

Advent 2018

*The Promise of Christ
in Genesis*



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in **Genesis**

Introduction

The Advent story of Christ doesn't begin in Matthew or Luke with the virgin conception; it begins amid the ashes of the Fall in Genesis.¹ In **Genesis 3:15**, God promises a Child will be born in the line of Eve that will ultimately defeat the serpent. Many theologians refer to this passage and promise as the protoevangelium or first Gospel given its fulfillment in Jesus Christ who ultimately defeats Satan in His first Advent. The total restoration of all things that we long for will be completed in His last Advent promised in Genesis.

This Advent season we will trace the line of Christ's Advent story through the early chapters of Genesis. Our journey will begin in **Genesis 3:14-24** post Fall where God's pattern of judgment and redemption begins. This paradox emerges in His placing violent enmity between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent. Edmund P. Clowney recognizes that, "Though Eve had made herself the friend of Satan and the enemy of God, God would reverse the situation. He would put the enmity not between God and man but between man and Satan."² Inherent within this judgment is the possibility of redemption from being eternally separated from and punished by God as the spiritual children of Satan. This story of judgment and redemption permeates the rest of the Scriptures. As Graeme Goldsworthy insightfully observes, "The Genesis account provides the framework upon which the Scriptures elaborate. It is impossible to separate the seemingly contradictory elements in the Fall of man – the righteous judgment of God and the incredible graciousness of God."³ God's gracious redemption in the aftermath of just judgment evidences how truly deep is the Father's love for us.

In the weeks following the Genesis 3 sermon, we will trace this paradox of judgment and redemption in **Genesis 4, 6-9, 11, 12, and 17** as the seeds of the woman and the serpent

¹ This is not to deny the presence of Jesus in the Creation event as testified to in **John 1:1-5** and **Colossians 1:15-17**.

² *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1988), 37.

³ *Gospel and Kingdom: A Christian Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1981), 54.

battle for supremacy over the created order. According to Clowney, “The point of the emphasis on generations is that God has not forgotten His promise. The appointed line of the descendants of the woman must continue. Through the dark and bloody history of human sin and violence, God continues the line of promise.”⁴ In addition, J.V. Fesko points out that “...God’s intended goal for the creation has not changed; the dominion mandate was repeated in each of the three major covenants. Moreover, the mandate remained the same throughout redemptive history and awaited the arrival of the second Adam, who would take up the abandoned work of the first Adam.”⁵ Thus, God’s redemptive mission persists unchanging despite profound suffering and loss. In His inaugural advent, Jesus declared the final victory through His sacrifice on the cross and triumphal resurrection from the dead. In His last advent, the final victory will be finished when He purifies sin and brokenness from Creation making all things new. At long last, we will be set free to dwell in the fullness of the Trinity in unspeakable joy and the peace that surpasses all understanding! This historical reality in Christ was promised to us from the beginning of the story in Genesis.

We will continue to seek nourishment from our historic faith and the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. The calls to worship will come from Book One of the Psalms that further confirm the unchanging missional love of God for His children. We will confess together Article 17: The Recovery of Fallen Humanity from the Belgic Confession as it will help us remember the redemptive promise made in **Genesis 3:15**.⁶ Our assurances of pardon will be granted from the Advent stories in Luke and Matthew. Our benedictory blessings each week will come from **Galatians 4:4-7** to send us out rejoicing in our adoption as sons and daughters of God in Christ heirs to the spiritual blessings promised in the lineage of the woman. The sum of these elements will hopefully serve to deepen our appreciation for God’s promise of Christ’s first coming and look forward with great anticipation to His promised return.

⁴ Clowney, 40.

⁵ J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis 1-3 with the Christ of Eschatology* (Scotland: Mentor, 2007), 164.

⁶ The Belgic Confession is part of the Three Forms of Unity which include the Heidelberg Catechism and Canons of Dort written used by Reformed churches in the 16th century during the Protestant Reformation.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities each Wednesday to engage one of the Advent hymns that we will sing weekly. We also have the opportunity to prepare each Saturday for the Lord's Day Sabbath and its associated means of grace. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May God bless our time in personal devotion, family worship, and corporate worship as we seek to for the Church to grow in the joy of being restored to the presence of God!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sermon Schedule

Date	Call to Worship	Assurance of Pardon	Benediction	Sacrament
<i>Sunday, 11/25:</i> Genesis 3:14-24	Psalm 8	Luke 3:23-38	Galatians 4:4-7	
<i>Sunday, 12/2:</i> Genesis 4:1-26	Psalm 36	Matthew 1:18-25	Galatians 4:4-7	<i>Bread and Cup</i>
<i>Sunday, 12/9:</i> Genesis 6:1-10, 8:20-9:17	Psalm 29	Luke 2:8-20	Galatians 4:4-7	<i>Baptisms</i>
<i>Sunday, 12/16:</i> Genesis 11:1-9	Psalm 33	Matthew 2:1-12	Galatians 4:4-7	
<i>Sunday, 12/23:</i> Genesis 12:1-9	Psalm 37:1-11	Matthew 1:1-16	Galatians 4:4-7	
<i>Sunday, 12/30:</i> Genesis 17:1-21	Psalm 30	Luke 1:46-55	Galatians 4:4-7	<i>Bread and Cup</i>

Weekly Congregational Confession

The Belgic Confession

Article 17: The Recovery of Fallen Humanity⁷

We believe that our good God, by His marvelous wisdom and goodness, seeing that (Adam) had plunged himself (and us all) in this manner into both physical and spiritual death and made himself (and us all) completely miserable, set out to find us, though we, trembling all over were fleeing from Him. And He comforted us, promising to give us His Son, “born of a woman,” to crush the head of the serpent, and make us blessed.

⁷The words in parentheses are modifications for clarity and to help connect us in the Redemptive Story.

The Week of November 25th

Genesis 3:14-24:

The Fall of Humanity and the Promise of Redemption

Monday, 11/19: **Psalm 8:** Meditate on God's mindfulness and care toward you who He has crowned with honor and glory in His image. Why do you matter to God?

Tuesday, 11/20: **Luke 3:23-38:** Why is it significant that in Luke's genealogy of Christ that he carries it all the way back to "the son of Adam, the son of God"?

Wednesday, 11/21: Read the lyrics to "Joy Has Dawned" praying for the Holy Spirit to kindle your joy in and gratitude for the first advent of Christ.

Thursday, 11/22: **Genesis 3:14-24:** Reflect on how God's judgment and discipline make His redemption possible amid the wreckage of the Fall. What are some ways that you have experienced this glorious pattern in your life?

Friday, 11/23: **Galatians 4:4-7:** What does this passage suggest about the flow of history and the advents of Christ? Why does God wait so long to send Christ in both advents?

Saturday, 11/24: Pray for the Lord to bring people to worship tomorrow who need to hear and see that His redemption is far more powerful than the brokenness of this world.

Sunday, 11/25: **The Lord's Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to help us understand and live in light of God's pattern of judgment and redemption.

Song of Response

Joy Has Dawned

Lyrics: Keith Getty & Stuart Townsend, 2004

Music: Kings Kaleidoscope

Verse 1:

Joy has dawned upon the world,
Promised from creation—
God's salvation now unfurled,
Hope for ev'ry nation.
Not with fanfares from above,
Not with scenes of glory,
But a humble gift of love—
Jesus born of Mary

Verse 2:

Sounds of wonder fill the sky
With the songs of angels
As the mighty Prince of Life
Shelters in a stable.
Hands that set each star in place,
Shaped the earth in darkness,
Cling now to a mother's breast,
Vuln'erable and helpless.

Verse 3:

Shepherds bow before the Lamb,
Gazing at the glory;
Gifts of men from distant lands
Prophesy the story.
Gold—a King is born today,
Incense—God is with us,
Myrrh—His death will make a way,
And by His blood He'll win us.

Verse 4:

Son of Adam, Son of heaven,
Given as a ransom;
Reconciling God and man,
Christ, our mighty champion!
What a Savior! What a Friend!
What a glorious myst'ry!
Once a babe in Bethlehem,
Now the Lord of hist'ry.

The Week of December 2nd

Genesis 4:1-26:

The Corruption of the Family and the Promised Son

Monday, 11/26: **Psalm 36:** What are some ways in which God has continued His promised steadfast love toward you and your family?

Tuesday, 11/27: **Matthew 1:18-25:** Reflect on the name Immanuel, which means God with us. What are some ways that you have experienced God's presence in Christ?

Wednesday, 11/28: Read the lyrics to "Silent Night" praying for the Holy Spirit to help you quietly reflect on the Lordship of Christ over all things.

Thursday, 11/29: **Genesis 4:1-26:** Do you ever let the jealousy of someone else's spiritual gifting and relationship with the Lord harden your heart as opposed to encouraging you to cultivate your gifting and relationship through the means of grace?

Friday, 11/30: **Galatians 4:4-7:** Give thanks to our Abba Father for adopting us as His children through the acceptable sacrifice of His Son and not leaving us as lost and wandering orphans.

Saturday, 12/1: Read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Spirit to show you who you need to pursue reconciliation with as Christ has pursued you.

Sunday, 12/2: **The Lord's Day Sabbath with the Lord's Table:** Pray for the means of grace to bring wisdom and healing to our various relational struggles.

Song of Response

Silent Night

Lyrics: Joseph Mohr, 1816

Music: Traditional

Verse 1:

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child
Holy Infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Verse 2:

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ, the Saviour is born
Christ the Saviour is born

Verse 3:

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth

The Week of December 9th

Genesis 6:1-10, 8:20-9:17:

The Pollution of the Lineage and the Cleansing Flood

Monday, 12/3: **Psalm 29:** Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name based on your experience with Him as King who brings peace to all Creation.

Tuesday, 12/4: **Luke 2:8-20:** Imagine being present with the shepherds on that glorious night. How has God's redemptive longing been revealed to you? How are you responding?

Wednesday, 12/5: Read the lyrics to "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" praying for the Holy Spirit to help you enjoy the presence of God in Christ throughout this Advent season.

Thursday, 12/6: **Genesis 6:1-10, 8:20-9:17:** Give thanks to God that Noah and his family were delivered by the waters of the Flood to continue His mission that continues to this day through us His children.

Friday, 12/7: **Galatians 4:4-7:** What are some of the ways that you have been blessed by being adopted by God as a full heir to all of the spiritual blessings in Christ?

Saturday, 12/8: Read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare to improve upon your baptism (See WLC, Q. 167). Give thanks for Christ bearing your judgment on the cross so that you could be redeemed to newness of life as signified and sealed in your baptism.

Sunday, 12/9: **The Lord's Day Sabbath with Baptism:** Pray for the means of grace to humble us in God's unwavering love through which He pursued us in Christ.

Song of Response

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Lyrics: Charles Wesley, 1739; Alt. by George Whitfield, 1758; Music: Traditional

Verse 1:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Verse 2:

Christ, by highest Heav’n adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time, behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th’incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.

Refrain

Verse 3:

Hail the heav’nly Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

Refrain

Verse 4:

Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Rise, the woman’s conqu’ring Seed,
Bruise in us the serpent’s head.
Now display Thy saving pow’r,
Ruined nature now restore;
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine.

Refrain

The Week of December 16th

Genesis 11:1-9:

The Heights of Arrogance and the Scattering of Seed

Monday, 12/10: **Psalm 33:** What gives you the most hope given the events of your life and the current circumstances in the world?

Tuesday, 12/11: **Matthew 2:1-12:** Give thanks to the Lord for His ability to redeem people from every tongue, tribe, and nation no matter their beliefs or brokenness.

Wednesday, 12/12: Read the lyrics to “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” praying for the Holy Spirit to grow you as an ambassador of reconciliation for King Jesus who reigns over God’s Kingdom.

Thursday, 12/13: **Genesis 11:1-9:** What are some ways in which your arrogant longing to control your relationship with God proved costly? How did God lovingly discipline you to protect you from continuing to further separate you from Him?

Friday, 12/14: **Galatians 4:4-7:** Meditate on the blessings that you have received from being filled with the Spirit of His Son in whom you are no longer a slave to your sinful focus upon self.

Saturday, 12/15: Pray for the Lord to help our congregation grow in humility in our relationship with God. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in being quick to repent where we arrogantly fail.

Sunday, 12/16: **The Lord’s Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to grow our relationship with God according to His will and Word.

Song of Response

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Lyrics: Edmund Hamilton Sears, 1849

Music: Richard Storrs Willis, 1859; Traditional

Verse 1:

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
From heavens all gracious King!”
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Verse 2:

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled;
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Verse 3:

O ye beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow;
Look now, for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh rest beside the weary road
And hear the angels sing.

Verse 4:

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace, their King,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

The Week of December 23rd

Genesis 12:1-9:

The Redemptive Covenant for the Life of the World

Monday, 12/17: **Psalm 37:1-11:** Take time to be still before the Lord waiting patiently for Him to comfort you with His promises amid the hectic nature of this season.

Tuesday, 12/18: **Matthew 1:1-16:** Why is it significant that in Matthew's genealogy of Christ that he begins with "the son of David, the son of Abraham"?

Wednesday, 12/19: Read the lyrics to "Joy to the World" praying for the Holy Spirit to help you rejoice in the limitless power of Christ to redeem as far as the curse is found.

Thursday, 12/20: **Genesis 12:1-9:** What is Christ's responsibility in the Abrahamic Covenant? What is your responsibility in the Abrahamic Covenant?

Friday, 12/21: **Galatians 4:4-7:** Reflect on what it means to be able to cry, "Abba! Father!" as a declaration of intimacy and praise as a child of God.

Saturday, 12/22: Pray for the Lord to help our congregation grow in its missional calling to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our various spheres of influence.

Sunday, 12/23: **The Lord's Day Sabbath:** Pray for the means of grace to tender our hearts for the lost who are enslaved in sin and separated from God and His people.

Song of Response

Joy to the World

Lyrics: Isaac Watts, 1719

Music: George Frederick Handel; Traditonal

Verse 1:

Joy to the World, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Verse 2:

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

Verse 3:

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessing flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

Verse 4:

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love

The Week of December 30th

Genesis 17:1-21:

The Limits of the Fall and God's Boundless Grace

Monday, 12/24: **Psalm 30:** Give thanks to the Lord for the times that He has responded to your cries for help and healing turning your mourning into dancing.

Tuesday, 12/25: **Luke 1:46-55:** Read Mary's Magnificat out loud. What most comforts you in its promises?

Wednesday, 12/26: Read the lyrics for "O Come Divine Messiah" praying for the Holy Spirit to stir your affections and hope for the return of Christ.

Thursday, 12/27: **Genesis 17:1-21:** What most strikes you about the grace of God toward Abram and Sarai who had left the covenant in ruins with their sin in **Genesis 16**?

Friday, 12/28: **Galatians 4:4-7:** Why were you made an heir through God as His adopted child? What is your purpose as His child?

Saturday, 12/29: Read the preparatory letter and pray to prepare for the Lord's Table. Ask the Spirit to nourish your hope in God's unrelenting grace.

Sunday, 12/30: **The Lord's Day Sabbath** *with the Lord's Table:* Pray for the means of grace to grant us the full assurance of pardon purchased for us by Christ.

Song of Response

O Come Divine Messiah

Lyrics: Abbé Simon J. Pellegrin; Transl.: Sister Mary of St. Philip, 1877

Music: Robbie Seay

Verse 1

O come, Divine Messiah
The world is longing for the day
When hope shall sing its triumph
And her sadness flies away

Chorus

Dear Savior come to tired earth
And bring the grace of dawn
Dispel the night and show Thy face
Come, Messiah, Come

Refrain

O come, Divine Messiah, come
O come, Divine Messiah, come

Verse 2

O Thou whom nations sigh for
Whom priest and prophet long foretold
Will break the captive fetters
And bring the wayward home

Chorus

Refrain

Bridge

There is hope today
That God Himself might shine upon our souls and say
Unto you a Savior comes
And everything will change
Everything will change
There is hope today
That God Himself will heal our wounded world and say
Unto you Savior comes
And everything will change

Refrain (x2)