

# THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION

**A Devotional guide leading up to Advent 2013**  
written by: Rev. Dr. E.N. Poulson & Dr. Koh Siang Kiang

*In Him was life, and the life  
was the Light of men. John 1:4*

### ***There are no devotionals written for Sundays.***

It is the Lord's Day. And we pray that you will be blessed by the worship, Bible Study and fellowship. We have included one passage that you might turn to sometime during the day for additional blessing.

### **Suggestions for receiving maximum value from this guide.**

- Begin each session with a prayer that you will have a mind, heart and will prepared to be taught by the Spirit.
- Read and meditate on the Scripture passage. Our comments may guide you to the meaning of the passage and the essential lessons to be learned.
- Jot down questions and observations and take them to your small group or church leaders.
- Ask questions like: What is this passage saying to me personally? How can this study help me increase my faith? What life-change must I apply?
- The hymn, carol or chorus may enable you to recall the lesson throughout the day.
- Share your blessings with someone else. Perhaps you can share this booklet.

**Note:** You may make copies for your personal use. If you know of people who may be blessed by this compilation, do feel free to share with them. However, do not make changes to or lift out information from this compilation without consulting with the authors.

# They Looked For Redemption

## **A Devotional Guide**

*for the month of December 2013*

written by:

Rev. Dr. E.N. Poulson & Dr. Koh Siang Kiang

### Introduction

Christmas is probably the happiest holiday in the calendar. But the world needs to be reminded that originally it was a “HOLY day.” We will have to concede that the day (season) has been secularized and commercialized. It is more about Santa Claus and Rudolf than about The Birth of Christ.

Early in church history the practice arose to devote a season of spiritual preparation for celebration of the coming of Christ into the world. From the sixth century, liturgical churches have formally recognized the season known as ADVENT.

Many who will make use of this short devotional guide worship in churches that no longer use that terminology. But the underlying concept is quite sound. We present a series of meditations for the entire month of December. The purpose of this series is to take us back to the very beginning of human history and trace the growing sense of expectation among people of faith who LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.



**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Genesis 3:15

**Prophecy:** He would be BORN OF A WOMAN

**Background:** God’s noblest creation, man and woman, were placed in a perfect environment. After sin entered, a Saviour was promised (see below).

**Digging Deeper:** Genesis 3:1-16

- Who was this “serpent”? (Rev 12:9)
  - Who was the “woman” who was deceived? (2 Cor 11:3; I Tim 2:14)
  - What was Adam’s role in this drama? (Rom 5:12)
  - Who was the promised offspring of the woman? (Hebs 2:14)
  - What words of judgment did God speak to the serpent? (vs 14-15)
- Notice that these words include the very first promise of One Who would defeat the deceiver.
- How is the first gospel described in verse 15b? cf Romans 16:20

**Promise:** That One would be a descendant of the woman.

**Think:** Many of God’s promises apply to a person, a family, a nation or a church. But many of His promises are for anyone who, by faith, will receive them. Which of the following best describe your experience?

- I am not well acquainted with the promises of God.
- I have often doubted the promises
- I have believed and claimed the

promises which I understand.

**Application:** How does the promise of the first gospel apply to you? How have you claimed it? What difference has it made to your life?

**Sing this Grand Old Hymn:**

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,  
Yonder on Calvary’s mount out-poured,  
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

*Grace, Grace, God’s Grace;*

*Grace that will pardon and cleanse within.*

*Grace, Grace, God’s Grace;*

*Grace that is greater than all my sin.*

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
Freely bestowed on all who believe!  
You that are longing to see His face,  
Will you this moment His grace receive?

*(Julia H. Johnston, 1911)*

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, Thank you for your promises. Give me faith to believe you, and help me to take Your Word seriously.

**Final Thought:** Eve was the very first person WHO LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

From that time, every woman, who truly believed the promises of God, hoped she might be the mother of the One Who would bruise Satan’s head. That was an honourable expectation as THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE** Genesis 49:1, 8-10

**Prophecy:** He would come from the tribe of JUDAH

**Background:** Israel (Jacob) thought he was dying (Gen 48:21). As inheritor of the Covenant of God, he called his sons to give to each a blessing which was prophetic.

**Digging Deeper:** Look at Gen 29:35 and learn about Judah, "Praise." Which son of Jacob was he? Notice the order of birth. Who was his mother? How does 49:8-9 describe his leadership over his brother? How do these verses describe the strength and security of the tribe of Judah?

**Basic Information:** Gen 49:10: "The scepter," (a symbol of political strength) is a staff held by a king on formal occasions. "Until Shiloh comes." Shiloh means, "whose right it is." This is a reference to Messiah. Only Christ has the ultimate right to rule. Judah would always be the royal line and ultimately bring forth One with sovereignty over all the world. (Ezek 21:27)

**Fulfillment:** Read Lk 3:30. Mary, the mother of Jesus, descended from Judah. Mary is not named in this genealogy, but it is generally agreed that Luke records the genealogy of Mary. She gave Jesus the birth right to the throne. Matthew records the genealogy of Joseph, the foster-father of Jesus. He gave Jesus the legal right to the throne.

By comparison you will note that both Joseph and Mary descended from Judah and David, but through different lines. Both by birth and by legal right, Jesus descended from Judah.

**Think:** In giving the blessings to his son, why did the special blessing not go to the first son but to the fourth? In choosing, God would lead according to a person's character, not just the order of birth.

**Application:** You may have to make decisions with long term implications. What factors govern your choice? At what point do you make it a matter of prayer?

**Hymn of Prayer:**

Teach me Thy way, O Lord,  
Teach me Thy way;  
Thy gracious aid afford, Teach me Thy way.  
Help me to walk aright;  
More by faith, less by sight;  
Lead me with heav'nly light,  
Teach me Thy way.

*(B. Mansell Ramsey)*

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to seek first your will in all of my plans.

**Final Thought:** The Promised One would come from the tribe of Judah. From this time forth, people of faith added this fifth clue to the cumulative evidence as THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE** 2 Sam 7:16

**Prophecy:** He would be a descendant of DAVID,

**Background:** David, King of Israel, built for himself a palace. Then he observed that God was manifest and worshiped in the simple tent (Tabernacle). (7:1-2) What was David’s strong desire? (7:2) But what was God’s response? (7:5b) Rather, what did God promise to do for David? (7:11b-13,16)

**Digging Deeper:** God did not want David to build Him a dwelling place. In this context what is meant by a “house?” (7:11-12)

**Fulfillment:** Read Isaiah 9:6-7 and Matt 1:6,16. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, was descended from Solomon, Son of David, and through him was passed the “legal right” to the throne.

**Application:**

- We often think of God’s house as physical – the church building. But, what does 1 Corinthians 6:19, say is the real house of God?
- What does this mean to you?
- What does this mean to God?
- How have you taken care of that “house?”

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**Hymn of Commitment:**

Living for Jesus, a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him In all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me.

*O Jesus, Lord and Saviour,  
I give myself to Thee,  
For Thou, in Thy atonement,  
Didst give Thyself for me;  
I own no other Master,  
My heart shall be Thy throne;  
My life I give, henceforth to live,  
O Christ, for Thee alone.*

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank you for a house not built with stones that no thieves or fire can destroy.

**Final Thought:** Henceforth, people of faith would have a sixth clue. They would think of David as more than a great king as **THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION**.

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**08 SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** I John 4:10

**Think:** What difference would it make if this verse declared the relationship began with “we loved God”?

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**SCRIPTURE READING:** Isaiah 7:14

**Prophecy:** He would be BORN OF A VIRGIN.

**Background:** Isaiah 7:1-13. In the 8th century BC. Israel, the Northern Kingdom, formed a coalition with Syria to make war against Jerusalem. Ahaz, king of Judah, and all the people were trembling with fear. But they did not call on the LORD. The LORD sent the prophet Isaiah and his son, Shearjashub, to deliver a message of encouragement. Judah would not be destroyed! The two northern kings were like fire wood, soon to be burned up. God knew the intention of the enemy; but within 65 years Ephraim would be totally destroyed. Ahaz was told to ask God for a sign to confirm the promises; but with false piety, the king refused to ask for a sign from God. Then the offer was given to the whole house of David and God Himself gave the sign. A boy would be born of a virgin and would be known as IMMANUEL which means "God with us."

**Digging Deeper:** How does Matt 1:18-25 reveal the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy? How does v23 carefully protect the fact of the birth? Who shall be with child? What does Gen 3:15 say about this birth? What does John 1:1,14 call the ONE that was born? How does 1 Tim 3:16 describe how this ONE was revealed?

**Application:** List ways you can describe what Immanuel, "God with us," mean to you.

**Chorus:**

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
His name is called "Emmanuel."  
God with us, revealed in us,  
His name is called Emmanuel.

**Prayer:** Dear Father, thank you for not being a God who is far off or impersonal. You are with us!

**Final Thought:** Those in Israel who had faith, would expect a miraculous manifestation through their seventh clue, as **THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.**

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Micah 5:2

**Prophecy:** He would be BORN IN BETHLEHEM

**Background:** In the 8th century before Christ, the prophet Micah pleaded with Israel and Judah to turn back to God from their sinful ways. Then he recorded a vision concerning the last days, when they would be the centre of a world-wide kingdom characterized by righteousness, peace and prosperity(4:1-5). But first, he warns of a final attempt by world powers to thwart the plan of God (4:11- 5:1).

**Digging Deeper:** Micah 5:2. The subject shifts to the One to be Ruler in Israel. Who is the One spoken of? Where was He to be born? By the first century A.D. it was an obscure village, but historically, it was the birthplace of Israel’s greatest king, David (I Samuel 16:1-13). Although His coming was yet future what was implied by the statement that “His goings forth are from long ago”? (NASB, 5:2b) Scripture teaches that He was Creator, Preserver and Protector.

**Fulfillment:** Matt 2:1-5; Luke 2:1-7,11 records the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning His birth.

**Application:** What does God’s choice of Bethlehem, a relatively obscure, village say to you about Him? The

place is small but certainly not insignificant. God’s choices are not always according to man’s way of determining importance. What does this mean to you?

**Carol:**

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie.  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years,  
Are met in thee tonight

*(Phillips Brooks)*

**Prayer:** Lord, keep me from being so absorbed with great things that I miss what you are willing to do through small things.

**Final Thought:** People of faith would keep an eye on Bethlehem, their eighth clue, as **THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION**

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Hosea 11:1

**Prophecy:** He would be CALLED OUT OF EGYPT.

**Background:** As is often the case with O.T. prophets, there is double application to this prediction. It looked back as a reminder of the Exodus, when God delivered Israel, whom God called My son (Exodus 4:22) out of bondage in Egypt. But it also looked forward to bringing His far greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, back to the promised land.

**Digging Deeper:** Read Matt 2:12-23. If Jesus was born in Bethlehem why and how did He get to Egypt? What historical event led to the fulfillment of the prophecy (Hosea 11:1 & Matt 2:15)? Why did the family uproot a second time and return to Israel?

**Application:** This event is one more proof of God’s foreknowledge and determined purpose that His Son would suffer and accomplish His redemptive work in Jerusalem.

- What events or persons, even in your pre-conversion days prove that God is working out His determined purpose for your life?

**Hymn:**

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.  
Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs  
And works His sov’ reign will.  
His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flow’r.

*(William Cowper)*

**Prayer:** Lord, you are so good to reveal yourself in my life through so many proofs.

**Final Thought:** The faithful ones in Israel would remember Egypt as a place of bondage; but this prophecy, their ninth and final clue, helped them LOOK FOR REDEMPTION

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*We have considered **nine** O.T. prophecies that enabled people of faith to LOOK FOR REDEMPTION. Now we will meditate on **four** PRE-NATIVITY PROCLAMATIONS that are designed to stimulate an even higher sense of expectation in those who heard.*

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 1:26-38

This is the tenth clue as to the fulfillment of God’s promised One.

**Pre-Nativity Proclamation:** The ANNUNCIATION to Mary.

**Background:** Perhaps Mary, like all God-fearing women since Eve, hoped that she might one day be the mother of the One Who would destroy the power of Satan. She lived in Nazareth and was engaged to a local man who was a carpenter (Mk 6:3). Suddenly, the angel Gabriel appeared to her. His salutation perplexed her! Gabriel calmed her fear with an even more bewildering assurance that she, a simple country girl, had found favor with God. And then he truly startled her by indicating that she was to bear a son! He even told her what she was to name Him. He would not be just an ordinary son, but One who would fill all of those expectations of centuries past—which we have been reading about since 1st Dec. In v34, how did Mary respond? Observe throughout this paragraph, the emphasis on virginity.

**Digging Deeper:**

- When the angel appeared to Mary, what was her response in v29?
- According to the angel, how would it be possible for a virgin to conceive? (v31, 35).
- Although He would have an earthly name, what would be His actual identity? (v35)

- What other event did Gabriel point to as evidence of divine intervention? (v36).

- How did v37 silence all argument concerning Mary’s pregnancy?

**Application:** If people mock at the thought of miracles, what is the best one sentence answer to their argument? As a child of God, how should you respond to a seemingly impossible situation in your own life?

**Song:**

Nothing is impossible  
 When you put your trust in God;  
 Nothing is impossible  
 When you’re trusting in His Word.  
 Harken to the voice of God to thee;  
 “Is there anything too hard for Me?”  
 Then put your trust in God alone  
 And rest upon His Word;  
 For ev’rything, O, ev’rything,  
 Yes ev’rything is possible with God.  
*(Eugene L. Clark)*

**Prayer:** Lord, if in my weakness I try to escape a situation by saying, “Impossible!” remind me who You are and what You are able to do.

**Final Thought:** In this first Pre-Nativity Proclamation, Mary obediently, by faith, yielded her body and her reputation and LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Mt 1:18-25

This is the eleventh clue as to the fulfillment of God’s promised One.

**Pre-Nativity Proclamation:** The EXPLANATION to Joseph

**Background:** In Jewish culture, betrothal was like our concept of engagement, only it was more legally binding. Joseph was shocked and hurt to hear the news about Mary. He knew that he was not the father because they had not come together (v18). The word “virgin” is not used in this text but was used in reference to Mary which we read yesterday. And the concept is carefully protected in the wording of v18. Both Old and New Testament uses the word “virgin” to refer specifically to a young woman of marriageable age who had never had a sexual relationship with a man. According to Jewish Law, she should be stoned to death for being unfaithful. But Joseph loved her, and sought a way to protect her.

**Digging Deeper:**

- Why was Joseph’s effort to protect Mary not a workable solution?
- What was God’s answer to Joseph’s dilemma (v20)?
- What was the declaration to Joseph in v21? Verses 22-23 refer to the passage which we considered on 9th December.
- How did Joseph demonstrate that

he believed the message of the angel, yet protected the unique origin of his adopted son (v24-25)?

**Application:** Human wisdom cannot provide an answer for all our dilemmas. Where do you turn for principles or specific instructions concerning perplexing problems?

**Hymn:**

O soul, are you weary and troubled?  
No light in the darkness you see?  
There’s light for a look at the Saviour,  
And life more abundant and free!

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth  
Will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

His Word shall not fail you—  
He promised;  
Believe Him, and all will be well:  
Then go to a world that is dying,  
His perfect salvation to tell!

*(Helen H. Lemmel)*

**Prayer:** Lord, help me turn to You and Your Word for answers whenever I meet life’s perplexing problems.

**Final Thought:** In this second Pre-Nativity Proclamation, try to imagine the mixed feelings of Joseph, as HE LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 1:39-45

This is the twelfth clue as to the fulfillment of God’s promised One.

**Pre-Nativity Proclamation:** RECOGNITION by Elizabeth.

**Background:** Elizabeth was Mary’s cousin and in her old age was six months pregnant with her first child (v36). When Mary learned of Elizabeth’s condition she left Nazareth, to go to the house of Zacharias and Elizabeth in Ein Karem about 8km S.W. of Jerusalem (v39-40). Upon arrival Elizabeth revealed a supernatural response of recognition. Her unborn fetus stirred for joy; and she was filled with the Holy Spirit (v41). (Note: In the OT the Holy Spirit came upon persons for special occasions and tasks; in the NT, the Spirit permanently indwells every believer.)

Based on inner tangible evidence Elizabeth greeted Mary saying that she (Mary) would be “well spoken of among women.” Elizabeth responded in praise and acknowledged and declared the supremacy of Mary’s expected One. She affirmed the reliability of all of God’s revelation (v42-45)

**Application:** See John 20:29. This is Christ’s promise to those of us who have not seen Him, yet believe. Write one or two blessings you have received by faith from Jesus Whom you have not seen with your eyes.

**Song:**

By faith we see the hand of God  
In the light of creation’s grand design  
In the lives of those who  
Prove His faithfulness  
Who walk by faith and not by sight  
By faith our fathers roamed the earth  
With the power of  
His promise in their hearts  
Of a holy city built by God’s own hand  
A place where peace and justice reign  
*We will stand as children of the promise  
We will fix our eyes on Him our soul’s reward  
Till the race is finished and the work is done  
We’ll walk by faith and not by sight*

*Keith & Kristyn Getty Stuart Townend*

**Prayer:** Lord you do not always give me tangible evidence as you did Elizabeth, but you have given exceeding great and precious promises in your Word. Help me believe.

**Final Thought:** In this third Pre-Nativity Proclamation, try to imagine Elizabeth’s faith and feelings as she LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

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## 15 THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** I John 4:10

**Think:** What is the Origin of love?

Propitiation was the work of Christ that made it possible for God to forgive and bless sinners without compromising His holiness and justice.

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 1:46-56

This is the thirteenth clue as to the fulfillment of God's promised One.

**Pre-Nativity Proclamation:** The ADORATION by Mary.

**Background:** The song in vs 46-55 is known as the THE MAGNIFICAT because it magnifies the Lord. It is mostly Old Testament quotes and allusions.

**Digging Deeper:** Summarize in each verse Mary's praise for God's special favor upon her (v47-50). Summarize in each verse, Mary's praise for God's special favour upon Israel (v51-55).

**Historical note:** How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth? When she left where did she go? (v56) Note: The Greek literally said "returned to her home" (that is her father's household)

**Application:** Think and write down a few special favours God has shown

and given you—things you might up to now have taken for granted. Pause right here to give praise to God for these.

**Hymn:**

Praise to the Lord the Almighty,  
The King of creation.  
O my soul, praise Him,  
For He is thy health and salvation!  
All ye who hear,  
Now to His temple draw near;  
Join me in glad adoration!

*(Catherine Winkworth, 1863)*

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for the special favours that you have given. As your own dear child, help me not take these things (and more) for granted.

**Final Thought:** In this fourth Pre-Nativity Proclamation, try to imagine the mixed emotions Mary must have experienced as SHE LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

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*We have considered **nine** O.T. Prophecies concerning Christ's First Coming; and **four** Pronouncements shortly before His birth (Pre-Nativity Proclamations). Up to this point, we have seen **13 clues** leading to the fulfillment of God's promised One.*

*Now we will review **eight** events surrounding the actual birth of Jesus.*

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:1-2 & Galatians 4:4

**Statement concerning:** The TIME OF HIS BIRTH.

**Background:** The Date of Jesus' Birth, was approximately BC 5 or 6. (Obviously our common calendar was popularized before serious historical search revealed the inconsistency). At the time, Caesar Octovianus Augustus ruled the Roman empire. Herod was king of the Jews (Mt 2:1). He died in BC 4.

The census first took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria (v2). Quirinius had been sent on a special assignment to take charge of military affairs in Province Syria at a time of rebellion. He ordered a census that had nothing to do with military conscription nor with taxation.

Caesar was the unchallenged ruler of most of the world. It was a period of peace (Pax Romana). Old Testament Scripture had been translated into the world language, Greek.

**Application:** What is something you feel sure is the Will of God for your life that you have prayed for but have been waiting without a clear answer? God has an appointed time for everything. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

**Chorus:**

In His time, In His time.  
He makes all things beautiful in His time.  
Lord, please show me everyday  
As You're teaching me Your way  
And I'll do just what You say,  
In your time.

**Prayer:** Lord give me patience to wait without wavering. Help me to believe You are in control not only of events but of time.

**Final Thought:** God had not previously revealed any hint as to the time of this long-expected birth. But put together all the prophecies we have considered and imagine the rising sense of expectation in the people of faith as THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 2: 3-7

**Statement concerning:** The PLACE of His Birth

**Background:** Although Joseph and Mary were residents of Nazareth in Galilee, Rome made a concession to avoid offense. They allowed Jews to follow their own tradition and register in their ancestral home (v3). Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem (House of Bread) known also as “The City of David.” Both of them were descended from King David (v4).

Mary was in the final trimester of pregnancy when they set out. She went with Joseph because both of them were people of faith and they knew from prophecy that the Saviour was to be born in Bethlehem (remember, Micah 5:2). (v5-6)

Arriving in Bethlehem, they would first look for accommodation. And there was No room for them in the inn. An inn was not a hostel, but a walled area with a well where shepherds or cattlemen could take their animals for protection and food. The whole town was overcrowded because of many arriving to register. The only available place was a hillside cave, probably used as a stable by the innkeeper. It was there that Mary gave birth to her Firstborn. This designation implies that other children followed (Mt13:55-56; Lk8:19-20). Mary wrapped the

baby Jesus in swaddling clothes. It is strips of cloth to protect the Child’s arms and legs. Then she laid Him in a manger, a feeding trough for livestock (v7).

**Application:** James 4:15 provided a basic principle for all of our planning. In what way have you seen God overrule some plan you have made? How have you responded to James’ instructions?

**Song:**

Away in a manger, No crib for His bed,  
The little Lord Jesus  
Laid down His sweet head;  
The stars in the heavens  
Looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus Asleep on the hay.

**Prayer:** Lord, make me ready to conform to Your Will. It may mean that I will have to even step down to a lower level of status and comfort than I had planned.

**Final Thought:** Imagine the mixed fear, confusion and joy of the couple who LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:8-14

**Events at the time of the Birth:** An ANGEL announced The Birth to shepherds

**Background:** v8, the shepherds in this area were probably tending sheep to be taken to the Temple for sacrifices. It was NOT winter. They were in the fields at night. In cold weather they would have put the sheep in one of the many nearby caves. v9 shows that such an unexpected appearance naturally frightened the shepherds. v10-11 What words of comfort did the angel speak? What is another word for “good news?” Who would benefit from this news? The gift of the Saviour... Christ (God Anointed One) is a clear reference to Messiah (The Jewish word describing this One who would come as a Saviour and King). v12 - How would the Divine Child be identified? v13-14. At this point, who appeared with the angel messenger? What did they do? Literally, they proclaimed “peace to men on whom His favour rests.”

**Application:** For the first time, there has been announcement of the expected One actually having come. And that was “good news.” What has been your personal response to the gospel? If you are truly grateful for this good news (gospel), express your joy by singing the following song. But if you have not trusted Jesus as your

Saviour, would you pause right now to ask for His salvation then sing this song?

**Carol:**

Hark the herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With the angelic host proclaim:  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem”  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, we thank you for sending us Your beloved Son to be our Saviour.

**Final Thought:** And suddenly the shepherds joined the ranks of those who LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:15-20

**Events at the time of the Birth:** Shepherds visited the Manger

**Background:** v15 – What priority did the shepherds assign to this news which they had just heard? We are not told how they discovered the place. v16 – How did they recognise the place and the people, when they saw it? Surely the rest of the angelic message could be believed! v17 – Who were the first evangelists of the Gospel? v18 - all those who heard it were amazed! v19 – We have seen the reaction of those who heard the gospel. What was the reaction of Mary? v20 – How did this experience change the life of the shepherds? What did they continue to do?

**Application:** You have heard the good news, in what way is your attitude different as you go back to your daily routine?

***Song:***

While shepherds watched  
their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.

“Fear not,” said he, for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled minds;  
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring,  
To you and all mankind.

“All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace;  
Goodwill henceforth from Heaven to men.  
Begin and never cease.”

*(Nahum Tate)*

**Prayer:** Lord, you know the struggles I’ve had with life. Help me to go back to my daily routines with an attitude of rejoicing and experience your peace.

**Final Thought:** And the shepherds, together with many who heard their testimony, joined the company of faithful ones who, by faith, LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:21

**Events at the time of the Birth:** Jesus was named and circumcised

**Background:** v21 – How old was The Baby Jesus at His circumcision? (see Leviticus 12:3) What name was He given? It means “Jehovah Saves” (Luke 1:31 – it was the Name given to Mary before she conceived; and Mt1:18-21 to Joseph after the conception.)

Note regarding CIRCUMCISION: This was a religious ceremony required of Jews as a symbol of racial and cultural identification, possibly with some hygienic significance. It was essential to the Jews as a sign of spiritual purification & commitment to their Covenant relationship with God (Gen17:9-14). There is no Scriptural evidence of any relationship between Infant baptism and this ancient Jewish ritual

**Application:** While we want to understand the principles that were pointed out by Jewish traditions, we are not under Law but under grace (Romans 6:14b). Take note of your spiritual experience and examine yourself, to ensure that you are not trusting man-made tradition but enjoying the free grace of God, in Christ.

**Song:**

Free from the law, O happy condition,  
Jesus has bled And there is remission,  
Cursed by the law  
And bruised by the fall,  
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

*Once for all, O sinner, receive it,  
Once for all, O brother, believe it;*

Cling to the cross, The burden will fall,  
Christ hath redeemed Us once for all.  
Now we are free,  
There’s no condemnation,  
Jesus provides a perfect salvation.  
“Come unto Me,” O hear His sweet call,  
Come, and He saves us once for all.

*(Philip Bliss)*

**Prayer:** Lord, help me more and more to trust NOT what I do but what You are doing in me.

**Final Thought:** By this ritual, the Infant was identified with those who LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

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**22 FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Romans 8:32

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:22-24

**Events following the Birth:** Jesus was presented in the Temple

**Background:** The Law (Ex 13:2, 12-16) required that a firstborn child be presented to God. Jesus came to fulfill the Law. Therefore it was proper that He be taken to Jerusalem. There is no Biblical record of the actual journey from Bethlehem to the Holy City. Again, according to OT Law, it was necessary for Mary to present an offering for ceremonial purification after childbirth (Lev 12:1-8). Although both Joseph and Mary were from the royal line, both were actually very poor. They could not afford a lamb, the usual burnt offering. But in the Law God had made provision for such and they were able to present a bird.

**Application:** Read Romans 12:1. Joseph and Mary were required to present Jesus to God.

- What are we taught to present to God?
- Examine your own life. What change(s) must you make if it is to be an "acceptable offering?"

**Hymn:**

Give of your best to the Master;  
 Give of the strength of your youth;  
 Throw your soul's fresh, glowing ardor  
 Into the battle for truth.  
 Jesus has set the example,  
 Dauntless was He, young and brave;  
 Give Him your loyal devotion;

Give Him the best that you have.

*Give of your best to the Master;  
 Give of the strength of your youth;  
 Clad in salvation's full armor,  
 Join in the battle for truth.*

*(Howard B. Grose)*

**Prayer:** Lord, cleanse me and make me complete so that the offering I bring will glorify you.

**Final Thought:** To many, such a ceremony was just a traditional ritual. But to Joseph and Mary it was deeply meaningful because **THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.**

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:25-35

**Events following the Birth:** The witness of Simeon

**Background:** v25-28. What is recorded concerning the character and faith of Simeon? What had been revealed to Simeon concerning his life-expectancy? How did Simeon recognise Mary, Joseph and Jesus? v29-32, Simeon’s song is known as NUNC DIMITTIS, the first two words in Latin translation. It means “Now, let me depart.” Simeon was ready to die because God’s promises to him had been fulfilled (v26). Who was to be blessed by the coming of this Child? (v31)

In v33 Joseph and Mary were “amazed” that this total stranger knew so much about their Child. v34-35 is Simeon’s prediction to Mary that the coming of Jesus would bring on a crisis; the nation would be divided; some would fall; others would be lifted up. Jesus would be God’s supreme sign to the nation. His coming proved that God was intervening to rule.

**Application:** God has given us promises in His Word. Some of them may not be immediately fulfilled. Honestly evaluate your personal level of expectation concerning the promises of God.

**Hymn:**

God is working His purpose out  
As year succeeds to year;  
God is working his purpose out,  
And the time is drawing near;  
Nearer and nearer draws the time,  
The time that shall surely be,  
When the earth shall be filled  
With the glory of God  
As the waters cover the sea.

*(Arthur Ainger)*

**Prayer:** Lord, don’t allow the pressing needs of my daily life to crowd out faith and expectation concerning Your promises even if we are long in waiting.

**Final Thought:** Simeon was one of the faithful WHO WAITED FOR REDEMPTION

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25 Christmas Day

There will probably be a service in your church.

Take a few minutes to meditate on Galatians 4:4-5

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Luke 2: 36-38

**Events following the Birth:** The witness of Anna

**Background:** The old woman was a widow, and is referred to as a prophetess. Day and night she stayed in the Temple, probably one of the numerous rooms normally kept for priests, Levites or temple servants. She devoted herself to worship, fasting and prayer.

**Application:**

- How old was Anna?
- What three things occupied her time and energy?
- Although your whole life should be devoted to God, think and pray about your retirement years.
- Even in old age, how can you invest your time, energy and even money for eternity?

**Song:**

Based on Psalm 71:17-18  
(Tune: 'Amazing Grace')

Since I received your saving grace,  
 You've met all other needs.  
 I will make known to all the race  
 The splendor of Your deeds.  
 Lord, give me strength  
 For each new day  
 To boldly proclaim your Word;  
 To spend my life so more will say,  
 You only are their Lord.

**Prayer:** Lord as I grow older, help me to grow wiser, bolder and more effective in leading others to make you Lord of their lives.

**Final Thought:** Upon seeing Jesus, she recognized in Him the fulfillment of the hope of all who **LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION**

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Matthew 2:1-12

**Events following the Birth:** WISE MEN visited the newborn King

**Background:** Wise men (Magi) is from a Persian word designating astrologers. They had seen a most unusual star, and concluded that it was the sign of the birth of a new king in Israel. We are not told how many magi there were. There must have been more than the traditional three, because they caused quite a stir when they entered Jerusalem and asked about the newborn King of the Jews. (v5) - Note: the religious leaders knew exactly where He should be born. They even quoted the prophecy in Micah 5:2. But they were not men of faith, so showed no interest in going to see the Child. We know from history what a ruthless savage Herod was. v7-8 - Herod pretended to have a spiritual interest; but v12, God warned the magi not to report their findings to Herod.

**Digging Deeper:**

- v9-How did the magi respond to King Herod's instructions?
- v10-11-What was their response when they reached their destination?

Note: some time had lapsed since the actual birth. Joseph had been able to relocate the family in a house.

**Application:** When the magi came to look for the baby Jesus, they came

prepared with gifts to be presented when they worshiped Him. When you worship, what preparations do you make to present yourself or your gifts to God?

**Song:**

Saviour, Thy dying love Thou gavest me,  
Nor should I aught withhold,  
Dear Lord, from Thee;  
In love my soul would bow,  
My heart fulfill its vow,  
Some off'ring bring Thee now,  
Something for Thee.

All that I am and have—  
Thy gifts so free—  
In joy, in grief, through life,  
O Lord, for Thee!  
And when Thy face I see,  
My ransomed soul shall be  
Through all eternity, something for Thee.  
*(Sylvanus Phelps)*

**Prayer:** Lord when I come to worship You, help me to always be prepared with myself and my gifts.

**Final Thought:** Gentiles, from far-away Persia, were among the many WHO LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION.

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Matthew 2:13-15

**Events following the Birth:** The family ESCAPED TO EGYPT

**Background:** In a dream, Joseph was warned by an angel. For protection, he was to take the family to Egypt. Bethlehem was dangerous. Herod would search for the Child to kill Him. Without delay, Joseph obeyed. This event was seen as the fulfillment of Hosea 11:1. In the Old Testament God treated Israel with the love and care of a son. Both ISRAEL and JESUS (God’s only begotten Son) went to Egypt to escape danger. Both came out from Egypt to fulfill God’s greater plan

**Application:** Right now, list a few evidences of the love and care shown to you by the God who knows all your circumstances and has a master plan for your life. Write down your prayer of thanksgiving and commitment to Him.

**Song:**

God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me  
He will be my guide  
Hold me closely to His side  
With love and strength  
For each new day  
He will make a way  
He will make a way

*(Don Moen)*

**Prayer:** Lord, in my life I am not aware of the dangers around me. But I thank You that You are my protector. Help me to be sensitive to your promptings.

**Final Thought:** This unexpected move to Egypt would be further confirmation to Mary and Joseph and other observers WHO LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION

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**29 First Sunday after Advent.**

Meditate on Philippians 2:5-11

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Matthew 2:16-18

**Events following the Birth:** Herod slaughtered innocent babes

**Background:** The questions of the magi had filled Herod with suspicion and he struck out to put fear in the hearts of all of his subjects. Herod activated a plan to kill all baby boys in Bethlehem who were two years old or less. This was consistent with his character and treacherous deeds. This event fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15. Jeremiah prophesied that the nation would weep because of the death of the children. (Interesting facts: Ramah is about 14 km north of Jerusalem. The tomb of Rachel, thought of as the mother of the Nation, is nearby).

**Application:** What deliverance from suffering have you experienced? Read Psalm 23:4 and 1Peter 5:10 and list ways you can trust God to take care of you.

**Song:**

Be not dismayed whate'er betide,  
God will take care of you!  
Beneath His wings of love abide,  
God will take care of you!  
*God will take care of you,  
Through every day  
o'er all the way;  
He will take care of you;  
God will take care of you!*

**Prayer:** Lord, you may not always provide a way of escape when I go through suffering, but in the midst of my deepest distress help me not to doubt.

**Final Thought:** Evidence was rapidly mounting for those who, by faith, LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION

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**SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:** Matt 2:19-23

**Events following the Birth:** The family returned from Egypt and went to Nazareth.

**Background:** In a dream, Joseph was informed by an angel, of the Lord, that Herod had died, and was instructed to return to the Land. Obediently, he set out, planning to go back to Bethlehem.

Joseph was warned through a second dream not to go there, but to Nazareth, in Galilee. Note: Upon Herod's death, Archelaus who was mentally unstable and who had a reputation for tyranny and murder, became king. He ruled from 4 B.C. to A.D. 6. This change of destination was seen as a fulfillment of prophecy. The Hebrew word, NATZER, the root word from which Nazareth took its name, means "Branch", a well-known OT designation of Messiah (e.g. Isaiah 11:1). Nazareth, about 100 km north of Jerusalem, had been the home of both Mary and Joseph. This is the place where Jesus grew up until He was about 30 years old.

**Application:** God can give directions by dreams and visions but now that He has given us His divinely inspired Word, He will normally direct us through Scripture.

- Look back and think of one or two past experiences when logic

would you lead you one way but divine wisdom led you another way?

- What decision are you facing at present?
- Where will you turn for direction?

**Song:**

Lead me gently home,  
Father, Lead me gently home;  
When life's toils are ended,  
And parting days have come,  
Sin no more shall tempt me,  
Ne'er from Thee I'll roam,  
If Thou'll only lead me, Father,  
Lead me gently home.

*Lead me gently home,  
Father, Lead me gently home,  
Father, Lest I fall upon the wayside,  
Lead me gently home.*

*(Will L. Thompson)*

**Prayer:** Lord help me to trust you so completely that I won't be misled by the wisdom of the world.

**Final Thought:** In spite of all the evidence there were people who did not recognise Jesus as The Promised One. But, His Teaching and His Miracles convinced multitudes that THEY NO LONGER HAD TO LOOK FOR THE REDEEMER. HE WAS THERE.

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# CONCLUSION

The long-promised Redeemer did come, fulfilling all of the prophecies and proclamations that we have observed in these thirty-one devotional exercises. He did defeat Satan! He did die for our sins! He did rise again from the grave! Are you among the many who testify “We have not seen Him, but we love Him”(1 Pet 1:8)? God’s plan has not yet come to complete fulfillment. Jesus said, I will come again and receive you unto myself (Jn 14:3).

The prediction of Christ’s Second Coming became a major theme in the New Testament. This is our blessed hope.

Read Titus 2:11-13. If you have personally received His gift of salvation from sin He will come to receive you unto Himself (1 Thess 4:16); you will be transformed, to be like Him (1 Jn 3:2) and you will be with Him forever! (I Thess 4:17).

Read and meditate on these promises. It will change your life—now! Be sure that you, by faith, are one of the multitude who LOOKS FOR HIS SECOND COMING.

Blank lines for writing.



## **A Devotional Guide**

### **leading up to Advent 2013**

**I**n sacred Scripture God revealed bit by bit major events in His eternal plan. The greatest historical event since creation was the personal coming, in the flesh, of God's Son to perfectly provide man's deepest need and God's greatest desire.

Scripture records that in every age people of faith examined the Word and had a rising sense of anticipation.

The authors' intent for **THEY LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION** is to enable you to experience the same delight those early saints enjoyed when they saw the literal fulfillment of the promises of God. .

### **About the authors:**

*Rev. Dr. E.N. Poulson* has served in Singapore as a Bible teacher, pastor and counselor for sixty years, with Singapore Bible College, Grace Baptist Church and numerous other churches and organizations.

*Dr Koh Siang Kiang* has served as an Administrator, Director of Christian Education and Lecturer in Dallas Theological Seminary. At present, she is Associate Professor of Christian Education in Singapore Bible College.

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