

Karen Haslam

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' 10He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' 11He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' 12The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' 13Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' 14The LORD God said to the serpent,
'Because you have done this,
 cursed are you among all animals
 and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
 and dust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.
15I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
 and you will strike his heel.'

Thanks be to God.

Phil Guest

God Promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.

15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,
16and said, ‘By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have
done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17I will indeed
bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven
and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the
gate of their enemies, 18and by your offspring shall all the nations of the
earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.’

Thanks be to God.

Karin Mussen

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

2*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
6For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Thanks be to God.

Joel West

The prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
 who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
 one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
 from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labour has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
 to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
 in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land
 and tread upon our soil,
we will raise against them seven shepherds
 and eight installed as rulers.

Thanks be to God.

Lori Colbeck

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.* 29But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. 31And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' 38Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Thanks be to God.

Mark Allwood

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3All went to their own towns to be registered. 4Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. 5He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Thanks be to God.

Elaine Clark-Siberry

The shepherds go to the manger.

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah,* the Lord. 12This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,* praising God and saying,

14‘Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’*

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’

Thanks be to God.

Jane Foster

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men* from the East came to Jerusalem, 2asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,* and have come to pay him homage.’ 3When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah* was to be born. 5They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6“*And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd* my people Israel.”*”

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men* and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ 9When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,* until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10When they saw that the star had stopped,* they were overwhelmed with joy. 11On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Thanks be to God.

Jack Nahrgang

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4in him was life,* and the life was the light of all people. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11He came to what was his own,* and his own people did not accept him. 12But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 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.

Thanks be to God.