



ADVENT DEVOTIONS

*This will be*  
**A SIGN**  
**FOR YOU**

INSPIRATION FROM

**HENRI J. M. NOUWEN**

MONDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

## Jesus, the *Logos*

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1

*Jesus is the Word, and his words are everlasting life. His Word is the bread that takes our hunger away, the light that dispels our darkness, and the life that allows us to face death without fear. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Selfless Way of Christ*, 80)*

John begins his Gospel by telling us that Jesus is the *logos* of God. This Greek term *logos* means more than just “word”; it also means that Jesus reveals the Father to us. To see Jesus is to see the Father. In John chapters 6 to 8, Jesus reveals that he is the Bread of Life, the Water of Life and the Light of Life. Bread, water and light: These are the three basic elements that we all need to survive. We have to let the Word dwell within us to really live, to be who God made us to be. This is more than just reading and reflecting on the Scriptures; it also means maintaining a lively sense of the presence of Christ dwelling within us. If Jesus becomes the Word of our lives, we will be changed more and more into his likeness.

Jesus, reveal the Father to me in my life. Make me more and more into your likeness. Amen.

TUESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

# Incarnation

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And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

*Dear Lord Jesus, you, the eternal Word, through whom all things came into being, you became flesh among us so that you could speak with us, walk with us, pray with us, yes even die with us. You became a human being among other human beings so that nothing human would be alien to you, so that in everything, except sin, you could be like us. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, Heart Speaks to Heart, 19)*

In the Incarnation, Jesus becomes a human being, like us in all ways except sin. But what does it mean to be “like us” if *not* for our sins? What is it that belongs to me except for the ways in which I have failed to live up to the image of God? It is much more appropriate to say that God became man so that we could better understand and receive the grace needed to become who we were originally *made to be*. This is why John describes the Incarnation as seeing Jesus' glory: Jesus becomes the light by which we see ourselves truthfully. The Advent season gives us time to really look at ourselves and see new ways we need to respond to God's invitation.

Heavenly Father, give me the grace to see myself rightly this season. Free me from my sins and transform me to be like Jesus. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

## Ways to Grow in Hope

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For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

*Romans 8:24-25*

*Thus the hope of those who belong to the living Christ is a hope rooted in what has already occurred, even if the total fullness of this event has not yet been revealed. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Peacework*, 108)*

The birth of Jesus at Christmas is the beginning of his redeeming work. Jesus' whole life, from his conception and birth, through his public ministry, through his death and resurrection, constitutes one saving act. When we reflect on all this in the Gospel, we will never exhaust the font of grace and wisdom we receive from Christ. The Advent season, while a season of joy for many, is also a season of great anxiety for some. Taking some time to read the Scriptures and spending moments with Jesus in prayer are excellent ways to grow in hope this season. In periods of uncertainty, even when it seems like you have nothing left to hold on to, don't forget that Christ gives us great reason to hope.

Jesus, sometimes I'm scared of what is to come or afraid that I don't have the strength for this day. Give me hope, Lord, that I might always trust in you. Amen.

THURSDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

## Waiting on the Word

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I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope.

*Psalm 130:5*

*Without the word, our life has little meaning, little vitality, and little energy. Without the word we remain little people with little concerns who live little lives and die little deaths. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *With Burning Hearts*, 49)*

What baggage did I bring into this first week of Advent that I have to get rid of before Christmas? So much is going on during these weeks that we can lose sight of ourselves. Amid the scheduling, food preparation, gathering with family and friends, shopping for the perfect gifts, and maybe even complaining about how busy everything is—what sins, what failings, what un-Christlike characteristics am I carrying around with me? Advent is a season of waiting, waiting in confidence that the promises God has made will be fulfilled. If I rush through these days unreflectively, or worse, cling tightly to my selfishness during this time, what do I hope to gain in the Christmas to come? Let us be people who wait on God's every word so we can be transformed and offer our new selves as gifts at Christmas.

Loving Father, I don't want to remain little. Let your Word fully come to life in me that I might wait in hope and be a reminder of hope for others. Amen.

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Celebrate Advent with a daily, prayerful journey toward the joy of Christmas. *This Will Be a Sign for You* is a thorough, thoughtful meditation on the Incarnation: God becomes a man—God with us. Let this fusion of God's Word, the genius of Henri Nouwen and the faith-filled writing craft of Christopher Klofft enrich your Advent. This booklet features a page-a-day format of Scripture readings, reflections and prayers, offering a springboard for your quiet times during this holy season.

Reflections and prayers by Christopher Klofft. Design by Jamie Wyatt. Cover image: Adobe Stock/Pronoia. © 2022 The Henri Nouwen Legacy Trust ([www.henrinouwen.org](http://www.henrinouwen.org)) and Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. [www.creativecommunications.com](http://www.creativecommunications.com). 800-325-9414. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA. **TS8**

