

Devotion for Advent 1

Psalm 80:1-7

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth.

Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us!

Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us an object of contention for our neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Isaiah 6:1-13

The Lord of hosts calls and commissions Isaiah

- 1) What did Isaiah realize about himself in the presence of the Lord?
- 2) What is the significance of the angels repeating the word 'holy' three times?
- 3) What encouraged Isaiah to gladly answer God's call?

Matthew 1:1-25

Genealogy and birth of Jesus

- 1) What is the significance of the genealogy of Jesus' birth?
- 2) What shame did Joseph want to keep Mary from suffering?
- 3) What is the significance of the names 'Jesus' and 'Immanuel'?

"Jesus, Our Immanuel"

No names express God's love for human beings more clearly and tenderly than the names 'Jesus' and 'Immanuel'. Ancient peoples (and modern) had little if any conception of their gods as loving them. The ancient pagans, regardless of how their paganism was expressed, believed the gods were at best unconcerned about them or angry with them. They offered sacrifice to get the gods to notice them, so they could seek their assistance at seed time and harvest. They offered sacrifices in case they had offended them.

When Paul and Barnabas spoke the gospel to the pagans at Lystra and Derbe, they said that God has always expressed His love in the cycle of the seasons and in seedtime and harvest. Then they told them about Jesus, in whom God expressed the fullness of His love by joining Himself to our humanity and sacrificing Himself for our forgiveness.

Jesus means, "The Lord saves." In ancient times the Lord saved His people through men and women, judges, prophets and kings. He saved them from their sins through the sacrifices offered in the Jerusalem temple, by the priestly service of Aaron and his sons. In all these ways the Lord was pointing to the greatest act of salvation He would accomplish through Jesus His Son and the sacrifice of His cross. God loves the world so deeply that He gave His Son to bear the weight of human sin and atone for every human soul.

Immanuel means, "God is with us." God is so involved with human life and the life of the world that He saves, not from a distance, but by joining Himself to our humanity and living as one with us. Jesus experienced life as a sinless human being in a world in bondage to sin, enthralled to the devil and under the condemnation of death. Jesus knows our humanity and He knows what it is like to live in this world of sin, death and the devil. His names express the deep love God feels for each of us, His closeness to each one of us.

“THE ANGEL GABRIEL FROM HEAVEN CAME” (Public Domain)
The angel Gabriel from heaven came, with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flames:
“All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, most highly favoured lady.”
Gloria!

**“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honour thee:
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favoured lady.”**
Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; “To me be as it pleaseth God.” She said. “My soul shall laud
and magnify God’s holy name.” Most highly favoured lady.”
Gloria!

**Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born, in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
“Most highly favoured lady.”**
Gloria!

Prayer

Lord God, heavenly Father, as we close the church year and begin the season of Advent, bless us to be ever watchful for the return of our Saviour. He came first in humble form, born of a virgin. He will come again on the clouds with glory, seated at your side. As we wait, bless us always to know that He is with us as our Saviour. In His Name we pray. Amen

The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen**

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Benediction

Isaiah 9:6

“For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Bible Knowledge Quiz

- 1) Where was Isaiah when the Lord called him?
- 2) Where was Zechariah when the angel told him he would have a son?
2) Where did Mary and Joseph leave Jesus?

Answers to last week’s Quiz

- 1) Jesse. 1 Samuel 17:12
- 2) Take off his shoes. Exodus 3:5
- 3) Casting a net into the sea. Matthew 4:18