

**ADVENT 2015
DEVOTIONALS**

Love Revealed

ADVENT

LOVE Revealed Devotionals

ADVENT

LOVE Revealed Devotionals

Week One

Day One

" . . . he will bring justice to the nations " (Isaiah 42:1b).

When a person is suffering from injustice, the promise of relief is a sweet sound to his or her ears. Advent is all about "the promise" and living in anticipation of the time when it will be fulfilled. What hopeful promise do you long to see fulfilled in your life?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me not to lose hope, but to keep trusting You

Day Two

" A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out " (Isaiah 42:3a).

Several times in verses 1-4 the writer tells us what the "servant" – whom we know as Jesus – will not do. The promised Messiah does not come with fanfare, smashing, bruising, breaking, and snuffing out. Rather he comes quietly, persistently to show us the love of the Father.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to remember that "in quietness and in confidence" is our strength (Isaiah 30:15 KJV).

Day Three

“ . . . he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth ” (Isaiah 42:4a).

What an admirable quality – to refuse to become discouraged! Let’s face it: discouraging things happen to all of us. But to remember that God has a plan, that His way will triumph, that when we give in to discouragement, we become our own worst enemies – how vital to our success.

Prayer: Lord, may we not falter, but rather be steadfast in everything we do.

Day Four

“I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness ” (Isaiah 42:6a).

We make a big mistake when we think that serving God is all about His forgiveness and not about our righteousness. Do we need His forgiveness? Yes. Do we sometimes fail in our righteousness? Of course. All the more reason to be determined, by His grace, to live righteously.

Prayer: O God, not in my strength, but in Yours, help me to think right and live right.

Day Five

“ . . . to open eyes that are blind” (Isaiah 42:7a).

Blind persons cannot see the danger that lurks all around them. An uneven place in a sidewalk, oncoming traffic, and other unexpected barriers all pose problems for an unsighted person. Even worse is to be so spiritually blind that we cannot perceive the enemy’s tempting dangers.

Prayer: Father, help us to open our eyes and receive the vision You give.

Day Six

“ . . . to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness” (Isaiah 42:7c).

The Advent season is renowned for its lights. Lights on trees, lights on buildings, twinkling lights, cheerful lights all remind us, if we’re properly attuned, that the Light of the World, whose birth we celebrate, is coming to dispel darkness from our lives. Open your heart; let in the light.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for enlightening us with Your truth.

Day Seven

“See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare” (Isaiah 42:9a).

Because God loves us, He does not want us to become stagnant. Therefore, He continues to challenge us with new things. Amid all the traditions of the Advent season, be open to a new thing God may want to do in your heart, in your wallet, or in your family.

Prayer: O God, as much as we love our traditions, help us accept Your new work in us.

Week Two

Day One

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

A word is a vehicle of communication. We express our thoughts through spoken or written words. God wanted to communicate His message of love to us. Although He sent prophets, we didn't listen. So He sent His Son, God's Word to us, a tangible expression of God's everlasting love.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You both for your written Word and your living Word.

Day Two

"In him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life (John 3:16). That life also brings light. A room may be completely dark, but a single candle will begin to dispel darkness. Within our hearts, His light chases away the darkness of sin and replaces it with the light of His love.

Prayer: Dear God, enlighten us so we may walk, not in darkness, but in the pathway of life.

Day Three

“There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John” (John 1:6).

John the Baptist was a man with a mission. God sent him to be the forerunner of Jesus. He came to preach repentance and forgiveness. He called attention to Jesus, the Lamb of God. Like John, by fulfilling our mission, we can introduce others to Jesus who can change lives.

Prayer: Lord, may we faithfully fulfill the purpose for which You have sent us into our world, our community, our family.

Day Four

“He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light” (John 1:8).

The moon shines brightly, but has no light of its own. The sun illuminates it. Although we don't see the sun, we know it is there because we see its light reflected from the moon. Like John, we are not the light, but we can reflect the light of Christ.

Prayer: O God, help others to see your light in us.

Day Five

“The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world” (John 1:9).

God wants everyone to hear the gospel. Jesus said He is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6), and “no one comes to the Father except through” Him. So we want to make sure everyone hears of Jesus who alone is the source of light and life.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us not to be content until the whole world knows about Jesus.

Day Six

“Yet to all who received him, to all who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

If I offer you a gift – say, a new pen – it could sit in my outstretched hand all day and never become yours until you received it into your possession. So God offers to begin a Father-child relationship with us. It begins only when we receive Him into our lives.

Prayer: Father, I open my heart to you. Please come in and begin a new relationship with me.

Day Seven

“ . . . the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth ” (John 1:14b).

People understood God as the truth. They had the Ten Commandments, the truth. But Jesus came as the truth, wrapped in grace. Grace speaks of beauty and charm and something we don't deserve. Jesus showed us a new picture of God – not abstract, but real – truth wrapped in grace.

Prayer: O God, thank you for showing us the truth of Your love, which we don't deserve, but which we gratefully receive.

Week Three

Day One

"His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph" (Matthew 1:18b).

To be "pledged" was like an engagement, only more binding. It required a divorce to break an engagement, which is why Joseph later considered divorcing Mary quietly. How shocking then, in that culture, for a woman to become pregnant before marriage when she was "pledged" to an honorable man.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, when we don't understand Your ways, help us to learn to trust You, as Joseph and Mary did.

Day Two

". . . before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18c).

Imagine Joseph's state of disbelief when Mary confessed she was pregnant, but added that it was a because of a miraculous act of the Holy Spirit. How could he believe such a wild story? It took another act of God to convince Joseph that her claim was legitimate.

Prayer: Dear God, when faced with the unbelievable, help us to hold steady until You show us a clear path to take.

Day Three

*“Joseph her husband was a righteous man . . .”
(Matthew 1:19a).*

Matthew used the term “righteous” to describe Joseph because it fit. He was a conscientious, law-abiding man. But he was also kind, tender, and merciful, as his behavior showed. He did not want to embarrass Mary, but he wanted to do the right thing in the right way.

Prayer: Lord, help us always to make sure righteousness is combined with kindness.

Day Four

“But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream” (Matthew 1:20a).

Joseph was not only a righteous man, he was also a deliberate man. He did not respond rashly or hastily. He considered his options. And while he considered all this, God had an opportunity to influence his thoughts and consequently his behavior. We should all “look before we leap.”

Prayer: O God, help me to follow Joseph's example to pray and think before acting.

Day Five

"... what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20c).

Joseph doubted what Mary claimed, but he had to believe when God's angel related the same thing. It sounded unbelievable when Mary said it, but conviction seized him when the angel repeated it. The Holy Spirit accomplished the miraculous, and we have been singing about the Virgin Birth ever since.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for sending the Savior in a unique way.

Day Six

"... you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21b).

Names are important. In the Bible, if you knew someone's name, it might tell you something about their personality. If you knew the name of a place – "Judea" means "hill country" – you knew what to expect when you arrived. Jesus means "Savior" and He did save us from our sins.

Prayer: Father, thank You for sending your only Son to die in our place on the cross.

Day Seven

“ . . . they will call him ‘Immanuel’ – which means, ‘God with us’ ” (Matthew 1:23b).

Someone has pointed out that God’s most frequent promise in Scripture is that He will be with us. The prophet said it first, promising the virgin would give birth to a son and call his name “Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). Matthew explained its meaning: “God with us,” a great comfort.

Prayer: O God, thank You that You are with us, regardless of our circumstances.

Week Four

Day One

"... they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid'" (Luke 2:9c-10a).

Often the Bible declares God's assurance: "Do not be afraid." In some cases, it's because an angel has appeared or the person is experiencing a vision. On other occasions, people are facing overwhelming circumstances. Either way, God's presence and power banish fear. So don't be afraid. He is with you.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your presence that dispels fear.

Day Two

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people" (Luke 2:10b).

We love to hear good news. Maybe it's because we hear so much bad news. We hear reports of vicious crime, terrible plane crashes, devastating tornadoes or hurricanes, and other disconcerting events. But the shepherds heard the best news that brought great joy – the long-awaited Savior was born.

Prayer: Dear God, thank You for keeping Your promise to send a Savior.

Day Three

“ . . . a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11b).

We can hardly imagine what this announcement meant to the shepherds. These humble keepers of the sheep, considered so low socially that their testimony was not acceptable in court, were the first to hear the news that Christ was born. It's good news for us too.

Prayer: Lord, thank You for the beautiful, simple story of Jesus' birth.

Day Four

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14).

What a magnificent message! When we look around us, we may wonder where this peace is today. You can have peace in your heart when you let the Savior abide. And when He returns to earth, He will reign in peace. The promise is true; His presence brings peace.

Prayer: O God, we praise you for the reality of Your peace in our hearts.

Day Five

*“When they had seen him, they spread the word”
(Luke 2:17a).*

They couldn't help themselves, these humble shepherds. The good news was too good to keep. They had to share it. So they spread the word wherever they went. Those who heard them were amazed. We are still amazed at the perfect plan of God who loves us so much.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, at this Christmas season, we bow humbly and then rejoice cheerfully.

Day Six

“But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

When Christmas Day arrives and the gifts are all unwrapped, it's a great time to find a few moments to ponder the real meaning of Christmas. That's what Mary did – she cradled the infant God in her arms and pondered. Here's wishing you a “Mary” Christmas!

Prayer: Father, thank you for giving us the greatest Gift of all – Your Son!

Day Seven

*“The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen”
(Luke 2:20a).*

As we leave the Christmas season, let's keep the joy perpetually in our hearts. Like the shepherds, let's move forward in a spirit of praise to God, glorifying Him for all the things He has shown us and done for us during this season.

Prayer: O God, we praise You for all the things we have seen and heard about Your plan for us.

ADVENT

LOVE Revealed Devotionals

ADVENT

LOVE Revealed Devotionals