12 Devotions Of Christmas

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is based on Haverim, a Bible Study template
powered by the Pais Movement.

Welcome to the 12 Devotions of Christmas!

These reflections are designed to explore the transformative themes of hope, peace, and joy during this Christmas season. Whether you are using this for your personal time of study, gathering around the living room with your family, or hanging out with a friends, these devotions are intended to be an engaging inspiration.

Simply set aside a little time each day to read the scripture, explore the questions provided and enjoy these three haverim sessions, spread across the twelve days of Christmas.

This is an invitation to slow down and experience the wonder of this season in the midst of our celebrations. We pray this season is a catalyst for Kingdom-Centric growth, and rest before the new year.

Day 1 | Hope

"His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and
prophesied:

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a horn[c] of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David
(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),
salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—
to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,
the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear
in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace."

And the child grew and became strong in spirit[d]; and he lived in
the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel."

Luke 1 : 67-80

Intended | P’shat | Context to discover the Point

Specific Question:

What seems odd that might be better understood with an increased knowledge of its context?

- What covenant was sworn to Abraham?
- Was God’s redemption plan to rescue us of recruit us?

Generic Questions:

- Who wrote it?
- Why did they write it?
- Where were they when they wrote it?
- How is it affected by the manners and customs of the day?
- What can archaeology teach us about this passage?
- What does history teach us about the subject?
- What happened to the main character before or after the incident.

Action Point:

- What does the context teach you about the main point of the passage?

First-century Israel lived under Roman occupation. Their Messianic hope was largely centered on a political king (a new David) who they believed would physically overthrow Rome and restore Israel as an independent Kingdom. Zechariah, in the context of a faithful priest, naturally framed salvation with the language of national deliverance.

The core of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17) was that God would:

1. Make Abraham into a great nation.
2. Make Abraham's name great.
3. Bless all families of the earth through him.

Zechariah's prophecy zooms into the arrival of the Messiah (Jesus) as the ultimate realization of God's fulfillment of His promise to bless all humanity through Abraham's family.

Similarly his language strongly emphasizes rescue (redemption), leading to recruitment (service).

- Rescue (Redemption): Luke 1:68 states God "has visited and redeemed his people," and Luke 1:74 says we are "rescued from the hand of our enemies." Redemption here means purchasing freedom through a ransom (Jesus' life).
- Recruitment (Service): The purpose of the rescue is clear in Luke 1:74: "...might serve him without fear."

More key context;

- The writer Luke, was a gentile physician and companion of the Apostle Paul.
- In his prologue (Luke 1:1-4) Luke states his purpose for writing was: to give an "orderly account" based on eyewitness testimony so that the recipient, Theophilus, might know the "certainty" of the things he had been taught.
- Zechariah was a priest from the tribe of Levi.
- Naming ceremonies were common practice.
- History notes there had been many failed uprisings and organized resistance movements like the zealots who hoped to usher in Messianic deliverance through their actions.
- Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were too old to have children.
- Whilst ministering in the temple an angel appear to Zechariah and told him he was soon to be a father and to call their son John.
- Zechariah did not believe the Angel, so God shut his mouth until the baby was born and Zechariah became mute.
- At the naming ceremony God opened Zechariah's mouth at the time to announce his sons name was John and the prophetic hymn recorded in this passage followed.
- John was later known as John the baptist and preached a passionate message of repentance and preparation for the Messiah's appearance.

"Our perception of the gospel and the emphasis of our hope matters."

Sources:

- Haverim: How To Study Anything With Anyone, Paul Clayton Gibbs
- Tyndale House Publiahers, Life Application Study Bible, NIV
- https://jewsforjesus.org/learn/the-nativity-story-is-surprisingly-jewish

Day 2 | Hope

Implied | R’mez | Connections to discover the Principle

Specific Question:

- Is there a pattern to be discovered or a principle to be applied?
    - Is there a pattern that links redemption and recruitment?

Generic Questions:

- Does the passage refer to another Scripture, story, or prophecy in the Bible?
- Does anything referenced here have a meaning elsewhere in Scripture?

Redemption & Recruitment:

Old Testament

- Exodus 4:22 - '… *Let my son go, that he may serve me …*
- Exodus 19 : 4-6 - *"You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now, if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."*
- Deuteronomy 10 : 12-19 - *"And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul … He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. Fear the Lord your God and serve him… He is your praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes…"*
- Isaiah 2 : 3 - *"Many peoples will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths."*
- Isaiah 43 : 10 - *"You are my witnesses, declares the Lord and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he.*

New Testament

- Matthew 28 v 19 - 20 - *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*
- 2 Corinthians 5 : 17 -20 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sin against them. And he has committed to s the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."*
- Ephesians 2 : 8 - 10 - *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from ourselves, - it is a gift from God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*
- Titus 2 : 11 - 14 - *"For the grace of God that brings slvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say No to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self controlled, up right and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify himself a people that are his own, eager to do what is good."*

"Saved To Serve"

Day 3 | Hope

Interpreted | D’rash | Collaboration to discover the Purpose

Specific Instructions:

- Choose the character and verse(s) you want to interpret.
- Ask why they did what they did.

- Character: Zechariah
- Verse(s): Luke 1 :74 - 75 - “to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.”
- Question: How did this understanding shape your hope?

Generic Instructions:

- Rewrite the verse(s) in the first person.
- Include what the character may have been thinking or feeling.
- Retell the story, fill in the gaps, but whatever you do, don’t change the facts.

Action Point:

- Use a creative tool to summarize what you discovered.

"For sixty years my hope has been your hope, for Yahweh to intervene. Our hearts have longed for His Messiah to appear in our lifetimes. But something started when I was visited by and Angelic presence 9 months ago and has been stirring ever since in my silence. More than a renewed hope, more than a deep longing but an ever growing conviction that the time is now! A time like the days of old in which we will be delivered from slavery, to freely set about His purposes, that through us the light of shalom will dawn for all people."

Day 4 | Hope

Inspired | S’od | Contemplation to discover the Practice

Optional Catalyst:

- Go for a walk to help focus your reflection
- Or press play on some instrumental worship music to help focus your reflection.

Personal Questions:

- Lord, what do I not yet understand about this passage?
- What has previously been hidden to me?
- What do you want me to do in response to this passage?

Friendship Question:

- Is there someone to whom I can pass on a message from this passage and how should I do that?

Our perception of the gospel and our emphasis of our hope matters; does the gospel provide the hope that if we live Jesus' way one day we will leave this earth to be with Him? Or does the gospel provide the hope that if we accept Jesus' invitation to reject evil and return to who He called us to be He will draw near here and now on earth?

Of course the truth is, there is truth in both. We give thanks the Messianic hope has been fulfilled, so as we celebrate this fulfillment the hope we hold reminds us the Kingdom is near conceptually, temporally, intimately and in proximity.

Our hope rejoices we continue to be made new, His Kingdom come, His will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven, but we also rejoice that one day all things will be made new, once and for all!

Day 5 | Peace

”The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.
You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.
For as in the day of Midian’s defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.
Every warrior’s boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.
For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David’s throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.”

Isaiah 9 : 2-7

Intended | P’shat | Context to discover the Point

Specific Question:

What seems odd that might be better understood with an increased knowledge of its context?

- What was Isaiah describing as darkness?
- Was is was Isaiah describing as light?

Generic Questions:

- Who wrote it?
- Why did they write it?
- Where were they when they wrote it?
- How is it affected by the manners and customs of the day?
- What can archaeology teach us about this passage?
- What does history teach us about the subject?
- What happened to the main character before or after the incident.

Action Point:

- What does the context teach you about the main point of the passage?

This passage offers a stark contrast from the heaviness and darkness of the chapters either side, offering a glorious triumphant promise of a king and endless peace.

Chapter 8 outlines the horrors of the Assyrian invasion, and the deception of those seeking direction from other sources. However chapter 9 is a much needed interruption and reminder of God's intention for peace.

The specific phrase for peace used by Isaiah which we have translated to "Prince of Peace" is; Sar = Prince, Chief, Ruler, Captain, Leader and Shalom = Peace, Wholeness, Completeness, Soundness.

God's Shalom - was considered a divine state of perfect order and harmony that flows from Him and intended to be mirrored by creation.

More key context;

- The book is traditionally attributed to Isaiah a prophet who served in Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (circa 740-680 BC).
- Isaiah was writing approximately 200 years after the 12 tribes of Israel split into 2 Kingdoms. Judah, Benjamin and Levi formed a Southern Kingdom, whilst Reuben, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, Dan, Manasseh, Ephraim and Gad retained the title Israel and formed the Northern Kingdom.
- Judah remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty, maintained the temple in Jerusalem and maintained a legitimate Levitical priesthood, however their faithfulness to their covenant with Yahweh was fairly mixed with some Kings doing what was right and many others diverting from the path of righteousness.
- The Assyrian Empire was the biggest threat to Judah as it rapidly expanded westward swallowing everything in its path.
- Notably since the split every one of Israels King's were described in scripture as "doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord."
- Assyria conquered Israel in 722, partly fulfilling Isaiah's prophecies and serving as a very present warning on Judah's borders of the seriousness of Isaiah's message.
- Judah's Kings Uzziah and Jotham lead eras of economic growth and military success despite the Assyrian threat.
- Ahaz however ignored Isaiah's warnings and advice and tried to negotiate an alliance with Assyria resulting in becoming a tributary of the Assyrian Empire and introducing pagan worship back into Judah and Jerusalem.
- Hezekiah listened to Isaiah and initiated major religious reforms ridding the temple of idols and destroying altars to idols around Judah. He also refused to pay tax to Assyria, which resulted in an Assyrian attack in 701. Most of Judah was conquered however Isaiah led Judah to stand firm and 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 note the Assyrian army was miraculously destroyed, further fueling the Messianic hope of deliverance once and for all.

”When peace (wholeness) feels illusive it often brings a yearning for deliverance to be powerful, fast and conclusive, but so many like Isaiah point us towards peace often growing in process.”

Sources:

- Haverim: How To Study Anything With Anyone, Paul Clayton Gibbs
- Tyndale House Publiahers, Life Application Study Bible, NIV
- https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-isaiah

Day 6 | Peace

Implied | R’mez | Connections to discover the Principle

Specific Question:

- Is there a pattern to be discovered or a principle to be applied?
    - Is there a pattern that unpacks Shalom further?

Generic Questions:

- Does the passage refer to another Scripture, story, or prophecy in the Bible?
- Does anything referenced here have a meaning elsewhere in Scripture?

Redemption & Recruitment:

Old Testament

- Genesis 1:31 - *“And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” - “very good” (tov me’od) implies completeness and harmony, Shalom.*
- Genesis 3 : 17-19 - *“Cursed is the ground because of you through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken.” - The lose of shalom.*
- Numbers 6 : 24-26 - *“The Lord bless you and keep you: the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord tunr his face toward you and give you peace.” - process towards a return to shalom.*
- Jeremiah 29:7 - *“Also seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers you to will prosper.” - Active pursuit of shalom.*
- Ezekiel 34 : 25 -27 - *“I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. I will belss them and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers of blessing. The trees in the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their lad. They will know that I am the Lord, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them.” - promise of return to shalom.*
- Micah 4 : 3 -4 - *“Every man will sit under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord almighty has spoken. All nations may walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.” - further promise of a return to shalom.*

New Testament

- Matthew 5 : 9 - *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. - encouragement to be a shalom maker.*
- John 14 : 26 - 27 - *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Co not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” - Reminder where peace really comes from.*
- Revelation 21: 3 - *“No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.” - Promise of shalom coming in full again in the future.*

"Saved to make Shalom"

Day 7 | Peace

Interpreted | D’rash | Collaboration to discover the Purpose

Specific Instructions:

- Choose the character and verse(s) you want to interpret.
- Ask why they did what they did.

- Character: Isaiah
- Verse(s): Isaiah 9 : 6 - “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
- Question: What did you hope this event would mean for the world?

Generic Instructions:

- Rewrite the verse(s) in the first person.
- Include what the character may have been thinking or feeling.
- Retell the story, fill in the gaps, but whatever you do, don’t change the facts.

Action Point:

- Use a creative tool to summarize what you discovered.

"Everything in me longs for shalom, things were never supposed to be like this, but alas the curse taints everything. It shall never taint my hope because the word of the Lord has come to me and there will be one who will come who will begin what has been long awaited and we all cry out for. He will reverse the curse. "

Day 8 | Peace

Inspired | S’od | Contemplation to discover the Practice

Optional Catalyst:

- Go for a walk to help focus your reflection
- Or press play on some instrumental worship music to help focus your reflection.

Personal Questions:

- Lord, what do I not yet understand about this passage?
- What has previously been hidden to me?
- What do you want me to do in response to this passage?

Friendship Question:

- Is there someone to whom I can pass on a message from this passage and how should I do that?

"Sometimes we find ourselves framing this day and age as if we are experiencing adversity and unprecedented struggles like no other generation has experienced. As if when Isaiah prophesied and the gospels recounted things were different.

They, and if I am honest I, know only too well budgets, health concerns, government legislation, political forecasts, personal relationships and more can make peace feel like an idealistic daydream.

When peace feels illusive I certainly yearn for deliverance to be powerful, fast and conclusive, but Genesis, Numbers, Ezekiel, Micah and indeed the gospels suggest peace often grows in process.

So I am thankful I am still a work 'in process," thankful that Jesus has not given up on me despite my short comings and grateful this time next year by the grace of God I will be more whole, more renewed, more free and will have reversed the curse in a world a little more."

Day 9 | Joy

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census
should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first
census that took place while[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.)
And everyone went to their own town to register.
4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to
Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to
the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary,
who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a
child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be
born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped
him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no
guest room available for them.
And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby,
keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord
appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them,
and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be
afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the
people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to
you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You
will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."
Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with
the angel, praising God and saying,
"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."
When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the
shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see
this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."
So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby,
who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they
spread the word concerning what had been told them about this
child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds
said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and
pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying
and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen,
which were just as they had been told."

Luke 2 : 1-20

Intended | P’shat | Context to discover the Point

Specific Question:

What seems odd that might be better understood with an increased knowledge of its context?

- Why is Bethlehem significant?
- Why was the arrival of the baby announced to shepherds?

Generic Questions:

- Who wrote it?
- Why did they write it?
- Where were they when they wrote it?
- How is it affected by the manners and customs of the day?
- What can archaeology teach us about this passage?
- What does history teach us about the subject?
- What happened to the main character before or after the incident.

Action Point:

- What does the context teach you about the main point of the passage?

This passage is often read during the Christmas season, at carol services, at nativity plays and depicted on Christmas cards alike. The writer seems to be keen to emphasize the Savior of the world was not born into the religious or economic epicenter in Jerusalem or the political establishment of Herod's palace.

A Baby is a source of personal joy, or indeed a source a family joy. However the writer notes the angels announced this birth would be the source of joy for all people. The angelic visitation takes place roughly 400 years since the last recorded prophetic experience. 400 years since the writings of Malachi had fueled Messianic hopes. And well over 400 years since Ezekiel, Micah, Isaiah and Zechariah linked shepherding with Messianic hope.

More key context;

- Luke wrote in Greek
- Although Luke wrote in Greek. Bethlehem is a Hebrew name, meaning "House Of Bread."
- It was notably the home town of King David
- Roman Census records support Luke's account
- Archaeological evidence has been found to support the presence of settlements in Bethlehem at the time of the Roman census.
    - The stable was likely a basement structure or cave that the house may have been built above.
    - Archeology suggests stables were not usually standalone structures. Areas underneath the main living quarters appear to have been typically used to provide safety for animals etc.
- Biblical passages in Genesis, 1 Samuel and Micah point to the presence of shepherd communities based around Bethlehem, specifically a watch tower called Migdal Eder (the tower of the flock.)
- Jewish text in the Mishnah suggests links between the Migdal Eder flocks raised for the temple.
- Archaeological evidence has been found around Bethlehem that supports the presence of shepherd communities, however the exact location of Migdal Eder is uncertain.

“You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed m sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.”

Psalm 30 : 11 -12

Sources:

- Haverim: How To Study Anything With Anyone, Paul Clayton Gibbs
- Tyndale House Publiahers, Life Application Study Bible, NIV
- https://www.logos.com/grow/shepherds-jesus-birth/

Day 10 | Joy

Implied | R’mez | Connections to discover the Principle

Specific Question:

- Is there a pattern to be discovered or a principle to be applied?
    - Is there a pattern that links Bethlehem, shepherds and a baby with joy for all people?

Generic Questions:

- Does the passage refer to another Scripture, story, or prophecy in the Bible?
- Does anything referenced here have a meaning elsewhere in Scripture?

Bethlehem:

- Ruth 4 : 13 - *“So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.” - Boaz (King David’s Great Grandfather) redeemed Ruth (King David’s Great Grandmother.)*
- 1 Samuel 16 : 13 - *“So Samuel took the horn of oil and annointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah. - Samuel anoints David, a shepherd from Bethlehem.*
  - 1 Samuel 17 - 32 - *“David said to Saul, Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and ight him.” - 1st occasion David redeems Israel from Philistine oppression.*
  - 2 Samuel 5 : 1-3 - *“All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said , we are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. and the Lord said to you, “You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler. When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. - David redeems Israel from Saul.*
- Psalm 78 : 22 - 25 - *“...they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance. Yet he gave a command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat.” - Bread was linked with deliverance.*
- Psalm 105 : 40 - *“They asked, and he brought them quail and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.” Bread linked with deliverance.*
- Isaiah 55 : 1 - 2 - *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money come buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without money and without cost. why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you soul will delight in the richest of fare.” - Isaiah uses bread as a prophetic metaphor for salvation.*
- Micah 5 : 2 -4 - *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the calns of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler of Israel, who's origins are from of old from ancient times. Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor gives birth ad the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.” - Micah prophecies a redeemer will come from Bethlehem.*

Continued:

- John 6 : 32 - 35 - *“Jesus said to them, I tell you the truth it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world…. then Jesus declared, I am the bread of life. He who come to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” - Jesus invokes the metaphor of bread to help His audience understand him as the redeemer.*

Shepherd:

- Genesis 49 : 22-24 - *“ Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him they shot at him wth hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,” - God’s redemption is compared to the protection of a shepherd.*
- Isaiah 40 : 11 - *“He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his hear; he gently leads those that have young.” Isaiah likens Yahweh’s care to that of a shepherd.*
- Jeremiah 23 : 4 - *“I myself will gather the remnant of my flock our of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number.” - Yahweh speaks of himself like a shepherd.*
- Ezekiel 35 : 23 - 24 - *“I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken.” - Ezekiel links the redeemer with the house of David and invokes the Shepherd King metaphor.*
- Micah 5 : 4 - *“He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.” - Micah prophecies a redeemer will come from Bethlehem.*
- Zechariah 13 : 7 - *“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me! declares the Lord Almighty. Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.” - Zechariah prophecies of the Messiah’s suffering.*

"Saved to share"

Day 11 | Joy

Interpreted | D’rash | Collaboration to discover the Purpose

Specific Instructions:

- Choose the character and verse(s) you want to interpret.
- Ask why they did what they did.

- Character: Shepherds
- Verse(s): Luke 2 : 10-11 - “But the angel said to them, Do not be afriad. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”
- Question: What did you hope this announcement meant for the world?

Generic Instructions:

- Rewrite the verse(s) in the first person.
- Include what the character may have been thinking or feeling.
- Retell the story, fill in the gaps, but whatever you do, don’t change the facts.

Action Point:

- Use a creative tool to summarize what you discovered.

"Easy to say do not be afraid but we're not the ones appearing out of nowhere and I don't even have words to describe the full experience! I can't claim to be particularly well educated but I am sure there are scriptures describing the Messiah like a shepherd and God's deliverance like the bread that sustained our forefathers in the wilderness. Neither would I claim to be particularly smart but it seems like there are some dots to join here, a baby born in the house of bread and announced to shepherds? I for one would like to find out more, is this really the Shepherd King who will lead us out of slavery into Yahweh's glorious Kingdom? If it looks anything like what appeared with those messengers count me in, oh what joy! It's too good to stay silent, let's spread the word!"

Day 12 | Joy

Inspired | S'od | Contemplation to discover the Practice

Optional Catalyst:

- Go for a walk to help focus your reflection
- Or press play on some instrumental worship music to help focus your reflection.

Personal Questions:

- Lord, what do I not yet understand about this passage?
- What has previously been hidden to me?
- What do you want me to do in response to this passage?

Friendship Question:

- Is there someone to whom I can pass on a message from this passage and how should I do that?

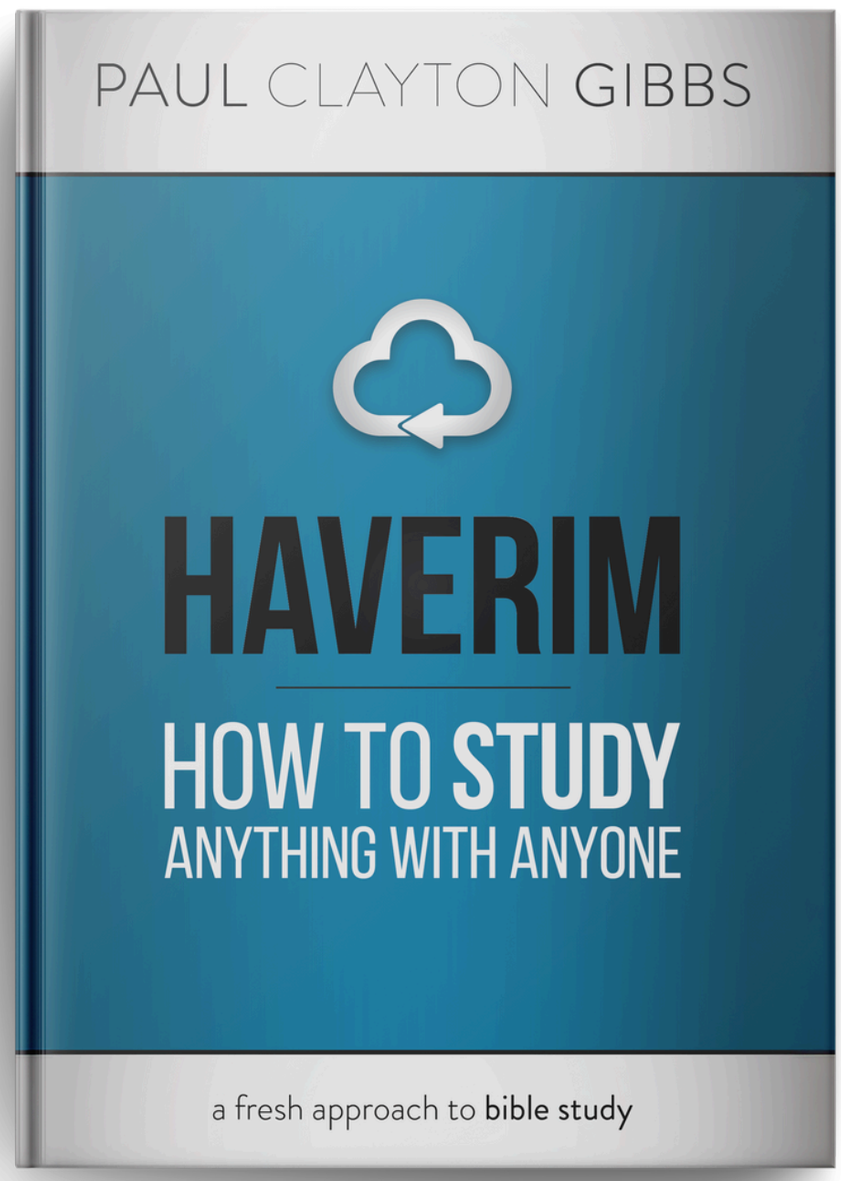
"Perhaps the angelic host announced the incarnation of the Lamb of God and Shepherd King to priestly shepherds rearing sheep for the temple sacrifices?

If it had been news of the oppressive empire collapsing, an abundant annual harvest, or an inexpensive cure for leprosy, it might have sounded more like good news of great joy. But a baby, wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger?

Except they were waiting … waiting with great expectation and great anticipation. In the waiting the legend of the manna in the wilderness had been passed down from generation to generation and become synonymous with Yahweh's word and the deliverance of his people.

In Hebrew Bethlehem means "house of bread" Manna foreshadowed the bread of life. Jesus' birth in the house of bread and the feeding trough for a crib subtly but nonetheless prophetically seems to hint that Jesus was/is the fulfillment of the word and the catalyst for coming deliverance.

Long may our joy be rooted in the fulfillment of His word and deliverance above changes or shift in circumstances. And long may we share the good news of great joy will all who will listen!"



If you would like to learn more about our Haverim Bible study template. You can find a full and detailed practical explanation of this method for experiencing the Word of God in Haverim | How to Study Anything With Anyone, by Paul Clayton Gibbs on Amazon.

Over recent decades there have been significant shifts in societies' behavior including a clear desire to pull information rather than have it pushed upon them.

By researching the rabbinic method of education, Paul Clayton Gibbs developed a four-step template that equips us to study anything with anyone, and equips us to explore the many facets of Scripture with those of no faith, little faith and even another faith.

Haverim also provides a practical way to create home groups that are inclusive rather than exclusive. It is a tool for friends who want to study together in order to know God and make Him known.

Get the book

Haverim is powered by the Pais Movement.

Our vision is to reframe Christianity so that the primary vision of every Christian is to advance the Kingdom of God and do it the way Jesus modeled it.

Pais empowers and equips individuals to live life on mission and become more Kingdom-Centric through 3 programs, our academy (for teens), apprenticeships (for gap years) and allies (for churches).

If you would like to find out more about how we could resource you please check out pais.life.

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