

3 Here a maid was found with child,  
Yet remained a virgin mild.  
In her womb this truth was shown:  
God was there upon His throne.

4 Then stepped forth the Lord of all  
From His pure and kingly hall;  
God of God, yet fully man,  
His heroic course began.

5 God the Father was His source,  
Back to God He ran His course.  
Into hell His road went down,  
Back then to His throne and crown.

6 For You are the Father's Son  
Who in flesh the vict'ry won.  
By Your mighty pow'r make whole  
All our ills of flesh and soul.

7 From the manger newborn light  
Shines in glory through the night.  
Darkness there no more resides;  
In this light faith now abides.

D 8 Glory to the Father sing,  
Glory to the Son, our king,  
Glory to the Spirit be  
Now and through eternity.

*Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; German version, Martin Luther, 1483–1546; (sts. 1–2): tr. William M. Reynolds, 1812–76; (sts. 3, 6): tr. Lutheran Service Book, 2006; (sts. 4–5, 8): tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001; (st. 7): tr. Gifford A. Grobier, 1973  
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## The Congregation at Prayer

# The Whole Story

2025

A Daily Devotional

St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



**Week #49-The Whole Story**

**First Week of Advent**

November 30-December 7, 2025

**Start Every Day**

*"In the Name of the Father, and + of the Son, and  
of the Holy Spirit. Amen"*

recite **APOSTLE'S CREED**

**VERSE: Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no  
one else, for there is no other name under  
heaven given among men by which we must be  
saved."**

## **CATECHISM—*Apostles' Creed*—*First Article***

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

***What does this mean?*** I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that he has given my body and soul, eyes, and ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

### **Sunday, November 30**

- Read **Zephaniah**

CYPRIAN: (Zephaniah 1:13-14) The lust of possessions and money are not to be sought for. In Solomon, in Ecclesiastes: "He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver." Also in Proverbs: "He who holds back the corn is cursed among the people; but blessing is on the head of him that communicates it."<sup>4</sup> Also in Isaiah: "Woe to them who join house to house, and lay field to field, that they may take away something from their neighbor. Will you dwell alone upon the earth?" Also, in Zephaniah: "They shall build houses, and

mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## **Personal Prayers**

*pray* **LORD'S PRAYER**

### **Luther's Morning Prayer**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

### **Luther's Evening Prayer**

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

### **332 Savior of the Nations, Come**

- 1 Savior of the nations, come,  
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!  
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,  
That the Lord chose such a birth.
- 2 Not by human flesh and blood,  
By the Spirit of our God,  
Was the Word of God made flesh—  
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

line of Abraham. The apostle made an interpretation for the Galatians about this, saying, “Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many; but, referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ which is Christ.”<sup>12</sup> So also is David first among the tribe of Judah in the rank of king. And likewise God promised to this very tribe that the eternal king, Christ the Lord, would be born from the fruit of its womb. For David was the first king from the tribe of Judah, from which the Son of God received his flesh. Thus Matthew rightly counted Christ our Lord as the descendant of David and Abraham, because both Joseph and Mary are descended from these regal origins, the line of David, who himself descended from Abraham, who in faith lived as the father of nations and in flesh was the first of the Jewish people. TRACTATE ON MATTHEW 1.1.<sup>7</sup>

### **Sunday, December 7**

- Read **Matthew 3-4**

### **End Every Day**

#### **Pray the *Collect for First Sunday in Advent***

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your

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<sup>7</sup> Simonetti, Manlio, ed. 2001. [Matthew 1–13](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

shall not dwell in them; and they shall appoint vineyards, and shall not drink the wine of them, because the Day of the Lord is near.” Also in the Gospel according to Luke: “For what does it profit a man to make a gain of the whole world, but that he should lose himself?”<sup>6</sup> TO QUIRINUS, TESTIMONIES AGAINST THE JEWS 12.3.61.<sup>1</sup>

### **Monday, December 1**

- Read **Haggai**

AMBROSE: (Haggai 1:8) The man who dies before his time does not build his tomb, for, although he lives, he is dead. He does not hear the words of Haggai, whose name interpreted the banqueter, for he does not enter the tabernacle of God “with the voice of joy and praise, the noise of one feasting.”<sup>22</sup> How does he hear his voice if he does not see his works? If he saw them, he would hear the word which was put within his grasp, he would rejoice in his acts, whereby “he knocked and it was opened to him,” and he would have gone down into his soul that he might feed therein upon the food of sincerity and truth. Because he failed to hear, the word of Haggai again comes, saying: Rise from houses embossed and carved with wickedness, and go up to the mount of heavenly Scriptures and hew

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<sup>1</sup> Ferreiro, Alberto. 2003. [“Introduction to the Twelve Prophets.”](#) In *The Twelve Prophets*, edited by Alberto Ferreiro, 210. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

the tree of wisdom, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. Make straight your ways, order your actions so that they may have due order which is necessary and useful for building the house of God.<sup>24</sup> LETTER 80.<sup>2</sup>

### **Tuesday, December 2**

- Read **Zechariah 1-5**

AUGUSTINE: (Zechariah 1:3) Free will and God's grace are simultaneously commended. When God says, "Turn to me, and I will turn to you," one of these clauses—that which invites our return to God—evidently belongs to our will; while the other, which promises his return to us, belongs to his grace. Here, possibly, the Pelagians think they have justification for their opinion, which they so prominently advance, that God's grace is given according to our merits. In the east, indeed, that is to say, in the province of Palestine, in which is the city of Jerusalem, Pelagius, when examined in person by the bishop, did not venture to affirm this. For it happened that among the objections which were brought up against him, this in particular was objected, that he maintained that the grace of God is given according to our merits, an opinion which was so diverse from Catholic

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<sup>2</sup> Ferreiro, Alberto. 2003. ["Introduction to the Twelve Prophets."](#) In *The Twelve Prophets*, edited by Alberto Ferreiro, 223. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

### **Saturday, December 6**

- Read **Matthew 1-2**

CHROMATIUS: (Matthew 1:1) Therefore St. Matthew began writing his Gospel with an introduction of this sort, saying, "This is the book of Jesus Christ, descendant of David, descendant of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob," and the rest that follows. Matthew, as I have said, tells of the second birth of the Lord into flesh and for this reason traces his family line from Abraham, treating separately the tribe of Judah, until he comes down to Joseph and Mary. Since the Evangelist begins from Abraham by succession of birth and recounts in order the names of all, one may wonder why he calls Christ our Lord only the descendant of David and the descendant of Abraham in saying, "This is the book of the lineage of Jesus Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham." At any rate, we know that the Evangelist did not say this without reason and in this order. Each of them, both Abraham and David, whether by the promise of the Lord or rank of birth, lived as a worthy predecessor in the line of Jesus Christ as to his existence in flesh. For the Lord had promised to Abraham, who by right of circumcision was the founding patriarch of the Jewish people, that from his seed all nations would be blessed. This was realized in Christ, who received his body from the

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by Alberto Ferreiro, 308. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

be loved by my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.” SERMON 277.<sup>5</sup>

### **Friday, December 5**

- Read **Malachi**

Pseudo-CLEMENT OF ROME: (Malachi 4:1) So, brothers, having received no slight opportunity to repent, let us, when there is yet time, turn to God who called us, while we still have one who awaits us. For if we bid farewell to these pleasures and overcome our soul by refusing to carry out its evil desires, we shall share in the mercy of Jesus. But you know that “the day” of judgment “is now coming, kindled as a furnace,” and “the powers of heaven shall dissolve,” and the whole earth shall be as lead melting in the fire, and then shall the secret and public deeds of people be made known. Almsgiving, therefore, is good as penance for sin; fasting is better than prayer, but almsgiving is better than both; and “charity covers a multitude of sins,”<sup>2</sup> but prayer from a good conscience delivers from death. Blessed is everyone who is found full of these things; for almsgiving relieves the burden of sin. 2 CLEMENT 16.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ferreiro, Alberto. 2003. [“Introduction to the Twelve Prophets.”](#) In *The Twelve Prophets*, edited by Alberto Ferreiro, 272. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

<sup>6</sup> Ferreiro, Alberto. 2003. [“Introduction to the Twelve Prophets.”](#) In *The Twelve Prophets*, edited

doctrine and so hostile to the grace of Christ that unless he had anathemized it, as laid to his charge, he himself must have been anathemized on its account. He pronounced, indeed, the required anathema upon the dogma, but how insincerely his later books plainly show; for in them he maintains absolutely no other opinion than that the grace of God is given according to our merits. Such passages do they collect out of the Scriptures—like the one which I just now quoted, “Turn to me, and I will turn to you”—as if it were owing to the merits of our turning to God that his grace were given us, wherein he himself even turns to us. Now the persons who hold this opinion fail to observe that unless our turning to God were itself God’s gift, it would not be said to him in prayer, “Turn us again, O God of hosts,” and, “You, O God, will turn and quicken us,”<sup>2</sup> and again, “Turn us, O God of our salvation”—with other passages of similar import, too numerous to mention here. For with respect to our coming to Christ, what else does it mean than our being turned to him by believing? And yet he says, “No man can come to me, except it were given to him of my Father.”<sup>4</sup> On Grace and Free Will 10.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ferreiro, Alberto. 2003. [“Introduction to the Twelve Prophets.”](#) In *The Twelve Prophets*, edited by Alberto Ferreiro, 231–32. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

### **Wednesday, December 3**

- Read **Zechariah 6-10**

JUSTIN MARTYR: (Zechariah 9:9) Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ, when he was about to enter Jerusalem, ordered his disciples to get him the ass with its foal, which was tied at a gate of the village of Bethphage, and he rode upon it as he entered Jerusalem. Since it had been explicitly foretold that the Christ would do precisely this, and when he had done it in the sight of all he furnished clear proof that he was the Christ. And yet, even after these things have happened and are proved from the Scriptures, you persist in refusing to believe. Zechariah, one of the twelve prophets, predicted this very event when he said, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king will come to you, the just and the Savior; meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, and upon the foal of an ass." The prophetic spirit, as well as the patriarch Jacob, mentioned the ass, an animal accustomed to the yoke, and its foal, which were in his possession. Then he asked his disciples, as I have said before, to lead the beasts to him. This constituted a prediction that both you coming from the synagogue and those who would come from the Gentiles would believe in him. As the unharnessed foal was a figure of the former Gentiles, so the ass, accustomed to the yoke, was a

symbol of those coming from among your people. DIALOGUE WITH TRYPHO 53.<sup>4</sup>

### **Thursday, December 4**

- Read **Zechariah 11-14**

AUGUSTINE: (Zechariah 12:10) And perhaps it is then that the words "all flesh" will become more perfectly fulfilled. Now I mean to say, flesh has seen him, but not all flesh. Then, however, at the judgment, as he comes with his angels to judge the living and the dead, "when all who are in tombs hear his voice and come forth, some to the resurrection of life, others to the resurrection of judgment," it is not only the just but also the wicked, those on the right, these on the left, who will see that form which he pleased to take on for us. Even those who killed him "will look on the one whom they have pierced."<sup>9</sup> So "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Body will be seen by body, because he will come to judge him in his real body. But to those placed on the right and sent on into the kingdom of heaven, he is going to show himself in the same way as he could already be seen in the body; and yet he had said, "Whoever loves me shall

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<sup>4</sup> Ferreiro, Alberto. 2003. ["Introduction to the Twelve Prophets."](#) In *The Twelve Prophets*, edited by Alberto Ferreiro, 258. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.