

Thursday		December 14		Day 12
AM	Psalm 37:1–18	Amos 9:1–10	Revelation 2:8–17	
PM	Psalm 37:19–42	Matthew 23:13–26	Ruth 1:1–2:13, 4 (Wheat)	
Friday		December 15		Day 13
AM	Psalm 31	Haggai 1:1–15	Revelation 2:18–29	
PM	Psalm 35	Matthew 23:27–39	1 Samuel 16, 17:1–4, 41–50 (Crown)	
Saturday		December 16		Day 14
AM	Psalm 30, 32	Haggai 2:1–9	Revelation 3:1–6	
PM	Psalm 42, 43	Matthew 24:1–14	1 Kings 17:1–7, 18:20–46 (Altar)	
Sunday		December 17		Day 15
AM	Psalm 63:1–8, 98	Amos 9:11–15	2 Thessalonians 2:1–3, 13–17	
PM	Psalm 103	John 5:30–47	Isaiah 6:1–13, 9:1–7 (Stump)	
Monday		December 18		Day 16
AM	Psalm 41, 52	Zechariah 1:7–17	Revelation 3:7–13	
PM	Psalm 44	Matthew 24:15–31	Jeremiah 8:22–9:11 (Tears)	
Tuesday		December 19		Day 17
AM	Psalm 45	Zechariah 2:1–13	Revelation 3:14–22	
PM	Psalm 47, 48	Matthew 24:32–44	Nehemiah 1:2–8, 6:15–16 (Wall)	
Wednesday		December 20		Day 18
AM	Psalm 119:49–72	Zechariah 3:1–10	Revelation 4:1–8	
PM	Psalm 49, 53	Matthew 24:45–51	Luke 1:26–28 (White lily)	
Thursday		December 21		Day 19
AM	Psalm 50	Zechariah 4:1–14	Revelation 4:9–5:5	
PM	Psalm 33	Matthew 25:1–13	Luke 1:39–56 (Mother & Child)	
Friday		December 22		Day 20
AM	Psalm 40, 54	Zechariah 7:8–8:8	Revelation 5:6–14	
PM	Psalm 51	Matthew 25:14–30	Luke 1:67–80 (Scallop Shell)	
Saturday		December 23		Day 21
AM	Psalm 55	Zechariah 8:9–17	Revelation 6:1–17	
PM	Psalm 138, 139:1–17	Matthew 25:31–46	Matthew 1:18–25 (Hammer)	
Sunday		December 24		Day 22
AM	Psalm 45, 46	Isaiah 35:1–10	Philippians 2:5–11	
PM	Psalm 89:1–29	Isaiah 59:15–21	Luke 2:1–20 (Manger)	

Advent Devotional

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BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH

*His Eyes are as a Dove's, and she's Dove-eyed;
He knows His lovely mirror, sister, Bride.*

*He speaks with Dove-voice of exceeding love,
And she with love-voice of an answering Dove.*

*Behold the Bridegroom cometh: go we out
With lamps ablaze and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.*

“Advent Sunday,” Christina Rossetti

Sacred Time in a Secular Age

Christians have always been a people “untimely born,” as Paul says of himself (1 Cor 15:8). This is especially true in our day, when what we might call “the CNN-ization of time” can send us into “a frenetic pursuit of ‘breaking news,’” in which we rarely see the the big picture but always hunger for the next thing.¹ Our holiday seasons are much the same. Take, for example, the American holiday trifecta of Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. When exactly does this season begin? When does it end? No one really knows. But we sure are exhausted by the end of it.

This is where the Christian Year can be a glass of cool water (or a steamy cup of cider, if you like). For centuries, God has been inviting his people to “live inside a big story, one that started long before our birth and that will go on long after our death, one that’s as wide as the universe and old as eternity: the Story of God as centered in Jesus the Christ.”² Unlike our secular calendars, which seem to take us only from one party to the next, the Christian calendar leads us closer and closer to new creation. It follows the life of Jesus. And so can we—by reliving the moments of our Lord’s birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and certain return.

The Season of Advent(s)

The Christian year begins with the four-week season of Advent, which means “coming.” But don’t let its proximity to Christmas fool you: Advent is not primarily about Jesus’ *first* coming at Christmas, but about his *second* coming at the end of the age. “During Advent each year, the Christian year teaches us to once again become Israel, recognizing our sin and need—

waiting, longing, hoping, calling, praying for the coming of the Messiah, the advent of justice, and the in-breaking of shalom.”³ And yet, between these two advents, there are many other advents to look for. “In our encounters with the poor and the stranger,” in our times of silence and worship, and “in those unexpected moments of transfiguration surely there is also an advent and Christ comes to us. The God in whom we live and move and have our being may come and meet us when and where he pleases, and any door we open may be the door” to his mysterious, loving presence.⁴

Inhabiting the Story

The Bible is a story. And in this story God speaks to us. The daily Advent readings are intended to place each of us at the divine intersection of Word and Spirit. It’s at this location where God’s voice can be heard, and his presence can be known. But if the Advent readings are geared more toward personal use, the Jesse Tree readings (listed in red) are designed to be read in a group—whether that’s with family, a roommate, or a friend. These readings span the biblical story from the creation of the world to the birth of Jesus, filling our imaginations with God’s good promises and helping us to inhabit the story into which God has written each of our lives.

A Spiritual Pilgrimage

The season of “Advent falls in winter, at the end of the year, in the dark and cold, but its focus is on the coming of light and life, when the Ancient of Days becomes a young child and says, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’”⁵ These four wintry weeks are a journey—a spiritual pilgrimage, in which we begin to see ourselves in the light of Christ. What are the habits, the vices, the deeply engrained patterns of thinking that hold us in their power? How are our hopes and dreams being shaped by the culture around us? Advent is a time for us to begin the Christian Year “by living deeply into Christ:” by finding ourselves in his story, rejoicing in the glimpses of his kingdom, crying out for justice, and asking for wisdom.⁶ Let’s make this journey together, watching and praying for many advents along the way.

¹ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 159.

² Bobby Gross, *Living the Christian Year: Time to Inhabit the Story of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 15.

³ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 157.

⁴ Malcolm Guite, *Waiting on the Word: A Poem a Day for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany* (London, UK: Canterbury Press, 2015), ix.

⁵ Guite, *Waiting on the Word*, ix.

⁶ Craig Bartholomew, *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition: A Systematic Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL, 2017), 9.

The Daily Scripture Passages for Prayer and Meditation

Scripture in red is for the Jesse Tree.

Sunday		December 3		Day 1
AM	Psalm 146, 147	Amos 1:1–5, 13–2:8	1 Thessalonians 5:1–11	
PM	Psalm 111, 112, 113	Luke 21:5–19	Genesis 1–2:3 (Globe)	
Monday		December 4		Day 2
AM	Psalm 1, 2, 3	Amos 2:6–16	2 Peter 1:1–11	
PM	Psalm 4, 7	Matthew 2:1–11	Genesis 2:4–3:24 (Fruit & Snake)	
Tuesday		December 5		Day 3
AM	Psalm 5, 6	Amos 3:1–11	2 Peter 1:12–21	
PM	Psalm 10, 11	Matthew 21:12–22	Genesis 6:11–22, 7:17–8:1, 9:8–17 (Ark)	
Wednesday		December 6		Day 4
AM	Psalm 119:1–24	Amos 3:12–4:5	2 Peter 3:1–10	
PM	Psalm 12, 13, 14	Matthew 21:23–32	Genesis 12:1–7, 15:1–6 (Stars)	
Thursday		December 7		Day 5
AM	Psalm 18:1–20	Amos 4:6–13	2 Peter 3:11–18	
PM	Psalm 18:21–50	Matthew 21:33–46	Genesis 22:1–19 (Ram)	
Friday		December 8		Day 6
AM	Psalm 16, 17	Amos 5:1–17	Jude 1–16	
PM	Psalm 22	Matthew 22:1–14	Genesis 28:10–22 (Ladder)	
Saturday		December 9		Day 7
AM	Psalm 20, 21:1–7	Amos 5:18–27	Jude 17–25	
PM	Psalm 110:1–5, 116, 117	Matthew 22:15–22	Genesis 37, 50:15–22 (Rainbow coat)	
Sunday		December 10		Day 8
AM	Psalm 148, 149, 150	Amos 6:1–14	2 Thessalonians 1:5–12	
PM	Psalm 114, 115	Luke 1:57–68	Exodus 2:1–11, 23–25; 3:1–12 (Burning bush)	
Monday		December 11		Day 9
AM	Psalm 25	Amos 7:1–9	Revelation 1:1–8	
PM	Psalm 9, 15	Matthew 22:23–33	Exodus 2:1–14, 29–32, 14:5–30 (Lamb)	
Tuesday		December 12		Day 10
AM	Psalm 26, 28	Amos 7:10–17	Revelation 1:9–16	
PM	Psalm 38, 119:25–48	Matthew 22:34–46	Exodus 20:1–17 (Stone tablets)	
Wednesday		December 13		Day 11
AM	Psalm 45	Amos 8:1–14	Revelation 1:17–2:7	
PM	Psalm 47, 48	Matthew 23:1–12	Joshua 1:1–11, 6:1–20 (Shofar)	

