

ChristmasTime
AT ARK ENCOUNTER

ChristmasTown
AT CREATION MUSEUM

WAITING
FOR THE
PROMISE
an Advent Devotional

LITA SANDERS

 Answers
IN GENESIS®

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INTRODUCTION

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

For many, Christmas begins with the birth of Christ (or maybe the angelic announcement to Mary), but really, what we celebrate at Christmas goes all the way back to eternity past (Ephesians 1:4) when God planned to redeem and save lost humanity through the gift of himself.

What we celebrate at Christmas is the birth of the very Savior who was first promised immediately after sin entered creation:

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. (Genesis 3:15)

The first people, Adam and Eve, had rebelled against God, doubting his Word and trying to be gods themselves, and yet God’s response was to mercifully promise a Savior who would rescue them from their sin. And that promise came to fulfillment one night in Bethlehem when a humble baby arrived and was laid in a manger.

As you reflect through this devotional on the promises of God for 4,000 years before the birth of Christ, be reminded of his great love for you that he would send his only Son to offer salvation for sinners!

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

In Christ,

Ken Ham

CEO Creation Museum, Ark Encounter, and Answers in Genesis



DAY 1

The Fall and a Promise

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.

GENESIS 3:15

When God first created the world, there was no need for a gospel. Adam and Eve were already in a close relationship with God; they had everything they could ever want in the garden paradise God made for them. But God knew before he ever created that the world would not remain “very good” for long. Satan deceived Eve, and she and her husband rebelled against God.

It is hard to imagine the terror they must have felt when God came to the garden for the first time after they ate the fruit. They knew their flimsy leaf coverings were not sufficient to clothe them in his presence because their naked bodies were not what was offensive—their sin tainted them to the core. Satan and the angels who fell with him were condemned with no chance of mercy. What on earth would God do to Adam and Eve?

God’s threefold pronouncement of judgment to the serpent, Eve, and Adam was undeniably devastating. They would no longer live in Eden, and they would live lives of hard toil before eventually dying and returning to dust. Eve would suffer pain in childbirth, and the marriage relationship would itself be tainted by the sinfulness of both husband and wife. But within the judgment, there is hope. Women would bear children—and that couldn’t happen if God planned to kill off Eve before she could get pregnant.

More than that, one of these children, borne painfully by a woman, would defeat the serpent and undo this curse. Perhaps Eve remembered this promise and, like her descendant Mary would, “treasured up” the assurance that the curse came with an expiration date. When she bore her firstborn, Cain, she made the pronouncement which is translated literally, “I have begotten a man—the Lord.” It could be that her theology was very advanced, though misapplied; she was expecting the serpent-crusher to be God and man. Her second son, Abel, has a name that means “breath” but also has the sense of “empty” or “vain”—indicating that perhaps by that time, she realized that her children had inherited sinful natures, and they would have to wait longer for deliverance.

But salvation would also require a sacrifice of blood, which God prefigured by sacrificing animals and clothing Adam and Eve with their skins. Just as Adam and Eve were covered by the animals killed in their stead, the promised serpent crusher would himself be wounded as a necessary element of salvation, and we are covered by his blood.

It would be around 4,000 years after God’s first promise of a Messiah that Jesus would be born. Many generations of believers would live and die, believing this promise and waiting for its fulfillment without knowing what form that deliverance would take. Believers have spent about half that time since Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven waiting for his second coming when he will fully manifest his defeat of Satan. We should emulate the faith of the Old Testament saints as we patiently wait for him.

Scripture Reading: John 1:1–4; Genesis 3:1–21

Question for Discussion/Reflection: How do we experience the curse on creation today?

Suggestion for Prayer: Thank God for mercifully providing a sacrifice for sin and pray for the soon return of the Lord Jesus.



DAY 2

Death Is Not the Final Word!

Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

GENESIS 5:24

The genealogy of Adam's descendants in Genesis 5 has a somber tone because each entry ends with the death of a patriarch. Adam fathered Seth . . . then he died. Seth fathered Enosh . . . then he died. There is no doubt that the curse was in full force.

Yet just as there is hope within the Genesis 3 pronouncement of judgment, there is hope within this genealogy. Each patriarch begets sons and daughters. Yes, people are dying, but new people are also being born, and each generation is a generation closer to God's promised Savior.

In the meantime, believers "began to call upon the name of the LORD" (Genesis 4:26). They sacrificed animals, spilling their blood to temporarily cover their sins. At the same time, sin became worse and worse. Men like Cain's descendant Lamech became wrathful and lustful. Marriage began to be distorted as men took multiple wives.

A little over 600 years after creation, Enoch was born. But Scripture's genealogical formula breaks during Enoch's entry. He didn't simply live—he "walked with God" (Genesis 5:22). And when it came time for him to leave the earth, he didn't die as Adam had done just a few decades before, but "he was not, for God took him" (Genesis 5:24).

We don't know exactly how much revelation of God believers had in this time, but we do know how they were saved. Hebrews 11:5–6 says, "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken

he was commended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

Enoch's life gives us a glimpse of a time when death will be defeated for people who trust God. As believers with the full revelation of Scripture, we have all we need in order to know how to live a life that is pleasing to God and the sure hope of the resurrection when Christ returns.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 5:21–24; Hebrews 11:5–6

Question for Discussion/Reflection: How should the hope of the resurrection affect how we live?

Suggestion for Prayer: Thank God for older people who have been good examples of how to live faithful lives for Jesus.



DAY 3

Lamech's Hope for a Deliverer

By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

HEBREWS 11:7

Jesus is often called a “second Adam,” but this is wrong for two reasons. First, many people are depicted along certain Adamic themes in Scripture—arguably, Noah is the “second Adam.” Second, it is important to call Jesus the “last Adam” because those themes culminate and find their fulfillment in Christ, so he is the final Adam.

When Lamech named his son, he said, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands” (Genesis 5:29). The name Noah sounds like the Hebrew word for rest. The Bible doesn’t tell us why Lamech believed Noah was important in God’s plan of salvation, but the reasoning behind Noah’s name reveals that he may have hoped Noah would be the “seed of the woman” who would defeat the serpent.

During Noah’s lifetime, the wickedness of mankind increased to a level that God judged the entire world with a global flood. However, sin survived the flood because Noah and his family, eight people total, survived. After the flood, the only thing we know about Noah is that he became “a man of the soil.” The Hebrew word for soil is *adamah*. The name Adam comes from *adamah*, and that phrasing is probably intentional. Noah then grows a vineyard. He becomes drunk from the wine and is found uncovered in his tent.

Notice, directly after the flood, the predecessor of all people who will live consumes wine (a product of fruit), which leads to shame regarding nakedness and a threefold pronouncement of blessing and judgment to Noah's three sons. Just as the global flood was a kind of "un-creation" and "re-creation," Noah is in some ways a second Adam, the patriarch of the new, post-flood world. But even though Noah was a believer who was justified by faith, Noah, just like Adam, was a sinner, and that sin would continue to have consequences for him and his descendants.

Theologians speak of *typology* in the Bible as the idea that God works in the same ways throughout history, meaning that people and events in the Old Testament look forward to Christ, who is the ultimate fulfillment of them. Noah did not bring anyone rest from the painful labor of their hands, but he was the next link in the line of promise that would ultimately lead to Jesus.

Scripture Reading: Genesis 9:18–29

Question for Discussion/Reflection: Most of us do not directly interact with agriculture, but the curse affects us all. What are some ways that the curse causes other types of work to be "painful toil"?

Suggestion for Prayer: Thank God for the promise that one day we will be given rest from all painful toil, along with sin, death, and pain, at the return of Jesus.