



Come & See What God Has Done

Advent 2023, Week 4

2023 Advent Devotionals – Week 4

Welcome to the Advent Devotionals for 2023. This year, we use the theme "Come and see what God has done." We find the scriptural basis for this theme in Psalms 66:5, Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.

In the four weeks of Advent 2023, we will take a journey through the Bible and discover instances where we can see where the Lord has done wonderful things for His people. The first three weeks will explore these instances from the Old Testament.

In the devotionals for week 4, we will investigate scripture and how the significant participants in the birth of Jesus could see what the Lord had done in their lives. Our transition to the New Testament will show how Mary, Joseph, The Shepherds, The Wisemen, the Innkeeper, and the populace of Bethlehem would see the works of the Lord. We know today that Jesus fulfilled the promise of a Messiah to come to earth to save God's people.

God incarnate is the focus of Advent and the start of a new relationship between God and man. For you and me, the Messiah is as necessary in our relationship as it was with God's chosen people of the Old Testament, who looked forward to the coming of the promised Messiah. Yet, when He arrived, many decided not to believe He was among them in the form of Jesus. Just as in Old Testament times, we, too, are in desperate need of a Messiah to save us from our sinful selves. Many will still choose not to believe in the Savior, Jesus, much to their loss.

I pray that in this season of Advent, you will be blessed in studying God's word.

Leaning on Jesus
Forest Holmes

Note: All scriptural references are from the English Standard Version of the Bible.





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Mary – Week 4, Day 1

Dec. 18

We open the 4th week of Advent devotionals by examining Mary's role in the birth of the promised Messiah. Of all the participants, one could argue Mary would be the most affected by the fulfillment of the prophecy. Then again, the Son of God left heaven to come to earth as a newborn infant. Regardless of your perspective, there is an exciting element to the visit of the angel Gabriel. Nowhere do we see any reaction from Mary beyond asking how she could become pregnant, given she was a virgin. We find her reaction in Luke 1:26-35, In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel "How will this be, since I am a virgin." And the angel answered her "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

We see reactions from those who witness the appearance of an angel, at times, as being struck with fear. At other times, we see a reaction like that of Mary. This leaves me to wonder, were the appearance of angels a more commonplace occurrence in Old Testament times? Are people in those times more accustomed or desensitized to angel appearances? I apologize for the "squirrel" moment there. But it leaves me to wonder about angels.





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Mary – Week 4, Day 1

Dec. 18

Mary, a teenager, was betrothed to Joseph at the time of the angel's appearance. She would experience, not just see, the work of the Lord in her becoming pregnant without knowing her to-be husband Joseph. The angel said it would happen, and it did. The profound impact that encounter would have on Mary is seen throughout the New Testament. Her reaction to the wisemen's visit is found in Luke 2:19, But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. Or, consider when Jesus stayed behind at the Temple, and his parents were frantically searching for him. Mary's reaction to his being found comes to us in Luke 2:49-51, And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. More and more, we see instances where Mary could see what an extraordinary thing the Lord had done in her life. We, too, can ponder the wonders the Lord does in our lives when we stop and consider all the changes we have gone through in our faith life. We were once one way, but we changed. And it was because of the Lord.

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