



God is Faithful!

Genesis 3:1-21 Matthew 1:18-25

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Advent begins today!

The word “**Advent**” is a Latin word (*adventus*) that means “coming, approach, or arrival.” In Church usage it means “**the long-awaited arrival of our Savior Jesus Christ.**” **Advent** is a time of preparation as we get ready for the fast approaching Christmas season.

The story of **Advent** reaches back deep into the Old Testament! *The story of Advent is the story of God keeping His Promise to send a Savior!*

The story of **Advent** begins in the *Garden of Eden*. Adam and Eve, though created perfect and holy, disobeyed God's Word and fell into sin. Their sin affects every single one of us... even today. Adam's sin is passed on to us, and because of it, we will die¹.

But right there in the *Garden of Eden* is when God promised to help. God made a promise to Adam and Eve --- and to all of us through them --- that He would send a Savior to rescue us. The promise was that one of Eve's sons would crush Satan's head and destroy him. Here is that very first promise of a Savior²:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel. Genesis 3:15

The Promise was that one of Eve's descendants, a son, would crush Satan's head. This is the beginning of *Advent*! Throughout the Old Testament, God kept

¹ This is the doctrine of **Original Sin**. As Lutherans, we teach that that “since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.” *Augsburg Confession, Article II: Of Original Sin.* (See Romans 5:12-21).

² Genesis 3:15 is known as the “*proto-evangelium*” ---> the “first-Gospel” promise.

this promise alive. Throughout the Old Testament, God's people eagerly anticipated the arrival of this Son. Over and over again, by words and actions, in prophecies and types, through Prophets and Kings, God renewed His promise to send the Son of Eve who would crush Satan's head and save us all from our sins. Here are some examples:

- † God promised Abraham that one of His descendants would bless the entire earth, giving life and salvation to all people
- † God promised Moses that God Himself would raise up a prophet who would speak the very words of life and salvation
- † God promised King David that one of His descendants would be a great King who will have an eternal Kingdom that will never end
- † Through the prophet Isaiah, God promised that the Messiah will be born of a virgin and that He will be our substitute in sin, guilt and death; He would give His life so that we would live forever!
- † Through the prophet Micah, God promised that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem and He will be the eternal King of Israel
- † Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that there will be forgiveness of sins through the Messiah and that God will never ever remember your sins again
- † Through the prophet Malachi, God promised to send a messenger to prepare the way --- that messenger was *John the Baptist*.

There are many, many promises in the Old Testament that God kept when He sent Jesus to be our Messiah and Savior. It is no wonder that one of the major themes of Advent is God's faithfulness: *God keeps His Word!*

God keeps His word and promises to you as well.

God's faithfulness is an important way to think about God's work in your life. It is an important way to think about how the Gospel intersects with your life. Think of God's Faithfulness in two ways today:

First, all the Advent promises that God kept means that you have a Savior, sent by God Himself. Jesus is the One whom God sent to rescue you from sin.

Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for **He will save His people from their sins.**" Matthew 1:20-21

Mary's Son is given the name **Jesus** (which means "Savior") and He is **GOD HIMSELF!**

GOD Himself came into the world to rescue you from sin, guilt and death. **It's as if God wasn't going to take any chances on your salvation --- He came down from Heaven Himself to do the work so that you can be 100% certain.** The life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ **guarantees** that you are saved, forgiven, and rescued from death. In Christ you have **the assurance** of life and salvation --- God Himself **secures** it!

God's faithfulness is seen in the promise of Salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ! God promised to send a Savior throughout the Old Testament times, and in the Jesus, God kept that promise!

A second way to think about God's faithfulness is to remember all the other promises that God makes to you. If God makes a promise to you in Holy Scripture, **He will keep it. You can trust Him!** Believe His promises!

Because of God's promises, we look to Him for all good things, and we turn to Him in times of trouble! **God promises to comfort, strengthen, and stabilize you each day.** For instance, here is a sample of promises God makes to you each day:

- Watches over your life (Psalm 121)
- Defends you from all evil (Psalm 97:10)
- Provides your daily bread (Matthew 6:11)
- Makes all things work for good in your life (Romans 8:28)
- Listens and answers your prayers (Psalm 5:3)
- Strengthens you when you are weak (Isaiah 41:10)
- Comforts you when you mourn (Psalm 34:18)
- Guides and directs every step of your life (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- Empowers you for godly living (Romans 8:11)
- Assures you of His love and forgiveness (Hebrews 10:22)
- Gives you hope, peace and security each day (Psalm 62:1-2)

God is your refuge and strength – an ever present help in times of trouble! **God is Faithful to you: His promises comfort, strengthen, and stabilize you each day!**

The problem is that sin enters your life and you start to doubt or you don't believe or you even forget God's promises.

- You go your own way
- You listen to your sinful nature
- You let the world influence you
- You follow the devil's temptations

Sin gets the upper hand when you doubt, when you don't believe or when you forget God's promises. God, of course, calls you to repent of that kind of living, confess your unfaithfulness, and trust that God is faithful and just, and that He will forgive your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. God sent Jesus to remove your sins and cleanse you from your guilt. You are renewed and forgiven through faith in Christ!

Through faith in Christ and the forgiveness of your sins, you learn to **keep God's Promises in front of you** each day: you learn them, write them down, and even memorize them.

No matter what you are facing, no matter how much you stress you have; no matter how much worry and fear: **keep God's promises in front of you: God is faithful: He keeps His Word!** Turn to the Lord in times of trouble and look to Him for all good things!

We start Advent today by thinking through one of the major themes of Advent: God's faithfulness:

- ⇒ God is faithful and He kept His Old Testament promises to send the Savior, born in Bethlehem.
- ⇒ God is faithful and He promises that you are saved from sin, guilt and death: He Himself came down from Heaven and does the work of salvation for you --- His life, death and resurrection guarantees your salvation!
- ⇒ God is faithful, and you can trust His Promises in Scripture to comfort, strengthen and stabilize you each day!

God is faithful: YOU CAN TRUST HIM!

Amen!

Genesis 3:1-21

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." 14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 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." 16 To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." 17 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." 20 The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21 And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. **19** And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. **20** But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." **22** All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: **23** "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"(which means, God with us). **24** When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, **25** but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Faithful God, we thank you for this season of Advent, and the time we have to remember your faithfulness. Help us to properly prepare our hearts for the approaching Christmas season, and lead us in true faith to trust in your words and promises. We ask that you comfort, strengthen, and stabilize our lives each day with your Word and Promises!d We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen!