



THE LIGHT BREAKS THROUGH:
Readings for Advent 2020



Bethel Baptist Church



INTRODUCTION

THE WORD “ADVENT” SIMPLY MEANS “COMING,” and within the church it speaks to the expectation for the coming of Jesus the Messiah. Historically the Christian Church has set aside the four weeks before Christmas as the season of Advent. During this time we walk together with the saints of old who earnestly awaited the first advent of our Lord. We also proclaim that we are those waiting for the second coming of our King when He will finally fulfill all of His promises. Today, our world needs a savior just like the world of the Jewish people in first century Palestine. Our world convulses with violence, injustice, oppression, sickness, hunger, and death. We can begin to question where a sovereign and loving God might be found in the face of such brokenness. As we look back into ancient history, we are reminded that God has always been faithful to keep His covenant, and this gives us hope that He will set right all of creation.

Each daily reading was selected to help us see God’s eternal plan of redemption. As you read alone or with your family, we encourage you to meditate on what each passage teaches us about looking to Jesus as the Author and Finisher of our faith. If you have others in your home, encourage them to participate with your family. Maybe mornings or evenings work best for you. My family will make our own advent wreath by taking four candles and placing them in a circle around one additional candle. We will light one candle each week until Christmas Eve when the center candle is lit. You may be musically gifted and able to play or sing the songs as a family. These daily readings can be as simple or ornate as fits your family. But we have found that taking a short time each day to refocus our hearts on the incarnation of our Lord has become an anchor in the often overly busy Christmas season.

Our prayer is that these readings will cause you to rejoice in our covenant-keeping God. This Advent season will look different from years past. Gatherings and celebrations may not take place in traditional forms. But we are still a people rejoicing in the past faithfulness of our God, and looking with hope to the return of the One who is Faithful and True. Sing of our God, who for us and our salvation, took on the form of a servant. Speak of the Word made flesh. And as we walk through this season together may we join our hearts in prayer with all the faithful saying, “Come thou long expected Jesus!”

Pastor Aaron Adams

Stephen Kennedy





Scan here to open
the full [Advent
playlist](#) (21 songs)
in Spotify

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the full [playlist](#) in
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ZECHARIAH 9:9-10

REJOICE GREATLY, O DAUGHTER OF ZION! SHOUT ALOUD, O DAUGHTER OF JERUSALEM! BEHOLD, YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU; RIGHTEOUS AND HAVING SALVATION IS HE, HUMBLE AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A DONKEY. I WILL CUT OFF THE CHARIOT FROM EPHRAIM AND THE WAR HORSE FROM JERUSALEM; AND THE BATTLE BOW SHALL BE CUT OFF, AND HE SHALL SPEAK PEACE TO THE NATIONS; HIS RULE SHALL BE FROM SEA TO SEA, AND FROM THE RIVER TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT: EXPECTATION

Song of the Week: Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

OUR THEME FOR THIS WEEK IS EXPECTATION. We begin the week by seeing that God created all things by the Word of His power. All was good. Then we see mankind rebel against his creator. Sin and death enter the world. In Genesis 3, during the aftershock of the first sin, God gives the great word of promise. The seed of the woman would come and crush the head of the serpent. There are already hints pointing to a virgin birth and a suffering Rescuer in the promised One who would undo the work of the serpent and the fall.

Mankind lived under the burden of sin and death, but also in anticipation of the coming Redeemer. By the time of Noah, the rebellion demanded divine judgement. But God remembered His promise. He called out Noah to build an ark as a foreshadowing to the shelter provided for us in Christ from divine judgement.

**GOD KEEPS HIS
COVENANT, EVEN
THOUGH EVERY
SINGLE PERSON IN
THE STORY FAILS IN
DRAMATIC WAYS.**

In Genesis 12 God calls out Abram and promises that through his family, all the nations will be blessed. The seed of the woman, the Serpent-Crusher, would come through Abram's family.

God promises him a son to carry on the family line. The LORD pronounces that the Redeemer will come through Isaac, not Ishmael, even though both are Abraham's sons. Then God reveals that the promised One will come through Isaac's younger son, Jacob, and not his older twin, Esau.

As the expectation for the coming Messiah builds, God is making one thing very clear: he is not choosing the strongest, or wealthiest, or holiest men to carry out His promise. As we learn in Romans 9, God is accomplishing His sovereign plan. God keeps His covenant, even though every single person in the story fails in dramatic ways. The longing for the perfect Redeemer builds as Jacob's family begins to grow.

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

By Charles Wesley,
verses 2-3 Mark E. Hill

[Spotify Link](#)

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.

Joy to those who long to see thee,
Dayspring from on high appear!
Come thou promised rod of Jesse,
Of thy birth we long to hear.
O'er the hills, the angels singing
News, glad tidings of a birth:
"Go to Him, your praises bringing
Christ, the Lord, has come to earth!"

Come to earth to taste our sadness,
He whose glories knew no end;
By his life he brings us gladness,
Our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.
Leaving riches without number,
Born within a cattle stall;
This the everlasting wonder,
Christ was born the Lord of all.

Daily Readings:

Monday, November 30
[Genesis 1:1–2:3](#)

Tuesday, December 1
[Genesis 2:15–3:24](#)

Wednesday, December 2
[Genesis 6:11–22](#)
[Genesis 7:17–8:12](#)
[Genesis 8:20–9:17](#)

Thursday, December 3
[Genesis 12:1–7](#)
[Genesis 15:1–6](#)

Friday, December 4
[Genesis 22:1–19](#)

Saturday, December 5
[Genesis 28:10–17](#)

Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit,
Raise us to thy glorious throne.



SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT: PROMISE

Songs of the Week: See pages 8-9

FROM THE HOUSE OF DAVID AND FROM THE LITTLE, IRRELEVANT TOWN OF BETHLEHEM, WILL COME THE ANCIENT OF DAYS. HE WILL COME AND BE THE FAITHFUL LEADER THAT HIS PEOPLE HAVE NEVER WITNESSED BEFORE. HE WILL STAND AND CARE FOR HIS FLOCK WITH THE VERY STRENGTH OF GOD, AND THE MAJESTY OF GOD'S SACRED NAME WILL BE HIS.

OUR THEME FOR THIS WEEK IS PROMISE. God continues to clarify His promise to send a Redeemer to save mankind. In these readings we begin to see more about who this coming Messiah will be, and additional clarifications on which family line He will come from. In Genesis 49, Jacob is dying and begins to bless his many sons. The promise of blessing does not fall to the first born, nor the second, nor the third. Judah, the fourth son, receives the promise. Judah, the violent and immoral son, gets the promise that the King of Peace will come through his line and will rule all the world. Judah, undeserving Judah, is chosen by the mercies of God. Here we begin to get a glimpse that the coming one will not only crush His enemy, but He will also reign as a great King.

We learn in Deuteronomy 18 that God is not only sending a Deliverer and one who will rule the nations, but He is also sending one who will be a great Prophet like Moses, only better. This coming Prophet will speak the very words of God to the people, and carry the authority of God Himself.

Hundreds of years go by after the promise to Judah, without any further clarification as to the line of the Redeemer. Finally, in 2

Samuel, David receives the word from the Lord that it will be one of his line who will be the great and eternal King. David is overwhelmed by the grace of God to his house. He knows he is unworthy, but he gives praise to God. God promises to be a Father to this coming King. Psalm 110 is a further reflection on this promise to David that the

Messiah, the great King, would come through David's family, but He would also be Lord over David himself.

In Isaiah 7 we hear the famous promise that the Lord is going to cause a virgin to bear a son and His name will mean "God with us." Then in chapter 9, we hear the staggering words that the coming child will carry attributes that are ascribed only to God. The coming Redeemer will be God Himself. In Isaiah 11, we see that this descendent from David's house has the Spirit of the Lord, and He will be like no other ruler before Him. He will judge with righteousness and truth. He will truly undo the work of the fall, and He will bring peace and justice to the ends of the earth.

The final scripture passage for this week is in Micah 5, where we see the culmination of all of these Promises. From the house of David and from the little, irrelevant town

of Bethlehem, will come the Ancient of Days. He will come and be the faithful leader that His people have never witnessed before. He will stand and care for His flock with the very strength of God, and the majesty of God's sacred name will be His. He will be great and will extend His rule to the ends of the earth, and in His person He will be their peace. We know that all of these promises are fulfilled as God the Son takes on flesh and, as the Good Shepherd, lays down His life for the sheep. He also overcame the grave so that He can shepherd His flock in faithfulness and power for all of eternity. Truly we serve a God who is faithful to keep His Promises!

Daily Readings:

Sunday, December 6
Deuteronomy 18:15–22

Monday, December 7
Genesis 49:8–12

Tuesday, December 8
2 Samuel 6:14–15
2 Samuel 6:17–19
2 Samuel 7:12–22

Wednesday, December 9:
Psalms 110

Thursday, December 10
Isaiah 7:14
Isaiah 9:2–7

Friday, December 11
Isaiah 11:1–10

Saturday, December 12
Micah 5:2–5



Song of the Week: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Traditional

[Spotify Link](#)

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 Thou Dayspring come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight

O come Thou Wisdom from on high
And order all things far and nigh
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go

O come Desire of nations bind
All peoples in one heart and mind
Bid envy strife and quarrels cease
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace

ISAIAH 7:14

THEREFORE THE LORD HIM-
SELF WILL GIVE YOU A SIGN.
BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL
CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON,
AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME
IMMANUEL.

Bonus Song of the Week: Emmanuel

By Caroline Cobb

[Spotify Link](#)



WHEN THE WORLD HAD RE-
VOLTED AGAINST ITS MAKER,
AND THE CREATOR HAD BEEN
DEFIED BY HIS OWN CREA-
TURES, A GREAT GULF WAS
OPENED BETWEEN GOD AND
MAN. THE FIRST COMING OF
CHRIST WAS LIKE A BRIDGE
WHICH CROSSED THE CHASM,
AND MADE A WAY OF ACCESS
FROM GOD TO MAN, AND
THEN FROM MAN TO GOD.
OUR LORD'S SECOND ADVENT
WILL MAKE THAT BRIDGE FAR
BROADER, UNTIL HEAVEN
SHALL COME DOWN TO EARTH;
AND, ULTIMATELY, EARTH
SHALL GO UP TO HEAVEN.

CHARLES SPURGEON

Blessed seed of Abraham
Born the nations now to bless
Promised son of mother Eve
Come to crush the serpent's head
Christ the sinless lamb of God
Every law in Him complete
Slain to ransom rebel hearts
Raised for us a great high priest

*He is here, He is here!
Emmanuel, God draws near
At long last, He has come!
Emmanuel, the Promised One*

Isaiah's servant suffering
By His wounds we are healed
Son of man in Daniel's dream
Glorious myst'ry now revealed
King of kings on David's throne
His rule and reign will never end
He will bring the exiles home
When His advent comes again

*The one the prophets longed to know
(Emmanuel)
The first, the last, the cornerstone!
(Emmanuel)
Every promise finds its yes in Him!
Spirit with us til we sing this song again*

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT: PROCLAMATION

Songs of the Week: See pages 12-13

OUR THEME FOR THIS WEEK IS PROCLAMATION.

We'll be reading Luke 1 together, which is full of angels and people proclaiming the wonderful things God has done. Verses 46-55 are the song of Mary, and it's a wonderful echo of songs from the Old Testament, especially Psalm 103. It starts with praise, and then gives reasons for praise.

Mary says she magnifies the Lord (v46), she rejoices in God and calls Him her Savior (v47). Verses 48-55 are all the reasons why she's singing, and they're summed up in verse 49: "for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name."

Just how mighty is God? Taking a look at what He has done can give us a good starting point.

When we look at the mountains towering above us, they can be pretty awe-inspiring. And the same Mighty One who invented mountains and created them also invented each of us.

Or consider the stars: NASA has a website dedicated to its space probes, Voyagers 1 and 2. The two have been traveling for 43 years at 10,000 miles per hour. At the time of this writing (11/13/2020), Voyager 1 is 14,108,127,242 miles from the earth. You can watch the mile number increase in real time from the website. But even at that tremendous speed, it would take 70,000 years for the probe to reach even the nearest star outside our solar system.

In the vast expanse of space, there are a hundred billion galaxies, each filled with hundreds of billions of stars, and God spoke them all into being, and they continue to exist because, as Hebrews 1:3 says, "He upholds the universe by the word of his power."

He has done mighty things, yes.

But he has also done a mighty thing – a great thing – for you and for me. The Mighty One did this in Mary's womb:

“Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

(Philippians 2:6–11)

As you read the Bible passages this week, think about the word “Proclamation.” The billion-billion stars proclaim God’s glory with every nuclear reaction. But human beings, His image-bearers, were made to proclaim His glory in a more wonderful way. We can look at the coming of Christ in the manger, God our savior who has done great things for us, and reflect His glory by proclaiming it in the same way that He created the universe: with words.

Each day this week, after reading the day’s passage, spend some time magnifying and rejoicing in God your Savior for the great things He has done for you, just like Mary. Write them down and keep them next to your Advent book, so you can look back at them later. Most of all, magnify and rejoice that the Maker of everything so loved you and me that He did this mighty thing for us. The Son of God became a baby in the womb of Mary – tiny fingers and toes and eyelashes and giggles and all the rest – to redeem us by His sinless life, sin-bearing death, and sin-conquering resurrection. Mighty indeed!

Daily Readings:

Sunday, December 13
Zechariah 9:9–10

Monday, December 14
Malachi 3:1–4
Malachi 4:1–6

Tuesday, December 15
Isaiah 40:1–5

Wednesday, December 16
Luke 1:5–25

Thursday, December 17
Luke 1:26–38

Friday, December 18
Luke 1:39–45

Saturday, December 19
Luke 1:46–56

Song of the Week:

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Traditional

[Spotify Link](#)

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in his hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.

At his feet the six-winged seraph,
Cherubim, with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia, Lord Most High!

BEHOLD HERE AN INFANT WITHOUT STAIN! BEHOLD THE LAMB WITHOUT SPOT, THE LAMB OF GOD, WHO TAKES AWAY THE SINS OF THE WORLD! WHO COULD BETTER TAKE THEM AWAY THAN HE WHO KNEW NO SIN? HE, INDEED, CAN CLEANSE ME, WHO HAS NEVER HIMSELF BEEN DEFILED. HIS TOUCH CAN REMOVE THE CLAY FROM MY EYES, FOR HIS HAND IS FREE FROM THE LIGHTEST DUST. HE CAN TAKE THE MOTE FROM OUT MY EYE WHO HAS NO BEAM IN HIS OWN; OR, RATHER, HE WHO HAS NO SMALLEST GRAIN OF DUST IN HIS OWN EYE CAN TAKE THE BEAM FROM MINE.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX



GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Luke 2:8-21

LUKE 1:46-49:

AND MARY SAID, “MY SOUL
MAGNIFIES THE LORD, AND
MY SPIRIT REJOICES IN GOD
MY SAVIOR, FOR HE HAS
LOOKED ON THE HUMBLE ES-
TATE OF HIS SERVANT. FOR
BEHOLD, FROM NOW ON ALL
GENERATIONS WILL CALL ME
BLESSED; FOR HE WHO IS
MIGHTY HAS DONE GREAT
THINGS FOR ME, AND HOLY IS
HIS NAME.”

Go tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and ev'rywhere
Go tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light

The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed the Savior's birth

Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT: FULFILLMENT

The True Light (John 1:1-18)

OUR THEME FOR THIS WEEK IS FULFILLMENT. John 1:14 talks about the coming of Jesus this way:

“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.”

Glory is a distinctively religious word. It carries connotations of weight, renown, adoration. Witnessing something glorious is like seeing through the brokenness of the world to the perfection we were meant for. Glorious things are weighty, worthy, and bright.

When the light of Christ dawns in our hearts and calls us out of the darkness, we meet Someone more glorious than anything in creation, and we begin to see why those other things appeared glorious. It was because, even dimly, they reflected His glory.

His genius is mirrored in the Hubble telescope photos. His beauty and love are echoed in Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos. When He frees us from the veil of sin and death, we see Who we were meant to praise. *Our* glory is a reflection, but *His* is of unfathomable gravity.

The Word made flesh is a foretaste of eternity—God tabernacling with man. This dwelling together of God and man is what Eden, the Tabernacle, and the Temple all foreshadowed. He fulfills every promise in the person of Jesus, Immanuel—God with us. The glory of God shines perfectly—the light of His renown and worth—through the Mighty God, who conquered death by His death for us.

In Him, the light has dawned—the night is far gone and the day is at hand (Romans 13:12). When the last shadows flee at the coming of the Lamb, we will see Him face to face (1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 13:12). The light of His glory will conquer the darkness of all sorrow. As we celebrate Jesus’s first coming this Christmas, let us ache for the last shadows of night to be pierced and overcome by the glorious Day of Christ’s return.

Joy to the World

By Isaac Watts, Lowell Mason

[Spotify Link](#)

Joy to the world the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing
And heav'n and nature sing
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing

Joy to the earth the Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat repeat the sounding joy

No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found
Far as far as the curse is found

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders wonders of His love

Daily Readings:

Sunday, December 20
[Luke 1:57–66](#)

Monday, December 21
[Luke 1:67–80](#)

Tuesday, December 22
[Matthew 1:18–25](#)

Wednesday, December 23
[Luke 2:1–7](#)

Thursday, December 24
[Luke 2:8–21](#)

Friday, December 25
[John 1:1–18](#)

Saturday, December 26
[Matthew 2:1–15](#)

Sunday, December 27
[Luke 2:22–38](#)

**THIS DWELLING TOGETHER OF
GOD AND MAN IS WHAT EDEN,
THE TABERNACLE, AND THE
TEMPLE ALL FORESHADOWED.
HE FULFILLS EVERY PROMISE
IN THE PERSON OF JESUS,
IMMANUEL—GOD WITH US.**



