

## Scripture Reading: Luke 1:68-79

*Christmas, my child, is love in action. —Dale Evans*

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Steve Poust was fishing in the St. Johns River near Jacksonville, Florida, last summer with his son Chase, 7, and daughter Abigail, 4. The boat was anchored, and the kids were in the water playing around. Abigail was wearing a life vest, but Chase was not required to wear one because he was 7.

Then Abigail let go of the back of the boat and started to drift away. Dad got into the water to get the girl and yelled at Chase to get help. Steve Poust was overcome with fatigue and Abigail again floated away in the powerful current.

Chase swam more than a mile back to shore to get help. He floated, he dog-paddled and he made it. Help arrived and the story had a good outcome.

As inspiring as this story is, for drama it doesn't match some of the most amazing and daring rescue stories of all time. Consider the "Miracle at Dunkirk," Apollo 13, the "Raid on Entebbe," the 2010 Copiapó mining accident, "Baby Jessica," the Thailand soccer team rescue and the "Miracle on the Hudson."

We love rescue stories, and they don't even need to be *human* rescues. Just think of all those animal rescues you've watched on television: the cow with its head between two tree trunks, the bobcat with a foot in a trap, a dog that fell through ice, a deer with its antlers caught in barbed wire, a shark that washed up on shore or a horse that's stuck in a quagmire. We can't get enough of a good rescue story.

Here's the thing: *The Bible is essentially one big rescue story.* The Incarnation is nothing but a rescue story more daring in execution, more breathtaking in scope, more imaginative in design and more thrilling in victory than any rescue in the annals of history.

This theme surfaces here in today's reading from the gospel of Luke: the prayer of Zechariah (known to us as the *Benedictus* — Latin for "blessed," the first word of the prayer).

Jesus will be "a mighty savior for us," sings Zechariah as his theme begins to appear. We will "be saved from our enemies" (v. 71), we will be "rescued from the hands of our enemies" (v. 74), and you, John, "will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people" (vv. 76-77).

It is easy to forget during the Advent season that the "reason for the season" is salvation and redemption — our salvation and redemption!

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: O God, may I never forget the purpose of Christ's coming to earth to live among us. May I remember that it was a mission of mercy, and a gift of love. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Blessings  
Lisa & Pastor Ben Metz*

**Daily Bible Readings**

**Sunday:** Psalms 142-145

**Monday:** Psalms 146-147

**Tuesday:** Psalms 148-150

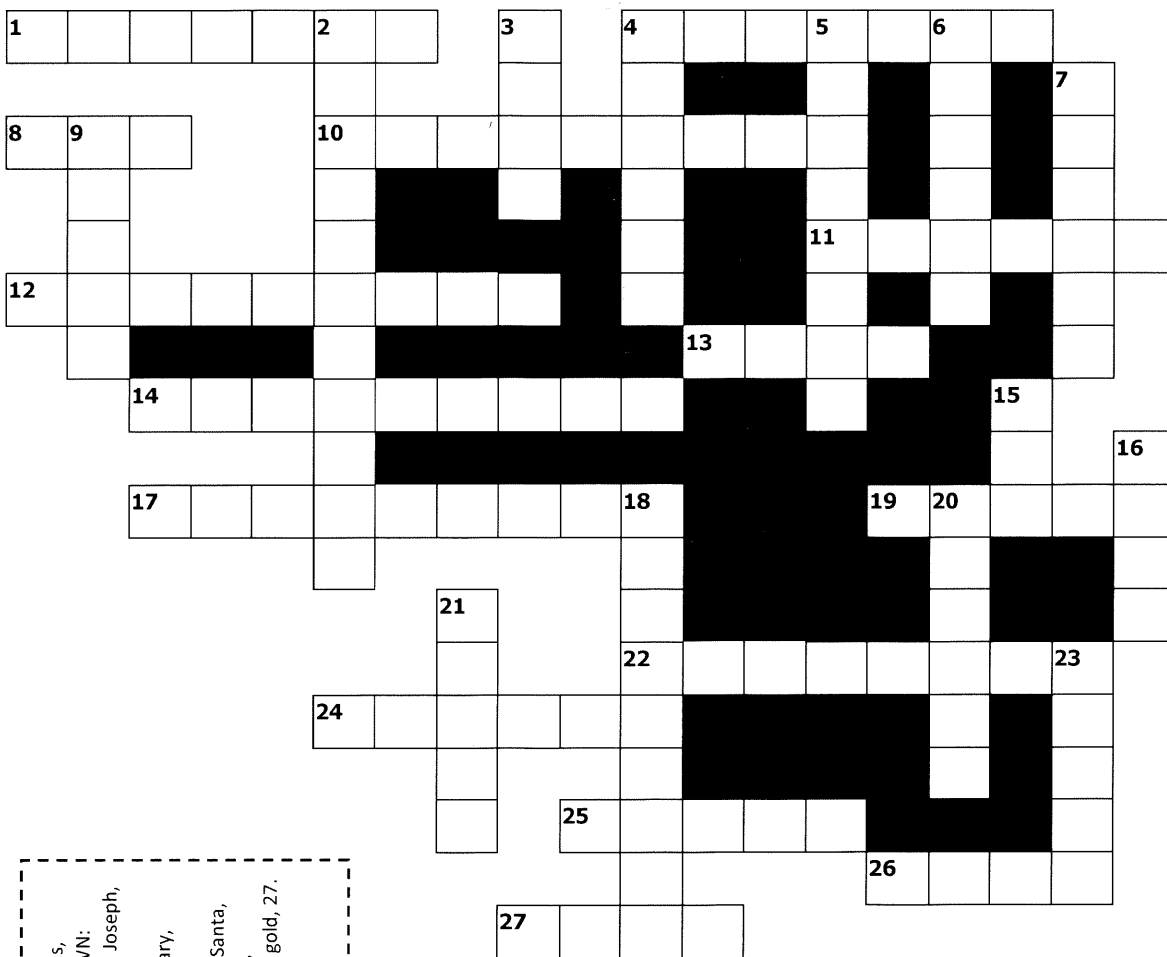
**Wednesday:** Revelation 13-15

**Thursday:** Revelation 16-18

**Friday:** Proverbs 8-11

**Saturday:** Proverbs 12-14

# CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



**CLUES**

1. Has a red nose
2. Red plants
3. A nova
4. A savior
- 4 DOWN: Crib
5. Keeper of sheep
6. Coming
7. He was a carpenter
8. 12<sup>th</sup> month  
Abbr.)
9. Little helpers at North Pole
10. Enfleshed
11. *Messiah* composer
12. Of Ephrathah
13. Gabriel visited her
14. A form of holly
15. B & B
16. Wise men
17. Tree decorations
18. Patron saint of children
19. Red-suited man
20. Heavenly singers
21. Song
22. Home for Mary
23. He ordered the Slaughter of the Innocents
24. Messiah
25. Presents
26. A gift of the wise men
27. Author of the most famous account of the birth of Jesus

**Answers:** 1. Rudolph, 2. poinsettias, 3. star, 4 ACROSS: Messiah, 4 DOWN: manger, 5. shepherd, 6. advent, 7. Joseph, 8. Dec, 9. elves, 10. incarnate, 11. Handel, 12. Bethlehem, 13. Mary, 14. mistletoe, 15. inn, 16. magi, 17. ornaments, 18. Saint Nick, 19. Santa, 20. angels, 21. carol, 22. Nazareth, 23. Herod, 24. Christ, 25. gifts, 26. gold, 27. Luke.

