

NEAC ADVENT

NAMES OF JESUS

DAY ONE

THE WORD

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

John 1:1,14

Jesus is The Word—the full expression of God’s character. Words reflect someone’s mind and Jesus embodies the mind and the will of God. In Him, God’s voice takes on flesh. In the gospels, not only do we hear his spoken words – Jesus as the speaker – but we learn that the entire message revealed to us points to him – Jesus as the speech itself.

I’m in a season where I crave wisdom—I crave for God’s voice and instruction to cut through the noise of my thoughts. In motherhood, at work, in my own wrestling with anxiety, I find myself wishing I knew God better, so that I could know better what to do. I see a similar desire around me in friends and family who are searching for clarity, sometimes aching for peace.

But returning to The Word—to Jesus, and to Scripture where He reveals Himself—has felt this year like a muscle I have to remember how to use. It takes intention to still myself, to listen. How I thank God for his promise that even when I do not remain faithful, He always does! Even when I feel spiritually weary or distracted, the Word is not silent. Jesus still speaks—through Scripture, through the Spirit, through His people. He is the wisdom I seek.

So I’m learning to come back, again and again, to The Word. Not for instant answers, but for the shaping of my heart. Not only to know what to do, but to know him better—faithful, near, full of grace and truth. My redeemer.

Giselle Montamat

PRAYER

Jesus, Word made flesh, speak into my heart again. Reorder my thoughts. Bring clarity to my questions. Let Your voice rise above all others. Teach me to listen, and let your Word dwell richly in me.

DAY TWO

i AM

God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'

Exodus 3:14

When I hear the words "I am" I immediately think of what comes after them. I am... a daughter, a sister, a friend, a parish counsellor, a netballer. In fact, for a while my occupation used these words as it's slogan "I am a genetic counsellor, lets talk".

Yet in the context of Christmas, I'm taken back to the words of Exodus 3. Of Moses meeting God on the mountain while he was tending his sheep. Of God declaring to Moses who He is and then calling him to go and rescue his people. And when they ask who sent Moses, God's answer "I am". He doesn't need anything more, there's no descriptor or defining explanation, just I am.

At Christmas we are reminded of the fulfillment of the promises God made in Jesus, that no matter how much we think our identity is in the things around us, no matter how

much pressure the world places to seek our identity in our job, our study, our family (or lack thereof), our home, our true identity is found in Jesus. The same God that Moses met on that mountain all those years ago, has a heart that still longs for his people, so much so he sent his son Jesus into the world to save them.

This Christmas, these are the words I will hold onto, when I'm catching up with distant relatives so focused on the years achievements, who look at you in a certain way when they realised your check list hasn't been ticked off the way they think it should. In these moments, I'll remember our I am who sent his son for me and for you. As a child of God, I need no other descriptor, I am assured of my salvation, as his Grace is sufficient for me.

Laura Yeates

DAY THREE

SON OF GOD

Read: Matthew 17:4-8

Jesus is the Son of God may seem like a familiar—even banal—statement. We hear it, say it and sing it endlessly at church. But if we linger over this little passage in Matthew's gospel (aka "the transfiguration"), we'll be reminded that Jesus's arrival—as the Son of God—carries with it a strange mixture of fear and comfort.

The scene itself is amusingly chaotic. Moses and Elijah, two long-dead men, appear next to Jesus. Peter fumbles around for words, trying to firm up camping arrangements for the trio. But before he can finish his sentence, God interrupts Peter, declaring "this is my beloved Son." Notice the surprising effect of this declaration: it terrifies the disciples. They collapse in fear because Jesus is the Son of God. Facing him, the disciples realise they are in the presence of none other than the Lord God, and they fall on their faces in acknowledgement of their unworthiness.

We don't often think of the arrival of Jesus as frightening, do we? A word association game for Christmas would yield answers like joyful, merry and bright. But when the Son of God is identified in Matthew 17, we see fear, trembling and fright. So what are we to do? God tells us in verse 7: listen to Jesus. What happens next is extraordinary. The terrifying Son of God interrupts fear and speaks a word of comfort: "Rise and have no fear."

This is the wonderful news of Jesus' arrival. The Son, in all his might and fright, has come to offer hope and life to people who know they don't deserve to stand in his presence. So, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, we can heartily sing both "fall on your knees and hear the angel voices" and "come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant."

James Marquet

DAY FOUR

REDEEMER

*I have swept away your offences like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist.
Return to me, for I have redeemed you.*

Isaiah 44: 22

One day last year in the Blue Mountains, I awoke to find I could barely see ten metres out of the back of the home I was staying in.

Because I had arrived the previous night I had no idea what the backyard looked like. And in the morning, the mist seemed impenetrable.

But as the sun rose, the mist gave way to blue skies and a wide vista of what turned out to be a previously unseen golf course.

Isaiah's prophecy centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ paints a vivid picture of how sin can be an all-obscuring force.

Throughout the book of Isaiah he repeatedly speaks of God as a redeemer, for a nation that can only be saved by Him.

Our lives may look different from those in Old Testament Israel, but we are just as sinful and in need of redemption.

But Jesus, the light of the world, has swept away that morning mist, and we now belong to the day.

What a blessing that we now live in a world where we have been redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus.

Nick Pearson

DAY FIVE

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.
John 8:12

Throughout Scripture, light symbolises God's presence, holiness, and truth, while darkness represents ignorance, rebellion, and death. Isaiah speaks of those "walking in darkness" who have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:2), and John declares, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5). This light is not mere illumination but the very source of life itself (John 1:4). By saying, "I am the light of the world," Jesus claims to be this life-giving light of God.

Our world often tells us to "find your own light" or "follow your truth," but Jesus says something radically different. His light is not something we manufacture ourselves; it is a gift of grace. Jesus exposes what is hidden, heals what is broken, and leads us safely through the shadows of sin and death.

In the Southern Hemisphere, Christmas comes in the bright warmth of summer – long sunny days, festive celebrations, joyful carols, presents, and good food. And yet, beneath the brightness, many still carry burdens: loneliness, grief, anxiety, or spiritual emptiness. The world's light cannot reach those shadows – but, praise God, Jesus can! When we let him, Jesus shines into every corner, even those hidden behind smiles and celebrations.

This Advent, let every light you see remind you of Jesus, the true Light of the world. Christ's light is never meant to be hidden; it is meant to spill into the darkness, bringing hope to those who feel unseen amid the season's joy. We don't need to manufacture our own light; we simply walk in and reflect His.

Like the song says – Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Becki Phillip

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Light of the World, who came to scatter the darkness of sin and death: teach me to walk in Your light and reflect it to others who feel lost in the shadows. Amen.

DAY SIX

LAMB OF GOD

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

Jesus is first called the Lamb of God by John the Baptist at the beginning of His ministry on earth.

It is a name layered with imagery from the Old Testament.

Jesus is our Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7) & the fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrificial system (Heb 10:14).

Like the old sacrificial lambs, Jesus' blood covers us from God's wrath against sin and is the perfect sacrifice that has brought us into relationship with God.

We live in a world where strength is everything. Consider the reaction of Donald Trump to an unflattering portrait on the cover of Time magazine. Strong people become upset when being depicted as being weak, because they depend on their image of strength to maintain power.

On the other hand, we worship one who willingly became weak. Jesus chose the name Lamb, knowing it conjured weakness in one's mind. From the beginning of his ministry on earth he knew he was fated for the death of a criminal. He gladly accepted this for us.

For Jesus, this apparent weakness is His strength.

In Revelation 5, we see a vision of a slain lamb, alive and ruling creation. Jesus didn't stay dead after dying for us. He rose again, leaving no doubt that sin and death have been defeated and that perfect relationship with God is open for all who have faith in Him.

Jesus is the perfect living sacrifice for your sin. Therefore, take heart and seek to serve him today.

Jana Stanbury

PRAYER

Dear Lord, we praise you for you are just and merciful. Thank you for sending your son Jesus to make a way for us to be in perfect relationship with you. We praise the Lamb of God for his sacrifice for us. Amen

DAY SEVEN

MEDIATOR

Read Job 14:1-4, 13-17

As you read this, I will be nearing sixty. I'm finding it a sobering thought. I haven't suffered like Job, nor do I feel my soul particularly close to Sheol. My days do feel few, but I'm definitely more withered than blossoming! And sixty years of sin would fill a very big bag!

The book of Job gives us a glimpse of life in a fallen world and these verses highlight Job's need for God to somehow cover his iniquity and cleanse him. Job knows he can't do this and he can't force or persuade God to. He needs God to do something, to avert his eyes or to hide him in Sheol until a time when his wrath has somehow passed and God calls him to life again. As the story continues, Job hopes for a divine redeemer (19:25) – a mediator, who will come between him and God to deliver him and ransom his soul from the pit (33:23-24).

Job's hopes are fulfilled by Jesus, our perfect mediator – one who comes between our sinfulness and God's holiness. Jesus is perfectly human, able to live the obedient, sinless, holy life we don't and can't live, to represent us before God.¹ Jesus is perfectly God, so that his sacrifice is sufficient to protect us from God's wrath. Jesus bridges the gulf between us, reconciling us to God. He does that by offering his own life as a ransom to redeem us from the pit.²

Thanks to Jesus our Mediator, this Christmas we can say,

'I sinned and perverted what was right, and it was not repaid to me.

He has redeemed my soul from going down into the pit, and my life shall look upon the light.³

Michael Charles

REFERENCES

1 – Hebrews 2:14-18; 12:18-24; 1 Timothy 2:3-6

2 – Hebrews 9:11-15; cf. Job 33:22-28

3 – Job 33:27-28

DAY EIGHT

IMMANUEL

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).
Matthew 1:23

As a die-hard Star Wars fan, there are few phrases which bring more nostalgia and thrill than ‘may the force be with you’. It’s a phrase of hope, encouragement and farewell repeated throughout the Star Wars movies, perhaps before a mission to the other end of the galaxy.

‘Farewell old friend and may the force be with you.’

To have the power of the force with them, the Jedi were not alone on their journey, were ready to face even the strongest foe and confident that the Force was with them. Wonderful cinema, to be sure, but utterly fanciful.

For Christians, on the other hand, the promise of God’s presence with us is real: Immanuel- God with us.

The prophet Isaiah foresaw a day when this Immanuel would come. For most of Israel’s history, God was quite distant. For example, as humans left the garden of Eden, God became very distant. Even the Tabernacle and Temple, with

their curtains, walls, sacrifices and laws didn’t solve the problem completely. Such holiness and power were simply too much for humanity to bear.

But, as Isaiah foresaw, the distance would soon be bridged by Immanuel. Though Isaiah’s prophecy likely saw fulfillment in his day, Jesus was truly God with us, the transcendent God become imminent. For humanity, Immanuel isn’t just with us as an idea but as one of us. Jesus became a real human, in all our underwhelming physical selves, full of bodily limitation, and even temptation. As one of us, Jesus had the capacity to bear humanity’s sin, and to show us the way forward as He lived the perfect life.

The true grace of the gospel is encapsulated within this wonderful name. So, let us rejoice for God himself came to us in the flesh and is still with us - Immanuel.

Fergus O'Shea

CORNERSTONE

If you were asked to list the beautiful names for Jesus, cornerstone might not be the first one that comes to mind. Yet this word says mountains about who Jesus is.

See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation. Isaiah 28:16

and

You... are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. Ephesians 2:20

In Bible times, the cornerstone was the very first stone laid – a foundational, structural anchor on which the whole building rested. It was often the most costly stone because of its beauty, strength, and importance. The cornerstone guided the entire construction. It was placed with compass-point precision, and every other stone was aligned to it. Without the cornerstone, the building would have no stability; remove it, and the structure could collapse.

In more modern times the foundational stone was also laid by someone with the highest authority.

For example, the original St Stephen's cornerstone was laid by the Bishop of Australia, William Broughton, and the foundation stone of our current church building was laid by the NSW Governor.

It's easy to see why Scripture uses this image to describe Jesus. He is the essential foundation of God's people—the one on whom the whole church stands.

When I was younger, I prayed the sinner's prayer many times at wonderful Christian camps—asking Jesus to be Lord of my life—only to come home and slip back into old patterns of doing my own thing. It wasn't until I made a deliberate commitment to place Jesus as the cornerstone of my life that my faith became solid and steadily grew.

Even now, with every decision, I ask not, "What do I want to do?" but "What would God want me to do?" It is, I've found, the best way to live.

The one who relies on Jesus will never be stricken with panic.

Marcelle Rodgers

DAY TEN

BREAD OF LIFE

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6:35

The feeding of the 5000 has just taken place. They all wanted food and could not see what the feeding pointed to. Mark 6: 52 tells us that even the disciples' hearts were hardened. So, Jesus is about to set them straight.

There are two forms of existence. There is the present, and the age to come. There are two forms of bread. Bread that perishes and bread that nourishes for eternal life. In today's passage, Jesus speaks plainly when He announces, "I am the Bread of Life".

It is the one who comes to Him that does not hunger, not the one who eats. Similarly, it is the one who believes who does not thirst, not the one who drinks. When Jesus later speaks of eating flesh and drinking blood, the metaphor is already established here.

John writes with a strong Mosaic theme surrounding bread.

The people put far too much attention on Moses and not enough on God. The manna could not bestow eternal life, as evidenced by the generation that died in the wilderness. Jesus is portrayed as the new Moses feeding the new Israel (all of us who believe in Jesus) He is teaching us to prioritise life in the coming age with bread from that age.

I have always been uncertain about what is happening spiritually when we share the Lord's supper. The passage helped me to understand that the metaphor of eating and drinking is really pointing to us coming to Jesus (eating the bread) and then believing in Jesus (drinking the wine). So, we eat the bread and then drink the wine. You cannot believe (drink) without first coming (eat the bread) to Jesus.

James Toose

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you are the Bread of Life. Draw us to Yourself so we truly hunger no more, and strengthen our faith so we never thirst. As we share the bread and cup, help us see they point us to trusting and believing in You alone. Soften our hearts and nourish us with Your grace, that we may seek the life that lasts forever. Amen.

THE VINE

Read Psalm 80: 8-18

Jesus' declarative statement "I am the true vine" in John's Gospel has always struck me as a slightly esoteric agrarian metaphor. It does not have the clarity of Son of God or Redeemer, and as a metaphor it is plain compared with Light of the World or Bread of Life.

Like so many of the names of Jesus, to discover its rich meaning we need to dig into the Old Testament. While 'the vine' is used to signify Israel throughout the OT, its use as an extended metaphor in Psalm 80 offers insight into why Jesus referred to himself as the true vine in John's Gospel.

In verse 8, the psalmist addresses God, reminding him of how he "brought the vine [the Israelites] out of Egypt" and how it flourished in the promised land "the mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches." (vv. 9-11). However, the psalmist asks why God would then allow this vine, which had been so

carefully moved and tended, be left unprotected by God breaking "down its walls", allowing both man and beast to come in and "ravage it" (v. 12-13).

The psalmist implores God to have "regard for this vine" (v. 14), asking God to both rebuke those who have "burned [the vine] with fire" and "cut it down" (v. 16), and finally to protect Israel through their King, "let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself." (v. 17)

Jesus as the true vine is a reminder of God's tender love and care for his people, and, for those of us who were once outsiders, of how Jesus has brought us into the promises of God. Like a plant that is grafted, our tissues have been joined to Jesus' so we can grow and flourish with vigour, resisting the disease of sin and leading to cross pollination in proclaiming Christ as the one true King.

Sian Lim

GLORY OF THE LORD

Read John 6:25-51

Glory is a word that pops up a bit in our everyday language. To bask in glory. Glory days. Crowning glory. To go out in a blaze of glory. It denotes high praise or honour for great achievement. We can, of course, easily attribute glory to God. Creator of everything from a grain of dust to the majestic mountains, from a water molecule to the vastness of the deep, from the simplest single cell organism to the complexity of humans. There is more than enough to warrant glory.

The Glory attributed to God in the Bible, however, is so much greater than this. In the Old Testament, the Glory of the Lord was a fearful, awe-inspiring, dazzling presence – cloud and fire in the wilderness, brilliance filling the tabernacle, radiance so intense that people could not draw near. God's glory was unapproachable, set apart, holy. Yet, the astonishing promise of God was that this same glory would one day dwell amongst humanity. Isaiah declared, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together" (Isa. 40:5).

The Advent season invites us to slow down and see how God's promise was fulfilled. On a quiet night in Bethlehem, while weary shepherds watched their sheep, the sky suddenly blazed. "The Glory of the Lord shone around them," (Luke 2:9). In this terrifying moment, heavenly messengers announced that the radiant glory of the Lord had become wonderfully approachable, knowable, touchable. Born in an animal feeding trough – a glory wrapped not in majesty, but in humility.

We've been challenged recently during the Isaiah series to consider whether we really understand how very immense God's glory is and how extraordinary it is that we can come close, even call ourselves family, because of Jesus, birth, life, death and resurrection.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Adrian and Cath Ahearn

DAY THIRTEEN

MAN OF SORROWS

*He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*

Isaiah 53:3

In his time on earth Jesus experienced many difficult things. Isaiah's vision of God's suffering servant is that he was "despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3). Jesus fulfils this prophecy. The son of God knows what it is to grieve.

We too know what it is to feel sorrow. Not only the devastating loss of death, but many other sorrows too – job loss, severe or protracted illness, unfulfilled hopes, criticism, betrayal, rejection from a loved one. These sorrows can disorient us. Sometimes we forget that the gospel offers grace not only for sin but also for sadness.

This year, as I have faced grief, I have been tempted to feel disappointment with God, to wonder if he has not seen my hard work, to feel shame, and to settle for resignation instead of being hopeful.

But knowing and speaking with the man of sorrows is lifegiving. Jesus understands – he is acquainted with grief. He cares – he has borne my griefs and sorrows (Isa. 53:5). And the writer of Hebrews assures me that Jesus doesn't point out the silver lining, tell me to get a grip, and remind me that others have it far worse than I. On the contrary, my high priest sympathises with my weaknesses, because he understands the temptation to question God's goodness and find refuge in things that will not save me. He never gave in to these temptations and encourages me to hold firm. I can trust God's plans, he rejoices in my faltering attempts to love, if I look to him he covers my shame, and there is hope in the day when all will be made well once again.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Heb 4:15).

Jo Charles

DAY FOURTEEN

ALPHA AND OMEGA

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.
Revelation 22:13

Before there were days and nights the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End was there.

And at the end of all the days and nights, when they are no more, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End will be there—still.

The Alpha and the Omega was there: when you were born (and when you moved) when you took your first breath (and every breath since) when you fell and cried and scabbed your knee (not once or twice but every single time) when you walked into class (and all classes following) when you motored through school (or when you didn't) when you sang that song in a choir of hundreds (and that time when you sang the wrong note).

The First and the Last saw: each Christmas and Easter each heartbreak and joy, each kiss and hug, each loss and gain, each mistake and celebration, your first smile... and every time you grieve and cry.

The Beginning and the End: was there for all the yesterdays, is here now for all the todays, and will be there for all the tomorrows.

All that is asked is that sometime, through all your days and nights, you will say, 'Yes' to the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Just say 'Yes'.

Travelling the highs and the lows of this rollercoaster that is all our glorious days and nights; whether the road I walk is messy or straight; whether the path you take is rocky or smooth; whether we run, or walk, or stumble (and we will); the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End is there and might even be holding us up.

I know. I've been held so very many times.

The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End has been there for all my firsts, although for some I didn't realise it. And when my heart for that final time beats, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End will still be there.

And for me, this morning, as the sun crested the city skyline there was a thought, a word, or a prayer to the First and the Last.

And tonight, when darkness sings her soothing song to prepare me for another sleep, there will be a thought, a word, or a prayer to the First and the Last.

The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End is always there.

You just have to say, 'Yes'.

Chris Cheng

PRINCE OF PEACE

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.
Luke 2:14

On the night Jesus was born, heaven broke its silence to declare peace to a weary world. Quiet fields outside Bethlehem erupted with light and song, as heavenly messengers filled the sky proclaiming:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests. *Luke 2:14*

It was the announcement that God's promised peace, the Prince of Peace, had finally come.

At Christmas we remember God's gift of peace to the world. Yet as we look around us, it's easy to wonder where peace on earth is today. Wars continue and injustice persists. Personal pain may weigh heavily on your heart. If Jesus came to bring peace, why does our world feel so far from it?

The peace the angels signalled is far greater than the fragile calm our world chases. Deep down, the restlessness of the human heart comes from being separated from God. Nothing but peace with Him will satisfy this longing, yet our sin

makes this impossible. Only the Prince of Peace could bridge this divide. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus brought us the lasting peace of being reconciled to God.

He alone could bring this peace because He Himself is peace. Peace belongs to Him, He is the ruler of it, it flows from His very nature. And the source of perfect peace has given Himself to us. For all who trust in Him, His victory on the cross enables a deep abiding peace that can not be shaken. This is the peace that came to earth that night.

Too often I let the worries of this weary world overwhelm me. Perhaps this is you, too. But let us take heart and remember that Peace Himself has come to dwell in us and remains with us in the calm and through the storms. In every season, may our souls sing Glory to God for His gift of peace, Jesus, and the hope we have in Him.

Bran Zucker

DAY SIXTEEN

THE WAY

Read: John 14:2, 4-6

Consider the groundbreaking claim that Jesus makes here, to his Jewish disciples who have only ever known the sacrificial system and considered God accessible through the Holy of Holies. When Jesus says "I am the way", He is saying that the solution to humanity's need for salvation and reconciliation with God is found solely in Him.

The exclusive nature of this claim probably shocked the disciples, and it remains shocking in 2025 as well. Our newsfeeds and conversations often reflect a view that everyone should find their own truth and spirituality that works for them. Many believe that this pluralism is so obvious and mainstream that it is politically incorrect, insulting or arrogant to believe anything to the contrary.

Yet today just as in ancient Israel, Jesus' claim cuts through this noise with a simple message: He is the only way to know God. Jesus is the perfect Son who enables us to have a relationship with God the Father, and gives us access to "the Father's house". There is humility in how Jesus points us towards his Father's holiness, and unique authority in how he shows us the

way to eternal life. How often do you reflect on this key truth, and thank Jesus for allowing you to know God and look forward to a room in His house?

This Advent, I reflect on the arrival of our own firstborn son in March this year, and how he is a precious gift from God. Along with the joy of welcoming a baby into the world, having a child has also brought new anxieties into my life: how best to care for him, raise him and help him to know Jesus. Amidst this uncertainty, I am so reassured that the route to God is not complex or unknowable. There is no guesswork, no sacrificial system - there is just Jesus, whom we know personally, and in whom we can trust every day to show us and our loved ones the way to God.

Lord Jesus, you came among us as a man, in order to show us the way to God, our Heavenly Father. We do not deserve you, and desperately need you. Please challenge us this Christmas to share You with our friends and families, so that they would know the way too.

Anna Freeman

DAY SEVENTEEN

LORD

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

Luke 2:10-12

What a glorious triumphant announcement these angels got to make to the shepherds on that first Christmas: a saviour is here, and he is the Lord! He is the ruler who has come to save his people and live up to all the unfulfilled promises of the Old Testament kings.

But then the shepherds are informed that this Lord is a newborn baby. Not the conquering hero they might have expected in the town of David, the legendary warrior king.

Jesus doesn't look like what the Israelites expected the Lord to look like. They expected a king: Jesus was born into an ordinary life. He spent his time on earth teaching and healing. He went to a criminal's death and could have easily been forgotten.

But – we know the birth wasn't the end of the story, and even the shameful death wasn't the end.

Jesus rose again, conquered death, and in doing so rewrote all our ideas about what a Lord should look like. Now he reigns on high – and we get to call him our Lord, our Saviour, our Jesus. What a glorious Christmas gift!

The world has a clear idea of what a Lord or successful ruler should look like – a victorious, all conquering, strong and heroic leader. But this meets a very different picture of Lordship in Jesus – the compassionate, self-sacrificing, loving Messiah who was born on this earth as a baby, who defeated death and looked weak for our sake. I pray when these two pictures confront each other, I will continue to turn to Jesus' image of Lordship and keep following a Saviour who did not despise the weak and lowly but became one of us, to save us.

Beccy Sharley

DAY EIGHTEEN

MORNING STAR

I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star. Rev 22:16

In Revelation 22:16 Jesus declares that he is the bright morning star. As the name suggests, the morning star heralds the coming of dawn as darkness gives way to light, the ending of the night and the start of a new day. Here, Jesus reminds his people that he is the sign of a new age, that the darkness of sin and death have been defeated in his death and resurrection, and will have no power in the new creation which he has ushered in.

For me this has been a wonderful reminder of the hope we have in Christ, as I consider the sin in my own heart and the darkness which characterises so much of our world,

it can be easy to fall into despair. In these moments I am reminded to look to Christ, to trust that this too will pass and to continue to place my hope in him and not in the fleeting things of this world. God has not left his people in this darkness but has sent his Son to bring light and hope and to herald the new age.

This advent may you find hope and comfort in the morning star shining brightly in the darkness which promises the coming of the dawn for all God's people.

David Wright

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Bright Morning Star, we look to You in the midst of our darkness. When our hearts feel heavy and the world seems overwhelmed by sin and sorrow, remind us that You have already broken the power of night through Your death and resurrection.

Shine Your light into our fears, our failures, and our weariness. Turn our hope away from the fragile things of this world and anchor it firmly in You. This Advent, fill us with Your comfort and the assurance that the dawn is coming—that You are making all things new. Amen.

DAY NINETEEN

GOOD SHEPHERD

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep.

John 10:14-15

In biblical days the Good Shepherd knew his sheep, not vaguely, but personally, deeply and intimately. We are his sheep. His knowledge of us mirrors the perfect, loving communion he shares with the Father. Jesus' care for us is never generic; it is attentive, specific, and tender. And this Shepherd, who knows us fully, is also the one who willingly laid down His life for us. Advent shows us a Saviour whose love is both intimate and sacrificial. The truth that Jesus knows us should bring great comfort. He

knows our fears even when we cannot name them, our hopes even when they flicker, our weariness even when we hide it. Advent reminds us that we are not lost in the crowd. The Shepherd calls us each by name; he understands our stories; he walks with us through both shadow and light. And because he knows us with perfect love, we can trust him with the unknowns ahead.

Peter Riadgers

PRAYER

Good Shepherd, thank you for knowing me more deeply than I know myself. As I wait for your coming, remind me that I am held in your steady, intimate care. Help me recognise your voice amid the noise of this season and follow where you lead. Let the knowledge of your sacrificial love bring rest to my heart and hope to my days. Draw me close as I walk toward the light of your coming. Amen.

May you sense the Good Shepherd calling you by name this Advent and guiding you with a love that knows you fully and holds you securely.

DAY TWENTY

MESSIAH

Read: Isaiah 11:1-6

For centuries, God's people waited for the Messiah — the Anointed One, chosen to restore what was broken and bring peace to a weary world. I'm sure that waiting wasn't always easy. Through exile, oppression, and silence, they held fast to a promise that seemed impossible: that from the dead stump of David's line, life would spring again.

Advent invites us into that same waiting. We know the Messiah has come in Jesus, yet we wait and long for our world to be made right – for justice to roll down, for creation to be made new, for the peace He promised to take root in full. The question isn't whether we wait, but how we wait until he returns again.

Waiting well can look different for each of us. One way we can wait well is by refusing to numb ourselves to the world's pain or to look away from it. Instead, we are invited to join in God's

work of renewal that will one day be made complete. In my own work in climate protection, I often feel the weight of the gap between the world as it is and the world as it should be. Yet in the here and now, we can live out small acts of faithfulness that echo the Messiah's work – we can act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly in the way of our God.

When I grow weary in my waiting, I return to the words of Psalm 27:14 which helps me to persevere, "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and take heart, and wait for the Lord." What a gift that we are not alone in our waiting, the Lord is with us. And just as Isaiah promised that a green shoot would rise from a dead stump, God is at work even when He seems silent – bringing life where none seems possible.

Bek Thieleman's

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you are the promised Messiah, the Anointed One who brings life and peace. Thank You that You have come and will come again.

Teach us to wait well. Keep our hearts open to the world's pain and guide us to join in Your work – to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with You.

When we grow weary, remind us: "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and take heart." Thank You that we never wait alone. Bring life where all seems dead and hope where despair lingers. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

SON OF MAN

The title Son of Man is one of the most mysterious and beautiful names Jesus uses for Himself. At first hearing, it sounds simple—almost ordinary. But in Scripture, it carries a depth that speaks both to His humanity and His divine authority.

Jesus chose this title to make clear that He entered fully into our human experience. He knew exhaustion so heavy it drove Him to sleep through a storm. He knew grief that made Him weep openly at a friend's tomb. He knew frustration, loneliness, misunderstanding, hunger, temptation, and the sting of betrayal. Nothing about being human was theoretical for Him. He lived it.

And because He lived it, He understands us—not from a distance, not as an observer, but as One who has walked our road. When we feel anxious, worn down, unseen, overwhelmed, or disappointed, we can come to Him knowing He has felt the weight of those

very things. The Son of Man is the God who sympathises.

But the title carries another layer—one that stretches back to Daniel's vision (Daniel 7). There, the Son of Man is not merely human; He is the exalted, heavenly figure who comes with authority, glory, and an everlasting kingdom. The One who knows our weakness is also the One who reigns over all things with unshakeable power.

Jesus is both:

The King who rules...

...and the Brother who understands.

The Judge of all the earth...

...and the Man acquainted with sorrow.

The One who holds the universe...

...and the One who took on flesh for us.

In Him, divine majesty meets human vulnerability—and this is our comfort. He is strong enough to save and close enough to understand.

Megan Haviland

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Son of Man, thank You for becoming one of us - entering our humanity, feeling our limitations, carrying our sorrows, and walking through the complexities of life in a broken world. Thank You that You are not distant or detached, but compassionate, present, and understanding.

When we feel weary or overwhelmed, remind us that You have walked this road before us and walk it now beside us. And thank You that You are also the Son of Man from Daniel's vision - the One who reigns with authority, power, and eternal glory. Help us trust both Your strength and Your sympathy. Teach us to rest in Your rule and lean into Your closeness. Amen.

DAY TWENTY TWO

SAVIOUR

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.
Isaiah 9:6

Jesus is our Saviour. He wants us to trust Him with our lives, every bit of them.

He knows each one of us by name. He knows all about our sin and yet He loves us still. Jesus brings hope to the hopeless, healing to the broken, and light to the darkest places. His love is deeper than our failures and stronger than our shame.

Our Sunday church sermons are from the book of Isaiah this month.

In Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 are some of the most beautiful words to describe the Saviour, many years before he was born in Bethlehem.

"For a child will be born for us, a son will be given for us, and the government will be on His shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

This verse describes the Saviour who we will sing about and worship at Christmas this year; born to save His people!

Tracey Szanto

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for the gift of Jesus, my Saviour. Thank You that He knows me fully, sees my sin and my weakness, and yet loves me with a steadfast and rescuing love. Help me to entrust every part of my life to Him—my hopes, my fears, my future, and my failures.

Fill me with His peace and His light, and teach me to walk in His wisdom and strength. May my life reflect His grace, and may my heart rest securely in the salvation He has won for me. Amen.

DAY TWENTY THREE

CHRIST

Why is Jesus called "The Christ"? It's not because it's his name, but because it is his title. It means "anointed", or "the anointed one". We find the same title in the Old Testament, referred to as the "Messiah".

But what does this mean? In the Old Testament, to be anointed was a sign that someone had been appointed by God for a special role. God would send a prophet to pour oil on the anointed one's head. Aaron and his sons were anointed. Prophets were anointed. Kings were anointed. Indeed, the pattern of Israelite kingship is that the King is chosen, called, anointed and performs a mighty act. David's mighty act for example was to slay Goliath.

Now we don't read about anyone anointing Jesus head with oil, but we do read that he was anointed when he was baptised by John. The Holy Spirit descended on him in the visible form of a dove. The dove is a reference to God's deliverance of Noah and his family from the catastrophic flood of Genesis 7.

For what role was Jesus anointed? In Acts 10:38 Peter, preaching to Cornelius and his household said "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him." Jesus, referring to

himself said: "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, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

Like pieces of a puzzle, God's plan is being revealed. These are mighty works indeed. But there is still more to Jesus' role. When God created Adam and Eve they were perfect. They were placed in a magnificent garden and lacked nothing. They were in perfect relationship with each other and God. But, as Genesis 3 tells us, they listened to Satan the father of lies who hated them, rather than God their maker who loved them. One of the consequences of this rebellion was sickness and death for Adam and Eve, and all their descendants. In fact, Paul teaches us that even the whole creation was subject to futility. But God promised that one of Eve's offspring would crush the head of the serpent. There would come a time when God would deal with this curse.

This time came when Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit when he was baptised. God finally revealed that Jesus was the one sent to crush the serpent's head and deliver God's people from the consequences of sin.

He is the long expected one who will rescue God's people.

Jesus performed many mighty acts. The first was to be tempted by Satan and to rebuke him, the exact opposite of Adam and Eve who were tempted by Satan and disobeyed. He cast out demons in the thousands, healed the sick, raised the dead and forgave sins. Each mighty act advancing the kingdom of God and reversing the consequences of sin. Each one crushing the head of the serpent.

Finally on the cross Jesus was able to say "It is finished" and breathed his last. His dreadful execution was the penalty that only God could pay. This is why he was anointed.

Jesus now reigns from heaven, and we wait patiently for his return. The final victory over the serpent is a certainty.

The title "Christ" reminds us that Jesus had a mission, and that mission has been accomplished. And while we wait patiently, we too have a mission, given to us by Jesus himself. It is urgent, perhaps more urgent than we realise: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Bruno Del Conte

PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You that "Christ" is not just a name but Your holy title—our Anointed King, our promised Messiah. We praise You that from the moment the Spirit descended on You, Your mission was clear: to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the captive, sight to the blind, and hope to a weary world.

Thank You that You are the One long promised—the serpent-crusher, the healer, the restorer, the Saviour who undoes the curse. In Your mighty works we see God's plan unfolding, and in Your finished work on the cross we see our salvation secure.

Lord, as You reign now from heaven and as we wait for Your certain return, strengthen us for the mission You have given us. Fill us with Your Spirit that we might go, speak, serve, love, and make disciples in Your name.

Anointed Christ, help us trust Your victory, walk in Your power, and live for Your glory.

Amen

DAY TWENTY FOUR

JESUS

*You are to give him the name Jesus,
because he will save his people from their sins*

Matthew 1.21

The name Jesus – technically, though amusingly, our Lord’s ‘Christian name’! – was given to Joseph by an angel of the Lord, in a dream, when he wrestled with the shock of Mary’s unexpected pregnancy in the months prior to their marriage. Jesus, or Joshua, Yeshua in Hebrew, was in fact a common Jewish name. The historian Richard Bauckham calculates it to be the sixth most common name, with perhaps 3.5% of Palestinian Jewish men named Yeshua – nearly 1 in every school class! (Though it was less common than some other names. About a third of the boys in the class would have been called Simon or Joseph.)

It was a popular name both because of its meaning – ‘The Lord saves’ and because of its history – Yeshua/Joshua was the name of the leader whose story is told in the Old Testament book of that name, who took up the leadership after the death of Moses and led God’s people into the promised land.

But Matthew told Joseph that his son would bear this name for a reason: ‘because he will save his people from their sins’. This child, this man, will be called ‘the Lord saves’. But the

salvation he brings will be of a different kind to that brought by Joshua. He will not deliver his people merely from their earthly foes – something that many longed for the Messiah to do – but from their much deeper problem. Through him, the Lord will save his people from their sins.

Salvation is the name Jesus bore from the day he was birthed to the day of his death, and salvation is what his life meant. He is Jesus, Yeshua ben Joseph, the Lord’s Saviour.

But there is also something special about the fact that this was also, simply, our Lord’s human name. Jesus is not just a signifier of meaning; it is a real name, a human name, a name his mother and brothers and father called him, called to him to come to dinner, or to play with them, or to help. To remember this name is to remember also that this Saviour lived a real human life, was a real, full human being. He was – and He is – a real man, with a real name. He is this one, and no other: Jesus.

Andrew Errington.

DAY TWENTY FIVE

GIFT

Have you ever unwrapped a present and felt that quiet thrill — the kind that says, this is exactly what I needed? Perhaps it was something you'd longed for, or simply a reminder that someone knew you well. Gifts speak of love, thoughtfulness, and connection. Yet even the most treasured gift fades, loses its luster, or fails to satisfy the deeper longings of our hearts.

At Christmas, we celebrate a gift unlike any other — a gift that does not fade or fail.

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

God's gift is not wrapped in paper, but in flesh and blood. Not placed under a tree, but laid in a humble manger. God entered our world in Jesus — into the chaos, the brokenness, and the beauty of human life — to bring joy that endures, peace that surpasses

understanding, forgiveness that restores, and hope that death cannot touch.

This is the gift that transforms our lives: God with us — Immanuel. Jesus came so that we could know God's love personally, intimately, and endlessly. No toy, no gadget, no fleeting pleasure can ever compare to the depth of this gift.

As we gather with family, exchange presents, and celebrate, let us pause to remember that the greatest gift is not under the tree. It is the One who came for us, the One who draws near to us, the One who offers life in all its fullness.

The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

Megan Haviland

PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the gift of Jesus — for stepping into our world, our hearts, and our lives. Help me to receive Him afresh today, to treasure His presence above all things, and to live in the joy, peace, and hope that only You can give. Amen

