

# Advent Calendar Scriptures and More

If you have an Advent calendar with boxes, doors, drawers, or cubbyholes, here are some inserts you can use for each day. Many Advent calendars have 24 days, ending on Christmas Eve. Others have 25 days, ending on Christmas Day. These inserts can be used for either calendar. Directions:

1. Print out the pages. Use plain paper, colored paper, plain card stock, or colored card stock.
2. Cut the pages into separate strips for each day.
3. Write the day number on the reverse side of each strip opposite where the day number is printed.
4. Roll each paper strip into a scroll (use a pencil or Bic pen) and tie with string, pipe cleaner, or rubber band.
5. Place each numbered entry into the matching day on the Advent calendar (1 for Dec. 1, etc.).
6. Beginning on December 1, open the door marked 1 and
  - read the Scripture and discuss it
  - read and discuss the questions, one at a time
  - pray the prayer
  - offer comments about the theme and meaning of the day.

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1.

## **God promises the Light of the Messiah Jesus will come**

But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. — Isaiah 9:1-2 (NASB)

- What does it mean to “walk in darkness”?
- What does it mean to say those in darkness will see a great light?
- What does it mean to walk in the light?

*Dear Lord, we thank you so much for bringing the light of salvation not only to your chosen people in Israel, but to us Gentiles, who without your grace would be lost in darkness forever. We bless your name and express our deep gratitude to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

2.

## **God gives a sign of the coming of the Messiah**

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. — Isaiah 7:14 (NASB)

- Immanuel means “God with us.” What does it mean to say that God is with us?
- Why do you think God chose to come to earth through human birth?

*Dear Lord God, we praise and thank you for your plan of salvation, which includes coming to us in human form, Immanuel, God with us. Thank you for the gift of a savior, to redeem us from our sins, to change us from our sinful selves, and to guide us on the path of righteousness. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

3.

### **The angel Gabriel appears to Mary**

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. — Luke 1:26-29 (NASB)

- How would you react if an angel came and spoke to you?

*Dear God, we are so deeply grateful for your generosity and kindness – that you would choose to send your angel to communicate with an ordinary young woman and that you would choose her to be your means of coming into the world. How unsearchable are your ways, and how glorious and generous. Thank you very much for saving each of your children. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

4.

### **Mary has been chosen to give birth to the Savior**

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." — Luke 1:30-33 (NASB)

- What would be your reaction if you were told you would be the parent of the "Son of the Most High"?
- What do you think is the significance of the statement, "His kingdom will have no end"?

*Oh Lord, we come to you thankfully and humbly for enabling us to be a part of your kingdom forever – that is, time without end. Though our bodies are from dust and return to dust, you have allowed us to live under the loving Lordship of Jesus eternally. We praise you and glorify you. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

5.

### **Mary is willing to accept God's plan**

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. — Luke 1:34-38 (NASB)

- Would you be as willing as Mary to do whatever God asked of you?
- As Christians, we are all God's servants ("bondslaves of the Lord"). How do we live this out in practical terms?
- What do you think would have happened if Mary had refused God's plan for her life?

*Dear God, in Mary's willingness to take on the shame and pain of birthing your Son, we see a model of perfect submission to your will. Help us to conquer our stubborn and resistant hearts and submit freely and completely to your will and your plan for our lives. Thank you so much for this. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

6.

### **God promises to pardon the sins of the people**

“Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” Says your God. “Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low. The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” — Isaiah 40:1-5 (NKJV)

- The prophecies about the coming of the Messiah were written about 700 years before they were fulfilled. How does this help us be more patient with God’s plans for us and for the world?
- Why does God say his people should take comfort?

*Dear Lord, what can we say, how can we express our gratitude for your wonderful and amazing offer to forgive us of all our sins, to pardon us for our iniquity? How can we hesitate for even a moment at such a gift? May the crooked path to our hearts be made straight indeed, and may you enter there and stay forever. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

7.

### **Isaiah predicts the coming of the suffering Savior**

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried. Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. — Isaiah 53:4-5 (NASB)

- Knowing that the book of Isaiah was written about 700 years before the prophecy was fulfilled, how does this give us confidence in the truth of Jesus’ claims?

*Dear Lord, we are humbled with gratitude for your kindness and overcome with the knowledge of your love for us, that you would provide your Son as the atonement, the repayment, for our sins. We cannot imagine the suffering included in the verses above. But we rejoice in the statement, “By his scourging we are healed.” Thank you so much for your mercy and for allowing us to be washed in the blood of Jesus that we might become part of your kingdom. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

8.

### **Jesus is coming to bear our sins**

As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied. By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors. Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors. — Isaiah 53:11-12 (NASB)

- What does it mean to be justified?
- What does “intercession” mean and what is your reaction to Christ’s intercession for you?
- What is your response to the fact that Jesus “poured out himself to death” for us?

*Dear Lord, you not only forgave us of our sins, and not only did you intercede on our behalf, but you paid the price for salvation, too. You didn’t just say, “I forgive you.” You also died in our place, and have given us our eternal future in the kingdom. You have almost made salvation easy for us. All we have to do now is be obedient to your Word. What can we say to that? “Thank you” seems pretty inadequate, but it’s all we can say, a thousand times. So, thank you, dear God. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

9.

### **Caesar decrees a census**

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. — Luke 2:1-3 (NASB)

- Joseph and Mary were obedient to the trouble needed for them to register for the census, which was for the purpose of taxation by a conquering, occupying government that many Jews resisted. What does this tell us about the parents of Jesus?

*Dear Lord, may we always be the embodiment of Christian virtue, obeying authority as long as it doesn't conflict with the teachings of your Word. As we do this, may others see Christ in us, reflecting joy and peace of heart as we go about the business of the day. And may those others want to have what we have, which is to follow you. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

10.

### **Joseph takes Mary to Bethlehem**

Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. — Luke 2:4-5 (NASB)

- Joseph and Mary were still not married, but Mary was clearly very pregnant. This fact was not unnoticed in their home town. Jesus was later accused of being illegitimate (John 8:41). Would you be willing to bear the shame of Mary and Joseph in order to fulfill God's plan?
- Joseph walked the 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem, while Mary jostled on a donkey. Why do you think God's will for us is sometimes so challenging?

*Dear Lord, help us to pray not for a calm life or a rich life, but for a holy life and an obedient life. May we seek and do your will not because we expect it to be quick and easy to do, but knowing that it might be extended and difficult. Give us the perseverance, the endurance we need to be your "good and faithful" servants. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

11.

### **God reveals his plan to Joseph**

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." — Matthew 1:18-20 (NASB)

- Why, do you think, God waited so long before telling Joseph the plan?
- Would you be as patient and trusting as Joseph?

*Dear God, if pride is our biggest fault – our constant enemy – then in second place must be impatience, for we want everything immediately. Poor Joseph thought that Mary had been unfaithful to him before they even got married. You waited to send your angel to speak to him in a dream until he was just about to break off the engagement. Help us to learn from this, dear Lord, that we must be patient and accept your timing in everything. Thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

12.

### **The angel tells Joseph about Jesus' purpose**

"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. —Matthew 1:21-25 (NASB)

- Why do you think God chose to come to us in human form, to be "God with us"?
- What do you think was Joseph's reaction to hearing that Mary's son would "save His people from their sins"?

*Dear God, thank you for the method and means you have appointed for the saving of our souls. You are much too kind, generous, and merciful. Your ways are mysterious but amazingly powerful. You show us through the personal actions — of yourself and those you choose — how intimately you know us and want to help us, if only we will trust you. Help us, Lord, to have and to live a strong and courageous faith. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

13.

### **Mary gives birth to a son**

While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. —Luke 2:6 (NASB)

- What can you conclude from the fact that the Savior of the world came to earth by being birthed from a (probably) 14-year-old unmarried girl in a barn 90 miles away from her home and family, with no way to communicate with them?
- Why doesn't God make life easy and understandable for those who want to do his will?
- Think about the saying, "Don't do this because it is easy; do it because it is hard." How does this saying apply to the Christian life?

*Our dear Father, we read about the coming of Jesus, and his life and his sacrifice for our sins. As we read, we follow the details of our Savior's life, only to note how much sorrow and suffering were involved. Isaiah calls him "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). Let us then, stop complaining about the problems and pains we suffer, and turn our eyes up to you, knowing that you will turn to good whatever evil befalls us. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

14.

### **Joseph and Mary stay in a barn**

And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. —Luke 2:7 (NASB)

- This being Mary's first birth, away from experienced and helpful relatives ("Mom! My water just broke! What do I do?"), she had to figure things out on her own. But, of course, she had every amenity a stable could offer. So she put Jesus in the feeding trough used by cattle and donkeys. Do we complain about not enjoying all the luxuries others have? What should be our attitude?
- Mary had to put a large degree of trust in the Lord. Do you? Explain how.
- Do you think the innkeeper would have found the holy couple a room if he had known how important they ultimately were?

*Dear Lord, help us not to seek a life of softness and luxury, but to seek your heart and your will, regardless of the challenges it might lead us into. May we become your true and faithful servants, paying the price to remain loyal and committed to you and the Gospel. Give us the strength and courage we always need. In Jesus' name we thank you and honor you. Amen.*

15.

### **The shepherds watch their flocks**

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. — Luke 2:8

- What were the shepherds watching for?
- The word *watch* occurs regularly in both Old and New Testaments. What are we to watch for?
- Are we to watch out for bad things in order to avoid them or are we to watch for something good to happen in our lives?
- Discuss Matthew 16:6: And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”
- Discuss Luke 11:34-35: “The eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Then watch out that the light in you is not darkness.”

*Lord God, we ask that you will be with us at all times, making us alert to opportunities for helping others, for giving a word of encouragement, or for exploring your Word. Help us to watch for the appointments you have for us with friends and with strangers, so that we can seize each occasion and turn it to a spiritual advantage. Don't let us doze in a spiritual hammock while the hurting world needs you so desperately. We need your help, and we praise you for all you give us. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

16.

### **An angel appears to the shepherds**

And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. — Luke 2:9 (NASB)

- What about the shepherds' reaction makes this narrative sound more like historical fact rather than merely a pleasant story?
- What do you think the shining glory of the Lord was like?
- The shepherds were watching for some things (wolves, thieves, injured sheep) but not for the appearance of an angel. How does God use the unexpected to get our attention?

*Dear Lord, your glory shines beyond our imagination, pushing back the darkness and making the world light. We thank you, in the midst of our fear, for shining your light on us and choosing us to participate in the experience of your holiness. We are so grateful for the opportunity to know you through your word and through the unfolding of our lives. You could have invited only kings and magnates and the powerful to enter your kingdom. But you chose shepherds – and us. We honor you for this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

17.

### **The angel brings good news**

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, 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 (NASB)

- Why do you think the angel appeared to shepherds, instead of to wealthy people of higher social status?
- What is the significance of telling the shepherds that the good news will be “for all the people”?

*Dear God, most of us today don't get to have angels appearing to us to tell us your message. But that's okay, because today we are so engulfed in busyness that I wonder if even an angel would get our attention. Help us, dear Lord, to be still and know that you are God, to be quiet and listen for your will, to pray with intention, and to read your Word with deep understanding, seeking to hear you by doing these things. May the focus and labor of our lives be pleasing to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

18.

### **The angel tells the shepherds how to find the baby**

“This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” – Luke 2:12

(NASB)

- Why was it important for the angel to tell the shepherds those details (wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger)? What was that a “sign” of?
- What would have been the difference if the angel had said, “You’ll find the baby in a crib in a hotel” instead of “wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger”?

*Dear Father God, we are lost in the dark without you. Life confuses us, we don't know what we are doing or why until we have your hand of guidance. Just as you gave the shepherds directions to find the baby Jesus, we ask that you will give us the path we should follow. Help us to discern your will for us by sending your Spirit to teach us as we read your Word. And help us to walk the path you point out. We praise you and thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

19.

### **The angels praise God and give Him glory**

And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” – Luke 2:13-14

(NASB)

- What do you think is the purpose of the multitude of angels praising God?
- Notice that the heavenly host does not wish peace among all men but only some. Who are they?
- Do you think the shepherds met the criteria for being wished peace? Why or why not?

*Dear Lord, we know that we can never praise you enough for your goodness. All we can do is strive to please you as much as we can. We ask now that you will strengthen our resolve to live righteous lives of honesty and integrity, of compassion and humility, and that you will keep us from giving in to temptation to sin. May we then enjoy the peace of heart that only trust in you can give. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

20.

### **The shepherds are curious about Jesus**

When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”

– Luke 2:15 (NASB)

- What does the shepherds' curiosity and willingness to leave their flock (possibly in the hands of young boys) tell you about the shepherds?
- How could you use someone's curiosity as a means to interest them in the Gospel?
- How has God used the concrete and the visual to establish his presence and his truth throughout Biblical history? And why is that important? (Hint: God is invisible, while other gods often have statues [idols] made to represent them.)

*Lord, we know that before the birth of Jesus, those shepherds keeping watch enjoyed stable and predictable lives. They could have lived out their earthly existence without venturing away from their flocks. But they were curious – curious about you. Lord, light the fire of curiosity under us; give us desire to leave our comfort zone, and to seek you with enthusiasm and effort. Help us to want to know your heart and your will for us. Make us fearless seekers of God. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

21.

### **The shepherds find Jesus**

So they [the shepherds] came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. — Luke 2:16-17 (NASB)

- Remember the statement is, “Today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Would spreading this news make the shepherds the first evangelists? The first pre-evangelists? The first Christians?
- What do you make of the fact that the Good News was given to a few—a few shepherds, a few wise men, a few disciples, and one converted Pharisee—and then later spread across the globe to billions of people?

*Dear God, we see that you chose humble beginnings for the Gospel, and that the Good News was at first spread from one or a few to one or a few more. May we take this to heart as we model Jesus in our attitudes and behaviors so that even one more might be saved. May we be encouraged even if the only effect we can have is to plant the seeds of the Gospel in others, one at a time, knowing that you can bring a waterer for them. Help us to use the talents and resources you have given us to further your kingdom. Thank you in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

22.

### **Those in Bethlehem marvel at the shepherds’ news**

And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. — Luke 2:18-19 (NASB)

- When Jesus was born, the news that he was the Christ began to be spread by the shepherds. Do you think the way people responded to him was understandable when Jesus began to preach openly 30 years later?
- What is your response to the shepherds’ news?

*Dear Lord, Jesus calls us “foolish” and “slow of heart” because we wait a long time before we accept the truth of the Gospel. Give us the wisdom we need to accept your truth, your word, your way, quickly and confidently. Help us to see your great plan for us and for all humanity. May we seek your will with all our heart and pursue its accomplishment with joy and gladness. Thank you for being our compass and guide. In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

23.

### **The shepherds praise God**

The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. — Luke 2:20 (NASB)

- Do you praise and thank God for sending his Son Jesus to be your savior? Explain how or what you do.
- Why do you think God summoned a handful of shepherds to witness the birth of Jesus instead of summoning a few priests, rulers, and wealthy citizens of the area?

*Dear Father God, we read that the shepherds praised you for finding that what they discovered when they found Jesus was exactly what your angels had told them. In other words, they rejoiced in the God of truth. May we trust your truth, also, Lord, putting our faith in you, your Word, and your Son, whose birth came after hundreds of years and many prophecies. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.*

24.

### **The Savior of the world is here**

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. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. — Isaiah 9:6-7 (NASB)

- What does this Scripture tell us about the government of Jesus? Name three or more characteristics.
- How does this passage remind us that life with God will be everlasting?

*Dear God and Father, we rejoice today as we celebrate the birth of your unique Son, Jesus, the Savior of the world. We praise you for delivering us from darkness and evil into light and goodness. How magnificent are your ways, O God, and how inscrutable. We stand amazed that you chose to storm the universe as a baby, to bring us salvation and eternal life. May your peace reign in our hearts all our days, and may we follow you and be your children forever. In the name of Him Who saves us, Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

25.

### **Jesus reigns!**

And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.” — Revelation 11:15 (NASB)

- What has Jesus done for you?
- What are you going to do for Jesus?

*Dear Lord, we rejoice in your gift of salvation for our wretched souls and in your reign in our lives today. Thank you for offering us the way, the truth, and the life – the true and living way. May we be humble and grateful servants all the days of our lives, and may we reflect and model your love to a hurting and confused world. And may we always remember that whatever happens, goodness and truth will win at last. In Jesus’ name is our prayer, our praise, and our thanks. Amen.*

### **A Semi-Paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer**

*Our Father in heaven, may your name be forever held holy. May your kingdom come to the world, according to your plan and timing. May your will be done on earth and in each of our lives, as it is done in heaven. Give us the things we need each day and forgive us our sins in the same way that we forgive those who sin against us. Keep us from giving in to temptation and deliver us from the Evil One. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory – the powerful and glorious kingdom – forever. Amen.*