



Dear grown-up heart,

If only we could have been there that night, right? The sights, the sounds, *the smells*...the views of Mary lovingly touching Jesus' cheek, or a trembling Joseph wiping his own brow, wondering how he ever got himself into this mess. Both parents' garments covered in straw and blood—the sign of what's to come. If we could only see, just for a moment, what would it do? I can't answer for you, but I know my own heart's cry that it would swell with belief. That doubt would vanish, that hope would be restored, that what is real could actually *seem* real and the temporary could fade away. That we could taste heaven if only for a second, right here, right now.

If I could pass along one thing to my children, it's this: the whisper of one hope—Jesus.

The Christmas story is filled with that hope, but somehow it gets muddled in the flatness of well-intentioned Sunday school felt boards. But there is real depth, real breadth, and real, transforming truth in the pages of advent scripture. And our children are desperate to have those truths pressed deep in their hearts for the days when they might really need them.

This devotional is intended to be just what the title suggests—real, raw, sometimes hard-to-swallow doctrinal truth presented through the conduit of a recognizable and memorable story. The scriptures are mainly from the gospels of Luke and Matthew, the themes straight from

the Westminster Confession of Faith, the concepts direct from reformed doctrine, and the questions heading right for the heart of the matter: what God says about us and what that means...

**But it's not really about the big words. It's about driving big concepts deep into little hearts, and reminding big hearts of concepts that alter the way we live.**

This devotional is also intended to grow with your little ones. We've all been there on the nights when *you just want to get it done* but two sentences of scripture are simply too much to ask of melting popsicle-children. *Give grace to all. That includes yourself.*

**So here's how to use this devotional:**

Have an infant? Read it over their warm wiggles or soft snuggles and remember that he came for you as a babe.

Have a toddler? Just aim for the scripture. High five yourself if you make it through the whole passage.

Have a whiny and manipulative three year old? Tell them God loves them and you do too and *turn out the lamp*.

Have a five year old? Try the scripture and the words in bold, which are the highlights of the concepts.

Have a seven year old? Try for the whole thing and even a question or two but don't be discouraged if it doesn't happen. *Maybe tomorrow, maybe tomorrow.*

Have a nine year old? Make it through the whole thing? Hit your knees when *their* questions are too big for you to answer.

May their view of God grow right along with their hearts. And may the same be said of ours.

Merry Christmas indeed.

Holly

# Table of Contents

Day 1	<b>Prophecy</b>	12
Day 2	<b>Genealogy</b> (covenant childhood)	14
Day 3	<b>Big News</b> (illumination)	16
Day 4	<b>Mary Responds</b> (sanctification)	18
Day 5	<b>Joseph Hears</b>	20
Day 6	<b>Joseph Obeys</b> (special revelation/general revelation)	22
Day 7	<b>Jumping for Joy</b> (assurance of salvation)	24
Day 8	<b>Mary's Song</b>	26
Day 9	<b>A Decree Goes Out</b> (sovereignty)	28
Day 10	<b>A Prophecy Fulfilled</b> (common grace/specific grace)	30
Day 11	<b>No Room in the Inn</b>	32
Day 12	<b>Jesus Is Born</b> (federal headship)	34
Day 13	<b>Shepherds Hear</b>	36
Day 14	<b>Shepherds Respond</b> (election)	38
Day 15	<b>Jesus as a Baby</b> (limited atonement)	40
Day 16	<b>Herod Hears</b> (the three offices of Christ)	42
Day 17	<b>Herod Tries to Trick the Wise Men</b> (obedience to authority)	44
Day 18	<b>Wise Men Find Him</b> (communion of saints)	46
Day 19	<b>Wise Men Don't Return to Herod</b> (providence)	48
Day 20	<b>An Angel Tells Joseph to Flee</b> (repentance)	50
Day 21	<b>Herod Realizes He's Tricked</b> (confluence)	52
Day 22	<b>A Plan From Long Ago</b>	54
Day 23	<b>Jesus Fulfills the Promise</b> (grace)	56
Day 24	<b>Jesus Is Baptized</b> (new covenant)	58
Day 25	<b>Now, Go and Tell</b>	60

# Day 1: Prophecy



*“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”*

*~ Isaiah 7:14*

*“But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.”*

*~ Isaiah 53:5-6*

**Many, many years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah spoke to God’s people, the Israelites. They were conflicted—sometimes they wanted to love God, and sometimes their hearts chose their own way.** Sometimes they wanted to submit to God’s kingdom, and sometimes they wanted to create a kingdom of their own. When they didn’t want to obey, they crossed their arms and said to God, “We can handle this, just leave us alone.”

Isaiah told them about Jesus hundreds of years before Mary would carry Jesus in her belly, but choosing their way instead of God's way made their hearts too hard to hear God's message and kept them from seeing all that God had for them. Their crossed arms had consequences. God longed to bless them with peace and righteousness, but they chose their own wisdom, which didn't end up very wise at all.

**In spite of their hard hearts, God still chose to bless the ones who he had called to himself. Many years later, God would send the payment for their hard hearts in the form of the most tender piece of his own heart: Jesus, his only son.**

- ~ Do you ever decide in your heart to choose your own way?
  
- ~ If you do, what does your action say to God? Do we have a right to choose our own way instead of God's way?
  
- ~ What is his response to us?