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Ytreeide's "Ishtar's Odyssey: A Family Story for Advent" (Book Review)

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Ishtar's Odyssey: A Family Story for Advent,

by Arnold Ytreeide. Grand Rapids, MI. Kregel Publications, 2015. 176 pp.

ISBN 9780825443930

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This is Arthur Ytreeide's fourth published Advent book published in the fall of 2015. As in *Jotham's Journey*, *Bartholomew's Passage*, and *Tabitha's Travels*, one can now follow Ishtar, a prince of Persia, through the Advent season to the manger-scene and his meeting with the Messiah.

As with *Jotham's Journey*, the beginning of the book shows us a pretty unimpressive Ishtar. He's selfish, immature, pampered and protected. Joining his father in the caravan to find the new King opens his life to a whole new adventure. For the first time he has to wait to eat. For the first time, he meets hardship face to face. For the first time, he is not the center of his own little universe. As his journey progresses, he matures and grows wiser. He also begins to examine his beliefs about the gods and his thoughts on this new baby king, the Messiah. By the end of the book, he's a much more likeable Ishtar.

Like the other three Advent story books, Ytreeide breaks the story up into cliff-hanger chapters, one for each day of the Advent season. Each chapter (as with all his books) leaves children (and adults!) eagerly waiting to hear the next day's adventure. At the end of each chapter, Ytreeide also has a short devotional thought. These devotional chapters lead families through the meaning of Christmas in a very engaging way, which is historically correct and points to our own personal need for a Savior.

Due to the success of his family adventure story books on advent, Ytreeide now has written Amon's Adventure which focuses on lent and the preparation for Easter. I plan on reading this starting next week to go through and prepare for the Lenten season.