



THE NAMES OF
JESUS
2023 ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

Written by the staff of
Campus Bible Church

29 Devotionals
Nov.27-Dec. 25

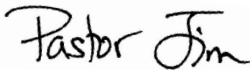
Dear Worshiper,

During this 2023 Advent season, the staff of Campus Bible Church has prepared twenty-nine devotionals for you and your family. We encourage you to read one each day, individually or as a family, as you prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

You will notice that each of these devotionals is related to one of the Names of Jesus—especially as they point us to the Birth of Christ. We hope you will take the time to write down your own thoughts while you read and pray.

Our sincere desire is that you will do as the mother of Jesus did: “Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

From our grateful hearts to yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Jim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Jim Cecy
Senior Pastor-Teacher
Campus Bible Church



CAMPUS
BIBLE CHURCH

NOVEMBER 27

Jesus

Matthew 1:21 - “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

After the angel explained to Mary that she was with child by the Holy Spirit, the angel went and told Joseph “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Jesus didn’t just come to be a good teacher who healed people, He came to be the Savior. If you don’t know Jesus as your Savior, then you don’t know Him at all.

When I hear that Jesus came to save us, my immediate question is, “From what?” When I was six-years old I almost drowned. It was a hot summer afternoon and I was at my cousins’ house. The neighbor down the street had a pool and they invited us to go swimming. We threw on our suits and ran down to their house. We couldn’t wait to get into that water and cool off. When we got to the pool, my cousins ran and jumped into the deep end, and I followed them right in. But I forgot one thing, I didn’t know how to swim. Immediately I started to panic. My cousin saw I was in trouble and swam out to help me. I grabbed him and almost drowned him with me. Then an older kid slid an inflatable out to me, I grabbed it, and he pulled me to the side of the pool. That kid saved my life. Without his help, my life would’ve ended at age six.

What do I need to be saved from? My sin. Once I knew I was drowning in my sin, God reached out to me by sending His Son as the Savior. I grabbed hold of Him and He saved me.

Prayer: Father, I thank you for sending your son Jesus to save me from my sins.



NOVEMBER 28

The Seed of the Woman

Genesis 3:15 - “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

I love a good Christmas tree. There're the ornaments, the star on top, and of course, presents underneath. Gifts are concealed in a box and a layer of wrapping paper then placed under the tree and we're left to wonder what might be contained. Half the fun is trying to figure out what's inside.

For many generations, I imagine Genesis 3:15 was curiously looked at in much the same way. In this verse God is addressing the serpent in the Garden. God says that the serpent will have enmity with the woman's seed. This makes no sense because women of course have no seed. Well, it makes no sense unless you account for a child born of a virgin.

Genesis isn't often the book we think of when it comes to Christmas but it's actually the first foreshadowing of the Christmas story. Isn't it amazing that in the midst of the heart-wrenching story of the Fall, there is a beautiful promise of hope? This is the first instance of sin but also the first instance of the Gospel being preached, and it's preached by none other than God Himself. This is not the end of the story, it's only the beginning.

God was not confused or unprepared; He had a plan already in motion. Whatever you're facing this season, God isn't caught unaware. He's with you and knows what to do next.

Prayer: God, thank you for the reminder that you are present and aware of all that we go through every day. Help us to look to You first in every situation we face.



NOVEMBER 29

Christ

Mark 8:39 - “And He continued by questioning them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered and said to Him, ‘You are the Christ.’”

Peter stood there. The question had been asked. As he reflected on it, things went on in his mind. Jesus had just healed a blind man. “Who do people say that I am?” Jesus had asked.

Peter’s attention turned as one of them said, “John the Baptist.” He looked again at Jesus, off to the side. Something was formulating in his mind. Then another answered, “Elijah.” Peter looked down. Jesus did not fit what he knew of Elijah. Jesus was something new God was doing.

He was called back to the moment as another suggested Jesus was one of the prophets. A thought sparked in Peter’s heart. Yes! Something about a prophet. But which one?

Then Jesus threw out the question of questions, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter was stunned. He squinted a little. Jesus seemed to change before his eyes for an instant, and some kind of veil was lifted, as when the sun breaks through the clouds.

Yes! The Prophet, whom Moses had spoken about! So he blurts out, in a moment. It is an answer from the heavens. You are the Christ!

Jesus turns to him with knowing eyes. There was affirmation there. This answer was not of human origin. It was revelation of the mystery of the ages. Jesus is the Messiah!

They were told to keep it quiet. But Peter would never again look at Jesus the same way.

Prayer: May our eyes be opened to see Jesus in a new way. Never again as a mere man. But as the eternal Son, who alone can redeem human lives, and grant eternal life!



NOVEMBER 30

Wonderful Counselor

Isaiah 9:6 - “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”

The book of Isaiah was written approximately 750 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Isaiah prophesied that God the Father would give His Son and one of His names would be Wonderful Counselor. The word “name” in Scripture often signifies an individual’s person and character. It was not always what He would be called but who he would be. Wonderful Counselor is actually two names that would characterize the Messiah. “Wonderful” is not an adjective but a noun. The Messiah would be full of wonder. Jesus’ life from His birth to His death and resurrection was characterized by wonder. He healed the sick, caused the blind to see and raised the dead. These were wonders only God could perform. They pointed to who Jesus was. He is unique among humanity as the God/Man. Jesus is wonderful because that is Who He is.

The Messiah also will be called Counselor. Jesus revealed the very mind of God and gave counsel from God’s perspective. He would not need anyone to give Him counsel because He is God. Psalm 139 reveals that God knows our hearts, our thoughts and everything about us. He can give perfect counsel because of His full understanding of how He has made each of us.

Prayer: Father, thank you for giving Your Son. Truly Jesus, You are wonderful and beyond our complete comprehension. You guide us in the counsel of Your will, which is the very best for us. Help us this Advent Season to learn more of the wonder of Who You are. Amen



DECEMBER 1

Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14-15 - "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

I like stories. One of my favorite parts of the gift-giving process is the story behind the gift. Whether I am the one giving or receiving, I think a good story makes a good gift even better.

I love the moment when my wife opens the gifts I got her for Christmas and I can finally spill on the details. I can tell her how I got her the dress I thought she wanted and wrapped it and put it under the tree but then I overheard her talking to a friend and say she wanted a different one, so I had to sneakily unwrap the one under the tree, exchange it, bring home the right one, and rewrap it, all without her knowing...Yes, that really happened, and it was all worth it because the story made a good gift even better!

I hope we all know what a good gift Jesus is but honestly, I think He's an even greater gift than we realize. Jesus saved us AND He can also sympathize with us. Our Savior and King came and lived among us. He's not distant or aloof. He knows the struggles of being a human, the struggles of temptation. He can sympathize with us and yet He is also an example to us because He experienced all that and yet never sinned.

Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for being such an amazing gift! Help me to realize just how amazing You are.



DECEMBER 2

The Bread of Life

John 6:35 - “Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.”

I know it would be natural to think of this literally, that if we believe in Jesus we will never go hungry or thirsty again. But it goes beyond this. Jesus can provide for our physical needs but He will also provide for our spiritual and emotional needs. It causes me to remember when my husband Gary came home from The Gulf War. For a period of 5 years he suffered from several undiagnosed symptoms and was unable to work. During that time the Lord provided for our physical needs through the generosity of our family, friends and church family, as well as some government assistance.

But we had more than just physical needs. We needed Him to assure us that He was with us, and that He cared. During those years we fed on what it meant to trust God in times of plenty and times of want. We had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to assure us that we were loved and seen when outwardly it seemed questionable. We had willing ears to listen to our concerns and heartaches and arms of love to give us hugs when we needed them. Those intense times proved to us that Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, would give us “everything we needed for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3).”

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for the love you have for us. Thank you for coming into this world, God in flesh appearing. Thank you for the peace you give to us as we come to you and believe that you will provide everything we need.



DECEMBER 3

The Vine

John 15:5 - “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

I love my Christmas tree. It is beautiful with all the twinkly lights sparkling their announcement that it is Christmas time. Truth is it would not look as lovely in my living room without the lights. The connection in the electrical outlet to the power source turns on the lights.

This reminds me of the illustration Jesus used about the vine. He is the vine. He is the source that empowers us to produce the fruit. Jesus declares: “for apart from Me you can do nothing.” Picture what the vine does for the branches. The vine provides the nutrients, stability and support. The vine carries along the branches. As the vine travels along the fence the branches follow.

This Christmas season am I abiding in Christ, trusting in His decisions and following His direction? Am I prone to do it on my own without trusting in Christ? Am I being nourished through His Word and prayer? Can I trust the Lord to make my life fruitful for His glory? Am I a conduit of God’s power?

Prayer: Praying that I will stay connected to Christ this Christmas season. He is the source that will make my light twinkle for Him.



DECEMBER 4

The Rock

1 Corinthians 10:4 - “And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.”

Hopefully when you see a title like “the Rock” your first thoughts aren’t of Dwayne Johnson or that mid-90s movie with Sean Connery and Nicholas Cage. I admittedly thought of those things eventually but one of the first things I thought about was “foundation”; the very basis one which anything stands. Foundation typically is the very ground something else is built upon and without a solid foundation that which is built cannot last or stand. Remember Christ encouraged all who would listen to build on the rock and not on the sand in Matthew 7:24–27.

We are reminded as we read Corinthians a spiritual rock was with the Jews throughout their wilderness journey. Even though it may have been hard to believe or understand, God was making provisions for them the entire way. Jesus was that spiritual foundation. It had already been laid and it cannot change. Which is great because that means that no matter how rocky things get in our lives, our firm foundation will always remain the same. One of my favorite songs says, “I’ve still got joy in chaos, I’ve got peace that makes no sense. I won’t be going under; I’m not held by my own strength. Cause I’ve built my life on Jesus, He’s never let me down. He’s faithful through every season, so why would He fail now? He won’t.” (“Firm Foundation” by Maverick City Music.)

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for being the solid rock on which we stand. As things around us shake and give way, may we continue to put trust in You knowing that You won’t fail. Amen.



DECEMBER 5

Alpha & Omega

Revelation 1:8 - “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

God declares Himself to be the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. What an incredibly powerful statement. Nothing came before Him, nothing will come after Him. As finite creatures we think time must have a beginning and an end, but God exists outside of time, He is eternal. He always was and always will be. Don't think too hard about that or your head will start to hurt. God's existence alone is bigger than we can even grasp, let alone the rest of His attributes.

And yet amidst the expanse of eternity He chose to come down to earth, to humble Himself by putting on flesh, and giving Himself as a sacrifice for us. Why? Because this eternally big God, that we cannot even fathom, cares about you. You! How amazing is that? How incredibly loving and caring is your God? He cares about your problems, He cares about your hurts, He cares about your little things, and your big things. God is present with you. And yet He is so incredibly big and powerful that He can handle anything you can imagine and everything you cannot even conceive of.

God came to earth to demonstrate His love for us and show us how much He cares, to save us in a way that we were incapable of ourselves. How blessed are we that we have a God who is so big He can handle anything, and yet so loving and caring that He is concerned about our anything.

Prayer: Thank you God for caring for me and my everything.



DECEMBER 6

Cornerstone

Isaiah 28:16 - “Therefore thus says the LORD GOD, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed.”

The New Testament alludes to Jesus Christ being the Cornerstone, which is defined as the first stone set in the construction of a masonry foundation, all other stones are set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure.

When I think about Jesus and His Word as the Cornerstone of my life, I think about Jesus determining my views, my actions, and my words. When I listen to the news, or read social media, I'm amazed by how convinced people are that their views are true. Yet when you compare their words to Scripture, they are way off. They don't have the Cornerstone of Jesus and His Word to guide them.

It reminds me of the story Jesus told of the two builders. (Matthew 7:24–27) “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may he be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell - and great was its fall.”

As Christians we will still go through storms, but our faith is built on a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation. And when we live our lives according to God's Word, we have the answers.

Prayer: Father, I thank-you for sending Your Son, Jesus, as the Cornerstone that I can build my life on.



DECEMBER 7

I AM

John 8:58 - Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

During the holidays our home is filled with various nativity scenes. They help me reflect on that moment in human history when Jesus Christ took on flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14.) However, there are some pictorial depictions of Jesus Christ in the Gospels that also get my attention during this Advent Season. Here in John’s Gospel, we see a portrait of Christ before the foundation of the world, living in eternity with His Heavenly Father—much “before Abraham was born.”

Notice that He doesn’t say “Before Abraham was born, I was.” Jesus was not having a grammar problem; He was saying exactly what He meant—and the Jews knew exactly what He meant. He was declaring Himself to be the Eternal God who revealed Himself to Moses (cf. Exodus 3:13–14). Thus, they picked up stones to stone Him (John 8:59).

The name “I AM” is the personal name of God Himself. It literally means “I am that I am” and speaks of the fact that God always was and always will be. He is the Ever-Existent One. Even more specifically, the name refers not just to God’s eternal existence but His all-encompassing provision in our lives.

“I AM” may seem like an incomplete sentence. In fact, it is the shortest yet totally complete sentence in the English language. It causes us to ask, “I AM...what?” The answer is deeply profound as Jesus answers: “I AM the Christ...the Ever-Existent One. All your past, present, and future days are in My view. I do not just supply your needs; I AM everything you need. I am the Great ‘I AM.’” Now, that’s a portrait of Christ that should be indelibly imprinted in our minds.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are the Great “I AM” and worthy of my praise and worship.



DECEMBER 8

King of Kings

Revelation 19:16 - "And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

In this season we remember when Jesus was brought into the world. He came quietly, as an infant! Yet born a king. Few knew it. Mary had some inkling, and treasured it. The shepherds had revelation, and went to see. The Magi saw a star, and traveled to worship Him.

We would have a gentle Jesus, who would not extinguish a dimly burning wick of a man or woman. One who heals, delivers those held captive by the devil and forgives a woman caught in adultery. But who is this One who comes humbly? This One to be born in a manger?

He who was to be born had no beginning! When God spoke the world into existence, the eternal story was also written. Many royal leaders in the world would come and go. But only One would be born with a name written on His robe and His thigh, "King of kings and Lord of lords." John in a vision saw Him in as "Faithful and True!" He alone will judge in righteousness and wage a final war. Jesus.

His eyes are like a flame of fire. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood. The Lamb of God. He will come with the armies of heaven. From His mouth comes a sharp sword. He will strike down nations! He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. This is the King of kings, our Savior!

Prayer: Lord, open the heavens before me and let me see Jesus, like never before. As He is. Give me a vision for my life, in Him. Amen.



DECEMBER 9

Good Shepherd

John 10:11 - "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

In Ezekiel 34 you can read about the distinctions between "other" shepherds and "the good shepherd." "Other" shepherds don't strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring back what is driven away, nor seek the lost. Their attributes mirror the hireling in John 10 who flees when the wolf comes to harm the sheep. The shepherds of Jesus' day would've understood the difference. They would've known that a good shepherd lays his body in front of the sheep gate to keep the wolves away.

When my kids were little I would try to shield and protect them from harm. As they grew, I tried to teach them how to recognize the wolves. But when they became adults I realized that ultimately their biggest need was to know the good shepherd. It was in knowing the Shepherd, staying close to Him, that they would be protected from the wolves.

There have been times when I wondered if I could follow through with saving my child's life by offering mine. But when I think of eternity without the Lord, my love becomes one of reckless abandon. That's why I love how Christ's humanity was revealed in Matthew 26:39, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." Jesus wrestled with laying down His life but He chose death to save us.

John 15:13 - "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for Your great love. Thank you that You desire to protect us from the harm that is lurking around us, seeking to devour the good you desire for us. I pray You would use all to draw us to Yourself.



DECEMBER 10

Bridegroom

Matthew 9:15 - “The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

Among other things, the Pharisees were joy-stealers. They thought that any form of celebrating was very unspiritual. In their twisted thinking, the religious life is one of self-inflicted suffering and “other-imposed” misery. Perhaps this holiday season we are being influenced by our own set of “Bah Humbug!” Scrooges. To them, the holidays are a miserable waste of time and effort.

Using the analogy of a wedding party, Jesus answered that as long as Christ the Bridegroom was present with them there was too much joy for “doom and gloom.” The whole story of the life of Christ, our Bridegroom—including His birth—is full of joy!

Mary rejoiced when she received the news she would be the mother of the Messiah (Luke 1:47). When pregnant, Mary came near Elizabeth (who was pregnant with John the Baptist) and Elizabeth cried out, “...the baby leaped in my womb for joy” (Luke 1:44). When the Magi saw the star that led them to Jesus “they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (Matthew 2:10). And let’s not forget the timeless words spoken by an angel to the shepherds: “...I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11).

Don’t let anyone or anything steal your joy! Sing...and sing loud enough to be heard by the Scrooges: “Joy to the World. The Lord is come....” And then: “Repeat the sounding joy!”

Prayer: Lord Jesus, my Bridegroom, I joyfully come to You and celebrate our eternal relationship.



DECEMBER 11

Creator

Colossians 1:16 – “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

On a clear night, we can see about 6,000 stars in the sky with the naked eye. But that’s just a fraction of the stars that exist. Scientists estimate there are 2 trillion galaxies with 100 billion stars each, which means there are approximately 200 billion trillion stars in the universe. And some of those stars, like UY Scuti, are so big that 5 billion of our Suns could fit inside one of them!

Nevertheless, the prophet Isaiah says that all the stars in the universe fit easily into the palm of God’s hand (Isaiah 40:12). Psalm 8 says the heavens are the work of God’s fingers. And Psalm 147 explains that God determines the number of stars and calls each one of them by name.

Who is this Mighty Creator that knows the exact number of the grains of sand on the earth, who measures the mountains in a scale and the hills in a balance as if they were nothing more than a few bits of dust?

Colossians 1:16 clearly states that it’s Jesus! The helpless child, born of a virgin, born in a lowly manger, was none other than the Creator of all things.

Today, as we celebrate the Advent season, let’s remember that all things were created by Jesus and for Jesus. In other words, we exist for him and for his divine purpose and pleasure. In the words of the Westminster Catechism: “The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for creating me and revealing the purpose of my life. I exist to worship and serve and enjoy you forever. Help me to do that today.



DECEMBER 12

Author & Perfector of Our Faith

Hebrews 12:2 - “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfector of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

After listing the Old Testament faithful in chapter 11’s “Hall of Faith,” the author of Hebrews gives his final example of faith: Jesus. Jesus modeled faith, the “conviction of things unseen” (Hebrews 11:1), by looking beyond the anguish of the cross to the glory and joy that His salvific work would bring. By this, Christ became faith’s “author” and “perfector.”

The Greek word behind “author” can also mean “founder,” “pioneer,” or even “prince.” It describes one who starts a thing and continues it, who blazes a trail and leads others along it. Thus, Jesus is the “author” of faith because His faith makes ours possible. But He is also faith’s “perfector.” Jesus lived a complete, perfect life of faith, leaving us the definitive example to follow. In other words, Jesus is the best model of the life of faith.

Our faith, then, grows as we “fix our eyes” on Jesus. This should be easier at Christmastime, when so many symbols point to him (lights, trees, presents, etc.) But in my experience, Christmas can be a very distracting time. It’s easy to miss the “reason for the season.” But fixing our eyes on Jesus is essential to daily trust in and reliance on God. May we break through the Christmas distractions and focus on Jesus, Author and Perfector of faith.

Prayer: Father, thank you for Jesus’ perfect example of faith. Even amidst the Christmas stress and busyness, help me to fix my eyes on Him. May His example help me trust in You and Your promises today. Amen.



DECEMBER 13

Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53:3 - "He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

As a parent, I am a big proponent of rewarding good behavior. I'd say to my kids, "If you guys are good, we'll go get ice cream." Or "If you guys clean your rooms, I'll give you a dollar." But when it comes to paying the price for your salvation, Jesus didn't reward good behavior. He didn't say, "If you stop sinning, I will die on the cross for your sins." He died while I was still a sinner. He died with no guarantee that I would ever turn to Him as my Savior. He paid the price then offered me the gift of salvation. And all I had to do was receive it. Truth is, if Jesus' death on the cross for my sin was dependent on my good behavior, He would never have died.

Jesus Christ was sent by God to be the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world. And the suffering Jesus Christ went through for us is unfathomable. Isaiah 53:10a says, "But the LORD was pleased to crush Him," Why? Because Jesus Christ is our only hope of salvation. Sin is rebellion against a holy God and it must be punished in full. Reconciliation with the Father is only possible through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus bore our griefs. Jesus carried our sorrows in His body on the cross. He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. And by grace through faith we are saved from our bondage to sin and its consequences. He did this for you.

Prayer: Thank you Father for loving me so much that You'd send Your only begotten Son to bear my grief and carry my sorrows.



DECEMBER 14

The Last Adam

1 Corinthians 15:45 – So also it is written, “The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

One of the strangest boxing matches I’ve ever seen was on June 28, 1997. In the third round of the Heavyweight Championship between Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield, Tyson bit off a piece of Holyfield’s ear and was disqualified from the competition.

There have been so many epic battles like this throughout the ages, but none compare to the contest between Jesus and Satan described in Genesis 3:15 – “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

This verse is referred to as the Proto-Evangelium because it’s the “first glimpse of the gospel” in the Old Testament, and it speaks of the Messiah—the “seed” or descendant of Eve—who would come to crush the serpent’s head.

This prophecy was fulfilled by the incarnation, birth, death and resurrection of Christ, who defeated the devil once and for all by succeeding where Adam failed. The first Adam gave in to temptation. The last Adam resisted every one of Satan’s attacks. The first Adam brought sin and death into the world. The last Adam brought forgiveness and everlasting life.

Today, let’s rejoice that Jesus has prevailed over the serpent. And he did it by becoming a man just like us in every way—except without sin.

Prayer: Jesus, thank you that you have prevailed over Satan and defeated him at the cross. No matter what devious and deceptive tactics the devil may use, he cannot and will not ever defeat you.



DECEMBER 15

Righteous Judge

2 Timothy 4:8 - “in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

If you've ever received a jury summons, you'll know that getting out of that jury summons is your top priority! However, if you've ever fulfilled your civic duty, you'll know that it's actually quite an interesting experience and a privilege to be a part of. To sit in that jury box and see our justice system at work, especially when it's a case in which you had a hand in delivering justice. It's an incredible feeling.

Now imagine you are on the other side, sitting in the defense and someone was making a judgement about you? Imagine there were witnesses making false accusations against you. If you read the entire passage of 2 Timothy 4, Paul is calling Timothy to preach the Word. To live out his faith. Even though there will be some who will abandon him. Some who will say false things against him.

The Lord will judge our hearts and our motives as He did Paul's. And there may be a time when it will actually be hard to be a Christian. Maybe a time when it's actually illegal. Stay faithful for we have a Righteous Judge waiting to give us a crown of Righteousness! I love the old adage, “If Christianity were a crime, would there be enough evidence to convict you?”

Prayer: Lord, You know my heart. I pray that you would strengthen it. Create in me a boldness to preach your Word and to live out my faith. Help me to not think about what others may say about me, even if they speak out against me. I want to be faithful to you and what you've called me to do, for you are my Righteous Judge, and you have laid up for me a crown of righteousness.



DECEMBER 16

Lord of All

Philippians 2:9-11 - “Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

These beautiful verses speak to the fact that Jesus Christ is the Lord of All. Yes, He is Lord over our family, people in our community and workplace. But we must expand our thinking beyond that. Jesus Christ is the Lord over people in faraway countries and heavenly beings. Furthermore, He is Lord over people in past history and future history. One day everyone will declare the reality that the majestic name of Jesus Christ is over all! Every knee will bow of those who are in heaven and earth and under the earth.

I still remember the day my foster son looked at me in amazement when I told him the name of Jesus was not a swear word, but a real person and our God who deserves respect. Jesus was and is Lord of everything. Little by little his understanding grew until that moment his little heart responded to the call and he accepted Christ as his Lord!

Prayer: Pray this Christmas season God will give us opportunities to share the Good News that Christ Jesus is the Lord of All.



DECEMBER 17

Son of God

John 1:34 - "I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

John the Baptist is obviously one of the most important people in church history. In the New Testament itself he's mentioned over eighty times. He held the very important job of being the herald, the one who would come before and introduce Jesus. And he mentions all kinds of cool characteristics about Jesus in John chapter 1. He mentions how He is eternal, full of grace and truth, and how He reveals God to us. Jesus explains God to us and interprets Him for us. We cannot see God and can't fully understand Him, but the monogenesis, the only begotten Son has revealed who God is to us.

Interestingly, there are at least nine occasions in John's Gospel, that Jesus is called the "Son of God." John specifically said that his purpose for writing his Gospel was to convince his readers that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:31). Now, most sons reflect their fathers. I've said this before but there have been countless occasions in which people have let me know that my oldest son William looks just like me. I pray there would be a day that he is proud of that claim. But we know that Jesus fully embraced being the Son of God, for He even said, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9). May Christ's example of reflecting the Father be one that both challenges and encourages us.

Prayer: Lord, as pleasing sons and daughters, help us to reflect your glory the way Christ does. Amen.



DECEMBER 18

Son of Man

Matthew 26:64 - “Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.’”

Let’s get right to the point. CHRISTmas is about Christ—Jesus Christ. He is Jesus, the fully human Son of Man. He is the Christ, the fully divine Son of God. Christmas is about the One who came to seek and save the lost—like you and me! (cf. Luke 19:10). As I once heard, “The Son of God became the Son of Man so the sons of men could become the sons of God.” That is THE Christmas Story. Consider Titus 2:11-14:

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.”

In the past, Christ left Heaven, took on a human body, and came to save us from the eternal PENALTY of sin (Read Titus 2:11).

In the present, Jesus Christ is sitting at the right hand of God and, through His Indwelling Holy Spirit, is here to save us from the daily PRACTICE of sin (Read Titus 2:12).

In the future, Jesus Christ is coming “on the clouds of heaven” to save us from the everlasting PRESENCE of sin (Read Titus 2:13).

The Eternal Son of God and Incarnate Son of Man is our Christmas—past, present, and future. What a glorious thought!

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Lord of CHRISTmas, be the center of my attention this season and every day.



DECEMBER 19

Immanuel

Isaiah 7:14 - “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”

When my daughter was just a wee toddler, I got in the habit of tucking her into bed at night and telling her three things: “God made you... God loves you... and God will always be with you.” It’s hard to imagine words more comforting than that, and sometimes my daughter still jumps into bed and says: “Daddy, tell me the three things.”

The name Immanuel means “God with us.” What an incredible reminder of the lengths the Second Person of the Trinity went to save us! He stepped down from the throne of heaven and exchanged it for a manger. He forsook the highest glory for the deepest shame. The infinite God voluntarily subjected himself to a finite human nature. He came to be with us in order to save us.

Many years ago, I received a startling phone call that my dad was being rushed into emergency surgery to remove part of his colon that was riddled with cancer. I jumped into my car immediately and drove 8 hours to be at his bedside in the hospital. I wanted to be with him because I love him, and I would have done anything to help.

It’s hard to comprehend how much God loves us. But it’s infinitely greater than the love I have for my dad. And because of that great love, he wants to be with us and help us.

Today, remind yourself of three things: “God made you... God loves you... and God will always be with you.”

Prayer: Jesus, thank you for leaving the glory of heaven to come save me. Thank you for being Immanuel and never leaving my side.



DECEMBER 20

Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:6 - “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest upon His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”

I am naturally a man of peace. I don't like conflict, in-fact I try and avoid it if possible. I think that's why God called me to be a “Peace Officer.” It's funny if you think about it...not liking conflict, yet working in an environment where your job is to turn a scene of absolute chaos into a scene of order...and even bring about “peace.” But that's the job. And I've seen what being an instrument of peace does. I've been able to see families torn apart by conflict, come together for a brief moment and put aside differences to allow resolution. I've seen bitter enemies come together. Peace...it allows a window for people to stop and examine their hearts, their emotion, even their motives, and maybe choose a little humility, and love.

There are some days I feel like I'm on the wrong side of peace. It seems like it's been ages since I've even known peace. Going through struggles that I wouldn't wish upon anyone. Yet here I am...supposed to be an instrument of peace? How? Looking at the news today, wondering if peace in the world is even attainable...how? Our government...how? Peace in my home? The Church?

Yet, we are reminded...a child was born to us for that reason! Governments will rest on His shoulders! He is our Counselor! He is Almighty! He is my Father! He is Peace! The world...our lives, will only become more chaotic, but we will know true Peace if we place our hope and trust in Him.

Prayer: Lord, help me remember the promises of peace found in Your Word. You command the wind and the sea. Surely you can command the turbulence and chaos in my own heart. Help me to trust in you and be my Prince of Peace. And Lord, make me an instrument of Your Peace today to others around me.



DECEMBER 21

Resurrection & the Life

John 11:25 - “Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies.”

With this statement Jesus claims to be the source of both resurrection and life. For without Christ there can be no resurrection and without Christ there can be no eternal life. Salvation is found in Christ alone. Romans 10:9 says that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

He also makes a claim about His divinity here, that He is not only the source of life, but that He is life. As a result death has no ultimate power over Him. Jesus confers this spiritual life onto us when we believe in Him as Lord and thus we are able to share in His triumph over death. We get to share in Christ’s resurrection because when we have the life that Jesus gives, it is impossible for death to defeat us. 1 Corinthians 15:53 says, For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Jesus is our source of life and therefore our salvation. When we believe in Jesus, death no longer has any sting, the grave has no victory. Instead Jesus has the final word and though this perishable may pass away, we will put on immortality to reign with Christ forever!

Prayer: Thank you Jesus for making a way for us when there was no way. Thank you for Your sacrifice so we could dwell with You for all eternity.



DECEMBER 22

Advocate

1 John 2:1 - "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

On that first Christmas morning, God set into action His plan of redemption. God the Father gave His Son to take on human form. The Christ Child was the God/Man and was given the name of Jesus. The birth of Jesus was essential to His sacrificial death on the cross approximately 33 years later. The Apostle John states that Jesus is our advocate. In God's perfect plan of salvation, He knew that His children would commit acts of sin. As our advocate, Jesus pleads our case with the Father against Satan's accusations. Jesus reminds the Father of our righteous standing because of His substitutional sacrifice for our sin. Since His blood was shed for our sin, Satan can no longer justly accuse us before the Father. The Father is acting rightly in having us in His heavenly family. No longer are there any grounds for Satan's accusations because of Christ's sacrifice. This Advent Season may we understand that both the cradle and the cross are essential to our salvation.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for never abandoning me even when I sin. Your substitutional sacrifice for my sin not only forgives my sin but gives me a perfect standing before You and the Father. It is wonderful to know that I can never be separated from You and the Father. Help me to reflect, this Advent Season, on why You came to this earth in that humble stable. You came to be my personal Savior and the Savior of the World. Amen



DECEMBER 23

Lamb of God

John 1:29 - "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

I'm sure this isn't the first time you've heard the term Lamb of God used to refer to Jesus, but it is somewhat an interesting title because while it's referenced many times, the title itself is only found in the Gospel of John and in the book of Revelation. The idea of the lamb can be traced back to the Old Testament. The first reference is found in Genesis 22 when God called Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. Just before Abraham went to slay his son in obedience to God, the Lord provided a lamb as a sacrificial substitute for Abraham's son. In the same way, Jesus acts as our substitute, and God pours out His wrath on account of our sin onto Him instead of us. God, then, provides a Lamb of His own and accepts the life of that substitute.

Likewise, we see the Lamb of God in the Passover story. When God prepared to bring the final plague over Israel and instructed His people to slay a lamb without blemish and spread its blood over their doorposts. And God promised to pass over all the houses that had the blood of the lamb on them (Exodus 12:3-13). As the blood of the lamb caused the people of Israel to be spared from God's wrath, the Lamb of God redeems His people from the penalty that is due for their sin by pouring that wrath onto Christ.

Prayer: Father, we thank you this day for the sacrificial Lamb of God, our Savior, who takes away the sin of the world.



DECEMBER 24

Light of the World

John 8:12 - "Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.'"

The last word from God had been over 400 years earlier. Malachi had written of Israel, of their sins and the judgment to come, "The great and terrible day of the Lord" (Malachi 4:5). Then silence. The words of doom hung over them day and night like a dark and ominous cloud.

The people had not improved. They had not repented. It was as if they were now imprisoned in their sinful and faithless country. It was not even theirs anymore, as the ghastly Romans had come to rule over them. Yet Malachi had also foretold that there would come deliverance for those who feared God's name. The sun of righteousness would rise with healing in its wings. (Malachi 4:2).

This next to last day of advent was still hiding the secret of the ages. He would slip silently into the world under the star over Bethlehem. It would fulfill what Isaiah had written much earlier, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (Isaiah 60:1).

Light not only for lonely Jerusalem, but for the entire world. He (anyone) who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life. God's redemption would come forth with the next light of day. He shines even till now. Let us rejoice and be glad!

Prayer: Jesus, help me understand the wonderful truth that you are the Light of the world, living light. Help me to follow You every day. Please bathe me in the Light of life. Amen.



DECEMBER 25

The Word

John 1:1, 14a - “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...”

The “Christmas story” of wise men, shepherds, and the baby in the manger comes from Matthew and Luke. But John’s gospel presents a different birth narrative, one that crystallizes the glorious truth at the heart of Christmas.

It is a cosmic opening: “in the beginning.” John describes “The Word,” fully God, Creator of the world. A Jew might think of Genesis 1, in which God’s spoken word shapes reality. A Greek might think of the philosophical Logos, or divine reason. But then John obliterates the preconceptions of his readers with four simple words: the Word became flesh. God became a man. The creative Power behind the universe became a human being.

This concept, the Incarnation (literally, “enfleshment”) is the single most dramatic truth in the history of the world. It is a mystery, a miracle – how could God become man? And yet the gospel centers on it. Our salvation, the atonement that Jesus accomplished, depends on it. It is the cornerstone of theology, the turning point of history, the answer to the riddles of philosophy.

And it is the reason for Christmas. Strip away all the lights and presents, and today is really a celebration of the Incarnation. Today, as you remember the birth of Jesus with your loved ones, take some time to give thanks for the glorious truth of “the Word became flesh.” And from all of us at Campus Bible Church, Merry Christmas!

Prayer: Father, thank you for this day to remember the Incarnation. May the Word become flesh, Jesus Christ, fill us with peace, joy, and hope today. May our celebration honor Him. Amen!





THE NAMES OF
JESUS
2023 ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

JESUS • THE SEED OF THE WOMAN • CHRIST
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR • GREAT HIGH PRIEST
THE BREAD OF LIFE • THE VINE • THE ROCK
ALPHA & OMEGA • CORNERSTONE • I AM
KING OF KINGS • GOOD SHEPHERD • BRIDEGROOM
CREATOR • AUTHOR & PERFECTOR OF OUR FAITH
MAN OF SORROWS • THE LAST ADAM • RIGHTEOUS JUDGE
LORD OF ALL • SON OF GOD • SON OF MAN • IMMANUEL
PRINCE OF PEACE • RESURRECTION & THE LIFE • ADVOCATE
LAMB OF GOD • LIGHT OF THE WORLD • THE WORD



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