

what
Child
is This?

Advent 2017



Advent ~ 1

INTRODUCTION

“Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:8-13

What an exciting time of year. This time of year is spent in anticipation of family, gifts, Christmas songs, snow, food, and a sense of peace on earth. For those who are believers, this time of year holds a special place in our hearts. For this is when we reflect on the greatest story ever told. When some 2,000 years ago a tiny baby was born who would save mankind from their penalty of sin.

Our culture tries hard to distract us from the real meaning of this Christmas season. While the time with family and friends is so wonderful, it must not overshadow what made this a joyous celebration. The world around us tries to promise us things that will fill the void in our hearts. But the truth is, the only promise that fills that void is that God sent His Son to pay for our sins and make an eternal relationship with Him possible.

HISTORY AND TRADITIONS

The word Advent has Latin roots, meaning "coming." Christians of earlier generations spoke of "the advent of our Lord" and of "His second advent." The first phrase refers to God's becoming incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. The latter phrase speaks of Jesus' second coming. In a second sense "advent" designates a period before Christmas when Christians prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth. This practice may have begun in some churches as early as the late fourth century. Advent began as a time of fasting. Sermons focused on the wonder of the Incarnation. By the Middle Ages, four Sundays had become the standard length of the Advent season.¹

There are a couple of ways people have celebrated the Advent season. One is through an Advent calendar that has some doors counting down to Christmas day. Often, behind these doors were poems, verses, and gifts that reflected the story of Jesus' birth. Another tradition is an Advent wreath. The wreath is made up of five candles that reflect Christ being the light of the world (Matt. 4:16; John 1:4-9, 8:12). As each week passes during Advent, a candle is lit leading up to the first advent, Christmas Day!

Advent is a wonderful time for us to take a break from our normal routine and reflect on the wonderful story of the first advent. Without this first advent, there would be no hope for mankind. So this season, we get to anticipate in a fresh way the coming of our Savior.

¹ Grissom, F. A., & Bond, S. (2003). Advent. In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (p. 31). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

My prayer is that this guide will help you, your family or your small group see beyond the noise that this world offers and take a moment each week to reflect on Christ this Advent season.

Pastor Josh

USING THE GUIDE

This guide offers you four weeks of material plus a reading for Christmas Day to help you and others reflect on Christ during this Advent season. Each week has six sections in it. The first includes Scripture that you will want to read through before you do anything else. Next you will read through the devotional section to help you reflect on a particular aspect of Advent that week. After the devotional section, you have a reflection section. This section will guide you to think a little deeper into what you read. Finally, you have an action, song, and activity section. Each of these sections will help you further reflect and put into action what you are focusing on for that week. For those of you with children, don't miss the fun activities in the Kid's Corner!

Many of us know the Christmas story well. But don't rush through these devotionals. Reflect on them and reread them throughout the week. Enjoy this fresh look during Advent season and enjoy the anticipation of the celebration of Jesus Christ!

This year's Advent was influenced by the Skit Guys material. Videos, graphics, and much more helped in creating what is presented this year.

SONGS AND PLAYLISTS

Each week there will be a few songs to help you reflect more on the emphasis for each given week. There is an Advent playlist available on our Advent website (ewoadvent.org). Enjoy the Advent season through song!

More info at: [EWOADVENT.ORG](http://ewoadvent.org)

Week One

Shepherd

December 3 - December 9

WEEK ONE

- Shepherd -

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:8-18

Devotional Thought

The title of the carol, “What Child Is This?”. Is intended to be the primary question the shepherds must have asked on the night they visited the baby Jesus. After their angelic encounter and receiving the startling news while they tended their sheep on the outskirts of Bethlehem, their heads must have been spinning rapidly. They tried to comprehend all they experienced on that first Christmas night. Luke’s Gospel records the scene in chapter 2:8-18.

While no nativity scene is complete without the shepherds’ presence, subsequently, the answer to this Christmas Carol’s question also would be only partial without the description of “shepherd.” There is no greater responsibility than holding the life of another in the control of one’s own hands. Protecting the life of others was the responsibility and calling of the shepherd.

The child that would be born in the manger in Bethlehem would be near the pastures that David grazed his father’s sheep centuries beforehand. The Savior of the world, the good shepherd, would be born in the City of David and a direct descendant of the King who also was a good shepherd in bygone days.

What child is this? He is a shepherd and king just as his ancestor David.

David describes attributes throughout the Psalms of the Lord who not only provides for his nourishment, but also protects him wherever he might find himself in life. These characteristics of the good shepherd help answer the question the shepherds posed at the Nativity: What Child Is This? He is the one who will provide for and protect all who are under His care.

What child is this? He is the one who left all the riches and comfort of heaven to look for the ones who went astray (Matthew 18:10-14). All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one of us—to our own way. The mission of the shepherd is to look for and rescue the ones who are lost. This is what a good shepherd naturally does. This is who this child in the manger would grow to become. He is the one who came to seek and to save those who were lost, alone, exposed, and astray.

When Jesus completed the rescue mission on the cross outside of Jerusalem three decades after being born in the Bethlehem manger, He restored, empowered, and entrusted the shepherding responsibilities to Peter on the shores of Galilee where they had first met three years earlier. The whole conversation revolved around the ongoing role and responsibility of being and training others to be shepherds of the ones Jesus came to rescue and call His own (John 21:15-17).

What child is this?

He is the one who came to lay down His life.

He is the one who came to provide for and protect His flock.

He is the one blessed beyond measure with ones He would call His own and who would come to know His voice.
He is the one who is the good shepherd.

His name is Jesus, the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger, just as the angel said he would be. Now go and tell everyone what has been heard, seen and experienced concerning who this child is, just as the shepherds did on that first Christmas in Bethlehem. What child is this?

He is a shepherd...the good shepherd.

Respond in Action

We each have a unique opportunity this time of year to share with others why Christmas is so important to us. How can you show and share Christ during this Christmas season?

What is something you hope happens for you, your family, or your community this Advent season? How can you play a role in making this happen?

Pray that God will use this Advent season to help you show and share Christ.

Songs of the Advent

What Child Is This?-Francesca Battistelli

Gloria/Angels We Have Heard On High-Casting Crowns

Advent Hymn-Christy Nockels

Midnight Clear (Love Song)-Chris Tomlin

Make Room-Casting Crowns

Activity

As a family, couple, small group, or individual create an Advent wreath or Advent calendar to help you reflect on what this time of year is about, the God who is the Good Shepherd.

Kid's Corner

The Joy of Giving:

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

Christmas is the time to celebrate the greatest gift the world has received, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! To help your family focus on being a great gift giver like our great God, encourage them to give unique gifts to those they encounter this Christmas season. Work as a family to give a gift to someone who needs to know of the gift of Christ. Some ideas include:

- Leave a small gift (cookies, candy, etc.) and a card for the postman, newspaper deliverer or garbage collector
- Make cards and take them to a local nursing home
- Write a note of thanks that also celebrates the joy of Christ at Christmas to your bus driver, librarian, grocery store clerk, hairdresser, etc.
- Write/make Christmas cards for some neighbors and deliver them

Week Two

Wise Man

December 10 - December 16

WEEK TWO

- Wise Man -

Scripture Reading

Matthew 2:1-2

John 1:1-2, 9-12, 14

Devotional Thought

Within the lyrics of the famous Christmas carol, *What Child is This?*, people encounter characters and their actions which help answer the inquiry posed in the title of the song. Although wise men or magi specifically are not mentioned as characters of the carol, their notifiable actions of worship and generosity lead the lyrics of the third stanza. “So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh...”

The wise men make their appearance in Mathew’s gospel account of the Christmas story. From the start of chapter two, we are introduced to these men and discover some details about their origins and intentions. As we understand who these wise men were, we can begin to see a reflection of some of their attributes found in the life of Jesus. Let us allow their lives to help us understand “what child is this.”

The wise men travelled a great distance before their arrival at the manger. Likewise, Jesus came a great distance to draw near to humanity and embody Immanuel: God with us. While Jesus did not come “from the east” as did the wise men, He did come to dwell among us from His previous position of being “with God...from the Father.” Thus the child

in the manger is the one who, like the wise men, made an arrival in Bethlehem from some distance.

Just as it is inferred that the wise men were from a position of wealth, likewise, Jesus came from a place of means. He is the God who stepped out from the riches of heaven and into the poverty of a lowly manger in a Bethlehem stable. Whether in His throne room of heaven or among the earth He created as we previously read in John's gospel passage, this child in the manger is the Lord. He is the One who created and owns all wealth. Thus, this child is like the wise men in that they both come from a place of means and have access to wealth. These characteristics we see mirrored in Jesus and the wise men help us understand glimpse by glimpse who this child in the manger truly is. Does the generosity of the wise men reflect an attribute of who this child in the manger is? He, too, is one full of generosity and a good giver of gifts.

What child is this? He is the one who would give the ultimate gift. He was born to give His life as a ransom for many.

When these wise men saw the star rising in the sky, they took it as a sign that something significant had happened on earth. It was a sign in the heavens they must follow that led to the One who had been foretold throughout the generations. Yes, Gentile wise men would follow the star and seek out this one born King of the Jews just as the prophecies had foretold.

What child is this? He is the one who, like the wise men, came to seek something. Notice how Jesus later described who He was as recorded in

Luke's Gospel. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Luke 9:10.

The wise men were the first Gentiles to worship Jesus. They would not be the last. Jesus was the child who was born to be worshipped by all people in all nations for all times. It is what the wise men experienced. It is part of the answer to the question the Carol asks: What child is this? He is the One who is worthy of worship by all people, of all places and races. He is the One True Savior of the entire world that is worthy to seek and to worship. He is the One not impeded by distance to be born as the One to give His life that we may receive forgiveness of sin and the gift of life everlasting. May we do as the wise men did. May we seek Him, bow before Him, worship Him, and give Him the gifts of our lives as we go and tell others about Him.

Reflection

What do the Scripture readings tell us about Jesus?

Why did you give your life to Jesus?

How has Jesus changed your life?

How could your story be important to others?

Respond in Action

How can you share Christ with someone this Advent season? Choose at least one individual that you have a relationship with that you can share Christ with.

Pray that during this Advent season God will give you both opportunity and courage to share the hope of Advent with that individual.

Songs of the Advent

Adore Him-Kari Jobe

O Come, O Come Immanuel-Matt Maher

The Proof of Your Love-For King & Country

Make Room-Casting Crowns

Activity

As a family, couple, small group, or individual, purchase a gift(s) this week to donate to a local homeless shelter, local church ministry, Salvation Army, or Goodwill. Make sure to attach a note about the true message each of us should reflect on this Advent season.

Kid's Corner

Christmas in Other Countries:

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.’” Mark 16:15

Jesus was God's gift of grace and salvation from sins that was given to the WHOLE world. Remember this together as a family by reading about another country and doing an activity, craft or making a recipe from another nation. Wycliffe Kids has great ideas! While you are working, celebrating, and creating pray for the people of this nation to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Week Three

Mary

December 17 – December 23

WEEK THREE

- Mary -

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:26-35

Devotional Thought

The opening lines to William Chatterton Dix's famous Christmas carol asks a poignant question. "What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?" Dix goes on to answer this question in part during the last line of the repeated chorus. This child is "the babe, the son of Mary." Luke's gospel tells how Mary's son would be conceived and that His name would be Jesus. Mary learns of this news in a unique and unforgettable way as recorded in Luke.

Hebrews 1:3 states the following about who this child is that was born in the manger in Bethlehem. "He [Jesus] is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power." Thus, the child referenced in the Christmas carol is God in the flesh that embodies the exact representation of God the Father who conceived Jesus in the womb of Mary by way of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Jesus is fully God. That is who this child is that is sung about in the Christmas carol. However, Jesus also is fully human because as both the Scriptures and the Christmas carol state, He is "the son of Mary." (Philippians 2:6-8).

Thus, while there certainly are reflections and attributes in Jesus' life that display God the Father, likewise, there are reflections from Mary's life that are seen in her son's being that help answer the question: What child is this?

We see in the Gospel accounts the way Jesus deals with people, especially children, with compassion, patience, and tenderness. Over and over again Jesus takes the time to value children and people in the margins of life by giving them dignity and reaching out to embrace and bless them with appropriate, meaningful touch. Mary, described by the angel of the Lord as one who has found favor with God, must have displayed similar compassion, patience, and tenderness in her own life as a woman and mother. This child mentioned in the carol is the one who lay sleeping on Mary's lap as a babe, but one day would grow to exhibit care and compassion to others just as his mother displayed to him.

As mentioned above in Hebrews 1:3, Jesus is the exact imprint of God. It is interesting to see how some of the descriptions of God in the Bible include motherly language and imagery. Read: Isaiah 66:13, 49:15, Psalm 22:9-10, 71:6, Hosea 13:8, Luke 13:34.

This motherly imagery is stated in the Bible as descriptions of the nature and character of God. Because the Scripture states that Jesus is the exact representation of God, these characteristics are true of Jesus as well. Therefore, these characteristics that would be true to Mary, also are true of the son of Mary who also was the son of God.

A continued comparison reveals both Mary and Jesus lived lives of great consequence that included deep pain. A brief scene after the birth of Jesus

in Luke's gospel shows a prophetic word of Mary that likewise, included pain and sorrow (Luke 2:33-35).

This prophecy concerning ramifications surrounding her child also is echoed in the lyrics of the Christmas carol we are examining. Notice these lines from the second stanza. "Nails, spears shall pierce him through, the cross he bore for me, for you. Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Mary." These lyrics speak to the reason Jesus was in such agony emotionally, mentally, spiritually and soon would be physically when praying in the Garden about the mission he was called to complete. Both his heart and hers would be pierced from the cross experience. This is part of the answer to...What child is this?

Regardless of the pain that Mary knew she would experience in watching her son suffer on the cross, she was present in both his pain and hers. Never would Jesus' mother leave him nor forsake him, especially in his hour of need (John 19:25). Remember one of His names is Immanuel: the God who is with us. Jesus is with us in our darkest hour and deepest pain. Jesus told His followers that no matter what, he would be with them always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20).

While Mary seeks to be near, comforting and supporting her son, likewise, we see the compassion and care of the son of Mary back to His mother in this same moment. "When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' and from that hour the disciple took her to his own home." John 19:26-27

What an incredible picture of love and compassion Jesus displayed toward His mother. While He hung their dying, he had the capacity to make sure

she was taken care of in his absence. This helps complete one's understanding to the question of what child this is and would grow to be. He would be the one who loved his family to the very end. He was selfless and sacrificing beyond measure. He was kind and considerate even when experiencing his worst day in the worst way. He was the one who came willingly to go through the worst so that we, too, might be made family and have provision through his death and because of his life. For not only was this child the one who was born in the manger in Bethlehem, but also, he would be the first-born from the dead. And his re-birth gives all people the opportunity to be born again and saved from our sins, just as Mary came to understand.

Reflection

When was a time in your life where you experienced the pain and sorrow of life?

How did Jesus reveal Himself to you during that time? How can He now?

How could your story be helpful to someone else? Is there someone that needs to hear about the compassion and care of Jesus now?

Respond in Action

Our lives should be all about Jesus! What is a way you can show others your excitement about Jesus? Encourage your friends and family that love Jesus to share with others their excitement for what this Advent season is all about.

Pray that God will give you the opportunity to show your excitement of the real meaning of Christmas in the coming weeks.

Songs of the Advent

Be Born In Me (Mary)-Francesca Battistelli

The Night Before Christmas-Brandon Heath

My Soul Longs-The Neverclaim

Make Room-Casting Crowns

Activity

As a family, couple, small group, or individual pick a few Christmas songs that you can sing together and visit a friend, neighbor, or family member who needs to be encouraged about what truly is exciting about this time of year.

Kid's Corner

Remember God's Christmas Blessings:

(<http://thecraftyclassroom.com/2015/12/17/nativity-finger-puppets/>)

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

Remembering all God has given to us during this Christmas season helps us to think about all that is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable! As a family, use finger puppets, a nativity set or dress up yourselves to show and share about God's goodness to us as described in the gospels. Grown-ups or older children can read the scriptures while other family

members use the above-mentioned methods to act out the Christmas story.

Week Four

Joseph

December 24

WEEK FOUR

- Joseph -

Scripture Reading

Matthew 1:18-25

Devotional Thought

It is interesting to note the characters mentioned overtly such as the Christ child, His mother named Mary, shepherds, angels and even two forms of feeding livestock. While not specifically named, the recognizable actions of the wise men are referenced as the ones who brought their well-known gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh. All the characters normally present in a Nativity display are accounted for and in place except one. Do you realize who is missing from the stable scene roll call by name or by referenced actions?

Joseph.

There is no mention of the man who would help raise the “Son of Mary.” While a few of Joseph’s actions are recorded during the early years of his relationship with Mary and into Jesus’ early life, none of Joseph’s words remain in print with the pages of the Bible. Only Joseph’s actions of obedience, care, and presence are mentioned.

No, Joseph was not present in the song. Joseph’s words are not present in the gospel texts. But Joseph quietly was present at the manger. He was present before the manger. He was present after the manger. He was

present at least up through Jesus' twelfth birthday as recorded in Luke 2:41-52. Beyond that account, historians believe Joseph died somewhere between Jesus' teenage years and the beginning of his public ministry at age 30. And during the early childhood years of Jesus' life on earth, not only was this child known as the "Son of Mary" as the song states but also Jesus was known as the Son of Joseph.

What child is this? He is a child adopted by a father who loved him.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem on that Christmas night, Joseph named the child, his adopted child, Jesus. It was his responsibility as his adoptive father. On the night Jesus was born, Joseph not only gave Jesus His name but also Joseph likely took his newborn baby and symbolically placed Jesus across his knees. Such a symbolic act was the way a first-century husband in biblical days acknowledged the legitimacy of his newborn descendent. Subsequently, for a man to place someone else's child across his knees was a sacred and symbolic act signifying adoption. Although the Bible does not state explicitly that Joseph did this, it is highly probable Joseph not only gave Jesus his name, but also laid Jesus across his knees claiming his legacy and adopting the Son of Mary as his own.

What child is this? One of the characteristics that answers the questions is found in the reflection of his earthly father, Joseph. He is the One who adopts and names us as part of His own family. Paul writes about this characteristic of Jesus who would grow from a baby in the manger to the God that was willing not only to die for rescue of His creation, but also to lay all people across His knees to call them His own as He purchased their freedom from the slavery of sin, death, Satan, and hell (Galatians 4:4-7).

What child is this? He is the one who makes adoption into His family possible. That is what Joseph was told to name his adoptive Son when He would be born (Matthew 1:21). The name Jesus means “God saves.” What God saves, God adopts as His own and for His own by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul goes on to write about the adoption into God’s family in his letter to the Ephesian church (Ephesians 1:5). After our adoption into the family of God the Father that is made possible by Jesus the Son, in due time Jesus will give us a new name (Revelation 2:17).

This is adoption language. It includes the responsibility of a father to name his child. What child is this? He is the one who enables adoption into God’s family to take place and will give a new name to those who become part of His family. These are the characteristics we see in Jesus’ adoptive, earthly father, Joseph. These are the truths and responsibilities of the One we celebrate who was born in a manger so he could die on a cross leading to resurrection and the defeat of sin and death. Such victory and life enable adoption to be available for all who call on His name! This is the ultimate answer to the question: what child is this? He is Jesus, the adopting and naming God who sets us on His knee and calls us sons and daughters. He enables us to be family as He gives us our name.

Reflection

Think about your adoption (salvation) story. How has your new ‘family’ impacted the way you live today?

Who in your life would benefit from hearing your adoption story?
Consider sharing with them soon!

Respond in Action

Who is someone that needs a last-minute word of encouragement, a gift, or hug from you to show them that you care for them? Does this person need to hear about the Savior who loves them more than we ever could?

Pray that the reflection from this Advent season will push you further in your walk with God. Pray that this coming year will be the best spiritual year you have ever had! You have been adopted into the family of God; live that and share that this coming year!

Songs of the Advent

Joseph's Lullaby-Matt Redman

Bethlehem-Chris Tomlin

These Christmas Lights-Matt Redman

Make Room-Casting Crowns

Activity

As a family, couple, small group, or individual spend time thinking through and writing down all the reasons to be thankful for those God has placed in your life that help point you to Jesus.

Kid's Corner

Share the Light of Jesus (<http://www.redtedart.com/gifts-kids-can-make-decorated-candles/>)

“Again Jesus spoke to them saying, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” John 8:12

All the beautiful, twinkling Christmas lights point us to the true light of Christmas and of the entire world-Jesus Christ!

With your children, gather some inexpensive candles and some permanent markers (Bic Marking Permanent Markers work great!) and have them design a Christmas candle for friends and/or relatives to help spread the light of Jesus. You could attach a Christmas tract or card explaining salvation to share with your gift.

Christmas Day

Anthem of the Christ

December 25

Christmas Day

- Anthem of the Christ -

Scripture Reading

Luke 2:25-32

Devotional Thought

What child is this? He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Lord, the One we have been waiting for all these years! Kids around the world have the hardest time waiting until Christmas morning arrives. For many, the longest night of waiting of all 365 nights of the calendar is the one landing between Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. Will the waiting ever cease? Will the dawn of Christmas morning ever arrive? How much longer until we can leave our beds and open the morning with celebration and joy? It is hard to wait for the arrival.

We are called to be the waiting people...let me explain.

The theme, command, and call to "wait" is one that recurs over and over throughout the Old and New Testaments in the Bible. Waiting on the Lord is not intended to be a passive part of life. Rather, biblical waiting is meant to be done with active engagement. When waiting is mentioned in the Old Testament, the emphasis revolves around the daily walk with God and the need to wait on God's provision and care within the pressures and needs of our life. The primary emphasis of waiting that is mentioned in the New Testament centers on waiting for the return of Jesus. The waiting for Jesus' second advent should have an impact on how we position and live our lives as followers of His as we continue to walk through life in our day to day relationship with Him through the power of His Holy Spirit.

There are seven primary words in the Bible that deal with the subject of waiting on the Lord. Four reside in the Old Testament:

Qavah – 1. To bind together (perhaps by twisting strands as making a rope), 2. Look patiently, 3. Tarry or wait, 4. Hope, expect, look eagerly

Yachal – 1. To wait, to hope, to wait expectantly, 2. To wait with trust

Damam – 1. To wait in silence, to be still, to grow silent, 2. To wait, tarry, rest

Chakah – 1. To wait, 2. To tarry, 3. To long for

Three reside in the New Testament:

Prosdechomai – 1. To receive to one's self, receive favorably, 2. Expect, look for, wait for. (The focus of this word is on the coming of the Lord in either His first or His second advents.)

Apekdechomai – 1. To await, 2. To expect eagerly. (The focus of this word is on the coming of the Lord and the glorious blessings that follow.)

Anameno – 1. To wait for an arrival of one who is expected, to wait with patience and confidence. (The literal meaning of this word means to wait up as a parent might wait up for a child to come home.)

Yes, the night before Christmas may seem like the longest night of waiting during the year. However, the waiting for the advent of Jesus that first Christmas had been a long time coming for many generations of people. Luke's gospel depicts the waiting that Israel had been engaged with for centuries:

"Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting (prosdechomai) 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

The waiting for the first arrival of the Lord was over. The celebration started. It started small. But it would grow through the years. It continues this Christmas day. Followers of Jesus all over the world celebrate the waiting of the Messiah is over with regards to the first advent. Now, the waiting continues for the second advent. This waiting is not meant to be a passive waiting on the return of the Lord. The waiting is meant to be a combination of relational walking and waiting with all the Old Testament emphasis of it being day by day in all our circumstances while at the same time it being a longing and looking and positioning and preparing of our life for the return of the Lord.

Yes, we are the waiting people.

We are called to wait with trust, hope, expectant provision, in quiet at times, yet always knowing He is coming soon.

May we celebrate the waiting of the first advent is over. May we prepare and position our hearts and lives day by day as we continue to wait for the second advent to take place. May we live our lives with the joy of Christmas and the new birth that is ours in our own lives when we put our faith, hope and trust in His. May we never cease to celebrate as we continue to wait on the Lord.

Songs of the Advent

Make Room-Casting Crowns

Christmas Is Here-JJ Heller

Unto Us-Matthew West

How Glorious the Love of Heaven-Stars Go Dim

The Christmas Hope-NewSong

His Name Shall Be-Matt Redman

Joy to the World-For King & Country

All Is Well-Michael W. Smith

Of the Father, To the World

Help From Heaven-Matt Redman

Noel-Lauren Daigle

He Shall Reign Forevermore-Chris Tomlin



*What
Child
is This?*

