



A Christmas Walk

Devotions for Advent

Zan Marie Steadham

Georgia Author of the Year Nominee

A Christmas Walk
Devotions for Advent

Zan Marie Steadham

W

Vabella Publishing
P.O. Box 1052
Carrollton, Georgia 30112
www.vabella.com

Copyright © 2010 by Zan Marie Steadham

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, utilized in any form, or stored in any retrieval system without permission in writing from the author.

All scripture quoted is from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*, published by B. B. Kirkbride Bible Co., INC. and Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1983. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

Cover design by Diana Black, www.dianadesigns.net

Cover image by Ryan Burke, copyright 11-10-09, courtesy of www.istockphoto.com

13-digit ISBN 978-1-938230-60-8

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Ad Gloriam Dei
To the Glory of God

Introduction

Advent is a joyous time when we prepare for family celebrations. All of us have beloved traditions that range from big family meals with cherished menus to hanging special ornaments year after year. Rushing around making preparations and finding the perfect gifts can distract us from the reason we celebrate Christmas.

The Christmas season has another name—Advent. The word advent literally means coming or arrival in Latin. Many of us mark the coming of Christmas, the commemoration of the birth of Jesus, the Lord of Creation, with special services, wreaths, and calendars. In the past, churches have celebrated not only the birth of the Savior, but His second coming as well during the Season of Advent.

Today, most churches count the start of Advent from the Sunday closest to the feast of St. Andrew, the Apostle, on November 30. There are four Sundays in Advent and the number of days can range from twenty-two to twenty-nine depending on which day of the week Christmas falls. *A Christmas Walk* includes twenty-nine devotions to mark the longest Advent season possible. The devotions begin with a verse from the scripture recounting that event. At the end, the reader is invited to a fuller walk using the full scripture references that were used to prepare each devotion.

The themes of Advent are as varied as the number of days. I chose to use the themes of Hope, Peace, Love,

and Joy to mark the four weeks. The devotions include the prophecies of Christ's birth and all the loved stories of the season. Special mention of the connections of Christmas to Easter are made to remind us that Christmas isn't an ending, but the beginning of Christ's sacrifice at Easter. The Star of Bethlehem casts an eternal shadow. The manger, lit by its glory, foretold the Cross and Christ's resurrection. God is much larger than we can imagine and yet He chose to become small enough to fit our hearts. From a human perspective, this journey shows amazing courage. From God's perspective, it is the gift of amazing love.

May *A Christmas Walk* provide our Advent with an appreciation for the greatest gift of all time. May our Christmas walk give us hope, peace, love, and joy.



First Week of Advent

Hope

O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with Him is full redemption.

Psalm 130:7

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:1

Sunday

Who Is Jesus?

“And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” Isaiah 40:5

Through the ages since Christ’s birth, people have debated these questions: Just who is Jesus? Who is the baby born at Christmas? Is He a good man, a wise teacher? Is there more to Him than meets the eye? Is He a man? Is He God?

Isaiah gives us so many names and they are all so amazing. The list is impressive—Immanuel (God with us), Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. To have all these attributes is beyond our reach.

The prophet Haggai added another amazing description to the list. He states that God plans to build a house for Himself that is greater than the physical Temple that so many at the time saw as the greatest house of God. Haggai’s explanation of the importance of this new house or temple is as amazing as Isaiah’s list of names. The Advent would shake the Temple and would fulfill the desire of all nations. When we are honest, we

know no person of merely human origins can claim such power. God's new temple would eclipse the physical Temple. We are reminded of Jesus' claim to be not only the Temple of God, but to be able to tear it down and rebuild it in three days' time.

What other God can claim to have come to live with us? None. Add the fact that God chose to come as a baby. He chose to live life as we do—tempted and tried. What a wonder! Our God loved us so much, that He wanted to be with us in good and bad times.

Who among us can claim that we have the power, desire and glory to be what all people need, want, and can imagine? Who can compare to the love Jesus Christ showed for us all? May we find peace with Heaven's perfect lamb who was born on Christmas Day. May we allow Him to prove Himself worthy and perfect, both God and man, during our Christmas walk and throughout this Advent season.



For a further walk, see

Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 40:5

Matthew 1:23

Haggai 2:7-9

John 2:18-22

Monday

Witnesses

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Luke 1:1-2

The Advent was foretold. God planned to provide us salvation—a way that led through a lowly stable. God planned to come to us and bridge the gap between divinity and humanity. He planned to bring ultimate love to us in the form of a small baby who would live the life we live. It was foretold. It was witnessed. God provides all we need through the Advent.

Do we dress up Advent in Christmas wrap and obscure its purpose and meaning? How often are our Christmas “to do” and gift lists so long that we leave off sitting quietly and contemplating the miracle of God’s ultimate gift? How can we fathom a God whose love is so deep that He would choose to be born among the lowly and the animals on a Judean night? How can we walk among the truths presented by the scripture if we

allow tinsel and greenery, bells and shopping to take the main stage?

May we not only think about God's majestic love in passing. May we slow down and listen to those who witnessed it firsthand. On our Christmas walk, may we be a witness to the miracle that the Advent has created in our hearts. May we have the same courage and desire to witness as those who have come before us.



For a further walk, see
Luke 1:1-4

Tuesday

The Gift

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

We spend untold hours, days, and weeks making sure all the Christmas gifts are just right, but none of our gifts can compare to the greatest gift ever given. This gift was planned and prepared from the beginning of time. It is a gift purchased with the ultimate sacrifice.

We don't usually read John 3:16-21 at Christmas. When we stop and think about it though, we have to realize that the Christmas gift of Jesus, the baby, created the gift of eternal life for us. This is a gift that slowly bloomed and blossomed into the Easter lily and the glory of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

Another amazing thing about this gift is that the nametag on it isn't limited to one person or even a few. It is not limited to those we think are privileged with the best things in life. When we really look closely at the tag we see a wonderful word. Jesus points out that the gift is for *whoever* believes.

As we really stop and look at the gift, we are amazed at the light it shares with us—the Light of the World. Christ came at Christmas so that we would not be forever in the dark created by our sin. This gift erases the shadows from our lives. It gives us the light of life.

May we unwrap the ultimate Christmas gift on our Christmas walk and understand that this gift never wears out. We cannot outgrow it or get tired of it. It is a gift meant for sharing. This gift is perfect love, the love of a perfect God. This gift is eternal life. May we appreciate it and share it with whomever we meet.



For a further walk, see

John 3:16-21

