

# Advent Devotional

## THE STORY OF GOD

*The Christian truth is not just a ragbag of detachable doctrines and ideas that you can rearrange in any order. "It's a story, the story of God and the world, the story of God and Jesus, the story of God and you and me. How do we learn this story? How do we make it our own?"*

### The Christian Year

"The Bible offers itself to us as a great story, a sprawling and complex narrative, inviting us to come in and make it our own. The Gospels, the very heart of scripture, likewise tell a story not merely to give us information about Jesus but in order to provide a narrative we can inhabit, a story we must make our own." Following the Christian calendar helps us at this point. It orders our year by the story of the Bible, by following "the key events in the life of Jesus: his birth at Christmas, his death on Good Friday, his resurrection on Easter Day, his Ascension forty days later, and his sending of the Spirit at Pentecost." This becomes "a solid framework within which to teach and live the gospel, the scriptures, and the Christian life."

At the heart of the traditional approach to the Christian calendar is, among other things, the deep truth that "the story you tell with your body, with your outward behaviour and habits, is the story you learn in your heart." The Christian year, if followed through faithfully, is an embodied story: "fasting and feasting by turns, kneeling in adoration at Christmas, following Jesus into the wilderness, singing Hosanna on Palm Sunday, sitting with Jesus at the Last Supper, following him to Calvary, singing for joy by the empty tomb, and so on. This is...a deep-rooted and long-tested...way of making real in our imagination and experience the story of God and the world which came to climax in Jesus and reaches out in love to us and the whole world."

### The Advent Season

The Christian year does not begin on January 1, it begins with the season of Advent—four Sundays before Christmas. The giant cultural-machine of consumerism gone nuts treats this same period of time not as Advent but as the Christmas season. The shopping malls and radio stations shout "Buy! Buy! Buy!" and "Go! Go! Go!" and "Do! Do! Do!" But the Church shouts "Wait! Slow down! Listen! Remember! and Prepare!"

### The Advent Scripture Readings

During Advent our Scripture readings lead us to recall, simultaneously, "the preparation of Israel and the world for the coming of Jesus at Christmas and the preparation of the church and the world for his final second coming." These two moments are umbilically joined together. The first forms a template for the second. Preparing for Christmas teaches us how to prepare for the great Advent that is still to

<b>Wednesday</b>		<b>December 14</b>		<b>Day 18</b>
AM	Psalm 119:49–72	Isa. 9:8-17	2 Pet. 2:1-10a	
PM	Psalm 49	Mark 1:1-8	Jeremiah 8:22–9:11 (Tears)	
<b>Thursday</b>		<b>December 15</b>		<b>Day 19</b>
AM	Psalm 50	Isa. 9:18–10:4	2 Pet. 2:10b-16	
PM	Psalm 33	Matt. 3:1-12	Micah 5:1–5 (Shepherd's crook)	
<b>Friday</b>		<b>December 16</b>		<b>Day 20</b>
AM	Psalm 40, 54	Isa. 10:5-19	2 Pet. 2:17-22	
PM	Psalm 51	Matt. 11:2-15	Habakkuk 1:1–2:1; 3:16–19 (Watch tower)	
<b>Saturday</b>		<b>December 17</b>		<b>Day 21</b>
AM	Psalm 55	Isa. 10:20-27	Jude 17-25	
PM	Psalm 138, 139	Luke 3:1-9	Malachi 4:1–6 (Sun)	
<b>Sunday</b>		<b>December 18</b>		<b>Day 22</b>
AM	Psalm 24, 29	Isa. 42:1-12	Eph. 6:10-20	
PM	Psalm 8, 84	John 3:16-21	Luke 1:26–38 (Angel)	
<b>Monday</b>		<b>December 19</b>		<b>Day 23</b>
AM	Psalm 61, 62	Isa. 11:1-9	Rev. 20:1-10	
PM	Psalm 112, 115	John:5:30-47	Luke 1:39–56 (Mother & Child)	
<b>Tuesday</b>		<b>December 20</b>		<b>Day 24</b>
AM	Psalm 66, 67	Isa. 11:10-16	Rev. 20:11–21:8	
PM	Psalm 116, 117	Luke 1:5-25	Luke 1:57–80 (Pencil)	
<b>Wednesday</b>		<b>December 21</b>		<b>Day 25</b>
AM	Psalm 72	Isa. 28:9-22	Rev. 21:9-21	
PM	Psalm 111, 113	Luke 1:26-38	Matthew 1:18–25 (Hammer)	
<b>Thursday</b>		<b>December 22</b>		<b>Day 26</b>
AM	Psalm 80	Isa. 29:13-24	Rev. 21:22–22:5	
PM	Psalm 146, 147	Luke 1:39-56	Luke 2:1–5 (Sandals)	
<b>Friday</b>		<b>December 23</b>		<b>Day 27</b>
AM	Psalm 93, 96	Isa. 33:17-22	Rev. 22:6-11, 18-20	
PM	Psalm 148, 150	Luke 1:57-66		
<b>Saturday</b>		<b>December 24</b>		<b>Day 28</b>
AM	Psalm 45, 46	Isa. 35:1-10	Rev. 22:12-17, 21	
PM	Psalm 89:1-29	Luke 1:67-80	Isa. 59:15b-21, Phil. 2:5-11	

come. During Advent we remember the great promises of both the Old and New Testaments “that one day the God who created the world will flood it with his glory, transforming it so that it thrills and throbs with his love, justice and peace.” In this renewed cosmos, we will have renewed “bodies and new tasks to perform, celebrating and implementing God’s victory over evil, injustice and death itself...[But] this Advent hope, this second-coming hope, isn’t something that will arrive simply by the steady work of the church, the eventual climax of a long, slow process. It will be a fresh act of grace, of new creation, completing what was done in the cross, the resurrection and the ascension, but also going way beyond them in the remaking of the entire cosmos.” “Learning to live appropriately between the two ‘comings’, under the rescuing rule of Jesus and in the power of the Spirit, is what it means to be Christian.”

## The Spiritual Pilgrimage During Advent

In these wintry weeks leading up to Christmas, the Bible passages that shape our Advent journey are just what we need. Through our worship on Sundays and our daily Scripture reading and prayer, let us remember that the evil of this world is doomed to be judged and burned when Christ returns and all is made new, and let us more clearly see those habits, relationships, vices, and blockages that hold us in their power. As we open our lives more fully to God, may we “become more attuned to the joyous wonder of Christ’s incarnation and better prepared for the fierce glory of his return.”

*\*Last quotation is from Bobby Gross, Living the Christian Year. All other quotations from N. T. Wright, For All The Saints and N. T. Wright, “Advent Oratorio: Preface.”*

*\*The Scriptures that follow are for use in daily devotions. Scripture in red is for the Jesse Tree.*

### The Daily Scripture Readings for Prayer and Meditation

Sunday November 27 Day 1			
AM	Psalm 146, 147	Isa. 1:1-9	2 Pet. 3:1-10
PM	Psalm 111, 112, 113	Matt. 25:1-13	Genesis 1-2:3 (Globe & Bird)
Monday November 28 Day 2			
AM	Psalm 1, 2, 3	Isa. 1:10-20	1 Thess. 1:1-10
PM	Psalm 4, 7	Luke 20:1-8	Genesis 2:4-3:24 (Fruit & Snake)
Tuesday November 29 Day 3			
AM	Psalm 5, 6	Isa. 1:21-31	1 Thess. 2:1-12
PM	Psalm 10, 11	Luke 20:9-18	Genesis 6:11-22; 7:17-8:12, 20-9:17 (Ark)
Wednesday November 30 Day 4			
AM	Psalm 119:1-24	Isa. 2:1-11	1 Thess. 2:13-20
PM	Psalm 12, 13, 14	Luke 20:19-26	Genesis 12:1-7; 15:1-6 (Stars)
Thursday December 1 Day 5			
AM	Psalm 18:1-20	Isa. 2:12-22	1 Thess. 3:1-13
PM	Psalm 18:21-50	Luke 20:27-40	Genesis 22:1-19 (Ram)

Friday December 2 Day 6			
AM	Psalm 16, 17	Isa. 3:8-15	1 Thess. 4:1-12
PM	Psalm 22	Luke 20:41-21:4	Genesis 28:10-22 (Ladder)
Saturday December 3 Day 7			
AM	Psalm 20, 21	Isa. 4:2-6	1 Thess. 4:13-18
PM	Psalm 110, 116, 117	Luke 21:5-19	Genesis 37, 41-46:7 (Rainbow cloak)
Sunday December 4 Day 8			
AM	Psalm 148, 149, 150	Isa. 5:1-7	2 Pet. 3:11-18
PM	Psalm 114, 115	Luke 7:28-35	Exodus 2:1-3:22 (Burning bush)
Monday December 5 Day 9			
AM	Psalm 25	Isa. 5:8-12, 18-23	1 Thess. 5:1-11
PM	Psalm 9, 15	Luke 21:20-28	Exodus 12:1-36 (Lamb)
Tuesday December 6 Day 10			
AM	Psalm 26, 28	Isa. 5:13-17, 24-25	1 Thess. 5:12-28
PM	Psalm 36, 39	Luke 21:29-38	Exodus 19:16-20:20 (Stone tablets)
Wednesday December 7 Day 11			
AM	Psalm 38	Isa. 6:1-13	2 Thess. 1:1-12
PM	Psalm 119:25-48	John 7:53-8:11	Joshua 1:1-11; 6:1-20 (Shofar)
Thursday December 8 Day 12			
AM	Psalm 37:1-18	Isa. 7:1-9	2 Thess. 2:1-12
PM	Psalm 37:19-42	Luke 22:1-13	Judges 2:6-23; 6:1-8:28 (Clay water pitcher)
Friday December 9 Day 13			
AM	Psalm 31	Isa. 7:10-25	2 Thess. 2:13-3:5
PM	Psalm 35	Luke 22:14-30	Ruth 1:1-2:13; 4 (Wheat)
Saturday December 10 Day 14			
AM	Psalm 30, 32	Isa. 8:1-15	2 Thess. 3:6-18
PM	Psalm 42, 43	Luke 22:31-38	
Sunday December 11 Day 15			
AM	Psalm 63:1-11, 98	Isa. 13:6-13	Heb. 12:18-29
PM	Psalm 103	John 3:22-30	1 Samuel 16-17 (Sling)
Monday December 12 Day 16			
AM	Psalm 41, 52	Isa. 8:16-9:1	2 Pet. 1:1-11
PM	Psalm 44	Luke 22:39-53	1 Kings 17:1-16; 18:17-46 (Black birds)