

## Celebrating the Advent Season

Memorize Luke 1:45: *Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!*

**ADVENT**: The arrival of something important or awaited.

The advent of the Christmas season is upon us. As you think about the coming of Christmas what thoughts and emotions does that stir within?

As believers we know that Christmas is the time set aside to celebrate the coming of Jesus to earth as a man, born as a baby. It is a time God has given us to commemorate His goodness and grace in sending us what we need ~ a Savior! From the moment sin entered the world back in the garden of Eden, mankind has needed Christmas. In this study we will participate in the celebration of the Christmas Advent.

Background: Within the church the term Advent actually has three meanings: (1) the coming of the Lord in the flesh at Christmas; (2) His arrival in Word and Spirit; and (3) the final Advent when Jesus will return bodily in glory. The celebration of Christmas Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. Because Christmas falls on different days each year, Advent can last 22 to 28 days. To celebrate Christmas Advent five candles are needed. During each Sunday's observance of Advent a new candle is lit, until on Christmas Day all five candles are lit. Our study will utilize the following sequence:

- Week One: The Prophecy Candle ~ Period of Waiting
- Week Two: The Bethlehem Candle ~ Symbol of Preparation
- Week Three: The Shepherd's Candle ~ Sharing the Good News
- Week Four: The Angel's Candle ~ Proclamation of Love
- Christmas Eve/Day: Christ's Candle ~ Adoration

As you begin, **pray** that the Holy Spirit will enable you to understand in a fresh way the depth of God's love for you, His beloved!

Part One: The Prophecy Candle ~ Period of Waiting

1. There are numerous prophecies about the coming of Jesus. Look up the following verses and complete the chart. The first one has been done for you.

Name or words for Jesus	Description of Jesus' character or action
Genesis 3:15 Seed or offspring of a woman	Crush Satan's head
Isaiah 7:14	
Isaiah 9:6-7 (list 4 names)	(list 4 actions)
Isaiah 11:1-5	
Isaiah 40:10-11	
Isaiah 49:6	
Micah 5:2	

2. Review the information you listed about Jesus. What about Him do you find most attractive? How does that affect you?

3. Just as folks living in Old Testament times awaited their promised Messiah, we too often find ourselves in periods of waiting. After reading and meditating on the following verses, write down your thoughts about how waiting can serve to draw you closer to Jesus. Hebrews 11:39-40; Galatians 4:4-5; Psalm 27:14; Psalm 130:5; Isaiah 64:4; Isaiah 30:18

Part Two: The Bethlehem Candle ~ Symbol of Preparation

**The Birthplace of Christ**

Read Luke 2:1-7.

4. Joseph and Mary traveled from the city of \_\_\_\_\_ to the city of \_\_\_\_\_, also known as the city of David.
5. If you have access to a Bible atlas or map in the back of your Bible, about how far apart are these two towns?
6. What event necessitated this journey?
7. Why was the birthplace of Christ also known as the city of David? Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and 17:12.
8. Where did the Israelites expect Christ to be born? Read John 7:42.

But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations. Psalm 33:11

9. With the coming of the Christmas season comes a time of many plans, preparations, and tasks. Let's see what we can learn about preparation from the example of these people in Scripture. Complete the chart. The first one has been done for you.

Person(s)	Task/Preparation	Personal Cost	Mindset	Outcome
Luke 1:26-38,48 Mary	Bear Christ child	Make inconvenient trip to Bethlehem; What else?	"I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."	Mary was blessed!
Matthew 2:1-12 Magi				
Luke 10:38-42 Martha				
Luke 10:38-42 Mary, sister of Martha				
Jesus	John 14:1-4	Hebrews 12:2-4	Hebrews 12:2-4	Hebrews 12:2-4

10. When faced with a task, especially a task requiring great personal investment or sacrifice, how does our mindset affect the outcome? How can you apply this principle in your life?

Part Three: The Shepherds' Candle ~ Sharing the Good News

Read Luke 2:8-20.

11. What was the good news the shepherds received? (See also Matthew 1:21.)
  
12. While Luke 2:10 tells us the good news was for "all the people," what has to happen in the life of each individual for this news to become personally meaningful? (Read John 1:12, Hebrews 4:2.)
  
13. After the shepherds heard the good news, what were their next actions? (Notice the verbs.) Do you think the sequence of their actions is significant? Why or why not?
  
14. What do the following verses reveal to you about sharing the Good News?
  - Isaiah 52:7
  - Isaiah 61:1-3
  - Psalm 78:1-7

Part Four: The Angel's Candle ~ Proclamation of Love

15. What do you learn about angels from Psalm 103:20 and Hebrews 1:14?
  
16. God employed His heavenly messengers during the events surrounding Christ's first earthly advent. Once again let's record information about these angelic visits onto a chart.

Person(s) to whom angel appeared	Angel's message	Response to angel's message
Matthew 1:18-25		
Matthew 2:13-15		

Person(s) to whom angel appeared	Angel's message	Response to angel's message
Matthew 2:19-23		
Luke 1:5-20		
Luke 1:26-38		
Luke 2:8-20		
How does God speak to us today?	What is His message to you this Christmas season?	What is your response?

Part Five: Christ's Candle ~ Adoration

17. The ancient prophecies recorded long before Christ's first advent revealed much about His character. Now let's find what Jesus revealed about Himself during His earthly ministry. Our last chart will list the seven "I AM's" spoken by Jesus.

Scripture Reference	Description	Meaning
John 6:35	I am the bread of life	Just as bread sustains physical life, Jesus sustains spiritual life now & forever
John 8:12; John 9:5		
John 10:7-9		
John 10:11-14		
John 11:25-26		
John 14:6		
John 15:1-5		

18. Look up and write out 1 John 4:9.

19. To experience God's lavish love is to participate in the second Advent. God has graciously given us ALL WE NEED in the gift of His Son, our Lord and Savior. The great I AM is indwelling us right now! May we each like Mary allow our hearts to swell with hope, even if we don't fully understand the scope of His plans. And may we each like Mary be blessed because we have believed what the Lord said to us is being accomplished! And now like Mary, record your prayer of praise to our glorious Lord!