

Celebrate Advent

HE IS COMING

“He’s coming! He’s coming! I just can’t wait! He’s coming!

Whether it is the arrival of a favorite relative, or a child’s emotion wrapped up in the traditions of the season, the weeks before Christmas Day are filled with excitement and anticipation. People of all ages look forward to something good, and the wait can seem unbearable.

The season of Advent is about growing anticipation. In the four weeks before Christmas, we prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus in the past and look forward to the return of Jesus in the future.

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah declared to the people of God:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder... Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.” (Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 ESV)

God’s word through the prophet confirmed an ancient promise: the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Isaiah offered hope to those overwhelmed by the darkness of their day. God had promised, but they still had to wait. They longed for his coming.

Years later, the child came, and his name was “Jesus.” He lived a perfect life; he died an atoning death; he rose to eternal glory. “The increase of his government and peace” had begun, yet his enemies remained. Full victory arrives when he comes again. And so, like those before us, we wait, and we long for his coming.

“...those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.”

In the four weeks of Advent, we reflect on God's provision of a Savior. Traditionally, the purple candles signify man's need for repentance and Christ's royal reign. A pink candle represents the joy of God's promise fulfilled and Christ's victory over sin. Each flame reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World, who shines in the darkness just as Isaiah had

foretold. In remembering the coming of Christ in the past, we maintain hope for the future. Christ will come again to establish his throne in perfect justice and righteousness.

The mixture of hope and longing we experience during Advent is captured in a song by Robert Kauflin:

As his mother held him closely it was hard
to understand

That her baby, not yet speaking, was the
word of God to man

He would tell them of his kingdom but
their hearts would not believe

They would hate him and in anger they
would nail him to a tree

But the sadness would be broken as the
song of life arose

And the firstborn of creation would
ascend and take his throne

He had left it to redeem us but
before his life began

He knew he'd come back, not as a baby,
but as the Lord of every man

“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20 ESV)