



ADVENT

WEEK 3 | LOVE



Week 2

PERSONAL STUDY

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

MICAH 5:2

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.

LUKE 2:1-7

Describe a time when you looked forward to an event for a long time.

What emotions did you feel as you waited?

How did you feel when the wait was finally over?



HE CAME JUST AS HE SAID HE WOULD

Throughout the Old Testament, the prophets spoke of the promised Savior, telling the people how to recognize His coming and reminding them that God had not forgotten. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, the Son of a virgin, a King to rule according to the lineage of David, ushering in an era of unprecedented peace. Israel watched and waited, filled with longing and expectation for this promised Deliverer.

And then, on a night unassuming and normal, God came—just as He said He would. A young woman named Mary, who was with child, journeyed alongside Joseph, her betrothed, from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be counted for the census according to Caesar's decree. The couple entered the sleepy Judean town, filled to the brim with the descendants of David, and took refuge in the only place available: a stable. And when the fullness of time had come, Mary gave birth to her firstborn son. He was wrapped in cloths, laid in a manger and given the name Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. And just like that, a whisper in the Bethlehem night, a Child was born, a Son was given.

Four hundred and fifty years of silence had passed since the final words of the prophets. At long last, a cry of deliverance was heard again, uttered from the lips of the Word Made Flesh. This newborn's cry pierced the midnight sky like a trumpet heralding sin's demise and the defeat of death forever for all who would believe. The Ancient of Days stepped into time and wrapped Himself in the frailty of human skin. He came, full of pity, compassion, and power, to rescue those lost in darkness and carry them into the kingdom of everlasting light. He came, just as He said He would, to do what we never could.

With hindsight, we see in Jesus the fulfillment of all that the prophets spoke concerning the Messiah. We understand that our Lord has done just what He said He would do in exactly the right way, at exactly the right time. We also see that God is full of compassion. He saw the desperate need of His people. He cared and acted by sending His only Son to save them.

May our hearts be encouraged! Let Advent be a time to reflect on God's good attributes and His faithfulness to do exactly what He said He would.



REFLECTION

Consider the prophecies from Isaiah 9:1–7 and Micah 5:2. How do you see these fulfilled in Jesus' birth?

Think about the circumstances that led Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. What do they show you about God's sovereignty?

The Old Testament contains many prophecies pointing not just to Jesus' birth but also to the salvation He would accomplish. Look up the passages below and see how they illustrate this truth.

OT Prophecy

Genesis 3:15
Isaiah 9:2
Isaiah 53:10–11
Isaiah 53:4
Isaiah 61:1–4

NT Fulfillment

Romans 5:6–8; Galatians 4:4–7; Colossians 2:13–15
Matthew 4:12–17; John 1:4–5; 12:46
Romans 5:1–2
Matthew 8:14–17
Luke 4:16–21

God reveals many things about His nature and character through the birth of His Son. What attributes of God do you see in this part of the Advent narrative?

RESPONSE

As you make your list of people to buy gifts for, include someone who would never expect to receive a gift from you. Think of the delight you feel in blessing them and consider the love in God's heart as He sent His Son to die for sinners.

In prayer, thank God for His goodness in sending a Savior. Confess places where your confidence in His faithfulness is weak and ask Him for increased trust, belief, and hope.

SONGS OF THE SEASON

O Holy Night
Silent Night
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen



Week 2

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP TIME

Set aside ten minutes one night this week to talk about God's mercy in sending a Savior. The only materials needed are five candles, matches, and a Bible.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Have one member of the family light last week's candle and a second candle.

SCRIPTURE READING

Have one person read the following passages out loud.

*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. **LUKE 2:3-7***

*And there, in the stable, amongst the chickens and the donkeys and the cows, in the quiet of the night, God gave the world his wonderful gift. The baby that would change the world was born. His baby Son. **THE JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE***



REFLECTION

Have an adult read the commentary below.

Do you remember the promise we talked about last week? God's promise to send a Rescuer? His promise to send Jesus? Well, Jesus came, just like God said He would!

After thousands of years of waiting, on an ordinary night, Jesus came. God gave His people hints and clues about how Jesus would come. He told them that Jesus would come from Bethlehem, be a Ruler, and bring peace. Many expected a soldier; some expected a politician. No one expected a baby. But that's how Jesus came.

Ask: If you had been an Israelite, how would you have expected the promised Savior to come?

Mary and Joseph lived in a town called Nazareth. One day, the king gave an order that everyone was to go back to their hometown to be counted for something called a census. Mary and Joseph traveled a long way to the town of Bethlehem, where Joseph's family was from. When they got to Bethlehem, the town was full of other travelers, and there was nowhere for Mary and Joseph to stay. So they found a stable to sleep in. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby, and Jesus, the Savior, was born.

Ask: How do you think Joseph and Mary felt when they finally got to Bethlehem and realized they had nowhere to stay? Do you think God knew that they felt this way?

Jesus, the King of heaven, left His perfect home to be born as a baby to a young man and woman. He became fragile and helpless. His room that night was a stable—dirty, smelly, and full of noisy animals. His bed was not kingly and luxurious; it was a feed box that animals ate out of. Mary had to wipe old, rotten food out of the manger and cover it with poky straw before she laid her tiny baby in it.

Ask: Is a stable the place you would expect the Savior to be born? Why do you think God decided for His one and only Son to be born there?

But everything that happened that night was exactly what God had planned and promised. Jesus came, just like God said He would. God saw that we needed to be rescued from sin. He cared about us in our need, and He acted. He sent Jesus.

The events of that night, in that stable in the little town of Bethlehem, would change the world forever.



God shows us many things about what's He's like in the birth of Jesus. How do you see that God is compassionate—that He sees, cares, and acts when His children are in need—in this part of the Advent narrative? What other attributes of God do you see?

PRAYER

Have one family member say a prayer to thank God for sending Jesus to be born as a baby who would save us from our sins.

SONG

As a family, sing or listen to "Away in a Manger." As you do, read carefully through the lyrics and explain any words that might be unfamiliar to your kids. Ask them what they learn about Jesus from this song.

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.*

FAMILY ACTIVITY

This week, keep the promise you made to your family during last week's family Advent time. Talk about how you fulfilled the hints and clues you gave them. Discuss the experience of waiting: What was it like to wait? What was it like to finally experience what you had been waiting and hoping for? Remember together God's faithfulness in sending a Savior. It happened just as He said it would.



ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Continue making your nativity set. This week, create the baby Jesus piece and add it to the set.

Create a set of ornaments that show the Old Testament prophecies of Jesus' birth and their fulfillments in the New Testament.

Create a nativity scene out of Legos.

Use a sock and stuffing to create a baby Jesus doll, wrapped in fabric scraps. Make a manger for the doll out of a paper sack. Let your preschooler care for baby Jesus and have him/her use it to retell Jesus' birth story throughout the week.