

PSALM 100 1 Shout with joy to the LORD, all the earth! 2 Worship the LORD with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy. 3 Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. 5 For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation....

Since my earliest memories of Christmas until today, I've observed Christmas creep. If it wasn't for Thanksgiving being in late November, who knows maybe we would be putting up Christmas lights on July 5th.

When I was young, I remember waiting until the weekend before Christmas day and getting a tree, then giving it time to rest in the house before decorating. There was a building of anticipation up to Christmas day. But now it feels like there is a cultural expectation or passive pressure to get the Christmas party going on Black Friday.

Maybe it's an unconscious belief that more is better, and the one season of joy we have each year is Christmas, so let's make it longer, let's extend the season as long as we can. Or maybe we are weak in patience and have lost the ability to wait well.

I'm guilty. The Christmas tree and lights, decorations, cookies, starbuck blend, etc all give me pleasure. The tree is already up, and I suspect it will be that way until late Jan early Feb. I think the trees these days are GMO to last longer before the needles fall off.

Is more, is longer better? Maybe. The chocolate advent calendars give a little relief to wanting to open a present today.

The intent though of engaging in an Advent season, is to bring the reason back to the season, the purpose to the party, focus to the feast, Christ in the center of the celebration.

The word Advent means 'coming' or 'arrival'. Before Jesus was born all of Israel actively anticipated the arrival of a King who would free them of oppressive injustice of Rome. There had been seemingly 400 years of silence since the prophet Malachi.

They awaited The Messiah sent by God - Messiah comes from the Hebrew word, Mashiach, meaning "the anointed one," or "the chosen one." Christos (Christ) is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term, Messiah

When Jesus came to earth (First Advent) to live with us and be our Savior, the Jewish people were looking for God to send the Messiah or the Christos as a conquering King (2nd Advent)

As George MacDonald put it, "They were looking for a king to lift them high. He came a little baby thing that made a woman cry."

Why the confusion - The Old Testament is saturated with prophecies concerning Christ's first advent, and the second advent. Often side by side. First and second advent are periods not moments.

According to John MacArthur - Of 330 prophecies about Jesus, about 110 refer to His first coming first coming (Advent) of Jesus Christ (Christmas - ministry, death, burial resurrection and ascension) and 220 to His Second Coming.

There are 46 OT prophets - 10 spoke of His first coming and 36 of His Second Coming.

MESSIAH WOULD BE

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM & THE BEARER OF THE GOSPEL circa 2000 B.C - Genesis 22:18

BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM circa 700 B.C - Micah 5:2

BORN TO A VIRGIN circa 700 B.C - Isaiah 7:14

RECEDED BY A FORERUNNER circa 700 B.C - Isaiah 40:3

MINISTER IN NAPHTALI AND GALILEE circa 700 B.C - Isaiah 9:1-2

ENTER INTO JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY circa 500 B.C - Zechariah 9:9

REJECTED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE - Ps 69:8 & Is 53:3

BETRAYAL FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER FORETOLD circa 500 B.C - Zech 11:12

One man fulfilling eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power (1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000) This has been illustrated by imagining placing 100,000,000,000,000,000 silver dollars on the State of Texas which would result in two feet "sea" of silver wherever you tread!

Fulfilled prophecy is fulfilled promises - really every fulfilled prophecy from a human perspective is a miraculously filled impossible promise. Fulfilled prophecy establishes for us a rock solid case for His faithfulness.

Mary's words in her "Magnificat" echo the celebration and thanksgiving expressed in Psalm 100 - a song of the faithfulness of God ... **And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. - Luke 1:47** My Savior in Greek is Soter which is synonymous with My Rescuer My Deliverer My Preserver My Protector My Healer!

Faithfulness of God - God will always do what he says and fulfill what he has promised. He can be relied upon, and he will never prove unfaithful to those who trust what He has said. The essence of true faith is taking God at his word, and relying on Him to do as He has promised.

Exodus 34:6 – He is “abounding in love and faithfulness.” Deuteronomy 32:4 – He is a “a faithful God.” 1 Corinthians 1:9 – “God ... is faithful.” 1 Corinthians 10:13 – “And God is faithful.”

1 John 1:9 – “He is faithful.”

God is as faithful today as he was yesterday. **“Your faithfulness extends to every generation, as enduring as the earth you created.” (Psalm 119:90).**

He is reliable in all his works. “7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy” (Psalm 111:7).

Lamentations 3:22-23 22 The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. 23 Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning..

How many people do you know who, no matter what the circumstances and no matter how they feel, will always do exactly what they say they will do every single time and do it with the same thoroughness and perfection that you never have to worry about anything they say or do because you know if they say it, they will definitely do it without fail, without change and without excuse?

One person, Jesus Christ - He does not fail, forget, falter, change or disappoint.

It is Estimated that >1500 OT verses refer to the return of the Messiah in glory and judgment. (Second Advent) - Approximately one of every 25 NT verses relate to Christ's Second Coming.

Our Lord referred to His Second Coming 20 times and there are over 50 warnings in the NT that He is coming again.

The most dramatic, powerful and divine intervention in all history will be the second appearing of Jesus Christ. It is the most prophesied event in the Bible. There is no other event that has so much of the divine revelation given to it as the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. When He will come and make everything that is wrong about this world - according to His design - and make it right.

So we find ourselves living in this amazing time of “Already - Not Yet” or in between the First and Second Advent.

Illustrations of the already - not yet state - work in progress - trip - building - ski lift - helicopter rescue

The Kingdom of God and the Christian is very similar. The season of Advent is a time for us to remember that the Kingdom project/trip/advent which includes our salvation and sanctification began at Christ's first coming. And yet, we actively await the completion of that project at Christ's second coming. **Advent is meant to inspire active waiting. Look back to look ahead with confidence in Jesus Christ.**

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. 3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up.

In 1950 Florence Chadwick crossed the English Channel in world record time and then in 1951 crossed the Channel again swimming in the other direction to become the first woman accomplish this feat. In 1952, Florence Chadwick attempted to swim the 26 miles between Catalina Island and California, but after 15 hours a thick fog set in causing Florence began to doubt her ability to finish her course. After telling her mother she didn't think she could make it, she swam for an hour and still unable to see the coastline due to the fog, stopped swimming. It wasn't until she got onto that boat that she discovered that the shore was about a mile away. At the news conference she said: 'All I could see was the fog, I think if I could have seen the shore I would have made it'.

Two months later, Chadwick tried again, but this time when the thick fog set in, but she kept swimming because she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind while she swam.

When you are discouraged, doubting, tempted, distressed, overwhelmed remember God's faithfulness. You are accepted, adopted, adored, and applauded. Look back to the cross, to be confident you will receive a crown.

"13 If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is." (2 Timothy 2:13).

6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:6).

Isaiah 9:6 6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

John 3:16 "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 1:29 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.

Psalm 100:3b We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise.

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