

# Advent - Faith

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas and God's own son coming to earth to redeem mankind, let's be purposeful to keep Christ in Christmas. We are preparing for the coming of Jesus by celebrating Advent. In the coming weeks, we are going to see that Jesus came with a purpose and a mission. We will discover that he is our faith, our peace, he is love, and he is our hope.

Advent is a Latin word meaning arrival, appearance, or coming. When we speak about the first advent of Christ, we refer to his birth. When we speak about the second advent of Christ, we refer to his glorious return as King of kings and Lord of lords. We celebrate advent as a family, and we encourage you to celebrate as a family, a small group, a cell site, or a church group.

No baby born is unimportant or ordinary. We are all created in the image of God. Every baby is special to his parents and family. Jesus was special to Mary and Joseph, but even more so to God, his true father. Jesus, however, was God himself, in the flesh who walked on the earth to save mankind.

Let's take a moment today and see how Christ is our faith. You see we have one Advent candle lit today.

If you are familiar with the events surrounding the manger and the birth of Christ then you would know that there were a lot of people who had their faith tested.

Mary and Joseph had their faith tested in many ways. Imagine looking for a place to stay for the night and having a pregnant wife who is about to give birth. They needed shelter and food. They were about to have a baby and needed everything that comes with that.

Let's look closer at Joseph. He was betrothed to Mary. They were not married yet, not living together, and had no physical relations. Let's read about Joseph's encounter with an angel in Matthew 1:18-24.

(18) This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. (19) Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. (20) But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. (21) She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." (22) All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: (23) "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). (24) When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Joseph exercised faith. He believed the angel of the Lord. Jesus brings faith. Joseph was exercising his faith by being sure of what he hoped for and certain of what he could not see. When we believe in the power of God, although we cannot see it, we have faith. Jesus is our faith. We cannot see him but have hope knowing for certain that he lives. That is evidenced in our daily lives.



The birth of the coming Messiah was prophesied throughout the Old Testament. It took faith for people to believe that one day, maybe not in their lifetime, but one day, the long-awaited Savior of the world would come to Earth.

The prophet Isaiah speaks of this in Isaiah 11:1-10.

(1) A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. (2) The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD— (3) and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; (4) but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. (5) Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. (6) The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. (7) The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. (8) The infant will play near the cobra's den, the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. (9) They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (10) In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.

The people of the Old Testament put their faith in the coming Messiah. You and I can put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who did come, lived among mankind, and is coming again to take his people home.

Faith is reliance, loyalty, or having complete trust in Jesus. People will let us down and make mistakes but Jesus never will. We can put our trust in him. We can have complete faith in him. He is for you, not against you. Jesus is our faith.

As you prepare your heart to celebrate the coming of God in the flesh this Christmas season, we encourage you to put your faith in Jesus Christ. We encourage you to trust him with your whole heart and allow his truth to penetrate your heart today.

Next week we will talk about the second week of Advent, peace.

