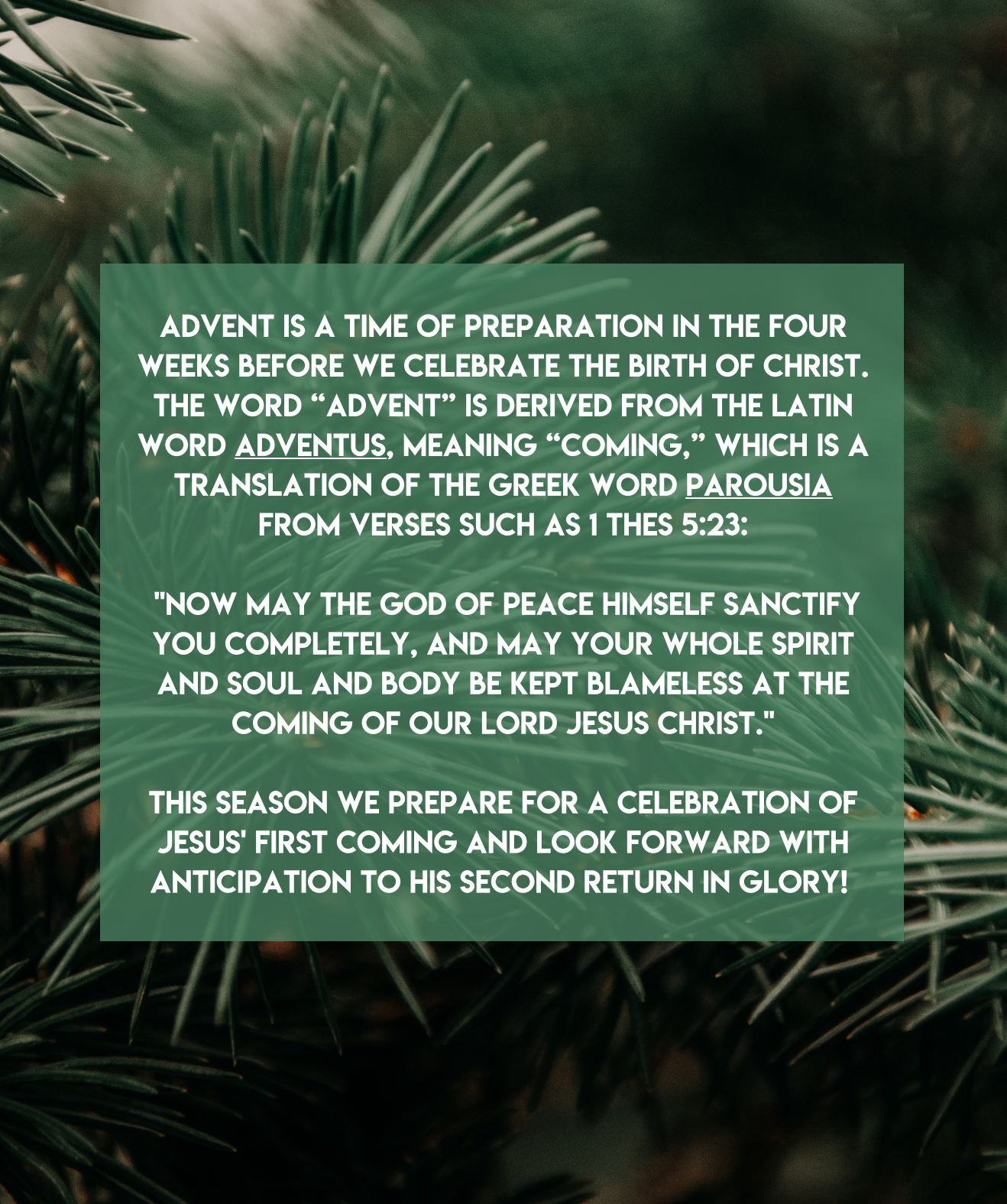




*advent*

**DEVOTIONAL 2020**





ADVENT IS A TIME OF PREPARATION IN THE FOUR WEEKS BEFORE WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. THE WORD “ADVENT” IS DERIVED FROM THE LATIN WORD ADVENTUS, MEANING “COMING,” WHICH IS A TRANSLATION OF THE GREEK WORD PAROUSIA FROM VERSES SUCH AS 1 THESS 5:23:

"NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE HIMSELF SANCTIFY YOU COMPLETELY, AND MAY YOUR WHOLE SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY BE KEPT BLAMELESS AT THE COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

THIS SEASON WE PREPARE FOR A CELEBRATION OF JESUS' FIRST COMING AND LOOK FORWARD WITH ANTICIPATION TO HIS SECOND RETURN IN GLORY!




**week one**



NOV 29 - DEC 5





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*





# John 1: 1 - 14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. 9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1: 1 - 14)



# OBSERVATION

# INTERPRETATION



# CORRELATION

# APPLICATION





ALSO READ:  
LUKE 1: 26 - 38  
2 CORINTHIANS 1: 20 - 22

## *prepare Him room*

One of the focuses of the Advent season is the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. This week we are reminded that the Old Testament does not describe hope as something that may happen, but something that will certainly happen:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." -- Isaiah 7:14

In the first chapter the Gospel of Luke, we read that the angel Gabriel visits Mary to tell her of God's plan for Jesus' birth and her response is recorded:

"Mary answered, 'I am the Lord's servant.  
Let everything you've said happen to me.'" -- Luke 1:38

It's just like God to choose Mary, a young woman, betrothed but not yet married, one who would have little, if any, power in her own culture, to be the main character in what we see is THE turning point of human history. Not only does the story of Mary demonstrate God's redemptive plan unfolding in a dramatic fashion, it also shows us something extremely powerful regarding humanity's response to that redemptive plan. As much as the prophecies about the Messiah are about Him, they are also about our reaction to and reception to Him.



Mary demonstrates to us the correct response when we are confronted with God's unfolding redemptive plan:

## Humility

Scripture tells us that humility is the opposite of aggressiveness, arrogance, boastfulness, and vanity. It says not "me first" but "others first." Proverbs 22:4 says **"Humility and the fear of the Lord bring wealth and honor and life."** By humility, we can recognize our own value and worth in God's eyes but we do not put ourselves above others. By humility we acknowledge that God created us for his purposes and not for our own gratification. When Mary chooses to place her life in God's hands, knowing exactly the magnitude of what the angel had told her, knowing that there may be pain and humiliation in her future, she was saying "not me first" but "others first." She was choosing to put God's plan above her own and she was choosing to put the future salvation of others before her own comfort. She had a bigger picture in mind, one in which she would be blessed for the ways that God was using her. She was willing to be humbled for God to be glorified.

## Obedience

Obedience is related to trust in many ways. It is to hear God, believe what he has said, and act according to what God has declared. In fact, it was because of Abraham's obedience that the God promised that all the nations of the world would be blessed. Mary had questions, she wasn't sure how things were going to work out for she asked "how will this be, since I am a virgin?" Yet, once the angel answered her questions and assured her that "nothing will be impossible with God" her reaction is immediate and clear—she calls herself a servant of God and determines to do all according to what the angel has told her. In fact, she later exclaims "my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior." There was no complaining or explaining why she couldn't do what the angel laid out, she simply heard God's word and acted accordingly.





# faithfulness

Faithfulness is steadfastness, constancy, or allegiance; it is carefulness in keeping what we are entrusted with. Biblical faithfulness requires belief in what the Bible says about God—His existence, His works, and His character. Mary was so faithful to God that others were able to observe that in her. We see of this in her cousin Elizabeth's reaction to her "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what is spoken to her from the Lord."

It is interesting to consider that in some ways Mary was really not that different than other young women of her time, for even the name Mary was extremely common. What Scripture seems to show us set her apart was her attitude and commitment to God. A.W. Tozer said, "The Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience that does not spring from faith. The two are opposite sides of the same coin." She demonstrates that proper response to God's redemptive plan and the logical conclusion, then, is that we too should respond to God's redemptive work, in all its forms, with the same humility, obedience, and faithfulness.

In fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, Jesus, the very Son of God, became flesh and dwelt among us. The passage you read in John 1 gives us this beautiful promise in verse 5 — "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." Jesus is the light of the world and no matter how dark it seems in our world, the darkness will never be able to overcome it. We don't have just a past hope or even just a present hope but also a future hope for Jesus will return once again:

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

—Revelation 21:4

## NOTES

NOTES



**week two**



DEC 6 - DEC 12





O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL,  
JOYFUL AND TRIUMPHANT!  
O COME YE,  
O COME YE TO BETHLEHEM;  
COME AND BEHOLD HIM  
BORN THE KING OF ANGELS:  
O COME, LET US ADORE HIM,  
CHRIST THE LORD.

*O Come. All Ye Faithful*





# Matthew 2: 1 - 11

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 6 "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel." 7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." 9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2: 1 - 11)

# OBSERVATION

# INTERPRETATION



# CORRELATION

# APPLICATION



ALSO READ:  
PSALM 95: 6 -7  
PHILIPPIANS 2:10

*let us adore Him*

Advent isn't simply a season of us remembering or acknowledging Jesus but adoring Him. In the story of the three wise men, we see these pagan men, astrologers really, coming before Jesus, filled with wonder and awe. They may have remembered the prophecy in Numbers 24: 17 "A star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel." Yet, more seems to be more happening here than just a recognition of a fact. It is a deep acceptance and commitment to the truth.

Not only did the men fall down in a physical sense but the posture of their heart was one of worship. While they were not Israelites, they recognized that Jesus was the promised king. Even in their lack of knowledge and understanding they knew something significant was before them.





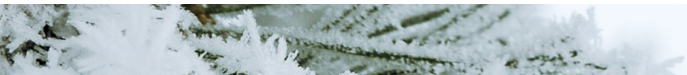
If these pagan men sent on a nefarious mission by the troubled Herod could fall down in worship in recognition of the truth, then so can we. Even when we feel far away or not good enough, we can come before our King and adore Him.

If these men, when confronted with the truth of Jesus, would respond in such a way what hope we can have for the people of our world! They are not lost or too far gone. They too need to hear the truth and be brought before Jesus!

"And many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

-- Micah 4:2



## NOTES



**week three**



DEC 13 - DEC 19



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*



# Isaiah 12



1 You will say in that day: “I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me. 2 “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation.” 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 4 And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. 5 “Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. 6 Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 12)



# OBSERVATION

# INTERPRETATION

# CORRELATION

# APPLICATION



ALSO READ:  
ZEPHANIAH 3: 14 - 20  
PHILIPPIANS 4

## *rejoice, rejoice*

In the Old Testament, the prophets often speak of the experience of joy and the act of rejoicing when Yahweh will bring restoration and will come once again into their midst. Zephaniah 3 says:

"Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout O Israel, Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst... Fear not, O Zion; the LORD your God is in your midst."

Likewise, Isaiah 12 declares "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation" after this important statement:

"Behold, God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation."





Thus, joy is the not just an emotion, but a natural reaction to work that the Creator does among His people, particularly the work of drawing the lost back into relationship with Him. It is that reason that the New Testament frequently exhorts us to rejoice about Jesus and His work on the cross. Philippians 4:4 says:

**"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice."**

Because Christ Jesus has come into our midst and His work on the cross is the basis of our salvation, our most natural response should be one of pure and unadulterated joy!

Therefore, we can have joy even in the midst of the most difficult and darkest of times. Joy is not something that is fleeting but a recognition of the character of our God. A God who allowed His own son to provide the atoning sacrifice required to bring us back into right relationship with Him. A God who continuously walks beside us and draws us closer to Him. A God who refines us and a God who cherishes us. And our beloved Messiah who will return one day to establish His kingdom in complete fulfillment of all that Scripture has promised us.

## NOTES

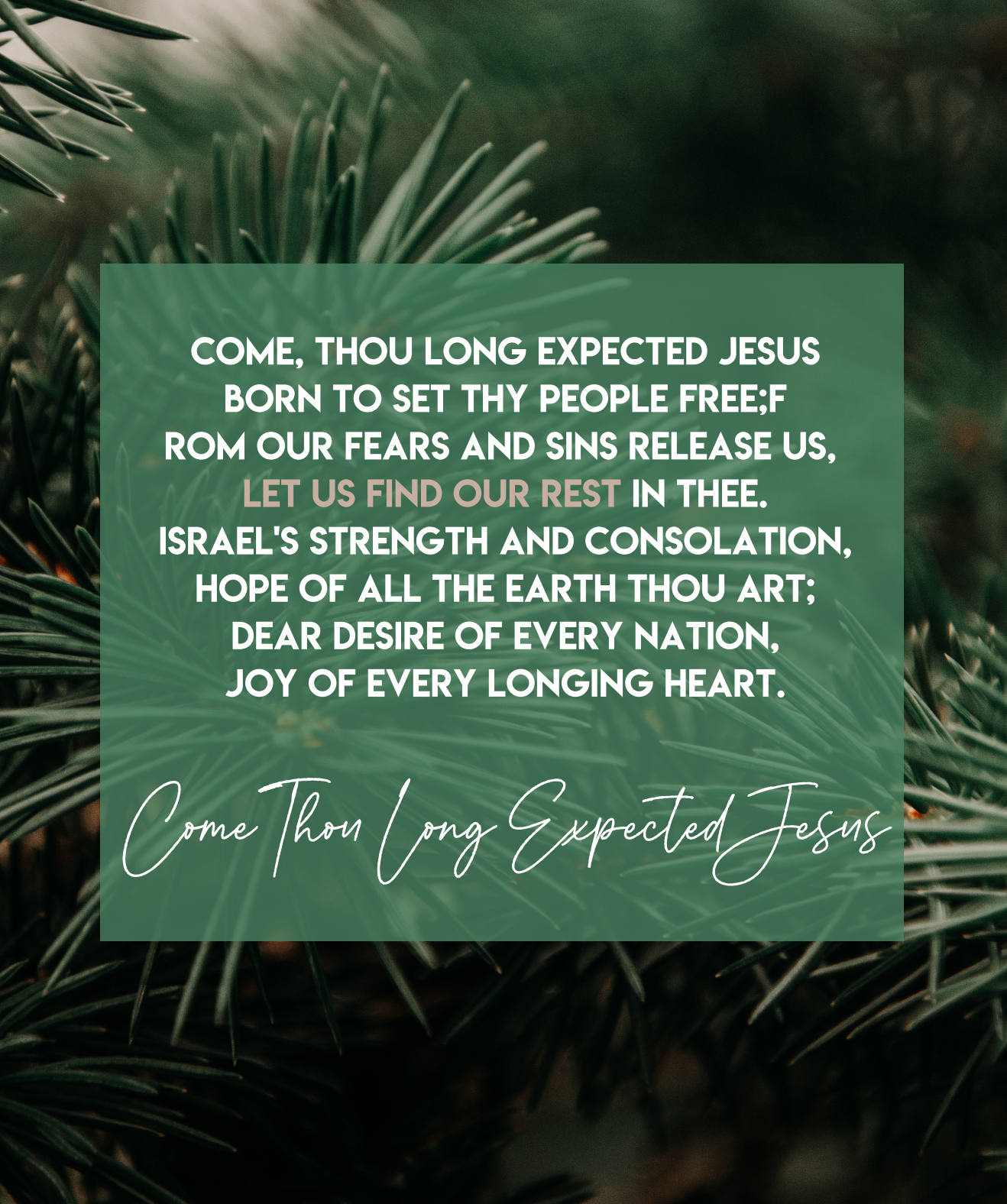


**week four**



DEC 20 - 24





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*



# Isaiah 9: 6 - 7



For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the  
government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be  
no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with  
righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

# OBSERVATION

# INTERPRETATION



# CORRELATION

# APPLICATION



ALSO READ:  
ISAIAH 41:10  
1 PETER 5:6-7

## let us find rest

One of the many beautiful things about the Word is how it speaks to even the small details in our lives. The Word recognizes the full spectrum of our human experience. The whole book of Ecclesiastes, for example, focuses on this human condition telling us “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven (3:1).”

When we look around us, it may be hard to see the peace that Scripture describes. We have all been affected by the pain, sadness, and despair that the world brings, but we must keep our eyes focused on Jesus, remembering that He is the one who brings peace. In fact, nothing or no person other than Jesus will ever show us the true meaning of peace. We don't have to strive or worry, for He is always working in all things, big and small.

We know that our lives should be patterned after Jesus. We know that our eyes should remain fixed on Him at all times. We know that nothing in our lives happens outside of God's control. But the unfortunate truth is that we sometimes forget that. Life can become a checklist and even if we are doing some awesome things, we can forget the basis for everything.



History shows us that we are not alone in this. Even God's chosen people were distracted from Him in the midst of the culture of their time. But God has never stopped trying to bring us back to Him and much of that work has been done in places of rest and retreat:

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her,  
and bring her into the wilderness,  
and speak tenderly to her.

--Hosea 2:14

In His earthly ministry, Jesus often spoke of and even modeled the need for rest and retreat. He recognized the need for a respite from the cares of the world, but He also recognized that rest and retreat should be found solely in God:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

--Matthew 11:28-30

In this season where we remember the birth of our Savior, I pray that we can see our relationships with God as a true place of refuge and rest.




## NOTES

# christmas



DECEMBER 25





**GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN  
OVER THE HILLS AND EVERYWHERE  
GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN  
OUR JESUS CHRIST IS BORN!**

*Go Tell It on the Mountain*





# The Birth of Christ

1. In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. The Shepherds and the Angels 8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" 15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. 21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. (Luke 2: 1- 21)

# OBSERVATION

# INTERPRETATION

# CORRELATION

# APPLICATION





## Go Tell, Go Tell

We can't think about the babe in the manger without thinking about the man on the cross. The birth of Jesus was not the beginning and it was not the end but another event in the unfolding redemptive history told throughout every single page in Scripture. The Father has always been calling humankind back to Himself from the very moment that Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden. And in the person of Jesus, through His work on the cross, we are reconciled to the Father and are called sons and daughters. Jesus continues to intercede for us as our great High Priest at the right hand of the Father and the Holy Spirit walks alongside us in every moment of our earthly lives. We are never alone and never forsaken. **Look around.** The world needs Jesus. They need hope, joy, rest, and peace and Jesus is the only one who brings those things. Don't keep this good news to yourself. The world has a desperate need to hear the truth. Go tell, go tell.

## NOTES

**FOR ALL THE PROMISES OF GOD FIND  
THEIR YES IN HIM. THAT IS WHY IT IS  
THROUGH HIM THAT WE UTTER OUR  
AMEN TO GOD FOR HIS GLORY. AND IT IS  
GOD WHO ESTABLISHES US WITH YOU IN  
CHRIST, AND HAS ANOINTED US, AND  
WHO HAS ALSO PUT HIS SEAL ON US AND  
GIVEN US HIS SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS AS A  
GUARANTEE.”**

*2 Corinthians 1:20-22*









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