



CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS ON THE SAVIOR
CISSIE GRAHAM LYNCH



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DEAR FRIEND,

When I was a young girl, our home was filled with rich Christmas traditions. From the decorations and food to family and activities, each memory is dear to my heart. I can still recall the aroma of my mother's sweet potato soufflé drifting through the house and the scent of fresh-cut pine filling our living room.

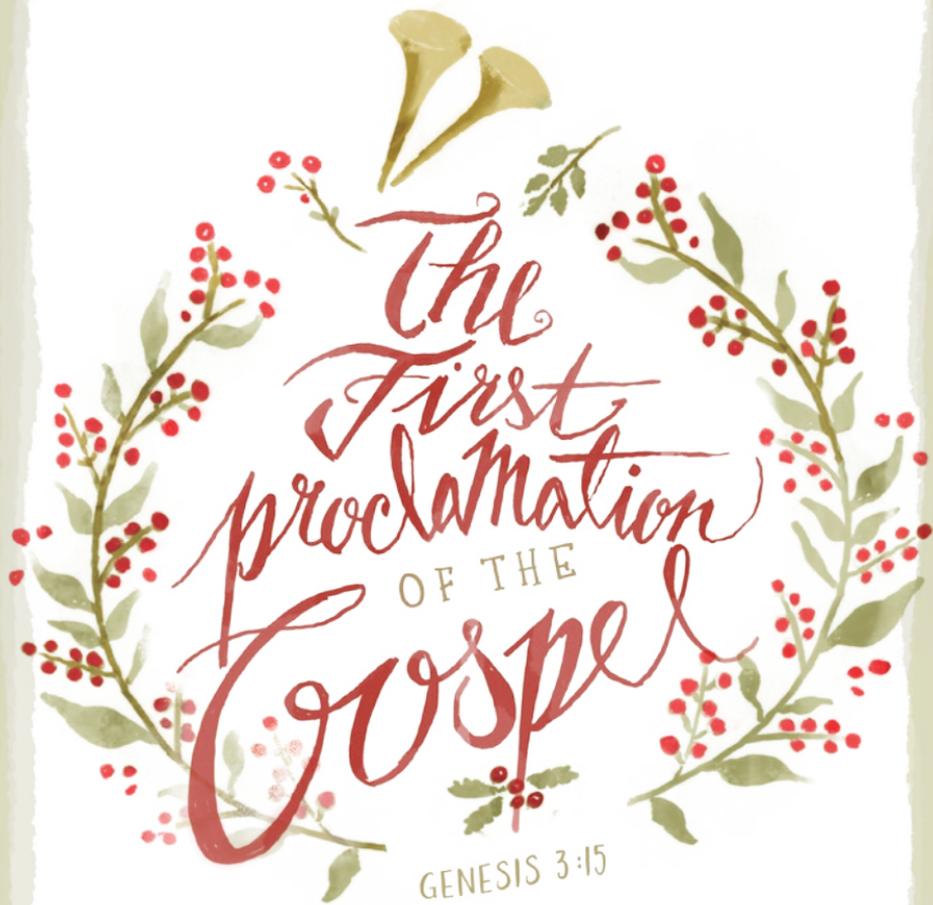
These cherished memories prepare my heart to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas, the day when God gave this world the greatest gift of all—His Son, Jesus Christ.

There was no stress that day in Bethlehem's manger. No one rushed about to make sure the greeting cards were sent or the decorations were put up just right. The sole focus on that first Christmas was a precious baby in the arms of His mother. That baby brought the greatest joy of all: salvation to the world.

As you read this devotional, I hope that you will take a moment to quiet your heart from the busyness and demands of this season and let the Lord speak to you. I pray that you will respond in praise to Him this holiday season—the way the shepherds and wise men did: *“They rejoiced exceedingly with great joy ... and they fell down and worshiped him”* (Matthew 2:10-11).

Merry Christmas!

Cissie Graham Lynch



The
First
Proclamation
OF THE
Gospel

GENESIS 3:15



Week 1

THROUGHOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT, WE READ PROPHECIES OF JESUS CHRIST, THE PROMISED MESSIAH. HIS COMING IS FIRST FORETOLD IN GENESIS 3:15:

*I will put enmity between you
and the woman, and between your
offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.*



It's the first time the Good News is mentioned in the Bible. Right after Adam and Eve had fallen into sin, God immediately revealed His plan to send a Redeemer, His Son, to offer salvation to a sinful world.

Can you see the promise of Jesus in this passage? The phrase “*I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman [symbolizing all of humanity]*” describes the coming, long-lasting struggle between good and evil. “*You shall bruise his heel*” refers to Satan’s attempts to defeat Christ, the woman’s offspring. “*He shall bruise your head*” foretells Christ’s victory over Satan when He defeated death.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, by Charles Wesley, is one of my favorite Christmas carols. In the original version, Wesley refers to that passage of Scripture:

*Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Rise, the woman's conquering Seed,
Bruise in us the serpent's head.*



Since the beginning of time, Satan has been out to steal, kill, and destroy us. He desires for you to follow his evil, destructive, and deadly path. He repeatedly attempted to defeat Christ during His 33 years on earth, and I am sure Satan thought he had the final victory when Christ took His last breath. But when Jesus rose from the grave, He conquered death and defeated Satan. Remember, Jesus came to give life to you and me:

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.
I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*

—John 10:10

Whether you are dreading this Christmas season or excitedly anticipating all it brings, keep in mind that Christ stands in victory. Don't let Satan rob you of the joy of the season.

Christmas is the time when we remember that God's Son was born—born to live so that He could die for you. What a precious thing to celebrate!

What are you doing to take time to appreciate and focus on the gift of Christ this Christmas season?

PRAYER: Father, I pray that You will open my eyes to the gifts You give each day—and open my lips so that I can give witness of Your gifts to others. Help me to celebrate the miraculous birth of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and share the Good News of salvation because of His ultimate sacrifice on the cross.

MORE PROPHECY READINGS FOR WEEK 1

Numbers 24:17

Psalms 2:7

Deuteronomy 18:18-19

Isaiah 7:14

2 Samuel 7:12-14a

Isaiah 53

Job 19:25

Micah 5:2





GENESIS 12:3



Week 2

TOO OFTEN CHRISTMAS BECOMES A TIME WHEN WE OVERCOMMIT OURSELVES TO A NEVER-ENDING “TO-DO LIST.” WE MAKE PROMISES TO OUR FAMILIES, FRIENDS, AND CO-WORKERS—PROMISES THAT OFTEN BECOME BURDENS. FROM DECORATING, SHOPPING, WRAPPING GIFTS, ATTENDING PARTIES, MAKING COOKIES, PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR THE KIDS, AND COOKING, WE RUN OURSELVES DOWN PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY, AND EMOTIONALLY. WE WONDER, WILL IT EVER END?

We make so many promises during the holidays that we forget the promises God gave in Scripture and His fulfilled promise that we celebrate during this season.

In Genesis 12:2-3, God makes His first promise to Abraham, known as the Abrahamic Covenant:

*And I will make of you a great nation,
and I will bless you and make your
name great, so that you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and him who dishonors you I will curse,
and in you all the families of the earth
shall be blessed.*

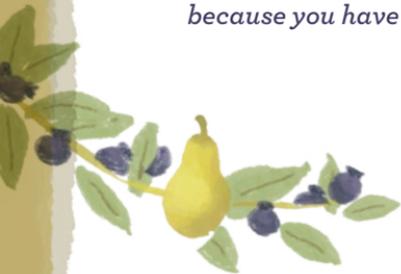


The word *covenant* simply means an agreement. God made an agreement with His people through Abraham.

The Lord promises a “*great nation*” to Abraham and goes on to promise Abraham that he will be a “*blessing*.” Abraham’s descendants certainly became a great nation, as evidenced by the genealogy found in Matthew 1:1-17. Through the lineage of Abraham, God blessed this world with the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

In Genesis 22:17-18, He reaffirms His promise:

I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.



Throughout Scripture, God continues to make promises to His people. This week, read and rejoice in the promises God has made to those who love Him.

What promises that God made through Scripture can you see fulfilled in your own life?

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, I pray that You steady my path and slow my pace. Allow me to stay focused on Your unfailing love and enable me to share that love for others through my thoughts, words, and actions. God, help me to cling to Your promises today and every day.

MORE PROPHECY READINGS FOR WEEK 2

Deuteronomy 4:29-31

John 14:1-3

Psalms 103:8-14

John 14:27

Isaiah 57:15

Romans 5:1

Luke 18:29-30

Romans 8:38-39





HIS NAME WILL BE CALLED



Wonderful,
Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting
Father,
Prince ^{OF} Peace

ISAIAH 9:6



Week 3

DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON, SOME PEOPLE WONDER ABOUT JESUS. MAYBE YOU HAVE KNOWN HIM FOR A LONG TIME, BUT YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A VALLEY, STRUGGLING TO UNDERSTAND WHO HE REALLY IS.

In different chapters of my life, I have found my relationship with Jesus changes. According to what I am experiencing, He has been my Counselor, Prince of Peace, Deliverer, and Comforter. He continues to reveal Himself to me in different, yet more beautiful, ways through each stage of my life.

Throughout Scripture over 200 names are given for Christ. Some are titles for Jesus, while others are concepts or descriptions of Him.

The message and meaning of Christmas is spelled out in Isaiah 9:6. The Prophet Isaiah gives four



awe-inspiring names of our Lord that encourage us, thrill us, and fill us with hope:



*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Each of these descriptions of Christ is reinforced and expanded on through other Scriptures.

Wonderful Counselor: *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him”* (James 1:5).

Mighty God: *“But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible’”* (Matthew 19:26).

Everlasting Father: *“Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist”* (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Prince of Peace: *“For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself*

all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Colossians 1:19–20).

The full meaning of these words from Isaiah should give us enough strength, hope, and joy to face any crisis, to endure any sorrow, and to meet any temptation.

How is God revealing Himself to you today?

PRAYER: God, You are El Roi—the God who sees. Help me to see You today and every day. I pray this Christmas season You will reveal Yourself to me in new and amazing ways.

MORE READINGS ON GOD’S NAMES FOR WEEK 3

Psalms 25:5

Isaiah 54:5

Matthew 1:23

John 1:1

Hebrews 1:2–4

Hebrews 4:14–16

Revelation 19:11

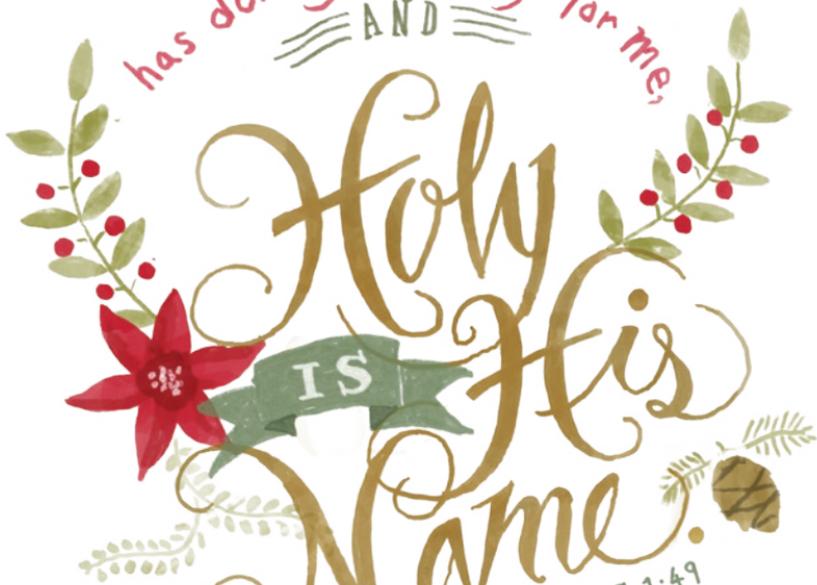
Revelation 22:13



HE WHO IS MIGHTY
has done great things for me,
AND

Holy His
Name.

LUKE 1:49





Week 4

DO YOU EVER THINK ABOUT HOW MARY MUST HAVE FELT AFTER THE ANGEL GABRIEL APPEARED TO HER? SHE WAS A VIRGIN AND PROMISED IN MARRIAGE, BUT GABRIEL TOLD HER SHE WOULD BECOME PREGNANT AND GIVE BIRTH TO GOD'S SON.

We cannot imagine the fear that probably swept over her. How lonely she must have felt, and how scared she must have been to face the next day. Who would believe her? How would Joseph react? She would be a disgrace to her family. What would people do to her? How could she bear it?

God chose Mary. He chose a poor, young girl to be the mother of His Son, the Messiah. He chose the least of these to be the mother of the King of kings. Even though she was selected by God to carry out an honorable task, this announcement would bring her ridicule and much pain. It would be years before her name would ultimately be cleared and lauded. This chosen girl, however, willingly submitted to God's plan.

We read her response to God in Luke 1:46-55, "Mary's Song," also known as the Magnificat.



Even in the depths of uncertainty and
loneliness, Mary sang praises to God:

And Mary said,

*“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble
estate of his servant.*

*For behold, from now on all generations
will call me blessed;
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.*

*And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.*

*He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the
thoughts of their hearts;
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;*

*he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

*He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”*



Mary recognized that God had a plan for her. She submitted to His authority and called out to Him, shouting and rejoicing. We, too, should sing praises to God this Advent season. We can rejoice that He sent His Son once to this earth and that He will send Him again (see John 14:3).

What other reasons do you have to sing praises to God this season?

PRAYER: Gracious Heavenly Father, we praise Your holy Name. Jesus, Messiah, King of kings, Lord of lords, Jehovah, Elohim, Yahweh—we lift our voices and hearts and proclaim that there is no one greater than You. God, help to soften our hearts so that we can fully receive You and hear Your voice when You call to us.

MORE PRAISE READINGS FOR WEEK 4

Exodus 15:2

Psalm 150

2 Samuel 22:2-4

Isaiah 12:4-5

1 Chronicles 16:34

1 Peter 1:3-9

Psalm 103

Revelation 19:6



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