# A GUIDE TO ADVENT

2026

# A Guide to Advent

## WHAT IS ADVENT?

The word "**Advent**" comes from the Latin word adventus, which means "coming" or "arrival." Over the years of Church history, this word came to describe the coming of Christ in His incarnation, born as the Son of God and the Son of Man. And, His second coming, when He returns to earth to execute judgment and establish kingdom righteousness in the earth.

Today, Advent is a season of anticipating and celebrating the birth of the Savior of the world. It is observed on the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. Each Sunday celebrates the hope, peace, joy and love which came to men when Jesus was born as the gift and grace of heaven—given to all people to fulfill the need of their lives and the longing of their hearts. It also continues to look ahead to the second coming of Christ, the blessed hope of all believers.

## WHY OBSERVE ADVENT?

Advent gives us the opportunity to properly prepare our hearts for the celebration of the coming of Jesus Christ the King, born of a virgin, born under the law, born to take away the sins of man through the fulfillment of the law by living a sinless life and dying a sinner's death. And to anticipate the second advent of King Jesus when He comes again to establish kingdom authority throughout the whole earth.

## HOW DO WE OBSERVE ADVENT?

We observe Advent by focusing each week on one aspect of what Christ's Advent promised and what it provided. Each Sunday we light the Advent candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Each Sunday we bring a teaching which speaks to the themes of The Advent of Hope, The Advent of Peace, The Advent of Joy and the Advent of Love. On Christmas Eve, we celebrate the Advent of Christ's Presence. We tie the entire Advent season together through worship, word, communion and the lighting of individual candles, representing Purity, Proclamation and Power. Through all of this, we properly prepare our hearts for a grand and glorious celebration of the Savior's birth on Christmas Day.

# WEEK ONE: THE ADVENT OF HOPE

## The Prophet's Promise

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." **Jeremiah 23:5-6**

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." **Luke 1:31-33**

Biblical hope is a settled confidence in a certain glorious future in God. The prophets of old sought to sow hope into the hearts of God's people. This hope was rooted in the coming of a future Messiah who would save them from their sins and show them the way back to a reconciled relationship with God. The advent of Jesus became hope's realized substance and salvation-peace and prosperity for all.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation
Joy of every longing heart.

***(Come Thou Long Expected Jesus, Charles Wesley, 1744)***

***"Father God, thank you for the hope you sowed into the hearts of Your people in times long ago, and thank you for the hope you have sown into our hearts as well. Their hope was rooted in a future Savior that would come to earth as a holy child. That hope was rewarded and realized in Christ's holy birth and sinless life. Our hope is in a certain glorious future in this life, and an even more glorious future when King Jesus comes again at His Second Advent. For Your precious promises for this blessed hope, we give you glory honor and praise. In Jesus' Mighty and Saving Name, Amen."***

# WEEK TWO: THE ADVENT OF PEACE

## The People's Possession

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."
**Isaiah 9:6-7**

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." **Luke 2:13-14**

Biblical peace is an undisturbed composure, calm and contentment produced by being right with God, right with self and right with others. The Scriptures call Jesus the "Prince of Peace."

He is the author and provider of divine peace by His warring and winning against the world, the flesh and the devil-death, hell and the grave through his life, death and resurrection. On the night Jesus was born, peace on earth was born. Fear, worry, depression and despondency could now be conquered and crushed because the Prince of Peace had come in the person of a holy child, born in a lowly manger, in a little town called Bethlehem.

O Little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep,
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth,
The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years,
Are met in thee tonight.
***(O Little Town of Bethlehem, Public Domain, 1867)***

***"Jesus, mighty Prince of Peace, we receive your undisturbed composure, calm and contentment. We receive the peace with God, peace with self and peace with others that you came to provide. We choose, in Your Holy Name, to conquer and crush fear, worry, depression and despondency through the perfect peace that You provide. We welcome your peace as a precious gift to be tried, treasured and trusted-encountered, experienced and enjoyed. We say to you as we approach the celebration of your advent on this Christmas Day, "Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today." In Jesus' Mighty and Saving Name, Amen"***

# WEEK THREE: THE ADVENT OF JOY

## The Angel's Proclamation

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy; they rejoice before You according to the joy of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." **Isaiah 9:2-3**

"Then the angel said to them, do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." **Luke 2:10-11**

When Jesus came into the world, unprecedented joy came into the world. It was joy of a nature and quality no one had ever experienced before. It was a divine, spiritual joy sent from the Father in the person of the Son. We could define this joy as a delight and satisfaction in the human soul that grows out of an intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus, the source of this joy. The advent of Christ, brought about the advent of joy. He brought something beyond happy feelings born out of happy circumstances. He provided a "prosperity of the soul" that dominated difficulties, triumphed over trials and fed and filled the human heart.

> Joy to the world! The Lord is come,
> Let earth receive her King!
> Let every heart prepare Him room,
> And heaven and nature sing,
> And heaven and nature sing,
> And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.
> ***(Joy to the World, Public Domain, 1836)***

***"Jesus, when you came into the world, joy came into the world. Your birth trumpeted the advent of JOY for all people, for all time. What the angels heralded in high and holy praise, we, your Church, declare with long and loud declarations filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. You, King Jesus, have made our hearts glad and our lives full. You, King Jesus, have poured out the oil of joy that has washed away the spirit of heaviness. You, King Jesus, are the fountainhead of fullness and the source of all satisfaction. For this, we give you all the glory and all the honor. In Your prevailing Name we pray, Amen."***

# WEEK FOUR: THE ADVENT OF LOVE

## The Father's Passion

"Though the mountains move and the hills shake, My love will not be removed from you and my covenant of peace will not be shaken, says your compassionate Lord." **Isaiah 54:10**

"Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to perform the mercy (steadfast love) promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant." **Luke 1:68-72**

God's love and passion for lost and broken humanity knows no bounds. There is nothing that He was unwilling to do in order to bring helpless men and women back to a holy God. In fact, He poured out the treasure of heaven, in the person of His Holy Son, to buy back and bring back a rescued, redeemed, restored and reconciled people that He might call His own. The Advent of Christ Jesus is a story of divine love and passion—sacrificing any price in order to save every person.

O come, O come Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.
***(O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, Public Domain, 1861)***

***Father God, your love and passion for us causes us to be humbled beyond measure and grateful beyond measure. Thank You, thank You, thank You for the gracious gift of your Son and our Savior. In King Jesus, we see the face of divine love and passion. In King Jesus, we see the face of a Father who wanted us to be part of His "forever family." Because you loved, we know love. Because you loved, we see light. Because you loved, we have life. All because you loved. For all this we give you our hearts, minds, souls and strength.***
***In Jesus' loving and liberating Name, Amen.***

# CHRISTMAS EVE:
# THE ADVENT OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

## The Savior's Personal Permanence

"So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us.'" **Matthew 1:22-23**

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." **John 1:14**

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." **John 14:16-17**

When Jesus came to live among humanity, people on earth were able to have the Son of God and God the Son personally present with them. And everywhere He went, the revelation of God's truth and the release of God's triumphant power abounded. The gospel was preached, the sick were healed and the demonically bound were set free. The calming influence and impact of the Prince of Peace liberated those troubled and tormented, weighed down by fear and anxiety. Christ's presence changed everyone and everything according to God's goodwill toward mankind. He truly was Immanuel—God come to personally dwell among men and women and deliver them from the penalty, power, guilt and shame of sin's death-dealing effects.

But Christ didn't come in His first advent to remain on earth. He lived, He died, He rose and ascended back to the Father in heaven. So, the question arose, now what? Well, Christ answered that He would remain personally and permanently present in and among redeemed people through the person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit. And so it is to this very day, and so it will be until His second advent when He comes again to reign on earth. Christ's presence is personally and permanently among all those who call Him Savior, Lord and King.

# CHRISTMAS EVE:
# THE ADVENT OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.
Hark, the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King.
***(Hark, the Herald Angels Sing, Public Domain, 1739).***

**"Jesus, our Immanuel, how grateful we are that You chose to dwell among mankind as the Son of God and God the Son. For Your presence among the inhabitants of earth became the Source of salvation for all. And, thank You that when You left this earth and returned to heaven, You didn't leave us orphaned and alone. Thank You that You sent the Holy Spirit as the personal expression of Your permanent presence in, upon and among us. You said You would never leave us nor forsake us. You said You would be with us always, even to the end of the age. And, by Your Holy Spirit, You have kept that promise moment-by-moment and day by day. Because of this, we can enjoy and employ Your presence, peace and power always. Your closeness is our comfort. In Your ever-present Name we pray, Amen."**

# APPENDIX

## The Advent Wreath

## WHAT IS AN ADVENT WREATH?

The tradition of the Advent wreath began in the mid 1800s and continues to be a symbol of the season to this day. The Advent wreath is made of a circle of evergreen, representing God's unchanging and eternal nature. Four Advent candles are then placed around the circle, representing hope, peace, joy and love. The three candles for hope, peace and love are purple, representing Christ's royalty. The candle for joy is pink (or rose), representing Christ's joy. A fifth candle, which is white, is placed in the center of the circle of evergreen, representing Christ Himself.

## WHY USE AN ADVENT WREATH?

The Advent wreath provides a way to mark the weeks of Advent. Each week as you read through the scriptures and commentary, sing the Christmas hymn, and recite the prayer provided in the "How Do We Observe Advent?" section of this guide, you can light each of the Advent wreath candles for hope, peace, joy and love.

## HOW IS AN ADVENT WREATH MADE?

**Supplies needed:**

- A green wreath or greenery bows
- 3 purple candles
- 1 pink (or rose) candle
- 1 white candle
- 5 candle holders



**Note:** The candles can be any type - taper, pillar, etc. - and the candle holders would just need to fit the candles. You may also use an advent wreath form found online or at your local craft store that has the candle holders built in.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- If using a pre-made green wreath, be sure to shape and fluff the branches if they are flat or bent. If using greenery bows, fashion them into a circle to make a wreath shape.
- Place four candle holders around the wreath, equidistant from each other. You can either place them around the outside of the wreath, or fold them into the branches.
- Place one candle holder in the center of the wreath.
- Place the three purple candles and the one pink (or rose) candle in the candle holders around the wreath.
- Place the white candle in the candle holder in the center of the wreath.

## LIGHTING THE CANDLES

- On the first Sunday of Advent (the fourth Sunday before Christmas), light the HOPE (purple) candle.
- On the second Sunday of Advent (the third Sunday before Christmas), light the HOPE (purple) and PEACE (purple) candles.
- On the third Sunday of Advent (the second Sunday before Christmas), light the HOPE (purple), PEACE (purple) and JOY (pink/rose) candles.
- On the fourth Sunday of Advent (the last Sunday before Christmas), light the HOPE (purple), PEACE (purple) and
- JOY (pink/rose) and LOVE (purple) candles.
- On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, light all of the candles including the CHRIST (white) candle.





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