pregnancy prior to the covenantal marriage ceremony was a scandal. A betrothed man who learned that his bride-to-be was pregnant, and knew that it was not his child, would carry the possible social consequence of stoning the woman (not to mention personal disrespect).

Hosea 6:6 speaks of a justice that transcends the Law—a justice of mercy. Whereas Joseph was instructed by the Law to expose Mary’s supposed sin of adultery, he mercifully determines to send her away quietly.<sup>6</sup>

### Vs. 21 – *Jesus*

The Hebrew and Aramaic name for Jesus is Yeshua. In the Greek it is rendered “Iesous” (pronounced “yay-soos”), meaning: The Lord (Yahweh) saves. From the beginning of Matthew, he wants us to know that this is a narrative about rescue.<sup>7</sup>

### Vs. 22 - *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken*

Our faith is inherently Jewish. This text reveals the plan of God unfolding from Old Covenant to New. There is continuity in the story of God.

### Vs. 23 - *they shall call his name Immanuel*

This is not a new person entering history. This is the eternal God inhabiting a womb, which would prepare him to take a human form on earth. “Immanuel” confirms the child’s divinity.

The second term is “Immanuel”, meaning “God with us.” Few words in the English language offer greater clarity concerning the desire and compassion of our God to rescue people. In a culture where many wrestle with perceptions of God, the name Immanuel serves as a constant reminder that God has not “left the building” – ruling out agnosticism; nor is God distant/disinterested – dispelling deism; and God is not a phantom of human imagination as a coping strategy – extinguishing atheism. According to Matthew, God is “with us.”

### Vs. 24 - *Joseph woke... (and) did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife*

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6. St. Athanasius Orthodox Academy. *The Orthodox Study Bible*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 1267.

7. Stern, David H. *Jewish New Testament Commentary: A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament*. (Clarksville, Md: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992), 1-2.

Joseph's radical obedience would inevitably lead to real consequences. Following the voice of God always bears consequence because the kingdom of earth is often in direct opposition to the Kingdom of Heaven. Fearing the loss of his reputation, vocation, and future stability, he chose to believe the dream and obey when it would have been tempting to ignore the vision, and get on with life.

## **APPLICATION**

1. Heart: What impact does the humanity of Jesus have in your life? What impact does the divinity of Christ have in your life?
2. Mind: Do you believe the Christ-Child was both Divine and Human?
3. Will: Has God called you to something that you've ignored due to fear, control or insecurity?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.<sup>8</sup>

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8. The Episcopal Collect

**Week 3**  
**Matthew 2:1-12**  
**Overwhelmed With Joy**

*What Christmas invites us all to, children and adults alike,  
is to have our hearts softened and tempered by the crib,  
to let the vulnerability manifested in the way Jesus was born bring us back to a time before  
hardness of heart, to a place beyond pseudo-sophistication,  
cynicism, bitterness, wounds, selfishness, and greed.  
Christmas is meant not just to renew our faith and hope,  
but also to renew our innocence.<sup>9</sup>*

-Ronald Rolheiser

## **PRAYER OF OPENING**

Holy Trinity, — Father, Son and Spirit —

Open us to new life, new hope, new possibilities this Advent season.

You always conquer the way we close up, close down, and close in.

Inhabit all our space this day, and invite us to become aware of your presence this moment.

## **LECTIO DIVINA**

**Read (5 minutes)**

Matthew 2:1-15

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, **2** saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” **3** When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; **4** and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. **5** They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

**6** ““And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.””

**7** Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. **8** And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” **9** After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. **11** And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they

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9. <http://ronrolheiser.com/an-invitation-inside-of-christmas/#.VFpkwodN3zI> (accessed Nov. 5, 2014).

offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. **12** And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

**13** Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” **14** And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt **15** and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

**Reflect (5 minutes)**

**Write (5 minutes)**

**Rest (5 minutes)**

## **SCRIPTURE MEMORY**

**Vs. 6** ““And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.””

## **COMMENTARY**

Vs. 1-12

Magi were not exclusively sorcerers or magicians by vocation; nor were they merely the appearance and actions of the astrologers. They were sages, wise men, and often held political positions in kingdoms for the purposes of reigning and ruling. These magi are believed to have been from the distant Medo-Persian Empire or Babylon.<sup>10</sup> Their long and arduous journey, their joy over the child, their gifts, and their kneeling worship suggests that they believed the child was more than a “teacher.” Their actions are a visible confession that Jesus was not only “King of the Jews,” but also “King of Kings.”

The designation of Jesus as “King of the Jews” was bad news for Herod, who posed like a puppet King for Rome to keep the Jews under control. He was threatened by the promise of the child and thus, initiated genocide. Consider how unlikely it is that anyone would kill all male babies under the age of 2 over a promised one who would grow to be merely a teacher. Rather, the Christ child threatened the power Herod held because he was destined to become much more than a teacher. Herod was notoriously insecure about his power, killing many rivals, including

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10. Stern, 9.

his wife's family and even his own children. His actions remind us of two realities: a) Jesus, even as a baby, was a threat to his kingship and b) one's daily actions reveal core beliefs.<sup>11</sup>

*Vs. 2 - We saw his star*

According to the Orthodox tradition, ancient pagans (such as the magi) perceived stars as gods. Although not from the Judaic tradition, these magi believed the one they were searching for came from divine origin, which explains why they worship when they find the child.<sup>12</sup>

*Vs. 6 - And you, O Bethlehem... are by no means least*

As seen in this text and again in the beatitudes, God works through paradox. For those who fail to grasp the paradoxical ways of God, the Kingdom will often be elusive.

*Vs. 10 - When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.*

Notice the text doesn't say here that they were overwhelmed with joy upon seeing Jesus. The joy came in the hope, in the waiting, in the expectation that they had discovered the child's coming at last; the joy was realized in the anticipation of moving further into what they had been on journey toward. Then, when they laid eyes on Him, they worshiped.

Are we not in that same place? Our future is fixed. Our eyes are sure... but we still have not laid our eyes to rest on God. We are still on our journeys. There is no doubt that we have discovered truth, but that truth still requires faith, trust, hope, and anticipation. We have yet to fully realize all there is to access. Yet even still, joy abounds and is available. May we not wait until the final day to access joy. May we access it now in great abundance, even as we wait and long. Just as Mary treasured truth in her heart, and it burned to see the coming of the Messiah through her, she still had joy upon what was to come. May we reflect the anticipating joy of Mary this Advent, as we wait for light in the dark.

*Vs. 11 - Into the house*

By the time the magi reached the child, the family found refuge in a house. It is interesting to note that the Jewish Shepherds first found Jesus in a cave. He was later visited by the Gentile magi. This theologically fits into salvation history that Christ first came for the Jews and then was worshiped by the Gentiles.

*2:14 - Egypt*

Thousands of years before Jesus was born, Joseph, the son of Jacob, found favor with Egypt and eventually brought the people of Israel in to avoid famine. Jesus' stepfather, also called Joseph, returns to Egypt to seek refuge once again. When Jesus comes out of Egypt, he traces the journey of Israel, fulfilling what the nation had been called to.<sup>13</sup>

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11. AJ Sherrill, *Urban Disciple*, 17.

12. *The Orthodox Study Bible*, 1268.

13. *Ibid.*

## **APPLICATION**

1. Heart: How are you feeling about your faith this Advent. Do you experience your heart as more warmed or detached to the readings of infancy narrative this year?
2. Mind: What about this narrative do you find hard to believe? Is it possible that God desires to use that part of the narrative in order to deepen your faith?
3. Will: Just as the magi offer the Christ child extravagant gifts, how do you intend to be generous toward God and others this Advent?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.<sup>14</sup>

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14. The Episcopal Collect.

## Week 4

### Matthew 2:16-23

*In the child, Jesus, the new world itself was already present;  
in the seed, the certain guarantee of the coming fruit.<sup>15</sup>*

-Karl Barth

### PRAYER OF OPENING

Holy Trinity, — Father, Son and Spirit —

Open us to new life, new hope, new possibilities this Advent season.

You always conquer the way we close up, close down, and close in.

Inhabit all our space this day, and invite us to become aware of your presence this moment.

### LECTIO DIVINA

#### Read (5 minutes)

**16** Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. **17** Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

**18** “A voice was heard in Ramah,  
weeping and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

**19** But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, **20** saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.” **21** And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. **22** But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. **23** And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

#### Reflect (5 minutes)

#### Write (5 minutes)

#### Rest (5 minutes)

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15. William H. Willimon. *The Early Preaching of Karl Barth: Fourteen Sermons with Commentary by William H. Willimon* (Kindle Locations 1241-1242). Kindle Edition.

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

**Vs. 23** *And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.*

## COMMENTARY

Vs. 16-23

In this brief reading, the Gospel writer twice uses prophetic fulfillment language to speak of the arduous journey the family takes to preserve the Christ child's life and raise him in a stable environment. Joseph and Mary must have been tempted to think the plot of the story had spun out of control; that perhaps God was not sovereign after all given the amount of tragedy, strain and hardship both they and the Jewish people were experiencing. Yet prophetic fulfillment language reveals that despite how chaotic life may seem, God is writing a story that will eventually result in eternal joy.

*Vs. 18 - A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.*

Generations before Matthew's Gospel, Jeremiah prophesied within the Jewish exile. Jeremiah spoke of Rachel weeping not over her own biological children, but over the spiritual children of Israel, through which she was a kind of spiritual grandmother. Her husband, Jacob, is listed in the genealogy.

*Vs. 22 - Archelaus*

In AD 6 Augustus Caesar banished Archelaus because of his severe cruelty.

*Vs. 23 - And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth*

Christianity is a faith of paradox. No one could have predicted the King of creation to be born in a feeding trough, from the womb of a virgin, and then raised in small town like Nazareth. God moves through the unexpected. Sigmund Freud was wrong about God being a crutch that humans invented because no one would conceive of the kind of God we find in Scripture.

## APPLICATION

1. Heart: Does reading about the genocide in this chapter as a prophetic fulfillment lead you to trust God more or less? Why?
2. Mind: How do you cope with the paradoxes of life that you cannot resolve? What are some of these paradoxes?
3. Will: Write a prayer of hope today, listing all your present anxieties, and then conclude it with a prayer of faith that God will eventually make all things new.

## CLOSING PRAYER

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.<sup>16</sup>