



# HERE WITH US...NOW!

## ADVENT FOUR

### Day 1—“’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”

Ask Jesus to quiet your heart as you ponder Louise Stead’s lyrics: “’Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His Word, just to rest upon His promise, just to know ‘Thus saith the Lord.’” God is faithful; nothing is impossible with God; and, in Jesus, all God’s promises find their ‘Amen’/’So be it’! Notice God’s promises, their fulfillment, and God’s abiding presence with God’s people as you read Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Samuel 7:1-11 (*also 1 Chronicles 22:5-10, 17-19*); and Luke 1:26-38. How do Simeon’s words (*Luke 2:28-32*) celebrate God’s promise that all nations will be blessed through Abram’s descendants (*Genesis 12:3*)? Tell Jesus you trust him.

### Day 2—“My Ways Are Higher” (*Isaiah 55:9*)

Read Isaiah 55:8-11 and Romans 11:33-36. Who but God would tell an old, childless man that the world would be blessed through his descendants? Who but God would make a shepherd boy Israel’s greatest king and, centuries later, announce that the Messiah would reign on “the throne of his father David”? Who but God would choose a young virgin from an inconsequential town to be the mother of the “Son of the Most High”? Read 2 Samuel 7:1-13,16 and Luke 1:26-38. Notice David offering to build God a house and God promising David an eternal kingdom. Notice Mary’s response to God’s call on her life (*Luke 1:38*). Read Romans 12:1 and pray.

### Day 3—God with Us—Emmanuel!

For God’s people, the Ark of the Covenant was the visible representation of God’s presence in their midst. Until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the Ark was kept in the Tabernacle (*read Exodus 25:8; 40:20-21,34-38; 2 Chronicles 5:7,13-14; 7:1-3*). Holding this picture in your mind, read Matthew 1:21-23 and John 1:14,18. Consider that the word “dwelt” (*John 1:14 KJV*) can also be translated “tabernacled”; the eternal God, who dwelled in the midst of his people Israel, donned human flesh and came to live among us. And he is still Emmanuel, God with us. Read Matthew 28:20b; John 14:18-20; and Hebrews 13:5b. Worship our Emmanuel.

### Day 4—Jesus

We have spoken of Emmanuel, God with us, a title that reflects Jesus’ eternal nature and omnipresence, but on Christmas Day, it is fitting that we also look at the name Jesus, which means “the Lord saves.” Read Matthew 1:21-23 and Luke 1:30-33. Do you treasure Jesus’ holy name? Is it sweet just to speak it; is his name dear when you talk to him and share your life with him? What does it mean that “the Lord saves”? Look beyond the babe in the manger to our Savior on the cross, our risen Lord, and our glorious King. Meditate on John 1:29; Acts 2:21; 4:12; Hebrews 9:28; and 1 Peter 1:18-21. Read the Christmas story in Matthew or Luke; pray.

### Day 5—The Lord Is My Shepherd

Can you rest in Jesus today? Pray that your moments with him now will be a sweet respite; quiet your heart and pray you will experience his presence. Look again at our 2 Samuel 7 text; notice that although the Lord calls David from shepherding sheep to be a shepherd/ruler of God’s people (*7:8*), it is God who is David’s Shepherd (*see Psalm 23*)! What difference does this make? Read John 10:11,14-18. Pray

Henry Baker's lyrics: "The King of love my Shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never; I nothing lack if I am His, and He is mine forever."

### **Day 6—"Son of the Most High"**

Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us; he is our Savior and the Good Shepherd. In our Luke 1 text, he is also called "Son of the Most High," "the holy one" and "Son of God" (1:32,35). Pray you will see Jesus evermore clearly as you read John 1:1-5,14,18; 14:6-11; 17:1-5; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20 ('firstborn' can mean preeminent or first in rank or honor); and Hebrews 1:1-3. We embrace by faith what our minds cannot grasp. Pray Charles Wesley's lyrics: "Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ, the everlasting Lord!... Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th' incarnate Deity, pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel."

### **Day 7—God Is with Us!**

Use verse 4 of Louise Stead's hymn to prepare your heart for today's time in Scripture: "I'm so glad I learned to trust Him, precious Jesus, Savior, Friend; and I know that He is with me, will be with me to the end." Now read Deuteronomy 31:8 and John 15:1-17 (in the John passage, notice the word 'remain' or 'abide'); spend time talking to Emmanuel; tell Jesus you want to know his very real presence in your life. King David, the nation Israel, and Mary were called to mission (2 Samuel 7:8; Isaiah 49:3; Luke 1:38), so are we (John 15:1-17 and 1 Peter 2:9-10). With Mary (Luke 1:38 NRSV), pray, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord." Worship Jesus.