

# Advent 2020

## “All About Jesus”



Devotional Readings

North Douglas Church

Victoria, BC

All Scripture references are in the New International Version of the Bible.

*The Holy Bible*, New International Version. Zondervan Publishing House, 2011.

## Advent is ...

Advent is the season of anticipating the coming of Jesus. This season is celebrated on the 4 Sundays before Christmas Day. This year the first Sunday of Advent is November 29th.



An advent wreath with candles is used to mark the coming of Jesus. For the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, light a candle to mark the week. You can do this everyday if you like. The themes to think over and pray about on Sundays are Hope, Love, Joy, Peace and Christmas Day's theme is Jesus. If you want, you can make your own Advent wreath or just setup five candles (one for each Sunday and one for Christmas Day.)

Readings in this guide are organized around the idea of reading one chapter of the Gospel of Luke for the 24 days leading up to Christmas Day. That is on December 1, read Luke 1 and on December 2 read Luke 2 etc. To accommodate the entire advent season I have added a few readings of prophecy about Jesus for the two days in November and a reading from Revelation for Christmas Day. In this way you will have covered the life of Jesus, his teaching and actions for the Christmas season.

For additional help and encouragement, read my devotional thoughts or watch a relevant video online. (See Youtube.com)

Enjoy this Advent Season.

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Rod Fair

## **Sunday, November 29 (Hope Candle)**

**Read:** Isaiah 9:1-7

Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Who did the prophets of old believe the Messiah would be? From this passage in Isaiah we see that there was an expectation of God's personal presence as Messiah. God was intent on visiting his creation and becoming the Saviour for mankind. You can know him as all of the names above.

## **Monday, November 30**

**Read:** Micah 5:1-4

Micah 5:4 (NIV) He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

God's plan for a Messiah was detailed. He had a plan and that plan included the town of Bethlehem. God's plan also included the task of shepherding people. God wants people to draw closer to him so he needed someone to show them the way. Jesus became the Way, the Truth and the Life we all need (see John 14:6). Choose Jesus as your leader, your shepherd, your guide for your life.

## **Tuesday, December 1**

**Read:** Luke 1

Luke 1:32–33 (NIV) He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,<sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

The angel of the Lord came to Mary and told her she would conceive and bear a child unlike anyone ever born. He would be a king of a divine kingdom. She was surprised but not overwhelmed by the revelation. She trusted God to do what he thought best. You can trust God to reveal himself to you.

## **Wednesday, December 2**

**Read:** Luke 2

Luke 2:10–12 (NIV) But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.<sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.<sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

God's angels appeared to shepherds and the message they delivered was one of joy. The Saviour had come and they were to celebrate. God's plan was to reveal Jesus to mankind. The Saviour was for everyone, the lowly poor shepherd as well as the kings of the earth. Jesus was born a Saviour for you.

## Thursday, December 3

**Read:** Luke 3

Luke 3:21–22 (NIV) When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

As Jesus was baptised in water there were some who began to recognize him. John witnessed God’s testimony of Jesus as the Messiah. God the Father revealed him as his Son. His first disciples began to follow him after his baptism. There is no one else like him. Ask God to show you who Jesus is.

## Friday, December 4

**Read:** Luke 4

Luke 4:18–19 (NIV) “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Jesus’ ministry to people started with the fulfillment of this prophecy from the Old testament prophet Isaiah. He read it out in a synagogue and he told the people listening that he was fulfilling it himself. God the Father had called him to proclaim good news. His actions and teachings were to become good news to the people of Israel and they are good news to us today.

## **Saturday, December 5**

**Read:** Luke 5

Luke 5:22–25 (NIV) Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?”<sup>23</sup>

Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?<sup>24</sup> But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”<sup>25</sup>

Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

When Jesus pronounced forgiveness of sins for the paralyzed man, the religious leaders were shocked. They could not equate forgiveness of sin outside of God himself. Jesus was showing the privilege of his divinity in both forgiving the man and healing him of his illness. Jesus can bring the power of God into your life today.

## **Sunday, December 6 (Love Candle)**

**Read:** Luke 6

Luke 6:31–32 (NIV) Do to others as you would have them do to you.<sup>32</sup> “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

Jesus taught a lot of things that surprised people. He taught with a different kind of authority and he was practical. His greatest message was about love. Not only were people to show love to others, but they were told to love even their enemies. God’s love reaches beyond the boundaries of human expectation. He wants us to continually love people. Practice the love that Jesus taught.

## Monday, December 7

**Read:** Luke 7

Luke 7:22–23 (NIV) So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.<sup>23</sup> Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

When John the Baptist was thrown in jail, he only heard reports of what Jesus was doing from his followers. John would have been discouraged and wanted to know if Jesus was really the one that he, John, had proclaimed him to be. Jesus’ reply was one of hope. He essentially told John not to give up faith. We need to be people of endurance in the face of difficulty. Don’t give up hope.

## Tuesday, December 8

**Read:** Luke 8

Luke 8:49–50 (NIV) While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” he said. “Don’t bother the teacher anymore.”<sup>50</sup> Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.”

While Jesus reputation as a healer was growing, many people wanted him to come and help them. Some were afraid to be in the public eye, so they touched him like the woman with the bleeding illness. But others like the synagogue ruler were willing to seek Jesus out regardless of what others thought. Jesus message to Jairus is important for us today, “Don’t be afraid, just believe ...”



## **Wednesday, December 9**

**Read:** Luke 9

Luke 9:20 (NIV) “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.”

There was a lot of speculation about Jesus as he taught and healed and cast out demons. Neither the religious leaders nor the common person could quite grasp who he was. When Jesus asked Peter about his opinion, Peter gave him a reply of faith that could only have come from God himself. The disciples knew Jesus as Messiah because God had shown them the truth. Do you know who Jesus is to you?

## **Thursday, December 10**

**Read:** Luke 10

Luke 10:20 (NIV) However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Jesus sent his followers out to proclaim the good news and to heal. They saw amazing things done by the power of God. Even demons were driven out when they were commanded. But Jesus reminded his disciples that their true joy was not just in the good that they could do but in the truth of their relationship to God. Real joy flows from God first and then results in good works, not the other way round. Focus on your relationship with God and the other things will fall into their proper place.

## **Friday, December 11**

**Read:** Luke 11

Luke 11:9–10 (NIV) “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Jesus not only taught on prayer, he practiced prayer. The disciples saw Jesus pray and wanted to pray like him. He showed them the way to approach God their Father. He encouraged them to keep asking and keep seeking God. We need to do the same. God will reveal himself to us as we seek after him.

## **Saturday, December 12**

**Read:** Luke 12

Luke 12:31–32 (NIV) But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. <sup>32</sup> “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

Jesus taught his followers many truths to encourage them, instruct them, prepare them and help them connect with God. The core of his teaching was about the kingdom of God. The rulership of God in his people is eternally important. As you believe in Jesus and follow him, you have become a part of his kingdom.

## **Sunday, December 13 (Joy Candle)**

**Read:** Luke 13

Luke 13:14–16 (NIV) Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”<sup>15</sup> The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water?<sup>16</sup> Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

One of the things that bothered Jesus most was people who carried a religious attitude that cared more for rules than for people. We must keep the heart of God and his value for people as the core of our belief and activity. Make a point of caring for others.

## **Monday, December 14**

**Read:** Luke 14

Luke 14:26–27 (NIV) “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.<sup>27</sup> And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Jesus was not kidding when he said that it would cost to be his follower. He called people to a different kind of relationship with God and a different kind of life. It takes complete dedication to be Jesus’ disciple. How deep is your commitment to Christ?

## **Tuesday, December 15**

**Read:** Luke 15

Luke 15:7 (NIV) I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

The parables of lost things are recorded to remind us of what God thinks is important. One lesson prevails: God cares for people and wants them to be saved. As one person repents of their sin and comes to God, all of heaven rejoices. We also should rejoice and be glad when people make a choice to enter the kingdom of God.

## **Wednesday, December 16**

**Read:** Luke 16

Luke 16:13 (NIV) “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Jesus called people to a deeper faith that would impact their life choices. Many people tried to have a connection with God while holding onto the priorities of the world. Jesus taught his disciples to be focused in one direction—God’s direction. Our time in history is no different from that of those Jesus was teaching in respect to spiritual responsibility. We too must choose whom we will serve.

## **Thursday, December 17**

**Read:** Luke 17

Luke 17:17–19 (NIV) Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup> Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

When Jesus healed the lepers all were made well. But only one returned to Jesus to thank him for what he had done. Gratefulness is never out of place in God’s kingdom. We all need to come to God with a thankful heart and express to him our thankfulness.

## **Friday, December 18**

**Read:** Luke 18

Luke 18:17 (NIV) Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Jesus knew that many obstacles would stand in people’s way preventing them from entering God’s kingdom. He encouraged childlike faith, a trust that was simple. We all need to come to God with that same faith. He is hoping for an honest and open relationship with his people. Don’t overcomplicate your faith.

## **Saturday, December 19**

**Read:** Luke 19

Luke 19:39–40 (NIV) Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” <sup>40</sup> “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

As Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey, the crowds of followers honoured him with their worship. They hailed him as Saviour; Hosanna means “He Saves.” While the religious leaders wanted it all to stop, Jesus implied that he was worthy of the worship when he said the stones would cry out if it stopped. Jesus is a Saviour worthy of worship.

## **Sunday, December 20 (Peace Candle)**

**Read:** Luke 20

Luke 20:26 (NIV) They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

Jesus had many run-ins with the religious leaders. They tried to trap him in what he said so they could accuse him of wrong teaching. Jesus had the wisdom of God to guide him through the minefield of dealing with people of ill-will. Jesus’ example was that of a man of truth, but he was also wise in knowing how to apply that truth. Ask God for the ability to be both truthful and wise.

# Monday, December 21

**Read:** Luke 21

Luke 21:13–15 (NIV) And so you will bear testimony to me.<sup>14</sup> But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves.<sup>15</sup> For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

Jesus knew his followers would face difficulty because of their faith. He encouraged them to rely on God and not to worry. He promised words and wisdom as needed. Today we are in need of good words and wisdom from God to know how to navigate the difficulties of our culture and maintain a good testimony for Jesus. Ask God for help in being a good witness for Christ.

# Tuesday, December 22

**Read:** Luke 22

Luke 22:67–69 (NIV) “If you are the Messiah,” they said, “tell us.” Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me,<sup>68</sup> and if I asked you, you would not answer.<sup>69</sup> But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

When Jesus was arrested he was first brought before the council of religious leaders. They wanted to know if he was the Messiah and he told them. But they did not believe. Jesus is calling us to believe in who he is and what he said he would do. Have faith.

## **Wednesday, December 23**

**Read:** Luke 23

Luke 23:33–34 (NIV) When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.<sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Jesus was crucified. He knew the sins of the people who collaborated to bring about his death and he also knew the plan of God the Father. He asked his heavenly Father to grant forgiveness. In the most horrific of circumstances, Jesus chose forgiveness. This is the salvation that mankind needs. Choose to be a forgiving person.

## **Thursday, December 24**

**Read:** Luke 24

Luke 24:46–47 (NIV) He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,<sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ...”

After Jesus had risen from the dead he appeared to many of his followers. To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus he explained the gospel from the law of Moses and the prophets. To the disciples he summarized the gospel in a simple statement. Jesus did indeed suffer, die and rise from the dead. Freedom is proclaimed all over the world in his name. Pray to be a part of spreading the great message of salvation.



# Friday, December 25

## (Christmas Day Candle for Jesus)

**Read:** Revelation 1

Revelation 1:17–18 (NIV) When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. <sup>18</sup> I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

There is life after death. Jesus rose from the dead and revealed himself to many of his followers. But to John he revealed himself as not only risen but the eternal God. Life is in his hands and he proclaims life that is eternal. Our Saviour is the eternal one who will bring us into his everlasting kingdom. He was, and is and is yet to come.

Jesus, we thank you for your first advent and we await the second advent, your return as King of Kings.

## **Advent 2020 Devotional List**

- ❑ Nov 29—Sunday (Hope) —Isaiah 9:1-7; focus passage vs 6 (Wonderful, Counselor)
- ❑ Nov 30 - Micah 5:1-4; focus passage vs 4 (Ruler from Bethlehem)
- ❑ Dec 1 - Luke 1; focus passage vs 32-33 (Son of Most High)
- ❑ Dec 2 - Luke 2; focus passage vs 10-12 (Saviour born to you)
- ❑ Dec 3 - Luke 3; focus passage vs 21-22 (Spirit descended on him)
- ❑ Dec 4 - Luke 4; focus passage vs 18-19 (Anointed to proclaim good news)
- ❑ Dec 5 - Luke 5; focus passage vs 22-25 (Paralyzed man forgiven and healed)
- ❑ Dec 6—Sunday (Love) - Luke 6; focus passage vs 31-32 (Do to others as you would have them do to you)
- ❑ Dec 7 - Luke 7; focus passage vs 22-23 (Report of Jesus' work)
- ❑ Dec 8 - Luke 8; focus passage vs 49-50 (Just believe)
- ❑ Dec 9 - Luke 9; focus passage vs 20 (You are God's Messiah)
- ❑ Dec 10 - Luke 10; focus passage vs 20 (Followers are to rejoice in having names written in heaven)
- ❑ Dec 11 - Luke 11; focus passage vs 9-10 (Encouragement to pray)
- ❑ Dec 12 - Luke 12; focus passage vs 31-32 (Do not worry, Seek His kingdom)

- ❑ Dec 13—Sunday (Joy) - Luke 13; focus passage vs 14-16 (Freed on the Sabbath)
- ❑ Dec 14 - Luke 14; focus passage vs 26-27 (Cost of being a disciple)
- ❑ Dec 15 - Luke 15; focus passage vs 7 (Rejoicing over lost people repenting)
- ❑ Dec 16 - Luke 16; focus passage vs 13 (Serving God or Money)
- ❑ Dec 17 - Luke 17; focus passage vs 17-19 (Leper Returns to Give Thanks)
- ❑ Dec 18 - Luke 18; focus passage vs 17 (Receiving the Kingdom by Faith, like a child)
- ❑ Dec 19 - Luke 19; focus passage vs 40 (Jesus Receives praise, otherwise Stones would cry out)
- ❑ Dec 20—Sunday (Peace) - Luke 20; focus passage vs 26 (Unable to trap him)
- ❑ Dec 21 - Luke 21; focus passage vs 13-15 (Persecution will be endured because of Jesus help)
- ❑ Dec 22 - Luke 22; focus passage vs 67-69 (Jesus testimony about himself in front of Jews)
- ❑ Dec 23 - Luke 23; focus passage vs 33-34 (Jesus is crucified and forgives)
- ❑ Dec 24 - Luke 24; focus passage vs 46-47 (Resurrection and Good News preached in his name)
- ❑ Dec 25 - Revelation 1; focus passage vs 17-18 (The First and the Last)

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