

Advent Devotional

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JOY IN THE WAITING

Merciful God, who sent your messengers, the prophets, to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Christian Year

Time is an important part of our lives. We organize it into days, weeks, months, and years; we mark holidays, celebrate birthdays, and remember anniversaries; we look forward to upcoming vacations. Sometimes it seems that we are always living in anticipation of the next big event. Christians confess that Jesus is the Lord of history, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Throughout the centuries, the church has lived within a liturgical year—one that orders its time to represent the life of Jesus and his return. So, “Advent deals with the coming of Christ; Christmas, his birth; Epiphany, his manifestation to the Gentiles; Lent, his journey toward death; the Great Triduum, the last days of Jesus’ earthly life; Easter, the time to celebrate his resurrection; and Pentecost, the time to experience life in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Robert Weber). By ordering our lives around Christ, we proclaim that “God is the larger plot and context in which our stories find themselves” (Eugene Peterson).

The Advent Season

The Advent season is different from the Christmas season. Christmas is a time for celebrating the birth of our Savior, but Advent is a time of waiting. During this season, we recall how Israel waited for the Messiah, and we learn how to wait patiently for his return. For the most part, our culture ignores the Advent season and plunges headfirst into a distorted, commercialized version of Christmas. But the Church stands on the gospel and reminds us that God’s promises are worth waiting for.

The Advent Scripture Readings

Our Advent Scripture readings invite us into the biblical story and tell us how “the good creation of the Father, ruined by sin, is restored by the Son of

Tuesday December 13 Day 17			
AM	Psalm 45	Isaiah 9:1–7	2 Peter 1:12–21
PM	Psalm 47, 48	Luke 22:54–69	1 Kings 17:1–16; 18:17–46 (Black birds)
Wednesday December 14 Day 18			
AM	Psalm 119:49–72	Isaiah 9:8–17	2 Peter 2:1–10
PM	Psalm 49	Mark 1:1–8	Isaiah 6:1–13; 9:1–7 (Tongs with coals)
Thursday December 15 Day 19			
AM	Psalm 50	Isaiah 9:18–10:4	2 Peter 2:10–16
PM	Psalm 33	Matthew 3:1–12	Jeremiah 8:22–9:11 (Tears)
Friday December 16 Day 20			
AM	Psalm 40, 54	Isaiah 10:5–19	2 Peter 2:17–22
PM	Psalm 51	Matthew 11:2–15	Habakkuk 1:1–2:1; 3:16–19 (Watch tower)
Saturday December 17 Day 21			
AM	Psalm 55	Isaiah 10:20–27	Jude 17–25
PM	Psalm 138, 139	Luke 3:15–20	Nehemiah 1:1–2:8; 6:15–16; 13:10–22 (Wall)
Sunday December 18 Day 22			
AM	Psalm 24, 29	Isaiah 42:1–12	Ephesians 6:10–20
PM	Psalm 8, 84	John 3:16–21	Luke 1:26–38 (Angel)
Monday December 19 Day 23			
AM	Psalm 61, 62	Isaiah 11:1–9	Revelation 20:1–10
PM	Psalm 112, 115	John 5:30–47	Luke 1:39–56 (Mother & Child)
Tuesday December 20 Day 24			
AM	Psalm 66, 67	Isaiah 11:10–16	Revelation 20:11–21:8
PM	Psalm 116, 117	Luke 1:5–25	Luke 1:57–80 (Pencil)
Wednesday December 21 Day 25			
AM	Psalm 72	Isaiah 28:9–22	Revelation 21:9–21
PM	Psalm 111, 113	Luke 1:26–38	Luke 3:1–20 (Sandals)
Thursday December 22 Day 26			
AM	Psalm 80	Isaiah 29:13–24	Revelation 21:22–22:5
PM	Psalm 146, 147	Luke 1:39–56	Matthew 1:1–25 (Hammer)
Friday December 23 Day 27			
AM	Psalm 93, 96	Isaiah 33:17–22	Revelation 22:6–11, 18–20
PM	Psalm 148, 150	Luke 1:57–66	Matthew 2:1–12 (Star)
Saturday December 24 Day 28			
AM	Psalm 45, 46	Isaiah 35:1–10	Revelation 22:12–17
PM	Psalm 89:1–29	Isaiah 59:15–21	Luke 2:1–20 (Manger)

God and recreated by the grace of the Holy Spirit into the kingdom of God” (Herman Bavinck). Israel’s longing for Christ’s first coming teaches us to long for his second. These two events are held together in the Bible. The Father sent a Child to redeem; he will send that same Child to resurrect. “Both Old and New Testaments promise that one day the God who created the world will flood it with his glory, transforming it so that it thrills and throbs with his love, justice, and peace” (N. T. Wright). We live in the last days, saddened by the evil around us, but brimming with hope in God’s glorious future. Advent, then, is the time to sing “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” with the confidence of our faith: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Advent

In Advent we are “learning to live appropriately between the two ‘comings,’ under the rescuing rule of Jesus and in the power of his Spirit. That is what it means to be a Christian” (N. T. Wright). We must learn to wait like Christians—to lament our sinful condition, to pray for the coming of God’s kingdom, to long for the renewal of all creation, and to watch for the signs of God’s presence. But we do all of this in hope. For God has already entered into our world, so that “even in December’s lengthening darkness, this seed of joyful hope grows within us” (Bobby Gross). So, wait with confidence. When our Lord returns, all will be well.

The Daily Scripture Passages for Prayer and Meditation

**Scripture in red is for the Jesse Tree.*

Sunday November 27 Day 1			
AM	Psalm 146, 147	Isaiah 1:1–9	2 Peter 3:1–10
PM	Psalm 111, 112, 113	Matthew 25:1–13	Genesis 1–2:3 (Globe & Bird)
Monday November 28 Day 2			
AM	Psalm 1, 2, 3	Isaiah 1:10–20	1 Thessalonians 1:1–10
PM	Psalm 4, 7	Luke 20:1–8	Genesis 2:4–3:24 (Fruit & Snake)
Tuesday November 29 Day 3			
AM	Psalm 5, 6	Isaiah 1:21–31	1 Thessalonians 2:1–12
PM	Psalm 10, 11	Luke 20:9–18	Genesis 6:11–22; 7:17–8:12, 20–9:17 (Ark)
Wednesday November 30 Day 4			
AM	Psalm 119:1–24	Isaiah 2:1–11	1 Thessalonians 2:13–20
PM	Psalm 12, 13, 14	Luke 20:19–26	Genesis 11:1–9 (Tower)

Thursday December 1 Day 5			
AM	Psalm 18:1–20	Isaiah 2:12–22	1 Thessalonians 3:1–13
PM	Psalm 18:21–50	Luke 20:27–40	Genesis 12:1–7; 15:1–6 (Stars)
Friday December 2 Day 6			
AM	Psalm 16, 17	Isaiah 3:8–15	1 Thessalonians 4:1–12
PM	Psalm 22	Luke 20:41–21:4	Genesis 22:1–19 (Ram)
Saturday December 3 Day 7			
AM	Psalm 20, 21	Isaiah 4:2–6	1 Thessalonians 4:13–18
PM	Psalm 110, 116, 117	Luke 21:5–19	Genesis 28:10–22 (Ladder)
Sunday December 4 Day 8			
AM	Psalm 148, 149, 150	Isaiah 5:1–7	2 Peter 3:11–18
PM	Psalm 114, 115	Luke 7:28–35	Genesis 37, 41–46:7 (Rainbow cloak)
Monday December 5 Day 9			
AM	Psalm 25	Isaiah 5:8–23	1 Thessalonians 5:1–11
PM	Psalm 9, 15	Luke 21:20–28	Exodus 2:1–3:22 (Burning bush)
Tuesday December 6 Day 10			
AM	Psalm 26, 28	Isaiah 5:13–25	1 Thessalonians 5:12–28
PM	Psalm 36, 39	Luke 21:29–38	Exodus 12:1–36 (Lamb)
Wednesday December 7 Day 11			
AM	Psalm 38	Isaiah 6:1–13	2 Thessalonians 1:1–12
PM	Psalm 119:25–48	John 7:53–8:11	Exodus 14:1–31 (Fire & Clouds)
Thursday December 8 Day 12			
AM	Psalm 37:1–18	Isaiah 7:1–9	2 Thessalonians 2:1–12
PM	Psalm 37:19–42	Luke 22:1–13	Exodus 19:16–20:20 (Stone tablets)
Friday December 9 Day 13			
AM	Psalm 31	Isaiah 7:10–25	2 Thessalonians 2:13–3:5
PM	Psalm 35	Luke 22:14–30	Joshua 1:1–11; 6:1–20 (Shofar)
Saturday December 10 Day 14			
AM	Psalm 30, 32	Isaiah 8:1–15	2 Thessalonians 3:6–18
PM	Psalm 42, 43	Luke 22:31–38	Judges 2:6–23; 6:1–6, 11–8:28 (Clay water pitcher)
Sunday December 11 Day 15			
AM	Psalm 63, 98	Isaiah 13:6–13	Hebrews 12:18–29
PM	Psalm 103	John 3:22–30	1 Samuel 3:1–21; 8:10–22; 9:15–10:9 (Crown)
Monday December 12 Day 16			
AM	Psalm 41, 52	Isaiah 8:16–9:1	2 Peter 1:1–11
PM	Psalm 44	Luke 22:39–53	1 Samuel 16–17 (Sling)