

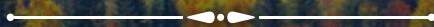


Glory
to God


in the Highest

Creative
Communications
Sample

DEVOTIONS FOR ADVENT



CHAD BIRD



For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6

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Sample



Introduction

When the angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest,” they didn’t send the shepherds to a high place but a low one. The glorious Son of God chose to arrive in our world where there was no glory—in the cold and dark of a cattle stall, among common people and simple things. The glory of Advent and Christmas is camouflaged by humility, anonymity and even foolishness, for our God likes to hide himself beneath his opposite.

These Advent devotions rework the way we see God at work. He arrives or “advents” himself into our lives in backwards ways. We see the Most High in lowly things, the majestic Lord in unawesome places. In this season of preparation, Jesus teaches us to look down when we sing, “Glory to God in the highest”—to look down at a manger and a cross, at the Lord who looks up to us in love.

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

God's Glory in Muted Arrivals

And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it.

Mark 11:7

When God begins something, it always looks as if nothing will come of it. It's not glorious enough. Doesn't have the wow-factor necessary to make a splash. If Jesus had charged into Zion atop a hoof-stomping stallion and waved a sabre in the air, that might bode well for his future regal prospects. Instead, he plods along on a colt with his students' shirts for a saddle.

Advent means coming or arrival. But God specializes in muted arrivals. We're more likely to overlook his advent than be overwhelmed by it. He doesn't come with pomp and circumstance, but in circumstances of poverty, lowliness, hiddenness. He even has to borrow and return his transportation.

So when Jesus shows up on our doorstep, it won't be our eyes that tell us he's there, but his Word. Our eyes will say, "Looks like a mere man," but the Word says, "He's God." Our eyes will tell us nothing will come of what he does. But his Word says, "Everything good will come from it. He is our life, salvation, resurrection."

Lord Jesus, open our eyes to see your glorious salvation in the lowliness of your saving Advent. Amen.

For further reflection: Read Mark 11:1-10

MONDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Glory at Rock Bottom

Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did."

Isaiah 10:24

The king of Assyria was guilty of an almost universal problem: he got too big for his britches. An arrogant heart swelled in his chest. "Look at me!" he gloated. "By the strength of my hand I have done it" (Isaiah 10:13). Self-glory blinds us to our humanity. Gives us a god complex. We forget that dust we are and to dust we shall return.

So God steps forward, needle in hand, and pops our bubble. Reintroduces us to the Advent gift of a shrinking heart, as he did that ancient king. We fail, fall, crumble to dust. And in the dirt we rediscover a beautiful truth: that the lower we are, the better Jesus sees us. "Though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar" (Psalm 138:6). Rock bottom is eye level with his cross-shaped throne.

Jesus is not the God who wants us to believe in ourselves, but in him. And to discover in him our new identity as sons and daughters of our Father, broken and glorious in him.

Our Father, grant us humility, that in our lowliness we behold your exalted grace. Amen.

For further reflection: Read Isaiah 10:12-27

TUESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

The *God Who Glories in* Second (and Third and Fourth) Chances

Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him."

Luke 20:13

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. That's the way we roll. If someone's done us wrong, we might give him a second chance, but not a third. Certainly not a fourth. Momma didn't raise no fool. If we were the owners of the vineyard in the parable, after they waylaid our first servant, we'd lock those criminals up and throw away the key.

But notice what kind of God we have: he sent two more servants, who left bloodied and bruised. And finally, he threw caution to the wind and sent his son, whom they killed. What kind of God is this? A Lord who displays his glory in patience, not wanting any to perish but all to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Advent reminds us that Jesus is not a hothead. He forgives and restores, time and again. He was the Son thrown out of the vineyard, that in his resurrection, he might bring us back home again, to the glory and approval of his Father and ours.

Son of God, come to us, your wandering sheep, and bring us back to our Father's house time and time again. Amen.

For further reflection: Read Luke 20:9-18

WEDNESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Sweet Old Grandmas and **Tattooed Bikers**

For the Lord will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own land.

Isaiah 14:1

Our Father doesn't have a single-child family. Israel was his first-born, but not his last-born. In Abraham, the founding father of Israel, all the nations of the earth were blessed, not just those with his DNA (Genesis 12:3). Isaiah, hammering this home, says that when the Lord restores Israel to her land, non-Jewish sojourners will hop along for the ride. And God, in prodigal love, will lavish compassion on them all.

Jesus isn't satisfied until his house is bulging at the seams. He gathers Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, sweet old grandmas and tattooed bikers. Come one, come all, into the Advent home of Jesus. He has arrived not for the good and beautiful, but for the miserable and corrupt. In other words, for us, whether our family tree is a majestic oak or a leafless sapling.

His arrival marks the beginning of a new kind of people: not Jews or Gentiles but simply Christians. Those who bear his image. United to Christ, we bring glory to him by crying out in faith, "Our Father!"

Our Father, join us to Jesus, our Brother, in whom we are part of your family. Amen.

For further reflection: Read Isaiah 14:1-23

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DEVOTIONS FOR ADVENT

CHAD BIRD

Echoing the declaration of the angels on the night of Christ's birth, this booklet of daily devotions by Chad Bird explores and highlights the way God's glory was revealed in an unexpected way—the birth of Christ our Savior. As we will see during this Advent season, God continues to reveal himself in unexpected ways.

This book, along with many other Creative Communications for the Parish products, is available on [amazon](#)kindle and [nook](#)