

Christmas Day Reflection, December 25

Spend this week preparing your heart, your mind, your spirit, and your family not just for Christmas celebrations but worshiping Jesus for everything He is: Savior, Lord, Judge, Shepherd, Redeemer, Holy One, Light, and Son of God.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
(John 1: 29)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it.
(John 1: 1-5)

*Shout triumphantly to the Lord, all the earth.
Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.
Acknowledge that Yahweh is God.
He made us, and we are His—
His people, the sheep of His pasture.
Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.
Give thanks to Him and praise His name.
For Yahweh is good, and His love is eternal;
His faithfulness endures through all generations.*
(Psalm 100)

Is Jesus your shepherd? Is He your Savior? Is He your Lord? How is He calling you to respond today?

A Study for Families 2017

First Baptist Church
Dickson, TN

"Advent? I thought it was Christmas!"

Though Advent and Christmas are both celebrated in December, Advent intentionally focuses on the Biblical promises, prophecies, and fulfillment surrounding the birth of Christ. Advent looks back at the Old Testament prophets telling of the Messiah, finds confidence in the fulfillment in Christ, and looks ahead to His return.

The word *Advent* means "coming." During the four Sundays of Advent and through Christmas Eve, we celebrate the first coming of Jesus as a baby, the fact that God came into the world in the flesh, and anticipate His coming again as victorious, righteous judge.

Jesus came to us as a baby to be our Savior and Lord. But we will see Him again when He returns as He promised. Use this season of Advent to repent, reflect, and rejoice in Jesus Christ past, present, and future!

Advent

Advent Week 1, November 27-December 3

This week we focus on God's prophecy to bring Israel out of exile and their hope for the promised Messiah.

Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him—a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight will be in the fear of the Lord. On that day the root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples. The nations will seek Him, and His resting place will be glorious.
(Isaiah 11:1-3, 10)

The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.
(Isaiah 7:14)

"Look, the days are coming"— this is the Lord's declaration— "when I will fulfill the good promises that I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a Righteous Branch to sprout up for David, and He will administer justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely, and this is what she will be named: Yahweh Our Righteousness.
(Jeremiah 33:14-16)

Questions for family discussion and personal reflection:

How was the promised Messiah described in Isaiah and Jeremiah?

Who is listed in the Messiah's family tree?

What affect would the Messiah have on Israel and Judah? What effect would He have on all nations?

Advent Week 4, December 18-24

This week, reflect on God's faithfulness to send Jesus in the flesh and look forward to His second coming.

He will stand and shepherd them in the strength of Yahweh, in the majestic name of Yahweh His God. They will live securely, for then His greatness will extend to the ends of the earth. He will be their peace.
(Micah 5:4-5)

In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David."
(Luke 2:8-11)

"Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and there will be anguish on the earth among nations bewildered by the roaring sea and waves. People will faint from fear and expectation of the things that are coming on the world, because the celestial powers will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near!" (Luke 21:25-28)

Questions for family discussion and personal reflection:

What do each of these passages teach you about fear?

How does the passage from Micah 5 reflect Jesus' teaching in John 10?

Does God keep His promises? How do you know?

Please join the First Baptist congregation on Christmas Eve, Sunday the 24th. We will have a 10 am worship (no Sunday School) and a 5 pm candlelight service.

Advent Week 2, December 4-10

This week, let these passages center your mind on the Messiah and His coming kingdom.

*He will judge Your people with righteousness
and Your afflicted ones with justice.
May he vindicate the afflicted among the people,
help the poor, and crush the oppressor.
May he continue while the sun endures and as long as the moon,
throughout all generations.
May his name endure forever; as long as the sun shines, may his
fame increase.
May all nations be blessed by him and call him blessed.
May the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does wonders, be
praised.
May His glorious name be praised forever; the whole earth is filled
with His glory. Amen and amen.
(Psalm 72:2; 5; 17-19)*

*Faithful love and truth will join together;
righteousness and peace will embrace.
Truth will spring up from the earth,
and righteousness will look down from heaven.
Righteousness will go before Him to prepare the way for His steps.
(Psalm 85:10-11; 13)*

*Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah;
One will come from you to be ruler over Israel for Me. His origin is
from antiquity, from eternity. (Micah 5:2)*

Questions for family discussion and personal reflection:
How would the Messiah be mighty?

What eternal qualities would the Messiah embody?

What kind of ruler would the Messiah be?

Advent Week 3, December 11-17

This week's scriptures point to the arrival of God's Kingdom through the His Son, Jesus.

*And the angel came to [Mary] and said, "Rejoice, favored woman!
The Lord is with you." But she was deeply troubled by this
statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. Then
the angel told her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found
favor with God. Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a
son, and you will call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be
called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him
the throne of His father David. He will reign over the house of
Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end...The Holy Spirit
will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will
overshadow you. Therefore, the holy One to be born
will be called the Son of God."
(Luke 1:28-33, 35)*

*An angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to [Joseph] in a dream,
saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your
wife, because what has been conceived in her is by the Holy
Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name Him
Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." Now all
this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the
prophet: See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a
son, and they will name Him Immanuel, which is translated "God
is with us." (Matthew 1:20-23)*

Questions for family discussion and personal reflection:
What descriptive names are given to Jesus in these
passages?

From which family tree did Joseph come?

What characteristics of faith do you see in Mary and
Joseph?

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