

4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
3 December 2017	10 December 2017	17 December 2017	24 December 2017	31 December 2017
Mark 13.24-37	Mark 1.1-8	John 1 6-8, 19-28	Luke 1.26-38	Luke 2.22-40
The stars fall	Beginning again	The voice	Let it be	Faithful waiting
The poetic image in 13.24-25 describes God's final victory over chaos and evil: the stars fall, and the powers in the heavens are shaken. Do you think this happened at the crucifixion, or is it yet to happen?	Mark begins literally with 'Beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ'. Some people think that there is a double meaning: yes, it is the start of his book, but maybe the whole of the book of Mark is a beginning; we are part of the unfolding story. Do you think of yourself as part of God's story of salvation?	Another look at John the Baptist, from the gospel of John, who seemed to think that his witnessing was more important than his baptising . Try renaming him as 'John the witness', or 'John the martyr' (the same word in Greek). Does that change your picture of him?	The word used to describe the way that Mary becomes pregnant is unusual - literally the power of most high will cast a shadow over you. Why a shadow?	Simeon and Anna knew that their world was not as it should be, and waited patiently for its redemption, fasting and praying. How can we remember that God has a plan to redeem the world, that started in Christ?
Doors back then only locked from the inside, so a doorkeeper was necessary to let the owner in when they returned and knocked. We are instructed to be like doorkeepers, staying alert , not falling asleep like the disciples at Gethsemane. What do you think this means today?	Mark pays a lot of attention to John the Baptist's clothing and diet. Perhaps he was trying to suggest a return to Eden - a second start. There was a tradition that a river of honey flowed through Eden. What do you think the significance is?	The only title John accepted for himself was a voice. What can you do to be a voice in the wilderness, to make a straight path for the Lord to the people you know?	Gregory of Nazianzus, 4th century Bishop of Constantinople, wrote, "Let us seek to be like Christ, because Christ also became like us: to become gods through him since he himself, through us, became a man. He took the worst upon himself to make us a gift of the best." What do you think?	Luke is really clear that men and women, young and old , are part of God's salvation plan. How can we make church reflect this?

Reason	Tradition	Experience
Write down some thoughts that you have had about God, these passages, and your life.	What have other people said about these themes? Write down any lyrics from hymns that have been in your head, insights from books or social media, or encounters that you have had with people.	Make a note of the times when God has spoken to you this month through your 'spiritual senses', times when you've felt a sense of depth.

 There is a video for each week that you can watch at www.youtube.com/c/andyfishburne



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