



# Advent

A FOUR WEEK DEVOTIONAL

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THE SEASON OF

# Advent

For centuries followers of Jesus have carved out the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day for a season of preparation and anticipation. Each Sunday a candle is lit representing that Jesus is the light of the world. As each week passes we light another candle increasing the light and focusing on a different aspect surrounding the Christmas Story. During this Advent Season our community here at Cornerstone will gather around themes of joy, peace, hope and light found through the arrival of the Promised Messiah.

You will receive a text each Sunday evening at 5pm with that week's devotional. Whether you spend this devotional time alone with the Lord, or with family and friends, we pray that it will bless your Advent season with greater meaning and union with the Messiah.





# Advent

WEEK ONE // JOY

# Light the first candle.

## **Reading.**

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2:8-14

The arrival of the Messiah was marked by unexpected joy. First, consider the shepherds. They may have seemed like unlikely recipients for such a high profile announcement like the birth of the Son of God. After all, they represented the fringe of society. Lowly, simple, meager, uneducated, unpopular, unremarkable. They were unfit for high society, and yet God felt they were perfectly suited for front row seats of the most important day of human history.

Second, the story tells us the shepherds were initially filled with great fear. Little did they know that the most delightful moment of their life would be preceded by the most frightening. For the shepherds to encounter the heavenly hosts was more than a little unsettling. But through this, we see that sometimes joy shows up in the most unlikely places. Whether it be in the lonely pastures of life or the darkness of uncertainty, God's presence and joy will find you there.

**Dim the Lights.**

As you look at the single candle, may you be reminded that the joy of the Lord can be found even in the most unexpected places in life.

**A Blessing of Joy.**

May you be surprised by joy in this season of Advent, for a rescuer was born for you, Christ the Lord.

Amen.



# Advent

WEEK TWO // PEACE

# Light the first and second candle.

## **Reading.**

...And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Luke 2:13-14

Caesar Augustus, who ruled during the time of Christ's birth, was perhaps the most influential and successful leader of the Roman Empire. A clever and master administrator, he was able to win the hearts of Romans, end several decades worth of civil strife and brought to an end an age of relentless war. He was responsible for ushering the Roman Empire into their golden age. A time referred to as Pax Romana (Latin for Roman Peace) or Pax Augusta (Peace of Augustus). It was a time marked by unprecedented peace, internal stability and economic prosperity for the empire and its citizens. Ironically, this was a peace that was enforced by Rome's fierce military!

Augustus was so instrumental in this Roman Peace that people erected shrines to him with inscriptions hailing him as "Savior of the whole world". One ancient inscription even declared, "the birthday of the god Augustus, was the beginning of the good news for the world that came through him."

Does that sound familiar to you? It's not all that different from what we read in Luke 2 about the newborn Jesus:

*"behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people... unto you this day is born a Savior... Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

So, to say that there was a Savior bringing peace on earth besides Caesar Augustus... well, that was scandalous! Rebellious even. But, the birth announcement may have been worded this way for that very reason. It was meant to challenge people's idea of what real peace meant and who the real architect of peace was. Furthermore, it was a declaration that a new kind of kingdom had arrived. One that would be ruled by the true Prince of Peace.

This would mean more than social and economic prosperity for the citizens of one empire. Rather, the arrival of the peace of Jesus signified true human flourishing for all people in all nations. It would be a peace without borders.

This would mean more than freedom from political conflict and civil war. Rather, the peace of Jesus signified freedom from the internal battles of the mind, heart and soul. It would be a peace that changes the landscape of the human heart forever.

### **Dim the Lights.**

As you watch the glow of the light, reflect on the words of Jesus, "I leave the gift of peace with you—my peace. Not the kind of fragile peace given by the world, but my perfect peace." (John 14:27)

### **A Blessing of Peace.**

May the peace of God be for you a source of light and comfort, especially in the dimly lit places of life.

Amen.



# Advent

WEEK THREE // HOPE

## Light the first, second and third candle.

### **Reading.**

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

Luke 2:25-32

Waiting is never easy, especially when what we desire seems to be delayed. Anxiety can grow when the outcome is unknown, yet the waiting can become an adventure of anticipation when fueled by hope for a promise to be fulfilled.

For centuries the people of Israel waited for the promised messiah, the chosen one who would come and deliver them. Through the highs and lows of their history a deep hope that God would do what He promised firmly rooted them regardless of circumstances.



The Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would see the Messiah in his lifetime. One can only imagine the hope that filled this devout man's life as each day was a treasure hunt for when and where the promise would come to fruition.

Through the miraculous birth of Jesus, God fulfilled His promise to Simeon, to Israel and to all people. The child would bring light to the Gentiles and glory to the Jews and reconcile all of humanity back to God the Father the keeper of promises, the reason for hope.

### **Dim the Lights.**

As the light grows from one candle to the next may this be a symbol of hope growing in our hearts, trusting that God is a keeper of His promises.

### **A Blessing of Hope.**

May the story of God's faithfulness to keep His promises in the past cause ignite a hope for the promises He will fulfill in the future.

Amen.



# Advent

WEEK FOUR // LIGHT

# Light all four candles.

## **Reading.**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

John 1:1-5

As the four candles flicker before you there is deep meaning behind their simple glow. For this night represents not only the season of Advent, but also the first night of Hanukkah. The Christian and Jewish traditions united in a simple flame pointing to God's breaking into the darkness with an inextinguishable light.

In ancient times He caused the Menorah to miraculously burn bright in the Temple, and centuries later He sent His Son Jesus as the Light of The World to overcome darkness once and for all.

## **Dim the Lights.**

As you look at the candles' flame, know that just as the light chases away the darkness in the room, so the Light, Presence, Power, Truth and Love of Jesus the Messiah overcomes the darkness in this world.

## **A Blessing of Light.**

May the anticipation and arrival of the Promised Messiah fill your hearts, mind, eyes and spirit with His Holy Light, a light that warms your souls and push back all darkness.

Amen.



# Advent

CHRISTMAS DAY BLESSING

# Light all the advent candles

## **Read aloud Luke 2:1-7**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 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, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 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.

## **Select a person to read the blessing.**

May the comfort and joy of Jesus The Messiah's birth fill our hearts and homes this Christmas morning. May the lights of the advent candles remind us that His grace and truth pushes back all darkness. May the wrapped presents under the tree lead us to gratitude for the blessings great and small that he bestows on each of us.

All praise be to God the keeper of promises, who sent His Son Jesus, that we may have abundant and eternal life.

Amen.

Merry Christmas  
FROM CORNERSTONE BOULDER