

# Christmas Devotional

December 25<sup>th</sup> 2022

Day 1:

When C.S. Lewis wrote the Chronicles of Narnia, he was searching for a way to help people experience the Gospel in a new and fresh way.

Sometimes the Christmas story can become something that we just go through. We hear the same story every year and sometimes it can become white noise. I don't want us to be so distracted or stressed with Christmas decorating, shopping, and celebrating with family or friends that we miss connecting with Christ. As we read this devotional, ask God to impress upon you the example of the character that you most need to follow, who can best guide you to worship Christ at his holy manger today.

## Zechariah

You probably don't have Zechariah (John the Baptist's father) in your Nativity set! But you could say that the Christmas story begins with his silent waiting. Nine months without uttering a word. Nine months of remembering his lack of faith in the angel's promise. And nine months of anticipating the birth of his son and the Messiah he was to herald! (Luke 1:5-25, 67-80). Perhaps God is inviting you also to withdraw from the noise and business of the Christmas season to enter into a time of quiet prayer? Be still to anticipate Christ's coming with Zechariah and you too will burst forth with joyous Christmas praise when your tongue is set free!

Day 2:

## Mary

Mary offered the prayer that receives the Christmas miracle: “Let it be to me according to your Word” (Luke 1:38, NKJV). She was God’s chosen vessel to give birth to the Messianic dream that God’s people had been waiting hundreds of years for. But as any mother knows, it’s painful to give birth! And in her case, she had the added trials of being scorned as an immoral woman and riding 90 miles uphill on a donkey just before giving birth to her son in a cave full of dirty, loud, smelly animals! (Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-7, 19-20). Perhaps you can relate to the promise and challenge of giving birth to God’s dream for you? Is there something special that you hope to give birth to this Christmas season? Ponder and treasure this God-dream in your heart and pray for the Lord’s guidance and blessing...

## Joseph

Joseph’s daring faith in the Lord is sometimes missed in the Christmas story. He believed in Mary’s virginity when no one else did and he endured a lifetime of ridicule for doing so. Joseph bet his life on words that an angel spoke to him *while he was sleeping*. He accepted the daunting challenge of raising the Messiah as his own child (Matthew 1:18-25). Maybe you too are facing a challenge? Do you need God’s help to prevail in an overwhelming struggle? Pray for God’s wisdom and strength to help you obey him in the midst of the stress...

Day 3:

## Innkeeper

The Innkeeper probably thought he had a good excuse for not finding a room for Jesus in his inn and for sending Mary, who was in labor, to go into the cave with the animals to have her baby (Luke 2:7). At least he provided the cave. And yet, we can imagine that when he heard that the newborn child was the Messiah, he probably regretted that he wasn't more hospitable to him! Perhaps you can relate to the Innkeeper's predicament: your schedule is overcrowded and you don't have enough room to give the time and attention to Christ that he deserves (and that you need!)? How could you make generous space in your schedule and your heart for Christ this Christmas season? Talk to the Lord about your schedule this Advent...

## Angel

What joy was Gabriel's and all the angels who announced the Christmas gospel! What a glorious message they sang from the skies just above the shepherds' heads! (Luke 2:8-15). Maybe this Christmas season you know that you need to cultivate a *heart of worship* for Christ? What do you especially appreciate and admire about Christ? Let the angels lead you in praise to the Son of God...

Day 4:

## Shepherd

Imagine the thrill that the shepherds felt when the angels sang the news that the Messiah, the King of kings had just been born in Bethlehem! No one would've ever picked the shepherds to be visited by Christmas angels. They were poor. They were societal cast offs. And yet that's exactly the point of the Gospel: the last shall be first, the poor shall be rich, the least shall be the greatest, the humble shall be exalted. Probably the shepherds marveled at God's generosity and kindness and felt unworthy (Luke 2:8-20). Is it hard for you to accept that God bestows his glory on you? Are you confident in God's acceptance of you? If you struggle to esteem yourself as God does, then lift up your head with the shepherds and let the Lord honor you with the gift of Christmas...

## Lamb

Probably some lambs went with the shepherds to see the newborn King (Luke 2:7, 16). Imagine a little lamb skipping with delight across the fields to go see the baby Jesus in a cave on the outskirts of Bethlehem. Then see her smiling with joy to stand right next to Jesus as she peers into his manger. Perhaps this Christmas, what you'd like more than anything else is to accompany the shepherds and their sheep to get closer to Jesus? What would help you be closer to Christ? Talk to Jesus about your desire to have a closer relationship with him this Advent season...

Day 5:

## Magi

The three magi studied the stars and the ancient prophecies, risked their lives to take an arduous journey across the desert, and dealt with the murderous King Herod— all to give their gifts to the newborn king. Who ever heard of kings worshiping another king? These wisest of all wise men wanted to give their best gift to Christ (Matthew 2:1-12). Maybe you are drawn to follow the wise men's example of giving a gift to Christ? We give Christmas gifts to many people, but may forget to give one to Christ! Follow the magi's example and tell Jesus what you want to give to him from your heart...

Which of these characters do you most identify with this Christmas season?

What is one action you can take this week to more fully live for Christ?