

Advent Devotional

**BEHOLD
THE
SAVIOR**

VERGE NETWORK

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:2)

At Verge Network, we exist to inspire and equip everyday Christians to love Jesus deeply, live gospel-centered lives, and engage in God's mission to redeem the world. Since our inception, we've sought to empower believers to embody their faith in practical, transformative ways—whether in their neighborhoods, workplaces, or across the globe.

This Advent devotional reflects the heart of Verge. As we journey through the Gospel of Matthew, exploring who Jesus is and why He came, we're reminded that His story is the foundation for our mission. Jesus is Immanuel, "God with us," and through His life, death, and resurrection, He sends us out as His ambassadors—carrying His light into a world in need of hope.

Advent isn't just a time to reflect; it's a time to prepare our hearts to live boldly in response to the gospel. As we marvel at the Savior, Shepherd, and King, we're called to share the joy and truth of His presence with those around us. This is the heartbeat of Verge: living in the fullness of who Jesus is and inviting others to experience the transformative power of the gospel.

Whether you're a leader, pastor, or everyday believer, this devotional is designed to remind you of the depth of God's love and the urgency of His mission. Together, let's celebrate the God who is with us and live as His witnesses in a world waiting for His return.

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PROLOGUE

Advent is a season of anticipation—a time to reflect on the wonder of God becoming man and to prepare our hearts for the arrival of Jesus, the Light of the World. It's more than a countdown to Christmas; it's an invitation to pause, remember, and rejoice in the God who came to dwell among us.

There's a message that David Platt gave at one of the Verge Conferences that has stuck with me throughout the years. In it, David paints a portrait of Jesus from the first four chapters of Matthew that is as stunning in its scope as it is radiant in its beauty. That part of his message inspired this devotional. (You can find the message [here](https://vergenetwork.org) at vergenetwork.org)

Through this devotional, we'll journey through the Gospel of Matthew to see Jesus more clearly: as Savior, King, Shepherd, and Light. Each day reveals a different facet of His character and mission, drawing us into deeper awe and worship of the One who came to rescue us.

Advent calls us to respond. Like the Magi who bowed before the King, we're invited to offer our lives to Him. As you reflect on these daily readings, may your heart be filled with wonder, gratitude, and hope in the knowledge that the King of Kings has come—and He will come again.

Michael “Stew” Stewart
Verge Network Founding Director

DAY 1: JESUS IS SAVIOR

Matthew 1:21

"You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."

Advent is about rescue. Jesus didn't come merely to inspire or instruct; He came to save. The name "Jesus" proclaims that we cannot save ourselves. This truth humbles us but also frees us. In Christ, salvation is God's work from beginning to end. He is not just a teacher showing the way or a prophet pointing to the truth—He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. To call Him "Savior" is to admit that we are helpless without Him.

This season, let your heart marvel at the extraordinary news that God entered into our world not to condemn it but to rescue it. He came to meet you in your brokenness, to lift you out of the pit of despair, and to bring you into the freedom of His grace. Jesus is not merely a rescuer in the abstract; He is your Savior, drawing near to save you from the guilt and power of sin.

Reflection: Where are you tempted to trust in your own efforts rather than Jesus' saving grace?

DAY 2:

JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

Matthew 1:1, 1:16

"Jesus the Messiah."

The title "Messiah" tells us that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's ancient promises. For centuries, God's people longed for the Anointed One, the one who would bring deliverance and healing. But Jesus shattered expectations. The Messiah didn't come to conquer political enemies but to conquer the deeper enemy of sin. He didn't come with military might but in humility and self-sacrifice.

Advent reminds us that God's ways often look upside-down to our human perspective. The Messiah came not to demand service but to serve, not to gain power but to lay it down. He is the ultimate promise-keeper, and His reign brings peace to those who trust Him.

Reflection: How does Jesus' humility challenge your understanding of leadership and power?

Journal notes

Lined writing area consisting of 22 horizontal lines.

DAY 3:

JESUS IS THE SON OF DAVID

Matthew 1:1, 1:6, 1:20

"Son of David, Son of Abraham."

To call Jesus the "Son of David" is to proclaim Him as the true and eternal King. David was Israel's greatest earthly king, but even David's reign was tainted by sin and death. Jesus is the King who reigns forever, bringing justice, mercy, and peace.

Yet, His kingship is not what we might expect. He reigns not with coercion but with compassion, not through force but through sacrificial love. Advent calls us to bow our hearts before the true King, trusting that His rule is good, even when we don't fully understand His ways.

Reflection: In what areas of your life do you need to submit to Jesus' kingship?

DAY 4: JESUS IS THE SON OF ABRAHAM

Matthew 1:1

"The son of Abraham."

By identifying Jesus as the "Son of Abraham," Matthew reminds us of God's promise to bless all nations through Abraham's offspring (Genesis 12:3). Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise. Advent is a celebration of the global reach of the gospel—a reminder that salvation is not confined to one nation or ethnicity but extends to every tribe, tongue, and people.

This Advent, consider how Jesus' birth fulfills God's heart for the world. His arrival is an invitation to be both blessed and a blessing. He calls us to participate in His mission of bringing hope and life to others.

Reflection: How can you be a blessing to others this Advent season?

DAY 5: JESUS IS THE CENTER OF HISTORY

Matthew 1:17

"Thus there were fourteen generations in all..."

All of history finds its meaning in Jesus. Advent invites us to see our own stories in light of His story. In Him, every moment has purpose, and every tear will be redeemed.

The birth of Jesus is not just an event in history—it is the defining event. Everything before Him pointed forward, and everything after points back. His arrival means that God's promises are trustworthy, His plan is perfect, and His love is eternal.

Reflection: How does knowing Jesus is the center of history give you hope?

DAY 6:

JESUS IS FULLY HUMAN

Matthew 1:18, 1:25

"She gave birth to a son."

The Son of God became fully human to save us. Advent is a celebration of God's nearness. He understands our struggles, for He has lived them.

Jesus' humanity means He knows what it's like to be hungry, tired, betrayed, and lonely. He is not a distant deity but a compassionate Savior who walks with us in our pain. This season, find comfort in the truth that God became like us to redeem us.

Reflection: How does Jesus' humanity comfort you in your current challenges?

DAY 7:

JESUS IS FULLY DIVINE

Matthew 1:18, 1:23

"They will call Him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')."

God didn't send an angel or a prophet; He came Himself. Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. Advent reveals a God who doesn't stay distant but enters into our brokenness.

This means that God is not only near; He is powerful to save. Because Jesus is fully divine, He has the authority to forgive sins, heal the broken, and conquer death. In Him, we find both intimacy and strength.

Reflection: How does the truth that God is with you change your perspective today?

DAY 8: JESUS IS THE SOVEREIGN OVER THE WISE

Matthew 2:1–11

"We have come to worship Him."

The Magi traveled great distances, driven by their recognition that this child was no ordinary king. Their gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—symbolized His kingship, divinity, and sacrificial death. In contrast, Herod, a local ruler with no true claim to eternal authority, feared and opposed Him.

Advent reminds us that wisdom bows before Jesus. True wisdom acknowledges our limits and submits to God's authority. The Magi came seeking the King of Kings, while the world around them largely ignored or resisted His reign. This season, let us seek Him with the same wholehearted devotion and worship.

Reflection: What would it look like to truly worship Jesus with your whole life this Advent?

DAY 9: JESUS IS THE SHEPHERD OF THE WEAK

Matthew 2:6

"A ruler who will shepherd My people Israel."

Jesus is not just a ruler—He is a Shepherd. He leads, protects, and provides for His flock with gentleness and care. Shepherds know their sheep intimately, calling them by name and watching over their every step. Advent assures us that we are never out of His sight.

Unlike leaders who exploit or neglect their people, Jesus seeks out the weak and the wandering. He lays down His life for His sheep. This is the Shepherd we celebrate at Christmas—the one who enters into our frailty to guide us toward abundant life.

Reflection: How has Jesus shepherded you this year?

DAY 10: JESUS INAUGURATES A NEW EXODUS

Matthew 2:15

"Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Jesus' journey as a child, fleeing to Egypt and returning, mirrors the story of Israel's deliverance. Just as God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt, Jesus came to lead a greater exodus—delivering us from the bondage of sin and death.

Advent celebrates the God who acts decisively to rescue His people. He does not leave us to languish in captivity. Like the Israelites, we are helpless to free ourselves, but God's power and love are more than sufficient. In Christ, a new exodus has begun, one that leads us into eternal freedom.

Reflection: In what ways do you still live as though you are enslaved to sin?

DAY 11: JESUS ENDS THE MOURNFUL EXILE

Matthew 2:17–18

"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning."

The birth of Jesus doesn't gloss over the pain of the world—it confronts it. Matthew's gospel includes the sorrow of Rachel weeping for her children, reminding us that Jesus came into a broken world full of grief. Yet, He also came to bring restoration.

Advent acknowledges both the reality of suffering and the promise of hope. In Jesus, the exile is over. He is the fulfillment of God's promise to bring His people home, to wipe away every tear, and to turn mourning into joy.

Reflection: Where do you need Jesus to bring restoration in your life?

DAY 12: JESUS LOVES HIS FIERCEST ENEMIES

Matthew 2:13–16

"Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him."

Even as a child, Jesus was opposed by the rulers of the world. Herod sought to kill Him out of fear and pride. Yet Jesus came not to destroy His enemies but to save them. His love extends even to those who resist Him.

Advent reminds us of the radical love of Christ—a love that prays for its enemies, forgives offenses, and seeks reconciliation. This love changes everything. As recipients of such grace, we are called to show it to others, even those who are difficult to love.

Reflection: How can you show the love of Christ to someone difficult in your life?

DAY 13:

JESUS IS THE SAVIOR KING

Matthew 3:1–12

"The kingdom of heaven has come near."

John the Baptist's proclamation announces Jesus as the King whose kingdom is at hand. But this King is unlike any other—He saves His people through humility and sacrifice. His kingdom is not built on political power or military strength but on righteousness, love, and peace.

Advent invites us to see Jesus as both Savior and King. He saves us from sin and calls us to live under His gracious rule. His kingdom is good news for the humble, the broken, and the weary.

Reflection: What would it look like to live as a citizen of Jesus' kingdom today?

DAY 14: JESUS IS THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

Matthew 3:10–12

"His winnowing fork is in His hand."

Jesus is not only Savior and Shepherd but also Judge. He will separate the wheat from the chaff, rewarding righteousness and confronting sin. Advent reminds us that His judgment is not arbitrary but rooted in perfect justice and holiness.

This truth calls us to humility and repentance. The same Jesus who offers mercy also demands that we turn from sin and follow Him wholeheartedly. His judgment is a promise that evil will not have the final word.

Reflection: How does the reality of Jesus as Judge challenge and encourage you?

DAY 15: JESUS IS FILLED WITH GOD THE SPIRIT

Matthew 3:16

"The Spirit of God descending like a dove."

At His baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, marking Him as the anointed one. Throughout His ministry, Jesus relied on the Spirit's power, showing us what it means to live in complete dependence on God.

Advent invites us to reflect on the gift of the Spirit in our own lives. Just as the Spirit empowered Jesus for His mission, He equips us to follow Him and bear witness to His kingdom.

Reflection: How can you make space for the Spirit in your life this Advent?

DAY 16: JESUS IS LOVED BY GOD THE FATHER

Matthew 3:17

"This is My Son, whom I love."

Before Jesus began His public ministry, He was affirmed by the Father. This declaration of love was not based on His performance but on His identity as the beloved Son.

And if you are in Christ, then what is true of Jesus is true of you.

Advent reminds us that in Christ, we too are beloved. God's love for us is not earned—it is freely given. This truth frees us from striving and allows us to rest in His grace.

Reflection: How does knowing you are loved by God free you from striving?

DAY 17:

JESUS IS THE NEW ADAM

Matthew 4:1–11

"Man shall not live on bread alone."

Where Adam failed, Jesus triumphed. Adam fell into temptation, leading humanity into sin and death, but Jesus resisted every temptation, ushering in new life for all who trust in Him. His victory over Satan in the wilderness foreshadows His ultimate triumph at the cross.

Advent celebrates this new beginning. Jesus is the new Adam, the one who obeyed where we could not. He invites us to share in His victory, freeing us from the power of sin and enabling us to live as God's children.

Reflection: What temptations do you need Jesus' strength to overcome?

DAY 18:

JESUS IS THE TRUE ISRAEL

Matthew 2:15; 4:1–11

"Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Jesus fulfills the role that Israel was called to play. Where Israel failed in faithfulness, Jesus was perfectly obedient. In the wilderness, He overcame temptation, showing His complete trust in God's Word and plan.

Advent points us to Jesus as the true and faithful servant who redeems His people. His obedience secures our place in God's family, not through our righteousness but through His.

Reflection: How does Jesus' obedience inspire your own faithfulness?

DAY 19: JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Matthew 4:15–16

"The people living in darkness have seen a great light."

Advent celebrates the light that breaks into the darkness. Jesus brings hope to those in despair, truth to those who are lost, and life to those who are dying. His light is not dim or fleeting—it is eternal and all-encompassing.

This season, let the light of Christ shine into every corner of your life. He dispels the darkness of sin and fear, filling you with His peace and joy.

Reflection: Where do you need Jesus to shine His light this Advent?

DAY 20: JESUS IS THE HOPE FOR ALL NATIONS

Matthew 4:13–17

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Jesus' ministry begins in Galilee, a region known as "Galilee of the Gentiles." This signals that His mission is not just for Israel but for the whole world. He is the Savior for all nations, extending His grace to every tribe and tongue.

Advent calls us to remember the global scope of the gospel. Jesus came to bring hope to everyone, and as His followers, we are invited to share that hope with others.

Reflection: How can you share the hope of Jesus with others this Advent season?

DAY 21: JESUS IS THE LORD OF THE SABBATH

Matthew 12:8

"For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Jesus declares that He is the fulfillment of the Sabbath rest. He gives us rest not only for our bodies but for our souls. In Him, we find freedom from striving and the assurance of God's provision.

Advent reminds us that true rest is found in Christ. He invites us to stop our frantic efforts to earn God's favor and to rest in His finished work on the cross.

Reflection: What are you striving for that Jesus has already secured for you?

DAY 22: JESUS IS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Matthew 9:12

"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."

Jesus came for the broken, the hurting, and the lost. He is the Great Physician who heals not only our bodies but also our souls. His love reaches into the darkest places, offering forgiveness and renewal.

Advent invites us to bring our pain and sin to Jesus, trusting that His grace is sufficient to heal and restore us.

Reflection: Where do you see the disease of sin in your life most clearly?

DAY 23:

JESUS IS THE BRIDEGROOM

Matthew 9:15

"The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast."

Jesus uses the image of a bridegroom to describe His love for His people. He came to unite Himself to His church in an unbreakable covenant. His first coming is like the betrothal, and His return will be the wedding feast.

Advent is a time to rejoice in His love and to long for the day when we will see Him face to face.

Reflection: How does seeing Jesus as your Bridegroom change the way you view His love for you?

DAY 24:

JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

Matthew 14:19–20

"He gave thanks and broke the loaves."

Jesus is the Bread of Life who satisfies the deepest hunger of our souls. Just as He provided for the multitudes, He provides abundantly for us. In Him, we lack nothing.

Advent reminds us that every longing of our hearts points to Jesus. He alone can satisfy and sustain us.

Reflection: What “bread” are you looking to for satisfaction instead of Jesus?

DAY 25: JESUS IS IMMANUEL – GOD WITH US

Matthew 1:23

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us")."

The story of Christmas begins with a name: Immanuel, "God with us." This name is not just a title but a profound truth that changes everything. In Jesus, God drew near—not to visit briefly, but to dwell with His people, to share in our humanity, and to redeem us from within the story of our brokenness.

Immanuel means that God did not remain distant, waiting for us to climb our way to Him. He stepped into the mess of our world, into the pain, the sin, and the suffering. He came not as a conquering king but as a helpless baby, showing us that His presence is gentle, humble, and accessible.

Even now, as we wait for His return, Immanuel is still true. Through the Holy Spirit, God is with us in every moment—our joy and our sorrow, our celebration and our waiting. And one day, the promise of "God with us" will reach its glorious fulfillment when we see Him face to face.

This final day of Advent reminds us that Christmas is not only a celebration of Jesus' birth but also a declaration of His presence. He is with you now and always. This is the heart of the gospel: God has come to be with us, to save us, and to bring us home to Himself.

Reflection: How does the promise of "God with us" comfort and strengthen you as you celebrate this Christmas?

