

Advent

FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS



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*Here we are.
Speak, Lord, we are listening.*

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the 2011 New International Version (NIV).

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Intro

ADVENT

*ad·vent / noun / from the Latin adventus /
the coming or arrival of a notable person, thing, or event.*

Advent is a season in which we fix our eyes on Jesus and celebrate His Advent—His coming. The Hebrew Scriptures foretell and foreshadow the coming of an Anointed One, the Messiah. As part of God’s mission to redeem a people and restore creation, He established a covenant people (Israel) and gave them three kinds of anointed leaders: Prophets, Priests, and Kings. Each of these offices played a key role in instructing and leading God’s people on how to be in right relationship with Him and how to live the way of His Kingdom in the midst of a broken and rebellious world.

The Prophet was anointed to speak the words of God and shed light into the darkness of the world. The Priest was anointed to perform ritual sacrifices on behalf of the people to enable them to draw near to God. The King was anointed to lead, guide, and shepherd the people in the way they should go. These three offices play a significant role in God’s unfolding plan, and yet throughout the Hebrew Scriptures we hear promises about an Anointed One, a Messiah, who will come and ultimately fulfill these roles and all of God’s purposes.

During Advent, we celebrate that this Messiah has come! With one beautiful voice, the New Testament proclaims that Jesus is the Anointed One through whom God redeems a people and restores His Creation. Together we fix our eyes on Jesus—the One who is the true fulfillment of all three of those roles. Jesus is the Prophet, the Priest, and the King. The contents herein are intended to help us as individuals, families, and churches to fix our eyes on Him in this special season.

Here we are. Speak, Lord, we are listening.

Jesus the Prophet



The Letter of Hebrews begins by declaring that in these “last days” God has done something new (Hebrews 1.1-3). In the coming of Jesus, God spoke to us through his Son who is “the exact representation” of God’s own being. Like the prophets of old, Jesus represents God to us, but he is more than that. He is God in the flesh. Like the prophets of old he speaks words about God to us, but even greater, he is the Word of God. Like the prophets of old he calls us to obedience while also perfectly demonstrating what obedience looks like. Like the prophets of old, he speaks words that shed light on God’s way for us, and even more, He is the Light of the world. Jesus is the Anointed Prophet of God sent to the whole world.

As we journey through this Advent season, may we fix our eyes on Jesus as the light of the world and the light for our path.

ADVENT READING

Read through some or all of the following Texts this week. These can be read by yourself or with others (or both).

Isaiah 2.1-5 / Psalm 122 / Romans 13.11-14 / Matthew 24.36-44

MEMORIZE/MEDITATE

Invest time mulling over this Text.

Hebrews 1 NIV / *1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

AROUND THE TABLE

The questions and activity below are designed to be used by families or communities as they share a meal together around the table. May the Lord bless you and reveal Himself to you as you share, listen, laugh, and cry together.

Can you think of a time when you were in the dark? Tell the story of that time and what it was like.

Jesus is the Prophet. What do you know about prophets? What was their role? How does Jesus perform this role?

Share about a time when God's words showed you something about yourself or your life that you did not see or know before.

Activity involving children: Take an object and hide it and then turn out all of the lights in the room. The darker the room is the better! Ask your kids to go into the room and find the object that you have hidden. Give them a few minutes to find it in the dark. After they give up, turn the lights on and give them a chance to find it. Ask them about what light does for us. Then talk how without the light of God's word it is impossible for us to know what our sin is. But, if we allow God's word to speak to us, his light reveals to us what we need to see.

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Jesus the Priest



In the Hebrew Scriptures, the High Priest played a unique and significant role in mediating the relationship between God and His covenant people. The one person in each generation who was chosen for the office of High Priest was anointed to draw near to God and to help the covenant people draw near to God. The offerings and sacrifices were a central part of this relationship. The New Testament proclaims that this office was a foreshadowing of Jesus. Jesus is the true and great High Priest who has drawn near to the Father, and remarkably, He is also the true and great sacrifice, offered once and for all for sin. Jesus is the great and true High Priest who has made a way for us to draw near to God.

As we journey through this Advent season, may we fix our eyes on Jesus and may this cause us to draw near to God together in His Name.

ADVENT READING

Read through some or all of the following Texts this week. These can be read by yourself or with others (or both).

Isaiah 11.1-10 / Psalm 72.1-7, 18-19

Romans 15.4-13 / Matthew 3.1-12

MEMORIZE/MEDITATE

Invest time mulling over this Text.

Hebrews 10 NIV / *19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*

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What does it mean to be near to someone relationally? List as many words or phrases as you can to answer this question.

Jesus is the Priest. What do you know about priests? What was their role? How does Jesus perform this role?

In as practical of terms as possible, what does it mean to draw near to God?

What are the practices or ideas or who are the people who have helped you draw near to God?

Activity: Invite some neighbors or friends over for dinner. Before you gather together, have your children each think of a question to ask them while you are together around the table. During the meal, make space for your children to ask their question and listen to the response. Also, before you thank God for the meal, ask your guests if there is any specific way you can pray for them. After your guests leave, talk with your children about how we as Followers of Jesus are to be priests who help others know and follow Jesus.

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Jesus the King



Some of the most well-known Advent lyrics are from Handel's *Messiah*. And the government will be upon his shoulders... and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Handel was inspired by the vision of Israel's coming king as spoken about by the Prophet Isaiah. The Hebrew Scriptures speak of a coming King through whom God would lead His people and accomplish all of His purposes. We believe that Jesus is that long-awaited King. For unto us a child is born! This King established His Kingdom by wearing a crown of thorns and carrying a cross-shaped throne. And one day He will come again in His second Advent to end evil and brokenness and rule the world as King.

As we journey through this Advent season, may we fix our eyes on Jesus and may we give all of our allegiance to this coming King. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

ADVENT READING

Read through some or all of the following Texts this week. These can be read by yourself or with others (or both).

Isaiah 35.1-10 / Luke 1.46b-55 / James 5.7-10 / Matthew 11.2-11

MEMORIZE/MEDITATE

Invest time mulling over this Text.

Isaiah 9 NIV / *6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

AROUND THE TABLE

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Which do you like better: telling other people what to do or being told what to do? Why? What is hard about being told what to do?

Jesus is the King. What do you know about kings? What was their role? How does Jesus perform this role?

What are some things King Jesus is calling you to do in this season? Remind one another that following the way of this King always results in true joy, peace, and life.

Activity: Set up an obstacle course in your house with furniture and toys. Blindfold your kids and tell them to listen to your voice as you give them directions for how to maneuver their way through the obstacle course.

Ask them about how they were able to find their way to the finish of the course. Then talk how without God's direction (His rule as King) is good for us. He knows the way that we should walk, and when we listen to his voice, we are able to find the path of life.

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Jesus the Savior



In Genesis 3, we see these first humans rebelling against God. The results of this rebellion are the downward spiral of evil, violence, injustice, and wickedness that we see and experience in the world clear to this day. This is what sin does. It brings darkness and brokenness. It causes separation from God. It makes us hide, lost in a sea of shame, guilt, and fear. This is the state of the post-Genesis 3 world.

The Hebrew Scriptures continually speak of a coming Savior, One who would rescue God's people and God's creation from the effects of evil. The New Testament begins by declaring that a baby boy was born and that He is called Jesus because He will save His people from their sins. This baby boy, who would grow to be the true Prophet, Priest, and King, was called Emmanuel, which means, "God with us." What a shocking proclamation! Jesus is God with us. God Himself has come to seek and save that which was lost!

As we journey through this Advent season, may we fix our eyes on Jesus, the One who saves us from our sins and who saves us unto a new life of knowing and following Him.

ADVENT READING

Read through some or all of the following Texts this week. These can be read by yourself or with others (or both).

Isaiah 7.10-16 / Psalm 80.1-7, 17-19 / Romans 1.1-7 / Matthew 1.18-25

MEMORIZE/MEDITATE

Invest time mulling over this Text.

Luke 2 NIV / *8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

AROUND THE TABLE

The questions and activity below are designed to be used by families or communities as they share a meal together around the table. May the Lord bless you and reveal Himself to you as you share, listen, laugh, and cry together.

What are some good stories about people being rescued? Have you ever been rescued? Tell those kinds of stories together.

Jesus is the Savior. What comes to mind when you think about saving something or someone? How does Jesus perform this role?

Share with those at the table some specific things Jesus has saved you from (choices, sins, directions) and some specific things Jesus has saved you for (purposes, mission, relationships).

Activity: Pause dinner or whatever else you are doing and play a round or two of hide-n-seek. Yes, seriously. No matter who is there, give it a shot. When you get back talk about what it is like to hide and what it is like to seek. Spend some time talking about how God seeks after us.

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