

1. Jesus, Son of Abraham,
may we share Abraham's faithful and obedient response to your will,
and, living by trust in you,
be accounted blameless before the Father through your righteousness.
V./Lord, in your mercy, R./Hear our prayer.

2. Heir of Isaac,
may we accept your completed sacrifice,
that delivers us from death and brings us forgiveness.
So may we be rescued from death and inherit your promises.
V./R.

3. Descendant of Jacob,
let us rely on you in our wanderings,
know you as the one who links us with God,
and struggle in prayer to make our relationship to you sure,
in our weakness as in our strength.
V./R.

4. Son of David,
may we accept you as our king and deliverer.
Rescue us from our enemies,
the temptations and spiritual forces that would enslave and destroy us.
So we shall live victoriously as your freed and liberating people.
V./R.

5. Successor of Solomon,
enable us to know and receive you as the eternal Wisdom of God,
and source of all true wisdom and understanding,
that we may live with prudence, courage, and effectiveness in this world,
as we seek to implement your caring justice in our lives
and the societies in which we live.
V./R.

6. Heir of Josiah,
let us reform our lives to worship and serve you according to your will,
in your body the church, the true temple of God.
So may our sacrifice of praise and obedience to the Father
be right and acceptable in you,
by the power of your Spirit.
V./R.

7. Descendant of Zerubbabel,
true branch of the rulers of God's people, Anointed One,
grant us to share in rebuilding the true temple of your body, your people,
ourselves holy in life, and helping others to be built up in you.
V./R.

Lord God, our parent,
as we meditate on the mothers of your Son, may we grow in your truth.
If we are shocked by Tamar's pretending to be a prostitute,
let us see her determination to do her duty by her dead husbands,
to fulfil the central demands of life and human solidarity as she received them,
to bear children, and to continue the family to which she was joined,
to do the right thing,
even at the cost of her respectability, and at great risk to herself.
So she became a true ancestor of your Son,
who put your will first,
enduring hatred, accusations, contempt, and a shameful death
to give birth to your salvation and your new people.
May we be similarly single minded, bold, determined,
and resourceful to do your will.
May we put obedience to your righteous will above reputation and respectability.
So may we too become the agents of the fulfilment of your saving purposes,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

God of salvation,
we see how the prostitute, Rahab, protected the spies at Jericho,
aligning herself with your people, and saving her family.
So may we not despair at our past sins,
or crumble in shame at where we have come from,
or despise others for their background,
but trust in your salvation and victory,
and so separate ourselves from evil,
and seek to assist the triumph of your just and righteous will.
May we protect those threatened by evil and cruelty,
and find ourselves delivered from destruction,
to share in your life,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
the friend of prostitutes and sinners,
who spoke up for the poor and weak,
and gave his life to save humankind from destruction
and make us your people.
Amen.

God of love,
we praise you for the faithfulness and love of Ruth to her mother-in-law, Naomi,
her loyalty in uniting herself to you and your people out of care for Naomi,
her courage in leaving her own people and coming to a strange land,
her humility in accepting the status of a poor alien among your people,
and her boldness in claiming her rights
by calling Boaz to act by marrying her to perpetuate Naomi's family.
So her descendant, Jesus, your Son,
in faithful love to you and us,
came from heaven to join himself to us,
humbly accepted poverty and homelessness,

and courageously faced death to give us life,
and to raise up a people for you.
Give us, too, loyalty and devotion to each other and to you,
humility and courage to accept change and give up security
for the sake of your will and your people,
that, in losing ourselves for your sake,
we may find our true lives in the community of your love,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Amen.

God of forgiveness and renewal,
you punished David and his family for his adultery with Bathsheba, Uriah's wife,
and his murder of her husband.
Yet you permitted even David and Bathsheba to be ancestors of your Son.
You gave a place in the process of salvation
to a woman exploited and manipulated by powerful men, but a survivor.
When our sins lie heavily on us,
and we suffer the destructive results of them in our personalities and
relationships,
may we trust in your forgiveness
and your power to turn even evil into the instrument of your good will.
So may we be freed from the tyranny of circumstances,
survive and triumph over all our troubles,
and find our liberation and fruitfulness in your love.
This we ask through Jesus Christ,
who bore our punishment and all the weight of sin,
transformed the evil of the cross into the gate of glory,
and, dying, overcame death to bring us eternal life.
Amen.

God, who cares for all,
in a patriarchal society

you called your church to celebrate, in the ancestry of your Son,
women of boldness and resource,
women able to act unconventionally,
women who came from outside the bloodline of Israel,
yet who seized the blessing for themselves and their loved ones
by their determination and commitment.

As you call the powerful and arrogant to humility and repentance,
so you call the oppressed to a new sense of self worth,

to courage and power to live and act as your people.

May we know ourselves rightly in the light of your Word,
that we may be both humble and confident,
able to act in faith to forward your will of liberation, justice, and care for all,
especially the oppressed and despised.

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord,

who humbly did your will, and bore all shame for us,

yet acted in the assurance of faith as your Child

to assert your Kingdom by word and deed

and brought us freedom and a new and assured identity as your children.

Amen.

Jesus, our Lord and Saviour,
we praise you that you were born into our human race,
 and share our human life, with all its joys and sorrows.
You took flesh and blood, not only of the heroes of faith,
but of the failures and sinners:
 of Solomon, whose ingratitude and self indulgence nullified his wisdom,
 and sowed the seeds of disaster for his kingdom;
 of Rehoboam, who lost a kingdom by his vanity and stubborn folly;
 of Joram, who killed his own brothers, and whose death no one regretted;
 of Ahaziah,
 whose friendship and co-operation with the wicked led to his own death;
 of Uzziah, struck down by leprosy in his arrogant presumption;
 of Ahaz, who had no trust in God,
 and relied on the cruel and tyrannical superpower of his day,
 even putting the symbols of its false religion in God's temple;
 of Manasseh and Jehoiakim, who murdered God's prophets,
 and brought destruction on your people;
 of Zedekiah, too weak and fearful to do right or to keep his oaths
 to avert the destruction of Jerusalem.
Forgive us our pride, vanity and presumption,
 our weakness, faithlessness and cowardice,
 our cruelty, violence and destructiveness,
 our self indulgence, and rebellion against your will.
You have overcome the temptation to these things in your own life.
You have born the result of them in your sufferings.
Give us, by your Spirit,
 your patience, your endurance,
 your strength to turn from evil
 to the way of faith, hope and love,
 loyalty and kindness, temperance and self control,
 that we may be faithful, obedient children of our heavenly Father,
 and his promises be fulfilled in us,
 for your mercy's sake.
Amen.

On Matt. 1.1-17
Luke 3.23-28

Jesus Christ, our friend and brother,
you number among your ancestors not only rich, famous and powerful people,
but also unknown, ordinary folk.
You were born into the home of a craftsman, a working man, and his wife,
and you yourself worked in an ordinary trade, as a carpenter.
May we find you now in ordinary people, ordinary work,
the ordinary occupations and relationships of life.
Let us not be deceived by the world's false values
into greed for wealth, power, fame, or worldly success,
but realise that it is in trust in you and your love,
in grateful caring for other people and for your creation,
in self forgetful service of our fellows for your sake,
that we can find true fulfilment,
and be prepared to inherit your eternal glory
in the kingdom of God our Father.
Amen.

On Matt. 1.1-17
Luke 3.23-28

Eternal God,
you were, you are and you are to come.
We praise you that, in the birth of Jesus, your Son,
you took up all his ancestors,
and made of their dubious history a preparation for your coming
and the road to your glory.
Transform, through Jesus the Messiah, and through your Spirit, our pasts too,
healing what is damaged,
forgiving what is evil,
and transforming them to be the path and preparation for your salvation of us
through the same Jesus, God with us, Emmanuel.
Amen.

On Matt. 1.1-17 (esp. v.17)

Everlasting God,
while the so-called modern world looks for instant solutions to its problems,
and in its rootlessness is swept hither and thither by changing fashions and ideas,
we pray that you will root us deep in your patient and faithful wisdom,
in which you purposed and planned the consummation of your love from eternity,
and worked it out over many generations,
through often weak, confused, foolish, and wicked people,
to make and fulfil your promise of salvation
to and through the descendants of Abraham.

Let your eternal Word and Wisdom,
who entered our life fully and definitively as Jesus Christ,
live in us, and we in him,
that we may truly be the heirs of trusting, faithful Abraham,
your children and chosen people.
So may we learn patience and perseverance to continue in your will,
and wait for the completion of your salvation in your own good time,
when we shall share your joy for all eternity,
through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Amen.

On Matt. 1.17

Everlasting God,
you took twice seven generations,
double what people thought of as the perfect number,
to work out each stage of your plan of salvation.
Give us patience to wait and to persevere
as you waited and persevered with your people.
Let us not be driven to despair by the weaknesses and wanderings of human beings
- including our own.
So may we come at last to the eternal fulfilment of your will
through Jesus Christ, the goal of the Old Covenant promises,
in whom you will make all things new.
Amen.

On Matt. 1.18-25

God, our guide and our goal,
help us to be sensitive to your will.
May your Spirit fit us to receive your guidance
by leading and enabling us to live as righteous people, like Joseph,
faithful to your ways,
caring for others and wishing not to hurt them.
And if you want us to do the unexpected,
that which is not obviously indicated
by reason and righteousness based on your revelation in scripture,
then guide us clearly, we pray, as you guided Joseph.
Give us messengers and messages we can understand,
and show us how what you are telling us
agrees with your will revealed in Jesus Christ.
We ask it through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

On Matt. 1.18-25

God, our Guide,
when we know what you want us to do,
give us the courage and self control of Joseph, that we may do it.
As he did not shrink from risking accusations, mockery, and disapproval
for marrying pregnant Mary,
may we not be deterred from obeying you by fear of contempt or attack.
As he had no sexual intercourse with Mary before Jesus' birth,
may we be ready to deny ourselves and control our desires and emotions
in order to fulfil your purposes.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who denied himself,
and faced mockery, insults, false accusations, attacks and crucifixion
to complete your salvation
and bring us to new birth as his sisters and brothers, your children.
Amen.

On Matt. 1.18-25

God, the giver of life,
your Son was born into the world through a virgin mother,
to give your own new life.
Enable us by your Spirit to realise that the salvation and eternal life he came to bring
are your gift,
not something that we can gain ourselves or give to others
by our own power or actions,
or even something we can comprehend with our limited understanding.
May we see rather
that the new and everlasting life he brings is your own new initiative,
which goes beyond the limits of this fallen creation.
So may we be enabled to receive our own new birth as your children
as your free gift,
in grateful, awed, and adoring faith,
through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

On Matt. 1.23

Almighty and Eternal God,
we praise you that, through your Son, Jesus Christ, you are Emmanuel, God with us.
May we accept your guiding, governing, loving presence in all our lives,
to show us the truth about ourselves,
to judge and correct us,
to be our joy in success and comfort in failure,
to give us our true identity,
and to lead us to our eternal home,
for his sake,
Amen.

Eternal Word of God,
 taking human flesh for our sake,
 Emmanuel, God with us,
we thank you that you took the name and character Jesus,
 God is Salvation.

You shared our life to rescue us from sin,
 from alienation from God and each other,
 from self destructive rebellion and selfishness,
 from death, the loss of self and all relationships.

You became what we are, that we might become what you are.
You saved us to be God's children,
 God's friends,
 heirs of eternal life,
 sharers of the love and joy,
 truth and light,
 glory and beauty,
 that are the life of God,
 citizens of the heavenly city,
 the eternal community of love.

You saved us by bearing the weight of sin,
 sharing our guilt,
 accepting loneliness,
 fear,
 pain,
 condemnation,
 and a shameful death for us.

You bore hell's pains, that we might enjoy heaven's bliss.
Praise to you for ever and ever,
 Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father.
 Amen.