



Gloria
A Christmas Devotional

Wilsonville.Church/GLORIA

Merry Christmas



The Christmas season is rather glorious. From the sparkling lights to the glittery presents to the delectable food, there is something magical about this time of year. Yet, nothing compares to the glory of the one whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. Jesus is more glorious than all of our holiday traditions, but the busyness of the season can cause us to forget all about him. The purpose of this booklet is to help you remember the birth of Jesus and the glory of God this December.

With this purpose in mind, the booklet is meant to be a companion to our sermon series “Gloria.” There is no devotional entry, but only a place for notes, for the Sundays in December. We hope you’ll come to church on those days, but if not, we encourage you to listen or watch the sermons online. This can be done at CreeksideBibleChurch.org/GLORIA or via our app (CreeksideBibleChurch.org/APP).

As stated above, we hope this devotional will help you remember the birth of Jesus and the glory of God. Each day contains a short writing (150-200 words) on small sections or phrases from the passages of Scripture preached in the Gloria series. Each of these passages are, in one way or another, about the glory of God and connect to the coming of Jesus to earth.

We have just one request as you use this booklet. Please let us know if you have questions or have been impacted. You can do so by emailing us at Respond@Creekside.Me or by visiting Creekside.Me/RESPOND. It would be really meaningful to us to hear from you; we’d love the chance to interact with you.

Merry Christmas.

To God be the glory!

Glorious God



Luke 2:8-14, “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”



Notes: December 3, 2017



December 4



“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them...”

Luke 2:8-9

The shepherds in this story are the first to hear about the birth of Jesus. This is incredible on two accounts.

First, shepherds were social outcasts. The nature of the work they did - working with sheep made them dirty in a physical and religious way. Plus, they had a reputation for being uneducated, unspiritual, crass kind of men.

Second, the announcement of Jesus' birth to these shepherds wasn't earthly, but heavenly and divine. The angels of God came down to announce to these social outcasts that Jesus had been born.

As you think about the Christmas season, remember that Jesus' birth isn't just important to the uber religious or socially acceptable. In fact, the message of Jesus birth was given first to people who were just the opposite. Perhaps you recognize your religious failings. Perhaps you feel like a social outcast. Christmas is for you!

This Christmas remember that the glory of Christmas is important for all people, even those the world considers lesser.

December 5



“...and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”

Luke 2:9

At the heart of this booklet is that God is glorious. Defining glory is not an easy thing to do though. It is similar to trying to define the word “beauty,” it is easier to explain in visuals than in words. A flower is beautiful. A sunset is beautiful. Looking at these things forms our idea of what beauty is.

God’s glory is similar to this. God is glorious because of who he is, but defining that glory is most easily done by talking about what he has done. People see God’s glory in creation, as we look at a flower or sunset. People see God’s glory as he manifests himself in wind or fire. People see God’s glory when they witness a miracle. People see God’s glory as he reveals himself to us in the Bible. And mostly, as we will see later, people see God’s glory in his coming to earth.

So, what is God’s glory? God’s glory is all that makes him greater than man. And in the announcement of Jesus' birth, God’s greatness made an appearance to the lowly shepherds.

This Christmas remember that God is glorious.

December 6



“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”

Luke 2:10

Christmas has become cluttered. From cultural arguments to family dynamics to holiday shopping, the beauty of Christmas is sometimes buried beneath a mound of extras. A 2012 study found that 45% of Americans would prefer to skip Christmas because of financial stresses. The American Psychology Association found that 38 % of people say the holidays increase their stress level.

The stresses of Christmas are so different than the declaration made to the shepherds. “Do not be afraid,” the angels said. Why? They brought “good news!” Christmas is, at its core, a celebration of the birth of Jesus and the birth of Jesus is good news. In fact, the good news is so good that it can be a source of “great joy for all people.”

We will consider more fully why Jesus’ birth was such good news tomorrow, but for now, consider that upon hearing the angels announcement and visiting Jesus, the shepherds “spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.” Bad news we often keep to ourselves; good news we usually share.

This Christmas remember that Jesus’ birth is gloriously good news...and consider sharing that good news with someone else.

December 7



“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Luke 2:11

The birth of Jesus was a big deal because of who Jesus is. He is Savior, Messiah, and Lord. The importance of these three titles fills books!

Savior: Jesus came to earth for a specific purpose, he came to save people from their sin. While we often make a disconnect between Christmas and Easter, the angels couldn't. Jesus would not become the Savior, he was the Savior.

Messiah: The Jewish people were promised by God that someone would come who would make things right for their people, their nation. When Jesus came, he fulfilled that promise, albeit not in the military/political way that they expected. Instead of national peace, they were offered spiritual peace.

Lord: Jesus wasn't just a baby. Before the foundation of the world he was Lord, he was God. This didn't change because he chose to humbly come to earth to be the Messiah and Savior.

It is easy to go through the Christmas season celebrating the birth of Jesus without ever considering the glory of who Jesus is, but this ought not be.

This Christmas remember that Jesus is glorious because he is Savior, Messiah, and Lord.

December 8



“This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:12

Yesterday we considered how Jesus is Savior, Messiah, and Lord. The contrast between those titles and the sign given to the shepherds is staggering when truly contemplated. The Savior-Messiah-Lord was born in a place for animals, wrapped in strips of cloth, and laid in a feeding trough.

This astonishing contrast reveals one glorious characteristic of Jesus: Humility. Philippians 2:5-7 says, “...have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing.” And why did he do this? He did it because he was on a rescue mission to save us.

If you’ve ever held a baby, you know how tremendously vulnerable they are. Yet, Jesus the Savior-Messiah-Lord, came as a vulnerable baby for our benefit. Incredible.

This Christmas remember the glorious humility of Jesus.

December 9



“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Luke 2:13-14

God is perfectly and eternally glorious. Sometimes he reveals this glory to people, but no matter how they respond, his glory is unchangeable. Yet, there is a proper response to God’s revealed glory and it is seen in the angels. Their response to experiencing God’s glory while declaring Jesus’ birth was to express God’s glory. This too should be our response.

This isn’t the norm though, especially at Christmas. For most, the response to Jesus’ glorious birth is to hang out with family, give/get presents, eat food, and sing a few songs that may or may not be connected to the birth of Jesus. None of these things are inherently bad, but if they supersede our desire to declare God’s glory then we are responding to the Christmas narrative incorrectly.

This is especially true when we consider an added benefit of Jesus’ birth. We’ve already seen that he is the Savior who sets things right. Here we see an additional benefit for those who believe, he brings peace. Biblically peace isn’t just a warm fuzzy feeling, but a state of well being that encompasses all of a person. How glorious is that?

This Christmas remember to express God’s glory.

Glorious Son



Hebrews 1:1-3, “In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”



Notes: December 3, 2017



December 11



“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...”

Hebrews 1:1-2

Throughout history God has communicated with his people in a variety of ways. He spoke in a heavily booming voice, in written words, and through the mouths of prophets. All of these were impersonal and incomplete.

When Jesus was born, a new and better form of communication between God and people began. In Jesus we have the most glorious form of godly communication.

It has been said that great storytellers don't tell, they show. In the coming of Jesus God showed. He showed who he is, what he's like, what he does, and what he wants - a personal relationship with all people. In Jesus God's communication with people went from impersonal to personal, from incomplete to complete. The birth of Jesus began God's glorious communication with humans. His life defined it. His death freed us to communicate back. His resurrection and ascension improved it.

This Christmas remember that the birth of Jesus offered a new and better form of communication with God - a glorious communication.

December 12



“...whom he appointed heir of all things...”

Hebrews 1:2

The reason all that we've seen about Jesus birth in this booklet can be true is that he is the Son of God. This is seen in many places in the Bible, but perhaps most famously in John 3:16 where we read, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son...”

Understanding Jesus as the Son of God may lead one to believe that Jesus became God's Son. This isn't true. His sonship doesn't demonstrate origin, but relationship. Jesus has forever been God's Son. John 6:38 says, “ For I have come down from heaven...” Jesus resided in Heaven before he was born on earth. Then he was glorified, now he is glorified, forever he will be glorified. Yet, when he came to earth, he left all that glory behind.

This explains how Jesus was appointed heir. Jesus, the Son of God, willingly chose to come to earth to die for sinful humanity. In doing so he left the benefits of sonship behind. But after his death and resurrection God “exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name...” (Philippians 2:9) Jesus was given back his glory.

This Christmas remember that Jesus left his glory for you, but Jesus sits glorified once again.

December 13



“...and through whom also he made the universe...”

Hebrews 1:2

Picture Jesus laying in a feeding trough surrounded by his parents and a bunch of animals. Now consider this: That being, that baby, created all that you see in the universe.

Consider also the words about Jesus in Colossians 3:15-16, “The Son is the image of the invisible God...For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities...” Everything created was created by Jesus.

Finally, consider creation, specifically the planet earth. Think about a sunset or the stars or one of America's picturesque national parks. They are glorious and they point to the glory of the one who created them - Jesus, who was born in a small town in Bethlehem. Romans 1:20 says just that, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made...”

From trees to lights to snow, this Christmas you will look at some beautiful things. As you do, remember the glory of the one who created it.

This Christmas remember that the glorious creation was created by one who was infinitely more glorious.

December 14



“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

Hebrews 1:3

We have already examined God’s glory in this booklet, but we only looked at one side of it, a side that is often referred to as shekinah glory. This term refers to the visual manifestation of God’s glory: Think light, clouds, fire, smoke, earthquakes, etc.

How can God’s incredible glory and the humble life of Jesus coincide? The answer to this lies partly in another side of God’s glory.

In the midst of a conversation about Moses wanting to know God more as he sought to lead the Israelites, Moses said to God, “Now show me your glory.” The beginning of God’s response is telling. He says to Moses, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you...” This is the other part of God’s glory.

The other side of God’s glory is his infinite goodness. He is perfectly good. He is perfectly loving. He is perfectly faithful. He is perfectly just. He is perfectly gracious. He is perfect. These qualities are not visible, but they are glorious. And Jesus represented all of these perfections perfectly.

This Christmas remember that Jesus is glorious in his perfect goodness.

December 15



“After he had provided purification for sins...”

Hebrews 1:3

It is impossible to separate the importance of the Christmas story from the importance of the crucifixion story. From the moment of his miraculous conception, Jesus was destined for the cross.

We also cannot forget the reason that Jesus went to the cross. Sin can be defined in several ways, but Romans 3:23 shows us what is at the heart of it. It says, “... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Consider this in light of what you read yesterday: God is perfectly good. All people have fallen short of that standard. John Piper partly defines sin as “the glory of God not honored.”

And so Jesus came. And while he didn’t come how we might have expected, his birth was the beginning of a rescue mission. Hebrews 9:14 says, “How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”

This Christmas remember that Jesus came to die for our sins because we had not lived up to God’s glorious standard.

December 16



“...he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

Hebrews 1:3

It is important to think about Jesus in terms of his earthly life. We should think of him as a baby. We should think of him as a humble, homeless, preacher who healed and fed people. We should think of him as crucified and resurrected. But if our thoughts on Jesus are void of his current status, we are thinking about Jesus incorrectly.

Jesus is no longer laying in a manger, he has been exalted to the right hand of God in heaven where he reigns “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked” (Ephesians 1:21) as “head over everything” (Ephesians 1:22). Jesus is “now crowned with glory” (Hebrews 2:9).

This matters for (at least) two reasons. First, it matters because of what Jesus is doing for us. He is interceding for us. He is advocating on our behalf. He’s preparing a place for us. He’s helping us! This is something a mere baby who lived 2,000 years ago cannot do.

But thinking about the exaltation of Jesus matters for another reason: it changes our response to Him. If we truly consider Jesus as glorified, ruling and reigning over all, our response will be to glorify him.

This Christmas remember that Jesus has been glorified.

Glorious gospel



John 1:14, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”



Notes: December 17, 2017



December 18



“The Word became flesh...”

John 1:14

We've seen that Jesus is the Son of God, but there's another important truth about his nature: He *is* God.

To understand John 1:14 you must read John 1:1. It says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In the same chapter we learn that the Word is Jesus. Thus, while Jesus is the Son of God, he is also God himself.

Think back to Exodus 33 and the conversation between Moses and God. God told Moses that if he saw him face to face he would die. This is incredible power, incredible glory. Now think about a baby. They're anything but powerful. They're weak, fragile, helpless. In the person of Jesus, almighty God became a helpless babe.

Throughout the Bible, when God's glory is being revealed, it is often veiled. When God showed up in fire it was veiled by a cloud. The place in the temple where God resided most fully was veiled by a curtain. This is what Hebrews 10:20 alludes to when it says of Jesus, “...through the curtain, that is, his body...” In Jesus God's glory was veiled by flesh. This allows us to, like Moses, see God.

This Christmas remember that in Jesus we see God's veiled glory.

December 19



“...and made his dwelling among us.”

John 1:14

The word that translates “dwelling” is significant. Its literal meaning is “to tent.” This is an allusion to a tent that traveled with the Israelites before they settled in their land. It was called the tabernacle. This tent served as the symbol of God’s presence among his people - the very thing that made them stand out from everyone else on earth (Exodus 33:15-16). Later, after the Israelites had settled in their land, a permanent structure was built as a house for God. It was called the temple.

In Matthew 12:6 Jesus declares, “I tell you that something greater than the temple is here.” He is of course, speaking about himself. There is a profound switch. Instead of people making a residence for God, God made his residence with people. This is important for all of the reasons we have seen, but it is also important because it helps us better understand God’s glory. It is easy to say “God is all loving,” but it means more when this truth is conveyed by stories of Jesus feeding, healing, encouraging, forgiving, and saving people.

This Christmas remember that God’s glory dwelt among people in the person of Jesus.

December 20



“We have seen his glory, the glory of the one
and only Son...”

John 1:14

It is important to remember that the man who penned John 1:14 had spent years hanging out with Jesus, eating with Jesus, and interacting with Jesus. They were ministry partners. They were friends.

In this section, the author, declares that he has seen Jesus' glory. This is amazing because it lends validity and importance to Jesus' glory. Think about your friends. There isn't a single one that you would describe as glorious. And yet, as this book opens, the author summarizes what he and his friends had seen in the person of Jesus with the word glory.

As you go through the Christmas season and think about the birth of Christ, don't disconnect it from all the disciples saw after they chose to follow Jesus. They saw him feed 5,000. They saw him walk on water. They saw him heal one person after another. They saw him rise from the dead. They saw his glory.

This Christmas remember that while Jesus' birth was glorious, his life was also defined by glory.

December 21



“...who came from the Father...

John 1:14

John 6:38 quotes Jesus, saying, “For I have come down from heaven...” This is a truth that made an impression on the author of John; he shows it more often and more clearly than the other Gospel writers. Jesus, before he was born, resided in Heaven. John 1:2-3 says of Jesus, “He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” This Christmas you will inevitably hear or read the word Immanuel. This word means “God with us” and it is a title given to Jesus.

We are amiss if we think the Son of God was created when Jesus was conceived. The Son of God always has been, always will be. In John 17:5 he prayed, “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”

The person of Jesus was conceived, but the being we call Jesus always was. He shows this eternal existence by calling himself “I am” and in many other ways throughout the Gospels.

This Christmas remember that Jesus is the glorious God who left glory to be born on earth.

December 22



“...full of grace...”

John 1:14

The glory of Jesus might best be seen in his inglorious death. This seemingly paradoxical statement is seen in the composition of the New Testament. In almost all the New Testament books Jesus' crucifixion is seen as the lowest point of his disgrace. However, in the book of John, it is seen as the highest point of his glory. How can both of these things be true? Commentator Alexander Maclaren says of his death, “It was the revelation of His heart. All his life long He had been trying to tell the world how much He loved it. His love had been, as it were, filtered by drops through His words, through His deeds, through His whole demeanor and bearing; but in His death it comes in a flood, and pours itself upon the world.”

Man has a sin problem. Remember, “...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). God is gracious though and he “demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). This is amazing grace!

The author of John had witnessed Jesus calm the sea, feed the crowd, and heal the hurting. But as he tells of Jesus' glory, he points to his grace.

This Christmas remember that the grace of Jesus is part of the glory of Jesus.

December 23



“...and truth.”

John 1:14

“What is truth” (John 18:38)? This question was posed to Jesus after he was unjustly arrested. Earlier in his ministry he had declared “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

What is it about Jesus that filled him with truth, that made him truth? While the idea of truth has been torn at in our modern society, biblically, truth is wrapped up in the nature of God. John MacArthur says, “Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God...Truth is the self-expression of God.” In fact, the Old Testament refers to God as the “God of truth” on more than one occasion. This is why God’s word is called “truth” in the Bible. Because it comes from him, it is true.

Jesus perfectly fulfilled the word of God. He, being God, perfectly embodied the mind, character, glory and being of God. He perfectly expressed God. He is truth, and thus, he shows us the glorious goodness of God and all that it means for us and how we live our lives.

This Christmas remember that Jesus is the truth, because Jesus perfectly embodies the glory of God.

Glorious eternity



Revelation 5:6-14, “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people. And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.” Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.”



Notes: December 24, 2017



December 25



Merry Christmas. We hope that you've enjoyed this devotional, but even more, we hope that it has been beneficial.

As we begin today, let's start with a quick overview of God's glory.

God's glory can be defined as all that separates him from mankind. Obviously, his infinite power (omnipotence), infinite knowledge (omniscience), and ability to be anywhere and everywhere are a part of this. More pragmatically, his ability to show up as fire, an earthquake, and a shining light in the sky are part of this. His goodness is another key aspect of his glory. He is infinitely and perfectly good. But we, mankind, have fallen short of this glory because of our sin. So Jesus, Son and God, came on a rescue mission. He was born of a virgin and testified to by shepherds. He lived sinlessly and died unjustly. In his life he showed us the glory of God. He showed us truth. In his death he cleansed us from sin as he offered us glorious grace. Then he rose from the grave and ascended into Heaven. There he sits at the right hand of The Father, glorified once again.

But there is another side of glory that we would be amiss not to bring up before this booklet is done. Because of who God is and what he has done in the person of Jesus, we all have the opportunity to experience glory ourselves. Romans 8:17 says, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." This is incredible. If we become children of God then we will one day experience glory ourselves. Obviously this can't be done in our own power. It can only be done through the glory of Jesus. All we have to do is believe and give our lives to Jesus. Romans 10:9 says, "If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." This salvation is unto glory. I hope that you have already made this decision. If not, today (Christmas), is the perfect day to do so.

In our passage for today, Revelation 5:6-14, we get a glimpse into the glory of eternal life - into Heaven. What do we see? We see Jesus being glorified by those who are represented there. When God's glory is experienced, it should be expressed. If you truly believe that Jesus has offered you glory, it is only proper that you glorify him. This is part of what we will do for eternity.

And so this Christmas day, as you consider the glory of God, the glory of the Son, the glory of the Gospel, and the glory of eternity, do your best to express God's glory. Do your best, with both action and word, to join with the angels in their declaration, "Glory to God in the highest heaven..." *Gloria in excelsis deo.*



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