

Advent Worship

Meditations on the First and Second Coming of Jesus

Advent. For some, the word brings memories. For others, it may be more of a fuzzy understanding. Even for others, it may hold no meaning at all. The word “advent” means “coming” in regards to the anticipation of Jesus and is usually celebrated for four weeks leading up to Christmas Day. In the Old Testament, the Israelites anticipated the advent of the Promised Messiah. Today, we are able to look back and marvel at the birth of the Messiah and also look forward to the day when He’ll come again to establish His Kingdom. This devotion is designed for you and your family to take a few nights together each week during this season of Advent - to meditate on the wonders of Christ’s birth and the glories of His Second Coming.

We encourage you to read and discuss the scriptures and pray together as a family. Some devotionals may have a small project to complete together and some may have a song to worship together. Begin and end your time together in prayer and light your Advent wreath candle if you’ve made one.

As we move through this Advent season, remember together as a family the coming of our Savior and His promise to come again.

Week One – Devotion One “A Miraculous Birth”

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25

Isaiah wrote his prophecy some 600 years before the birth of Christ, yet God revealed through Isaiah that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary over 600 years after Isaiah’s prophecy and told her that she was “favored of God” and that she would conceive the Son of God, she was confused. She didn’t understand how this was possible - she was not married and had no relations with any man. Thus she questioned Gabriel, asking “How can this be since I am a virgin?” In response, the angel assured her that “nothing was impossible with God” and that “the power of the most High” would accomplish this special miracle. Likewise, Mary’s fiance Joseph, was shocked when he was told by the angel that his bride-to-be was pregnant. He felt the best way to handle the situation was to separate from her. He knew the baby was not his, so logically the baby would have to have been another man’s child. However, the angel told Joseph of the baby’s supernatural origin - that he was the result of a miracle from God. He was warned not to divorce Mary. The angel told Joseph when the child was born, he was to name him Jesus because “he would save his people from their sin.” Without the virgin birth, there would be no salvation from sin. Without the virgin birth, Jesus would have been just another man. But...He is not a mere man, he is the God-man. This is why Mary was told that he would be called the “Son of the Most High” and the “Son of God.”

Song: “Mary Did You Know” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifCWN5pJGIE>

Time of Prayer

Week One – Devotion Two “A Comforting Promise”

Scripture Reading: John 14:1-3

It is the night when Jesus will be betrayed. Judas has already left the upper room to find the Roman soldiers and the officers of the Pharisees so he can lead them to Jesus. Jesus has been explaining for weeks to his disciples that he would have to leave them. What they didn’t fully comprehend yet was that he would be leaving them by way of the cross. It is at this point Jesus shares the famous words of comfort with his disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled...” These words

were spoken in the context of Jesus' promise that He will come again. When we hear these words, the troubles and cares of this life pale in comparison to the joy we will experience when we are in the presence of God. Even though Jesus was going to leave them, the disciples must have been greatly encouraged by the promise that Jesus made when he said, "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go... I will come again." It is amazing to think about the fact that Jesus is preparing a place for us. We know there is plenty of room for all who believe, for He says, "in my Father's house are many dwelling places." While we are still here on this earth, we can only imagine what it is going to be like in the presence of our Savior.

Activity: Have one family member read Revelation 21:1-22:6 and the rest of the family draw out what you believe Heaven will look like.

Song: "I Can Only Imagine" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_lrrq_opng

Time of Prayer

Week Two – Devotion One "A Glorious Name"

Scripture Reading:

Compare:

Matthew 1:21 with Luke 1:31;

Isaiah 7:14 with Matthew 1:23

Luke 1:32, 35 with Isaiah 9:6

Activity: List all the names of the Messiah recorded in the verses above.

Minister and author Matthew Henry wrote these words about Isaiah 9:6: "He is wonderful, counsellor. Justly is he called wonderful, for he is both God and man. His love is the wonder of angels and glorified saints; in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, he was wonderful. A constant series of wonders attended him, and, without controversy, great was the mystery of godliness concerning him. He is the counsellor, for he was intimately acquainted with the counsels of God from eternity, and he gives counsel to the children of men, in which he consults our welfare. It is by him that God has given us counsel, Ps 16:7; Rev 3:18. He is the wisdom of the Father, and is made of God to us wisdom. He is the mighty God—God, the mighty One. As he has wisdom, so he has strength, to go through with his undertaking: he is able to save to the utmost; and such is the work of the Mediator that no less a power than that of the mighty God could accomplish it. He is the everlasting Father, or the Father of eternity; he is God, one with the Father, who is from everlasting to everlasting. He is the author of everlasting life and happiness to them, and so is the Father of a blessed eternity to them. He is the prince of peace. As a King, he preserves the peace, commands peace, nay, he creates peace, in his kingdom. He is our peace, and it is his peace that both keeps the hearts of his people and rules in them. He is not only a peaceable prince, and his reign peaceable, but he is the author and giver of all good, all that peace which is the present and future bliss of his subjects." - from *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database, 2006*

Activity: Add to your list as many other names of Jesus that you can think of from the previous reading

Song: "What a Beautiful Name" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5L6QIAH3L4>

Time of Prayer

Week Two – Devotion Two “A Glorious Day”

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

In John 14:1-3, Jesus gave us the promise that “he will come again and receive us so that where he is we may be also.” Here in this passage in 1 Thessalonians, Paul gives us exciting details that surrounds this glorious day when Jesus comes again. First of all, He gives us a **great hope** that the Christians who have died before this day of Jesus return are in the presence of Jesus. Verse 14 says, “For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died” (NLT). Then, Paul gives us details of Jesus’ **great advent**, or Second Coming. List the sequence of events according to verse 16 and 17 that happens at when Jesus comes again.

- 1) Jesus descends
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) dead Christians will _____
- 6) living Christians will _____

What are we as Christians suppose to do because of this great promise according to verse 18?

Song: “Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me)” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXp6xcY5lqU>

Time of Prayer

Week Three – Devotion One “The Mystery of Godliness”

Scripture: 1 Timothy 3:16

This verse is from a song that the first century church would sing in their worship. The phrase “by common confession” indicates that this was a song well-known among the churches of Paul’s day. This “mystery of Godliness,” as Paul explains it, is all wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ - beginning with His incarnation and culminating with His ascension into heaven. The six lines of this hymn give us some important truths of our Savior:

- 1) “He was revealed in the flesh.”
 - a. This speaks of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem and His earthly ministry. The word “revealed” does not mean “to bring into existence” but “to make visible.” The invisible, eternal God, was made visible by the miraculous virgin birth and “we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).
- 2) “Vindicated in the spirit.”
 - a. Vindicated means “to justify” or to “declare righteous.” At Jesus’ baptism, the Holy Spirit came as a dove, descending upon our Savior. The Father’s voice was heard, saying, “This is my beloved son in

whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17). Jesus, the sinless one, became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). Romans 1:4 tells us “Jesus was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness.”

- 3) “Seen by Angels.”
 - a. The idea of “seen” means “to visit,” “to observe,” or “to attend to.” Angels announced our Savior's birth, angels ministered to him at His temptation, and angels attended to him in the garden. Angels were there at His resurrection and Angels announced He would come again at His ascension.
- 4) “He was announced to the Nations.”
 - a. The disciples were faithful to the Great Commission Jesus left them. They were His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8).
- 5) “He was believed on in the world.”
 - a. Because of the disciples faithful proclamation, many believed and churches were established wherever their missionary journeys took them. Today, churches exist all over the known world because of this “mystery of Godliness.”
- 6) “Taken to heaven in glory.”
 - a. Acts 1:9-10 describes the ascension of our Lord. Hebrews 1:3 says, “When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Pastor John MacArthur writes that “in six short stanzas, this hymn summarizes the gospel. God became man, died for our sins, triumphed over death, was honored by angels and feared by demons, and ascended into heaven. This message was preached all over the world and many believed and were saved. That is the heart of the message. It is our mission to proclaim to the world.”

Activity: Play a game of Pictionary using the life of Jesus. Take turns drawing out an event in the life of Jesus and see if the other family members can guess what the event is. Examples include Jesus in a Manger, the angel telling Mary she will be the mother of Jesus, Jesus walks on the water, etc.

Song: “Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbe7OruLk8I>

Time of Prayer

Week Three – Devotion Two “An Amazing Mystery”

Scripture: Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58 then discuss the following questions:

- 1) What is the mystery Paul is writing about? We will not all sleep, but we will all _____.
- 2) How fast will this change take place?
- 3) When will this change occur?
- 4) What is the change that will happen to every Christian?
- 5) Who gives us the victory over death?
- 6) What three things should we do until Jesus comes and accomplishes this mystery (vs. 58)?

Song: “Resurrection Song” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjgRFMaEs1w>

Time of Prayer

Week Four – Devotion One “Baby in Bethlehem”

Scripture: Micah 5:2-4 and Matthew 2:1-23

Just a little town in Judah had the greatest distinction of being the birthplace of the Messiah. This little town was even named by Micah the prophet about 700 years before it happened. The town of Bethlehem was where the Magi found the Christ-child and presented to Him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The birth of Jesus was a time of great blessing and joy to many. At the same time, horrifying and atrocious acts related to the birth of Jesus fell upon the city as well - this was also prophesied centuries before. Warned in a dream, the Magi did not return to Jerusalem to tell Herod where to find the Messiah as he had requested. In his rage, Herod ordered the execution of all the infant boys ages two and younger, committing unspeakable crimes upon the people of this quiet little town. I can't imagine what pain and agony the inhabitants went through. But, in this part of the Christmas story, like in the other narratives, I find a few reasons to exalt and praise God and to make personal application to my life despite its horrors.

God's timing is perfect and unalterable.

We know and understand the enemy wanted to kill the Christ child through Herod's request of the Magi to relay to him Christ's place of birth. What I find interesting is that while death was in the plan of God for His son, death would come in God's time and on God's terms. There is no person or power that could alter God's timetable. We can draw great comfort from that, knowing that God's timing for me and for you – the times of sorrow He allows us to endure, the time of joy He gives – these are all by His design and perfect will and they are just the right length of time for what we need. The times of sorrow are not too short unless I think that I overcame them in my own strength and they are not too long unless I become distraught and abandon the cause of Christ. I must trust God and praise Him that each season of time that He brings into my life is perfect.

God knows all the evil intentions of the Enemy.

I don't need to fear the enemy. I acknowledge his existence. I understand he is powerful and deceptive and destructive, but I do not fear him. I do not try and outsmart him or out think him, lying in bed trying to figure out where he might attack next. I don't need to worry about that. I leave all fear in my Heavenly Father's hands. Joseph had no clue of Herod's intentions toward his infant child, but God knew and God warned Joseph of the enemy's plans. I am convinced that God will protect us just like he protected Joseph from the enemy's plans.

Remember that Jesus prayed for us in this matter, saying "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." I'm reminded of what John wrote, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:8). Remember that he also wrote, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8). We also read in Heb 2:14 that "since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-that is, the devil."

God always provides a place of refuge.

Satan had his plans, but they were no match for God's great plan. Before Satan could execute his plan, God intervened. God had a place to harbor His children.

God himself is our refuge:

Psalm 9:9 "The Lord will also be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble."

Psalm 46:1 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Psalm 57:1 "Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me for my soul takes refuge in you, and in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by."

Psalm 91:2 "I will say to the Lord, my refuge and fortress, My God in whom I trust."

Psalm 142:5 "I cried to you Lord; I said, you are my refuge."

God always brings deliverance.

The angel, once again, visited Joseph... only this time he was in Egypt as a refugee in a strange land. The angel sent by God then told him he can safely return to his home. God, and God alone, restored Joseph to the land of promise. Sometimes that deliverance comes unexpectedly and in emergency situations. Sometimes that deliverance seems as if it will never come. We pray and wait, pray and wait, and ask "how long Lord?" (Psalm 13). Throughout our cries, we know in His perfect time, He will bring deliverance.

Song: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3GqXdarBPo>

Time of Prayer

Week Four – Devotion Two "King of Kings and Lord of Lords"

Scripture: Revelation 19:11-21

In His first advent, Jesus came as a suffering servant. His purpose was to lay down His life for a ransom for many. His mission was to save us from our sin and create in us a clean heart. In His second advent, Jesus comes as a conquering King. From the scripture reading, discuss these questions:

- 1) What are the names Messiah is called in this passage?
- 2) Describe His appearance in verses 11-16. What does He look like?
- 3) Who is following him (vs. 14)? How are they dressed?
- 4) What is His mission, according to verse 15?

Verses 19 -21 describe Jesus' victory over the beast (the Anti-Christ) and his false prophet. To further understand who these characters, are read Revelation 13. What happens to these two when they try to make war against Jesus and His army?

After Jesus defeats this vast army led by the Anti-Christ, He establishes His kingdom on this earth. In this Kingdom, there will be peace and perfect justice because Jesus will be ruling the earth. After the thousand year reign of Jesus, we read of one more final battle. This battle is led by Satan in order to defeat Jesus (read Rev. 20:7-10). Satan is utterly defeated and is cast into the Lake of Fire, never to deceive anyone ever again. After this event, God judges all the unrighteous (Rev. 20:11-15) and creates a New Heaven and New Earth. At this time, those who know Jesus as Savior will dwell together with Him for eternity (Rev. 21,22). Praise God for His amazing plan for us who know Him!

Song: "Revelation Song" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-zk-E55dRk>

Time of Prayer

Final Devotion - Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

Read through the story of the birth of Christ in Luke 2:1-20.

Activity: Act out the story to emphasize the events of this glorious day.

Share with one another what the coming of Jesus means to you. Share how thankful you are that He came and was willing to die for your sins and give you the gift of eternal life. Think about how you can keep the Second Coming of Christ an important part of your thoughts in this new year.

Prayer Time: Thank Jesus for His first coming to bring salvation to the world. Thank Jesus for His Second Coming, when all sin will be abolished and there will be eternal peace on earth. What a beautiful gift.