

Advent, Day 4

Wednesday, December 5

Read Romans 13:9-1 “...the time has come for you to awake from your slumber...” *Isaiah 13:11*

WAKE UP!

I had given all the subtle and not-so-subtle hints I could. Pictures from the Sear’s and Penny’s catalogues had been strategically arranged all over the house. It was all up to Santa now.

A Red Rider BB Gun just had to be under the tree on Christmas morning, or...well, I didn’t know what I would do, but it would be drastic.

My mom and dad had been trying to put me off the track with comments about Santa not always coming up with *exactly* what we wanted. But I was not fooled, nor was I deterred from my solid conviction that Santa would come through. Christmas afternoon would find me shooting targets with my new acquisition, thanks to the unfailing hand of Santa Claus.

Christmas Eve is always the longest night of the year, and the toughest for sleeping. Finally, however, I was able to doze off.

About 4:30 a.m. I was abruptly awakened by scratching noise that was very distinct. I knew all the warnings about trying to catch Santa in the act, but those paled before the prospect of getting that Red Rider gun from Santa’s own hand. So I crept to the living room. Santa was nowhere to be seen. Instead, in the middle of the room, a large box with a big white bow. And the scratching was coming from inside.

Peering over the edge I saw a tiny little Dalmatian puppy, who began whining in earnest when he saw my wide eyes looking at him. About that same time, my dad came into the room, having also been roused by the whimpering dog.

“Well, I guess we might as well get everybody up,” he said.

Christmas morning was there! And there was my new dog, aptly labeled ‘Speck’ because, of course, he had a lot of specks of black on him. The note from Santa advised me that he felt I was grown up enough now to take care of this very special puppy. So he was giving him to me.

It took several hours, because I got so caught up in playing with Speck and opening other presents, for me to realize that there wasn’t any Red Rider BB gun for me that year.

My mother asked me if I was too disappointed. Holding a struggling puppy who was ardently licking my face didn’t seem to leave a lot of room for disappointment at the time. If I stopped to think about it, sure there might be some. But there was always next year.

The salvation of the world probably didn’t look like anything anyone had expected. Instead of chariots of fire and angel armies, there was the insistent cry of a baby from a manger, who needed all the care his mother could give him. Instead of rebel armies behind an iron-clad leader, there was a tiny group of faithful following behind their hope carrying a cross up a lonely hill.

It didn’t seem like enough at the time.

But God knows what we really need.

I never did get that BB gun. I did get a companion who stayed with me and was loyal for more than seventeen years, and who left me enough memories for a lifetime.

Wake up. Your Father has a marvelous gift for you. He can’t wait for you to open the package.