



ADVENT

Mias



ADVENT

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History of Advent

The term Advent, meaning coming, has Latin roots and is most often used to describe the incarnation of Christ or the second coming of Christ. Christians of earlier generations would use the phrase advent of our Lord when referring to Jesus' birth. They would use the phrase His second advent when referring to Jesus' return to judge the nations.

The liturgy of the traditional church calendar celebrates the season of Advent immediately leading up to Christmas. In the western church, the four Sundays prior to Christmas constitute the season of Advent. The eastern church begins their celebration in mid-November. Many believe this special celebration of the Advent season began as early as the fourth century.

As evangelicals, we see no mandate in Scripture to practice certain festivals. However, what we do see in Scripture is God placing special events and seasons in the lives of his people in order to remember the blessings that He has given his children and to hope for the blessings yet to come. This is our desire for the Advent season at Willow Creek.



How To Use This Guide

This guide is a mirroring of our church family's celebration of Advent for your family to follow. In family sects of Christianity, both the first and second Advents of Christ are celebrated, the incarnation and the second coming respectively. This guide gives opportunities both to reflect on the past and to hope in the future.

Each week follows a similar layout: Scripture, Advent Wreath, Prayer, Singing, and Questions for Reflection. Our hope and prayer is that your wonder of the Christ Child and the return of King Jesus will be in your heart this season. We hope this guide can play a small role in your Advent celebrations.

The Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath looks like a normal evergreen Christmas wreath, but the wreath is laid down flat on a table instead of being hung on your front door. Four candles are placed within the wreath to represent the four weeks leading up to Christmas. A candle is also placed in the center of the wreath and is called the Christ candle.

In the very beginnings of Christianity, the light of a candle or lamps became a symbol and reminder of the light of Christ shining into the darkness of our world. The concept of Christ as a light in the world is not merely a historical practice but is synonymous with the Scriptures in passages like Matthew 4:16 which says, "The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." John 1:4-10 reads: "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, though the world did not recognize Him."

The Prayers

The time we set aside for celebrating is only meaningful because of the fuller redemptive story. The prayers in this guide are designed to inform us about the person of Christ. They are adaptations from "The Valley of Vision," a collection of prayers from the Puritans. These prayers are best used as a springboard for your own family prayers.



Week One
Hope

Scripture

Isaiah 9:2

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah 11:1-5

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord- and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Romans 15:12-13

And again, Isaiah says,

*“The Root of Jesse will spring up,
one who will arise to rule over the nations;
in him the Gentiles will hope.”*

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lighting of the Candle

Have a family member light one advent candle.

Prayer

God and Father,
May our hearts be reminded of your love
in the manger of Jesus birth,
in his garden of agony,
in his cross of suffering,
in his tomb of the resurrection,
in his heavenly intercession,
May we be deepened,
in our understanding of your glory
and our vileness,
your majesty and our meanness,
your beauty and our deformity,
your purity and our filth,
your righteousness and our iniquity.
You have loved us everlastingly
and unchangeably.
May we love you as we are loved.
Amen.

Carol – Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus, the carol used to introduce the theme of this lesson, was written by Charles Wesley. Born in England, he and his brother John came to America to help James Oglethorpe establish Georgia, the last of the 13 English colonies. On board the ship from England, the Wesley brothers met 26 German Moravians. They were impressed by the hymn singing of these German Christians and realized for the first time that hymn singing could be a spiritual experience.

Charles wrote more than 6,500 hymns, many of which are sung today in Christian worship. Two beloved Christmas carols are among them: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing and Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus. Charles was an evangelistic preacher and wrote about 480 of the 525 hymns in the Collection of Hymns.

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

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

Reflection Questions

Many of our traditions have roots in the gospel of Jesus. *What is your favorite Christmas celebration? How does that celebration demonstrate the light of Jesus coming into the world?*

Isaiah tells us that Jesus judges with righteousness alone. *How have you judged unrighteously this week? How would have Jesus judged?*

Family Activity

Parents, plan a fun Christmas activity during the next week that you know your children will love. Maybe it'll be making Christmas cookies together, taking a drive through Jolly Holiday Lights, or watching a favorite Christmas movie.

At the end of your family Advent time, promise your children that you are going to have a very special family activity to celebrate Advent, but don't tell them what the activity will be or when it will be. As the week goes by, remind them often of your promise and give them special hints about what the activity might be. Let their expectation and excitement grow! Use this opportunity to remind them about God's promise to send a Rescuer for His people. Talk about the anticipation God's people felt as they waited for the promised Messiah. (Don't forget to fulfill your promised activity sometime throughout the week, too!)





Scripture

Isaiah 9:6-7

*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.
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.*

John 14:27-31 (NIV)

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
"You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you'—
If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.*

Week Two

Peace

Lighting of the Candle

Have one family member light one advent candle and then a second candle.

Prayer

O Most High, Most Glorious
The thought of your infinite serenity
cheers us,
We are toiling and moiling,*
troubled and distressed,
but your are forever at
perfect peace.
Your designs cause you no fear or
care of unfulfillment,
You stand fast as the eternal hills.
We come to you as sinners with
cares and sorrows,
to leave every concern entirely
to thee,
every sin calling for Christ's
precious blood;
Revive deep spirituality in
our hearts;
Let us live near to the
great shepherd,
hear his voice, know its tones, and
follow its calls.
Amen.

**meaning: agitated*

Carol – Hark The Herald Angels Sing

The carol we now know as “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” did not start life as such. The carol required at least four people to bring it to its current form. Wesley’s original, written as a Christmas Day hymn and first published in 1739, is made up of ten 4-line verses, rather than the longer eight-line verses with refrain which we have now.

The tune we now call “Mendelssohn” comes from the second chorus, “Gott ist Licht” (God is Light). While there can be no doubt that the marriage of Mendelssohn’s tune and the adapted words has been most fortuitous, it is rather ironic that Mendelssohn, while recognizing the value of his tune, felt that it would be unsuitable for sacred words. Similarly, Wesley, when writing the original text, suggested that a slow, solemn tune would fit them best.

Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled
Joyful all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With th’angelic hosts proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

Christ by highest heav’n adored
Christ the everlasting Lord
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of the Virgin’s womb
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see
Hail th’incarnate Deity
Pleased as man with men to dwell
Jesus our Emmanuel
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace
Hail the Sun of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings
Ris’n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

Come Desire of nations come
Fix in us Thy humble home
Rise the woman’s conqu’ring seed
Bruise in us the serpent’s head
Adam’s likeness now efface
Stamp Thine image in its place
Second Adam from above
Reinstate us in Thy love
Hark the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King

Reflection Questions

In the Scriptures this week we see that Jesus is called the Prince of Peace. Jesus will right all the wrongs and bring an everlasting peace to this earth. We, however, are not peaceful beings. Think through this past week. *First, what worries or concerns were in the forefront of your mind?*

Second, why do you think those thoughts were given precedent?

In our hymn for this week, Mendelssohn writes, “Bruise in us the serpent’s head Adam’s likeness now efface.” This line asks Jesus to finish the good work that he has started in us. *What do you most long to be rid of in this mortal life?* Note: Be specific, don’t just say sin!

Family Activity

Make ornaments and put an attribute from of God on each ornament. Include the words from Isaiah 9:6 that describe our Savior: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Hang the ornaments on your Christmas tree so that your tree can remind you and others of God’s attributes.





Scripture

Isaiah 65:17–19

“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.”

Philippians 2:1–11

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Galatians 5:22–26

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Week Three

Joy

Lighting of the Candle

Have one family member light three advent candles.

Prayer

To the giver of Joy,
Jesus wept, sorrowed, and suffered
that we might rejoice. For our
joy you sent us the Comforter,
multiplied your promises, shown us
our future happiness, and given us a
living fountain.

You are preparing joy for us and
us for joy; We pray for joy, wait for
joy, long for joy; give us more than
we can hold, desire, or think of.
Measure out times and degrees of
joy, at our work business and duties.

Let us rest in the thought of your
love, pardon for sin, and our title to
heaven, our future unspotted state.

We are grateful and unworthy
recipients of grace. Amen.

Carol – Joy To The World

The popular carol Joy to the World was penned by Isaac Watts in his book: Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament (1719). Watts paraphrased 138 Psalms through the lens of their fulfillment in the redemptive work of Christ.

Though Watts never intended for the hymn to be sung merely during Advent and Christmas, most hymnals properly list it as an Advent Carol. During Advent, we celebrate the twofold advent of Christ: His incarnation and His glorious return. These three aspects are each portrayed in Watts' hymn, Joy to the World.

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

Reflection Questions

Jesus' entire life serves as a model for serving one another. In fact, the Philippians passage that we read this week shows us that part of Jesus' serving of mankind was the incarnation. His birth was a sacrifice for us! *What are some ways that can you serve and love people this Advent season?* Think of a couple specific deeds.

What are some tangible ways that people have served you?

Family Activity

Christmas presents us with a wonderful opportunity to share joy in a tangible way with others in our community. Think together as a family of ways you could serve someone else this week. Here are a few ideas to help you get started:

- Prepare a meal and take it to a friend or neighbor in need.
- Bake cookies and deliver them to your nearest Police Station or Fire Department.
- Buy a gift for a child from our Angel Tree in the foyer.
- Create homemade Christmas cards and deliver them to residents in a nearby nursing home.
- Serve a meal together at a homeless assistance center or shelter.





Scripture

Deuteronomy 10:17-22

For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. He is the one you praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. Your ancestors who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

John 1:1-5, 14-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Lighting of the Candle

Have one family member light all four advent candles.

Prayer

You have loved us everlastingly,
unchangeably,
may we love you as we are loved;
You have given yourself for us;
may we give ourselves to you.
You have died for us,
may we live for you, in every
moment of our time,
in every movement of our minds,
in every pulse of our hearts.

May we never dally with the world
and its allurements,
but walk by your side, listen to
your voice, be clothed with your
graces, and adorned with your
righteousness.

Amen.

Carol – O Come All Ye Faithful

“O Come, All Ye Faithful” (originally written in Latin as Adeste Fideles) is a Christmas carol which has been attributed to various authors, including John Francis Wade (1711–1786), with the earliest copies of the hymn all bearing his signature, John Reading (1645–1692) and King John IV of Portugal (1604–1656).

The original four verses of the hymn were extended to a total of eight, and these have been translated into many languages. The English translation of “O Come, All Ye Faithful” by the English Catholic priest Frederick Oakeley, written in 1841, is widespread in most English speaking countries. The present harmonization is from the English Hymnal (1906).

O come all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O come ye O come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of angels

O come let us adore Him
O come let us adore Him
O come let us adore Him
Christ the Lord

Sing choirs of angels
Sing in exultation
O sing all ye citizens of heaven above
Glory to God all
Glory in the highest

Yea Lord we greet Thee
Born this happy morning
Jesus to Thee be all glory given
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing

Reflection Questions

Reread John 1:1-5. *Who is John writing about?*

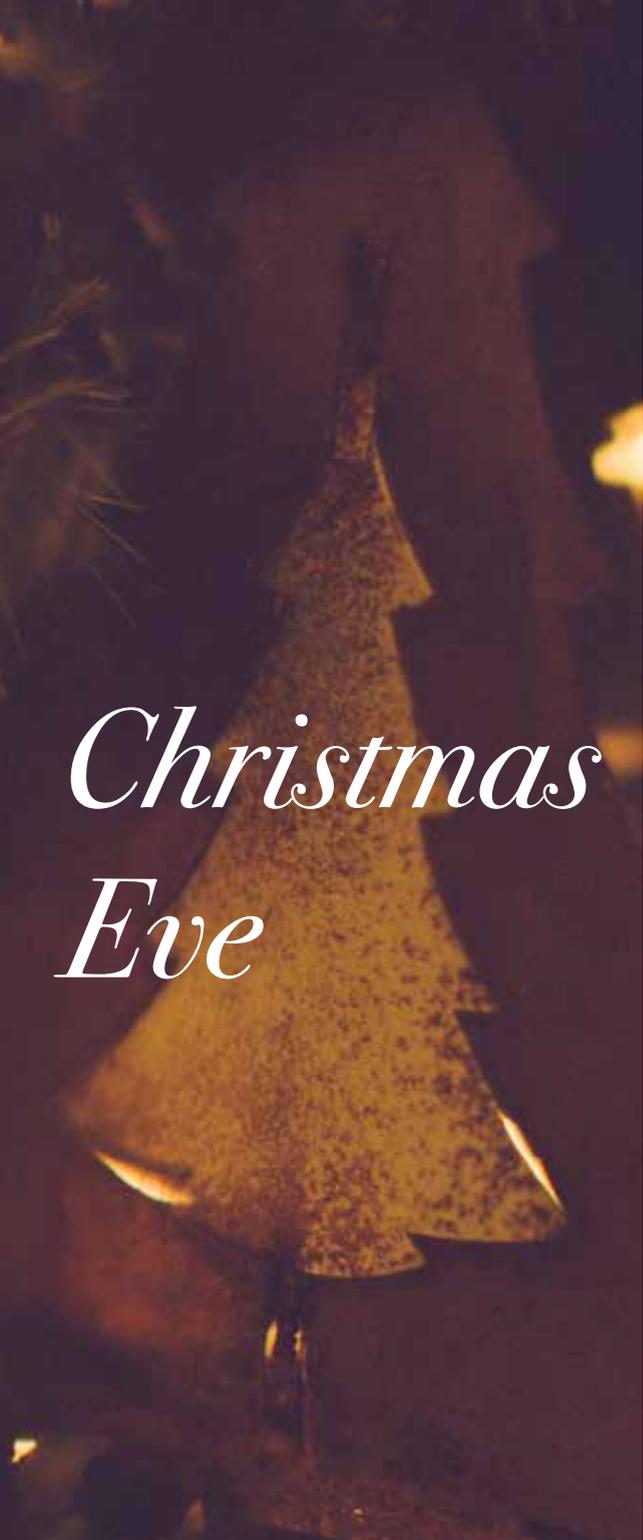
Explain in your own words what John is communicating about “the Word”.

How can you rest in the truths of John 1:1-5?

Family Activity

As a family, draw your own nativity scene of Joseph and Mary with Jesus in her arms. Across the bottom on your picture, write the words “A Light to the Nations.” Discuss ways we can reach out to our friends, neighbors, and co-workers with the Light of Jesus.





Christmas Eve

Scripture

Luke 2:1–14 (NIV)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Revelation 21:1–4

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Lighting of the Candle

Have one family member light all four advent candles and the Christ Candle.

Prayer

Three in one, one in three, God of
my Salvation,
Heavenly Father, blessed Son,
eternal Spirit,
We adore you as one Being, one
Essence,
and God in three distinct Persons,
for bringing sinner to thy knowledge
and to thy kingdom.
O Father, you have loved me and
sent Jesus to redeem us;
O Jesus, you have loved us and
assumed our nature,
you shed your own to wash away our
sins,
wrought righteousness to cover our
unworthiness;
O Holy Spirit, you have loved me
and entered my heart,
implanted there eternal life,
and revealed to me the glories of
Jesus.
Amen

Carol – Silent Night (Stille Nacht)

The song originated on Christmas Eve back in 1818 in a village church in Oberndorf, Austria. It was originally entitled "Stille Nicht! Heilige Nacht."

History tells us that the song was written by Father Joseph Mohr, who presented his classic work at the midnight Mass in St. Nicholas Church. They say that Father Mohr and Franz Xavier Gruber, the choir director, sang the carol to the accompaniment of music by Father Mohr with his guitar.

One story tells that the organ in the church was not working, so Father Mohr and Gruber created the song for guitar accompaniment. Others say Father Mohr simply wanted a carol which could be accompanied with his guitar.

Silent night holy night
All is calm all is bright
'Round yon virgin mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night holy night
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heav'nly hosts sing alleluia
Christ the Savior is born
Christ the Savior is born

Silent night holy night
Son of God love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus Lord at Thy birth
Jesus Lord at Thy birth
Christ the Savior is born

Family Activity

Set up the nativity scene as you read through the story of Jesus being born.

Read Luke 2:1-7: Set up the manger with Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and the animals.

Read Luke 2:8-20: Add the shepherds and angels to the nativity scene.





Resources

Books

On the Incarnation - Athanasius

Song of the Stars - Sally Lloyd Jones

Favorite Christmas Albums

Campfire Christmas by Rend Collective

Christmas Songs by Family Force Five

The Family Force Five Christmas Pageant by Family Force Five

Handel's Messiah by George Frideric Handel

Let it Snow Baby...Let it Reindeer by Relient K

Oh For Joy by David Crowder

Waiting Songs by Rain For Roots

Advent Wreath Ideas

Simple Evergreen Wreath

<http://blog.novanatural.com/2014/12/08/make-a-holiday-wreath-for-a-festive-centerpiece/>

Advent Candle Tins

<http://ao.com/life/home/crafts/diy-advent-candle-tins/>

Child's Advent Wreath Tutorial

<http://www.purejoycreative.com/2009/12/childs-advent-wreath-tutorial.html>

Advent Wreath Calendars

Felt Advent Calendar-free pattern!

<http://www.bhg.com/christmas/crafts/felt-christmas-advent-calendar/>

25 Advent Calendars—Great Ideas!

<http://tatertotsandjello.com/2013/12/great-ideas-advent-calendars-2.html>

Names & Titles of Jesus

Alpha and Omega

The Beginning and Ending of all things
Rev 21:6

Bread of Life

The one essential food
John 6:35

Chief Cornerstone

A Sure Foundation of life
Eph 2:20

Chief Shepherd

Gives guidance and protection
1 Pet 5:4

Christ

The Anointed One of God foreseen by Old
Testament prophets
Matt 16:16

Firstborn from the Dead

Leads us into resurrection
Col 1:18

Good Shepherd

Gives guidance and protection
John 10:11

High Priest

The Perfect Mediator
Heb 3:1

Holy One of God

Perfect and sinless
Mark 1:24

Immanuel

God with us
Matt 1:23

Jesus

His personal name meaning Yahweh Saves
Matt 1:21

King of Kings, Lord of Lords

The Sovereign Almighty
Rev 19:16

Lamb of God

Offered His life as a sacrifice for sins
John 1:29

Light of the World

One who brings hope and gives guidance
John 9:5

Lord

Sovereign Creator and Redeemer
Rom 10:9

Lord of Glory

The power of the Living God
1 Cor 2:8

Mediator

Redeemer who brings forgiven sinners into
the presence of God
1 Tim 2:5

Prophet

One who speaks for God
Luke 13:33



Resources

*Commentary on
selected passages
from the Bible
Knowledge
Commentary*

Deuteronomy 10:17–22

10:16–18. The proper response to their election by the sovereign Lord was to circumcise their hearts (cf. 30:6). An uncircumcised heart means a will that is hardened against God's commands. It is another way of saying the person is stiff-necked or stubborn (cf. 9:6, 13; 31:27). Thus the command to circumcise their hearts assumes that human hearts are naturally rebellious and need correction. Though human hearts are slow to change, Moses warned the nation that no bribe or anything less than an inward transformation could satisfy the Lord, who is the great God. God's treatment of the helpless (the fatherless ... the widow, and the alien) further illustrates His absolutely just character (showing no partiality) and highlights His requirement for Israel to be just.

10:19–22. The mention of the alien in verse 18 recalls God's great deliverance of Israel with great and awesome wonders (v. 21) from being aliens in Egypt (v. 19; cf. Ex. 23:9). Therefore the Israelites were to fear ... serve, adhere to (cf. hold fast to in Deut. 11:22; 13:4; 30:20), and praise Him. As a further encouragement to be faithful to the Lord, Moses called the people's attention to the fact that He had already fulfilled part of the promise to Abraham by multiplying their number like the stars in the sky (cf. Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4). On the question of whether 70 Israelites moved to Egypt (Ex. 1:5) or 75 (Acts 7:14–15) see comments on the Acts passage.

Isaiah 9:2.

With typical Hebrew parallelism the prophet described the effect of the Messiah on this northern part of Israel. The people were in darkness (cf. 8:22) and in the shadow of death. Then they saw a great light and light ... dawned on them. Matthew applied this passage to Jesus, who began His preaching and healing ministry in that region (Matt. 4:15–16).

Isaiah 7:13–16

7:13. Ahaz, by rejecting the offer of a sign from God's messenger, was in effect rejecting the One who sent the prophet. The house of David (cf. v. 2) refers not to all David's descendants, but to Ahaz and those kings of Judah who would descend from him. Ahaz's answer was impious. He said he did not want to test the Lord, but by refusing to follow God's directive to ask for a confirming miracle, he was testing the Lord's patience (as well as man's patience).

7:14–16. Though Ahaz refused to request a sign that would have confirmed the truth of Isaiah's message, the prophet said God would give him one anyway. The sign was to be a boy named Immanuel. Three elements pertain to the sign: (1) The boy would be born of

a virgin (v. 14). (2) He would be raised in a time of national calamity (v. 15; on the curds and honey see comments on v. 22). (3) While he was still a youth, the two-king alliance would be broken (v. 16).

“Virgin” translates ‘almâh, a word used of an unmarried woman of marriageable age. The word refers to one who is sexually mature. It occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Genesis 24:43 (“maiden”); Exodus 2:8 (“girl”); Psalm 68:25 (“maidens”); Proverbs 30:19 (“maiden”); Song of Songs 1:3 (“maidens”); 6:8 (“virgins”). It also occurs in 1 Chronicles 15:20 (alamoth) and in the title of Psalm 46 (alamoth may be a musical term). The child’s name Immanuel means “God (is) with us.”

Most Bible scholars hold one of three views on the virgin in Isaiah 7:14–16: (1) The boy of whom Isaiah wrote was conceived shortly after Isaiah spoke this message. A young woman, a virgin, married and then had a baby. Before he would be old enough to tell the difference between good and evil the northern Aram-Israel alliance would be destroyed. According to this view the woman was a virgin when Isaiah spoke his prophecy but was not when the boy was born because he was conceived by sexual relations with her husband. Some say this child was born to Isaiah (8:3–4). They point out that 8:1–4 corresponds in a number of ways to 7:14–17. But this view must be rejected because (a) Isaiah’s wife already had a child (Shear-Jashub, v. 3) and so was not a virgin, and (b) the second child born to Isaiah’s wife was not named Immanuel (8:3). In this view Ahaz would have known this woman, and hearing of the child’s birth and his name Immanuel he would understand that Isaiah’s prophecies were correct.

(2) A second view sees the predicted birth as exclusively messianic and the virgin as Mary, Jesus’ mother. It is argued that in Isaiah 7:14 the virgin is said to be with child (lit., “the virgin is or will be pregnant”). It is also argued that Matthew, stressing the fact that Joseph and Mary’s marriage was not consummated till after Jesus’ birth (Matt. 1:18, 25), affirmed that Jesus’ birth fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy (Matt. 1:21–23).

Proponents of this view point out that since Isaiah spoke this prophecy to the house of David (Isa. 7:13) and not just to Ahaz himself, the sign was given not just to the king but to the entire kingly line and the entire nation. However, if the fulfillment did not occur until Joseph and Mary’s day, how does the prophecy relate to Isaiah’s point that the Aram-Israel confederacy would soon be defeated? And how does the birth of the Lord Jesus relate to the eating of curds and honey (v. 15) and to the breaking of the alliance before the boy was old enough to know good

and evil? (v. 16) Proponents of this view answer that the time is similar: the two years of Jesus’ babyhood (before He would know between right and wrong) point to the same time segment, two years, within which the Aram-Israel threat would be gone.

(3) A third view, a combination of the first two, sees the prophecy as directed primarily to Ahaz regarding the breaking of the alliance. The ‘almâh was a virgin when Isaiah spoke his message, but then she would marry and have a baby. When the Aram-Israel alliance was broken the boy would still be young. Centuries later the Holy Spirit led Matthew to quote Isaiah 7:14 as a statement that was also true of a virgin birth (i.e., a birth to a woman who was still a virgin). This is the first of many prophecies about the Messiah given by Isaiah. (See the chart “Messianic Prophecies in the Book of Isaiah.”)

The sign must have had some significance for the historical situation in which it was given. The sign involved not only the birth and the boy’s name (Immanuel, “God [is] with us,” would assure the people of God’s presence), but also a designated length of time: before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings ... will be laid waste.

Within about three years (nine months for the pregnancy and two or three years until the boy would know the difference between good and evil) the alliance would be broken. It was broken in 732 b.c. when Tiglath-Pileser III destroyed Damascus. After Tiglath-Pileser had defeated Aram and put Rezin to death Ahaz went to Damascus to meet the Assyrian monarch (2 Kings 16:7–10). Ahaz liked an altar he saw in Damascus, and had a sketch of it drawn so a similar altar could be set up in Jerusalem. No wonder Isaiah and God were angry with Ahaz. Even after the alliance had been broken by Tiglath-Pileser Judah had no peace. Though Assyria did not defeat Judah, she had to pay Assyria a heavy tribute. Isaiah foretold the consequences of Ahaz’s attitude (Isa. 7:17–25).

Isaiah 11:1-5

The Assyrian Empire would fall (10:5–34), but another empire would arise. This section about God’s empire (11:1–12:6) includes a description of the Messiah, the kingdom itself, and the remnant who will inhabit the kingdom. Besides contrasting this kingdom with the Assyrian kingdom, Isaiah also contrasted it with the sinful actions of Israel in his day.

11:1. The Lord would cut down the forests and the mighty trees (10:33–34), that is, foreign soldiers and leaders, but God’s kingdom will arise by a Shoot coming up

from the stump of Jesse, David's father (cf. Rev. 22:16). Isaiah undoubtedly was thinking of God's promise to David (2 Sam. 7:16) that a Descendant of David will rule over his kingdom (cf. Isa. 9:7) forever. This Branch, the Messiah (cf. Jer. 23:5), will bear fruit, that is, prosper and benefit others. (He is the Root; cf. Isa. 11:10.) This Hebrew word for branch (נֶחֱמֶה) differs from the word used for branch in 4:2 (נֶחֱמֶה). However, the concept is the same. (Yōnōq in 53:2 for "tender shoot" is still another word.) He will come directly from the line of David (cf. Matt. 1:1) and will fulfill God's promises in the Davidic Covenant.

11:2–3a. In these verses the character and work of the "Branch" are described. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, that is, the Holy Spirit would empower Him (at Jesus' baptism, Matt. 3:16–17) for His work which would be characterized by wisdom ... understanding ... counsel ... power ... knowledge, and the fear of the Lord. The attributes of the Holy Spirit would characterize the Messiah. Because of His wisdom, understanding, counsel, and knowledge He is the Wonderful Counselor (Isa. 9:6). Isaiah referred to the Holy Spirit more than did any other Old Testament prophet (11:2 [four times]; 30:1; 32:15; 34:16; 40:13; 42:1; 44:3; 48:16; 59:21; 61:1; 63:10–11, 14).

He is characterized by the fear of the Lord and has delight in it (11:3) just as His people should have. To fear God is to respond to Him in awe, trust, obedience, and worship. (Interestingly all three persons of the Trinity are suggested in vv. 1–2.) The Messiah constantly seeks to do what God the Father wants Him to do. This contrasted with the religious leaders in Isaiah's day who were unconcerned about following God's Word.

11:3b–5. As world Ruler, the Messiah will judge the world (cf. 2:4). But He V 1, p 1057 will not be like an ordinary judge who may be swayed by superficial knowledge. He will judge impartially and in righteousness. The needy and the poor will not be oppressed by Him as they often are by human leaders (10:1–2). The oppressed will be the beneficiaries of His justice, and the wicked will be slain. His reign will be characterized by righteousness (11:5; cf. 9:7; 16:5) and faithfulness as if they were integral parts of His clothing, as a belt and sash.

Romans 15:12–13

15:8–12. Having pointed to the Lord Jesus as the Model for Christians, Paul proceeded to discuss Jesus' ministry and its objectives: Christ became a servant (the word "deacon" comes from this Gr. noun diakonon) of the Jews (lit., "to the circumcision"). Jesus was born a Jew as God's Messiah for Israel. God had two objectives to accomplish through Jesus' ministry. The first was to confirm the

promises made to the patriarchs (cf. 9:4–5). God's second objective in Christ's ministry was so that (lit., "and that," because the following clause is coordinate with the preceding one) the Gentiles may glorify God (cf. 15:6) for His mercy. God had made covenants only with Israel (9:4), not with the Gentiles (cf. Eph. 2:12), so God had no covenantal promises to confirm with the Gentiles. Any spiritual blessings that come to the Gentiles spring solely from the mercy of God. Nevertheless God eternally purposed to bless the Gentiles spiritually through the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and through His covenants with Israel (e.g., Gen. 12:3; cf. John 4:22).

God's two purposes in the ministry of Christ are being achieved now while Israel nationally has been set aside (cf. Rom. 11:1–31) and the church is being formed of both Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14–22). And it will be achieved in the future when Israel is restored to her place as head of the nations and becomes a means of blessing to everyone (cf. Deut. 30:1–10).

To demonstrate the validity of his statement concerning the ministry of Christ and its purposes, particularly the one relating to Gentiles, the Apostle Paul quoted four Old Testament passages, introducing the series with the formula, As it is written (perf. tense, "it stands written"). Significantly these quotations are taken from all three divisions of the Old Testament—"the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44)—and from three great Jewish heroes: Moses, David, and Isaiah. The first quotation (Rom. 15:9) is from David's song of deliverance (2 Sam. 22:50; Ps. 18:49); the second (Rom. 15:10), from Moses' valedictory song to the people of Israel (Deut. 32:43); the third (Rom. 15:11), from both the shortest and the V 2, p 496 middle chapter of the Bible (Ps. 117:1); and the fourth (Rom. 15:12), from Isaiah's messianic prophecy (Isa. 11:10).

A progression of thought can be traced through the four quotations. In the first, David praised God among the Gentiles (Rom. 15:9); in the second, Moses exhorted the Gentiles, Rejoice ... with His people (v. 10); in the third the psalmist commanded the Gentiles to praise the Lord (v. 11; cf. v. 7); and in the fourth, Isaiah predicted that the Gentiles will live under the rule of the Root of Jesse (the Messiah) and they will hope in Him (v. 12). The Old Testament never presented the Gentiles as "heirs together with Israel, members together ... in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:6), but it certainly did see them as receiving blessing from God's fulfilling His covenantal promises to His people Israel.

15:13. Several times Paul's words sound as if he were ending this epistle (vv. 13, 33; 16:20, 25–27). This verse (15:13) is in effect a benedictory prayer. The description

of God as the God of hope relates to hope mentioned in the preceding verses and to the promises of God recorded in the Scripture which give hope (v. 4). Paul desired God to fill his readers with all joy and peace (cf. 14:17). Joy relates to the delight of anticipation in seeing one's hopes fulfilled. Peace results from the assurance that God will fulfill those hopes (cf. 5:1; Phil. 4:7). These are experienced as believers trust in Him (cf. Heb. 11:1). As a result believers overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom. 15:19). The achievement of all God's purposes for the spiritual welfare of His children comes from the power given by the Spirit of God. What a fitting closing reminder to the apostle's discussion of Christian living.

Isaiah 9:6-7

Here Isaiah recorded five things about the coming Messiah.

1. He was to be born a Child. The implication, given in parallel style, is that this Child, a Son, was to be born into the nation of Israel (to us) as one of the covenant people.
2. He will rule over God's people (cf. Micah 5:2) and the world (Zech. 14:9). The government will be on His shoulders figuratively refers to the kingly robe to be worn by the Messiah. As King, He will be responsible to govern the nation. In Isaiah's day Judah's leaders were incompetent in governing the people. But the Messiah will govern properly.
3. He will have four descriptive names that will reveal His character. He will be the nation's Wonderful (this could be trans. "exceptional" or "distinguished") Counselor, and the people will gladly listen to Him as the authoritative One. In the kingdom many people will be anxious to hear the Messiah teach God's ways (2:3). He is also the Mighty God (cf. 10:21). Some have suggested that this simply means "a godlike person" or hero. But Isaiah meant more than that, for he had already spoken of the Messiah doing what no other person had been able to do (e.g., 9:2-5). Isaiah understood that the Messiah was to be God in some sense of the term.

This Deliverer will also be called the Everlasting Father. Many people are puzzled by this title because the Messiah, God's Son, is distinguished in the Trinity from God the Father. How can the Son be the Father? Several things must be noted in this regard. First, the Messiah, being the second Person of the Trinity, is in His essence, God. Therefore He has all the attributes of God including eternity. Since God is One (even though He exists in three Persons), the Messiah is God.

Second, the title "Everlasting Father" is an idiom used to describe the Messiah's relationship to time, not His relationship to the other Members of the Trinity. He is said to be everlasting, just as God (the Father) is called "the Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:9). The Messiah will be a "fatherly" Ruler. Third, perhaps Isaiah had in mind the promise to David (2 Sam. 7:16) about the "foreverness" of the kingdom which God promised would come through David's line. The Messiah, a Descendant of David, will fulfill this promise for which the nation had been waiting.

The Messiah is also called the Prince of Peace, the One who will bring in and maintain the time of millennial peace when the nation will be properly related to the Lord. Together, these four titles give a beautiful picture of the coming Messiah's character (Isa. 9:6 includes the first of Isaiah's 25 references to peace.)
4. The Messiah, seated on David's throne (Luke 1:32-33), will have an eternal rule of peace and justice. His rule will have no end; it will go on forever (cf. Dan. 7:14, 27; Micah 4:7; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15). Following the kingdom on earth, He will rule for eternity. He will maintain righteousness (cf. Jer. 23:5), as His rule will conform to God's holy character and demands.

5. This will all be accomplished by the zeal of the Lord Almighty. The coming of the millennial kingdom depends on God, not Israel. The Messiah will rule because God promised it and will zealously see that the kingdom comes. Without His sovereign intervention there would be no kingdom for Israel.

Apparently Isaiah assumed that the messianic Child, Jesus Christ, would establish His reign in one Advent, that when the Child grew up He would rule in triumph. Like the other prophets, Isaiah was not aware of the great time gap between Messiah's two Advents (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12; and see comments on Isa. 61:1-2).

John 14:27-31

14:27. In New Testament times the normal way to say good-bye was Peace (שלום in Heb.). In His death Jesus provided a legacy for His disciples: My peace I give you. They would have "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1) because their sins were forgiven and the "peace of God" (Phil. 4:7) would guard their lives. The world is unable to give this kind of peace. Fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15) and fear of the future are removed as Jesus' followers trust in Him. Thus they need not be troubled (cf. John 11:33; 13:21; 14:1).

14:28. If the disciples had been more mature in their love for Jesus, they would have been glad for His departure. But their love was still selfish at this point. Jesus was

in His humiliation on earth, but by going back to the Father He would be exalted in glory (cf. 13:31–32) and He will come back (cf. 14:3).

Arians and Jehovah's Witnesses argue from the statement, The Father is greater than I, that Jesus is a lesser god. But this would make Jesus a created being or would lead to polytheism, both of which are clearly unbiblical. The Father and the Son share the same essence (cf. 1:1–2; 14:9; 20:28). The Father and the Son are "One" in purpose and essence (10:30). Thus the Father is greater in office or glory than the Son was in His humiliation.

14:29–31. Fulfilled prophecy is a great comfort and support to believers (cf. Isa. 46:8–10). Jesus had predicted His death and resurrection many times (e.g., Mark 8:31–32; 9:31). When this came to pass, after their initial shock, it would greatly help their faith. His teaching time was now limited because Satan, the prince of this world (cf. John 12:31; 16:11), was moving his forces against Jesus through Judas (cf. 13:2, 27). And yet Satan had no hold on Jesus. Sin leads to death (Rom. 5:12, 21a; 6:16), and sin and death give Satan a hold over people (cf. Heb. 2:14–15; Rev. 12:10). But since Jesus is sinless, Satan cannot claim Him for his kingdom of darkness. Satan thought Jesus' death was a victory for him, but actually it was Jesus' victory over Satan (John 16:11; Col. 2:15).

Because Jesus loves the Father, He did exactly what the Father ... commanded (cf. John 10:18; 12:49–50) including being "obedient to death" (Phil. 2:8). Then He said, Come now; let us leave. Jesus had been with the disciples in the Upper Room. He now prepared to go to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Whether Jesus' words in John 15–17 were spoken in the room or on the way to the garden is uncertain, but probably they were given in the room.

Isaiah 65:17–19

65:17–25. In these verses the Lord described the millennial kingdom, which is seemingly identified here with the eternal state (new heavens and a new earth). In Revelation, however, the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1) follow the Millennium (Rev. 20:4). Most likely Isaiah did not distinguish between these two aspects of God's rule; he saw them together as one. After all, the Millennium, though 1,000 years in duration, will be a mere pinpoint of time compared with the eternal state.

The need for new heavens and a new earth is suggested in Isaiah 51:6. During the Millennium Jerusalem will be a place of joy (65:18). Also the Lord Himself will rejoice over it, for sorrow will be vanished (v. 19). Though death will still be

present, life spans will be extended (v. 20) and people will enjoy safety and the produce of their vineyards (vv. 21–22). God's blessing will be on their work and families (v. 23) and He will speedily answer their prayers (v. 24). Wild animals will lose their ferocity (cf. 11:6–8; Hosea 2:18) and harmony and safety will prevail under God's good hand (Isa. 65:25). (On God's holy mountain see comments on 11:9.)

Philippians 2:1–11

1. The declaration (2:1)

2:1. In 1:27 Paul had written about living the Christian life in harmony with the message on which it is based. He followed that message with a call to show forth spiritual unity. This unity is possible because of the reality of the four qualities mentioned in 2:1. The "if" clauses, being translations of first-class conditions in Greek, speak of certainties. So in this passage "if" may be translated "since." Paul wrote here about realities, not questionable things. Paul appealed on the basis of (a) encouragement from being united with Christ ... (b) comfort from His love ... (c) fellowship with the Spirit ... (d) tenderness and compassion.

"Encouragement" is from a Greek word related to the one Christ used in referring to the Holy Spirit as "the Counselor" (John 14:16; "Comforter," kjv). It may also be translated "exhortation" in the sense of either rebuke or comfort. Since each believer had received this work of the Spirit, Paul used it as a basis to appeal for their spiritual unity.

Also they each had "comfort from His [God's] love." God's love in people's hearts produces spiritual unity in their lives.

"Fellowship with the Spirit" is a result of the Spirit's permanent indwelling ministry (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19). This may refer, however, to fellowship that comes from the Holy Spirit, just as encouragement comes from Christ and comfort comes from love.

Paul also spoke of "tenderness (splanchna; cf. Phil. 7, 20) and compassion." One of the Spirit's ministries is to produce within each believer a concern and love for other members of God's family. This may be received or rejected by a believer, but the Spirit's work is a reality and is a basis for spiritual unity.

2. The exhortations (2:2–4)

2:2. On the basis of what was presented in verse 1, Paul exhorted his readers to show in practical ways the unity which was theirs in Christ. Their expression of that spiritual unity would make his joy complete. Corresponding to the four realities in

verse 1 are four specific ways in which their spirituality unity would be realized. They would be like-minded, have the same love, be one in spirit (sympsychoi), and be one in purpose.

2:3-4. Paul gave further exhortations, also based on the declaration of the fourfold reality expressed in verse 1. The terms the apostle used reveal an underlying problem in the church at Philippi. The situation Paul addressed evidently was prompted by self-centeredness among certain Christians.

Nothing was to be done out of selfish ambition (v. 3). The same word (eritheian) appears in 1:17 to describe the attitude of those who opposed Paul. Without question such behavior is of the flesh and not the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:20, which uses the same word). Vain conceit, meaning “empty glory,” was probably the root cause of their selfish ambition.

The two negatives are followed by a positive exhortation: in humility consider others better than yourselves. But, a word of contrast, introduces these words. Humility before God and man is a virtue every child of God needs to strive for. A spirit of pride in human relations indicates a lack of humility before God.

Paul exhorted the Philippians to consider others before themselves (cf. 1 Peter 5:5-6). “This will go far toward removing disharmony” (Homer A. Kent, Jr., “Philippians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, II: 122).

Paul explained how humility can be expressed (Phil. 2:4). Instead of concentrating on self, each believer should be concerned for the interests of others in the household of faith (cf. Rom. 12:10). Preoccupation with oneself is sin.

3. The humiliation of Christ (2:5-8)

Christ is the supreme example of humility and selfless concern for others (vv. 5-8). These verses, along with verses 9-11, constitute a grand statement on Christology.

2:5. Believers are exhorted to have the same attitude—selfless humility—Christ exhibited in His humiliation and condescension. The word here translated attitude is translated “like-minded” in verse 2.

2:6-8. The word translated nature V 2, p 654 (morphē) in verses 6 and 7 is a crucial term in this passage. This word (trans. “form” in the kjv and nasb) stresses the inner essence or reality of that with which it is associated (cf. Mark 16:12). Christ Jesus, Paul said, is of the very essence (morphē) of God, and in His incarnation He embraced perfect humanity. His complete and absolute deity is here carefully stressed by the apostle. The Savior’s claim to deity infuriated the Jewish leaders (John 5:18) and caused them to accuse Him of blasphemy (John

10:33).

Though possessing full deity (John 1:14; Col. 2:9), Christ did not consider His equality with God (Phil. 2:6) as something to be grasped or held onto. In other words Christ did not hesitate to set aside His self-willed use of deity when He became a man. As God He had all the rights of deity, and yet during His incarnate state He surrendered His right to manifest Himself visibly as the God of all splendor and glory.

Christ’s humiliation included His making Himself nothing, taking the very nature (morphē) of a servant, and being made in human likeness (v. 7). These statements indicate that Christ became a man, a true human being. The words “made Himself nothing” are, literally, “He emptied Himself.” “Emptied,” from the Greek kenōō, points to the divesting of His self-interests, but not of His deity. “The very nature of a servant” certainly points to His lowly and humble position, His willingness to obey the Father, and serve others. He became a man, a true human being.

“Likeness” suggests similarity but difference. Though His humanity was genuine, He was different from all other humans in that He was sinless (Heb. 4:15).

Thus it is seen that Christ, while retaining the essence of God, was also human. In His incarnation He was fully God and fully man at the same time. He was God manifest in human flesh (John 1:14).

Some have wrongly taught that the phrase, being found in appearance as a man (Phil. 2:8), means that He only looked human. But this contradicts verse 7.

“Appearance” is the Greek schēmati, meaning an outer appearance which may be temporary. This contrasts with morphē (“very nature”) in verses 6 and 7, which speaks of an outer appearance that reveals permanent inner quality.

The condescension of Christ included not only His birth—the Incarnation in which He became the God-Man—but also His death. And it was the most cruel and despicable form of death—even death on a cross! (v. 8) This form of capital punishment was limited to non-Romans and the worst criminals.

No better example of humiliation and a selfless attitude for believers to follow could possibly be given than that of Christ. With this example before them, the saints at Philippi should be “like-minded” (v. 2) and live humbly before their God and each other.

4. The exaltation of Christ (2:9-11)

God the Father is the subject in these verses, whereas in verses 6-8 God the Son

was the subject. Christ's obedience was followed by the Father's exaltation of Him to the place of highest honor. God exalted and honored the One men despised and rejected.

2:9. Christ's exaltation and His receiving a name that is above every name was the answer to His high-priestly prayer (John 17:5). The exaltation refers to His resurrection, ascension, and glorification at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33; Heb. 1:3). His "name" is not merely a title; it refers to His person and to His position of dignity and honor.

2:10. In keeping with Christ's exaltation and high name ... every knee will one day bow and acknowledge Him for who He really is. Paul stressed the same truth in his letter to the Romans (Rom. 14:11). Both instances reflect Isaiah's prophecy (Isa. 45:23) of the singular greatness of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The extent of Christ's sovereign authority is delineated in the threefold phrase, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. No intelligent being—whether angels and saints in heaven; people living on the earth; or Satan, demons, and the unsaved in hell—in all of God's universe will escape. All will bow either willingly or they will be made to do so.

2:11. What all will confess is that Jesus Christ is Lord. This, the earliest Christian creed, meant that Jesus Christ is Yahweh-God. One day all will be made V 2, p 655 to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is all He claimed to be—very God of very God. Unfortunately, for many it will be too late for the salvation of their souls. The exalted place the Savior now occupies and the universal bowing in the future in acknowledgement of His lordship is all to the glory of God the Father.

Galatians 5:22–26

The power for victory over sin (5:22–23).

5:22–23. There is a pointed contrast here. As verse 16 indicated, there is no need for a believer to display the works of the flesh. Rather, by the Spirit's power he can manifest the nine graces that are now listed. It is important to observe that the fruit here described is not produced by a believer, but by the Holy Spirit working through a Christian who is in vital union with Christ (cf. John 15:1–8). The word "fruit" is singular, indicating that these qualities constitute a unity, all of which should be found in a believer who lives under the control of the Spirit. In an ultimate sense this "fruit" is simply the life of Christ lived out in a Christian. It also points to the method whereby Christ is formed in a believer (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 1:21).

The first three virtues are habits of mind which find their source in God. Love (agapē) is listed first because it is the foundation of the other graces. God is love and loves the world (cf. 1 John 4:8; John 3:16). Such self-sacrificing love that sent Christ to die for sinners is the kind of love that believers who are Spirit-controlled manifest. Joy (chara) is a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ (cf. John 15:11). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God's sovereign control of all things (cf. Rom. 8:28). Peace (eirēnē) is again a gift of Christ (cf. John 14:27). It is an inner repose and quietness, even in the face of adverse circumstances; it defies human understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7).

The second triad reaches out to others, fortified by love, joy, and peace. Patience (makrothymia) is the quality of forbearance under provocation (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Col. 1:11; 3:12). It entertains no thoughts of retaliation even when wrongfully treated. Kindness (chrēstotēs) is benevolence in action such as God demonstrated toward men. Since God is kind toward sinners (cf. Rom. 2:4; Eph. 2:7) a Christian should display the same virtue (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Col. 3:12). Goodness (agathōsynē) may be thought of both as an uprightness of soul and as an action reaching out to others to do good even when it is not deserved.

The final three graces guide the general conduct of a believer who is led by the Spirit. Faithfulness (pistis) is the quality which renders a person trustworthy or reliable, like the faithful servant in Luke 16:10–12. Gentleness (prautes) marks a person who is submissive to God's Word (cf. James 1:21) and who is considerate of others when discipline is needed (cf. "gently" in Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25; "gentle" in 1 Cor. 4:21; Eph. 4:2; "gentleness" in Col. 3:12; 1 Peter 3:16). Self-control (enkrateia; this noun is used in the NT only here and in Acts 24:25; 2 Peter 1:6) denotes self-mastery and no doubt primarily relates to curbing the fleshly impulses just described. Such a quality is impossible to attain apart from the power of God's Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16). As a final summary statement Paul affirmed that there are no prohibitions (lit., there is not a law) against such virtues. In a litotes (understatement) he V 2, p 609 asserted that obviously no one would make laws against people who practice such things.

4. The provision for victory over sin (5:24–26).

5:24. Paul next explained that believers (lit., "those who are of Christ Jesus") need not be responsive to the sinful nature because they have crucified it. This does not refer to self-crucifixion or self-mortification. Rather, it refers to the fact that by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Christians were identified with Christ

in His death and resurrection. Paul declared that this had been his experience (cf. 2:20) and that of all believers (cf. Rom. 6:1–6; Col. 2:11; 3:9). While co-crucifixion took place potentially at the cross, it becomes effective for believers when they are converted. This does not mean that their sin nature is then eradicated or even rendered inactive but that it has been judged, a fact believers should reckon to be true (cf. Rom. 6:11–12). So victory over the sinful nature’s passions and desires has been provided by Christ in His death. Faith must continually lay hold of this truth or a believer will be tempted to try to secure victory by self-effort.

5:25–26. Again Paul reminded the Galatians that in addition to a divine judgment of the sinful nature there is a divine enablement in the person of the Holy Spirit. He made the believer alive by regeneration (cf. John 3:5–6), so each believer is exhorted to keep in step (stoichōmen, trans. “follow” in Gal. 6:16) with the Spirit. Step by step one’s Christian walk should conform to the Spirit’s direction and enablement, lest believers become conceited, provoking and envying each other. The latter traits would be true of a walk in the flesh (cf. 5:19–21) and may point to divisions in the Galatian churches occasioned by the Judaizing error (cf. v. 15).

John 1:1–5, 14–17

The Logos in eternity and time (1:1–5).

1:1. As far back as man can think, in the beginning ... the Word was existing.

The term “Word” is the common Greek word *logos*, which meant “speaking, a message, or words.” “Logos” was widely used in Greek philosophical teaching as well as in Jewish wisdom literature and philosophy. John chose this term because it was familiar to his readers, but he invested it with his own meaning, which becomes evident in the prologue.

The Word was with God in a special relationship of eternal fellowship in the Trinity. The word “with” translates the Greek *pros*, which here suggests “in company with” (cf. the same use of *pros* in 1:2; 1 Thes. 3:4; 1 John 1:2). John then added that the Word was God. Jehovah’s Witnesses translate this clause, “The Word was a god.” This is incorrect and logically is polytheism. Others have translated it “the Word was divine,” but this is ambiguous and could lead to a faulty view of Jesus. If this verse is correctly understood, it helps clarify the doctrine of the Trinity. The Word is eternal; the Word is in relationship to God (the Father); and the Word is God.

1:2. The Word has always been in a relationship with God the Father. Christ did not at some point in time come into existence or begin a relationship with the

Father. In eternity past the Father (God) and the Son (the Word) have always been in a loving communion with each other. Both Father and Son are God, yet there are not two Gods.

1:3. Why is there something rather than nothing? That is a great question in philosophy. The Christian answer is God. He is eternal, and He is the Creator of all things. And the Word was the agent of Creation (cf. 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). All Creation was made by the Word in relation with the Father and the Spirit. John stressed the work of the Word. He came to reveal the Father (John 1:14, 18); and the work of revelation began in Creation for Creation reveals God (Ps. 19:1–6; Rom. 1:19–20).

1:4. Life is man’s most important asset. To lose life is tragic. John affirmed that in the ultimate sense, life is in Christ. Man’s spiritual and physical life come from Him. (For John’s teaching on life, cf. 5:26; 6:57; 10:10; 11:25; 14:6; 17:3; 20:31.) Jesus, the Source of “life” (cf. 11:25), is also the light of men (cf. 8:12). Light is commonly used in the Bible as an emblem of God; darkness is commonly used to denote death, ignorance, sin, and V 2, p 272 separation from God. Isaiah described the coming of salvation as the people living in darkness seeing a great light (Isa. 9:2; cf. Matt. 4:16).

1:5. Light’s nature is to shine and dispel darkness. Darkness is almost personified in this verse: darkness is unable to overpower light. By this, John summarized his Gospel record: (a) Light will invade the dominion of darkness. (b) Satan the ruler and his subjects will resist the light, but they will be unable to frustrate its power. (c) The Word will be victorious in spite of opposition.

The Incarnation and revelation (1:14–18).

1:14. The Word (*Logos*; cf. v. 1) became flesh. Christ, the eternal *Logos*, who is God, came to earth as man. Yet in doing so, He did not merely “appear” like a man; He became one (cf. Phil. 2:5–9). Humanity, in other words, was added to Christ’s deity. And yet Christ, in becoming “flesh,” did not change; so perhaps the word “became” (*egeneto*) should be understood as “took to Himself” or “arrived on the scene as.”

“Flesh” in this verse means a human nature, not sinfulness or weakness. In the Greek the words *lived for a while among us* recall God’s dwelling with Israel in the Old Testament. The word “lived” is *eskēnōsen*, from *skēnō* (“tabernacle”). Much as God’s presence was in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), so Jesus dwelt among people. We have seen most naturally implies that the author was an eyewitness. His glory refers to the unique splendor and honor seen in Jesus’ life, miracles, death, and

resurrection. The one and only Son (monogenous; cf. John 1:18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9) means that Jesus is the Son of God in a sense totally different from a human who believes and becomes a child of God. Jesus' sonship is unique for He is eternal and is of the same essence as the Father. The glorious revelation of God which the Logos displayed was full of grace and truth, that is, it was a gracious and truthful revelation (cf. John 1:17).

1:15. John the Baptist gave a continuing testimony to Jesus. The present tense of the Greek verbs testifies and cries out stresses this. Jesus was younger and began His ministry later than John. But John said that because of His preexistence (and thus His true nature) He ... has surpassed me.

1:16. The Word made flesh is the source of grace (charin), which is the sum total of all the spiritual favors God gives to people. The words we ... all refer to Christians and include John the author. Because of the fullness of His grace ... one blessing after another (charin anti charitos, lit., "grace in place of grace") comes to Christians as waves continue to come to the shore. The Christian life is the constant reception of one evidence of God's grace replacing another.

1:17. The greatness of the old dispensation was the giving of the Law by God through His servant Moses. No other nation has had such a privilege. But the glory of the church is the revelation of God's grace and truth ... through Jesus Christ (cf. v. 14).

1:18. The statement No one has ever seen God (cf. 1 John 4:12) may seem to raise a problem. Did not Isaiah say, "My eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty"? (Isa. 6:5) God in His essence is invisible (1 Tim. 1:17). He is One "whom no one has seen or can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). But John 1:18 means, "no one has ever seen God's essential nature." God may be seen in a theophany or anthropomorphism but His inner essence or nature is disclosed only in Jesus.

God the only Son is literally "the unique God" or "the only begotten God" (monogenēs theos; cf. monogenous, "the one and only" in v. 14). John was probably ending his prologue by returning to the truth stated in verse 1 that the Word is God. Verse 18 is another statement affirming Christ's deity: He is unique, the one and only God. The Son is at the Father's side, thus revealing the intimacy of the Father and the Son (cf. the Word was "with God," vv. 1–2). Furthermore, the Son has made ... known (ἐξηγήσατο, whence the Eng. "exegeted") the Father. The Son is the "exegete" of the Father, and as a result of His work the nature of the invisible Father (cf. 4:24) is displayed in the Son (cf. 6:46).

Luke 2:1-14

2:1–2. Jesus' birth was dated by Luke as falling in the reign of Caesar Augustus, who was officially made the ruler of the Roman Empire in 27 b.c. and ruled to a.d. 14. (See the list of Roman emperors.) Because Herod the Great's reign ended in 4 b.c., Jesus was born before that time. The mention of Quirinius as governor of Syria poses a problem. He was governor in a.d. 6–7, much too late for Jesus' birth. Therefore does the word first (πρῶτον) refer, as in the NIV, to a first, that is, an earlier, census by Quirinius? If so, one would have to posit a previous governorship for Quirinius at about 4 b.c. Perhaps a better solution is to take "first" to mean "before," as it does, for example, in John 15:18. Luke 2:2 would then read, "this V 2, p 208 was the census that took place before Quirinius was governor of Syria" (i.e., before a.d. 6).

2:3–5. For the census Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem, Joseph's ancestral home. Joseph was a descendant of David (cf. 1:27), who was born in Bethlehem. Some have argued that it seems strange that people were not registered in the places where they currently lived. However, other instances of the same practice are known (see I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, pp. 101–2). Mary accompanied Joseph for several reasons. The couple knew she would have the Baby during the time Joseph was gone, and they most likely did not want to be separated at that event. Also both of them knew that the Child was the Messiah. They also would have known that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

2:6–7. The Child was born during their time in Bethlehem. The fact that Jesus was called Mary's firstborn implies that later she had other children. The couple was housed in quarters which were not private. According to tradition, they were in a cave near the inn. The Child was placed ... in a manger, from which livestock fed. Being wrapped in strips of cloth was important, for this was the way the shepherds would recognize the infant (v. 12). Some infants were bound up in that way to keep their limbs straight and unharmed.

b. The shepherd's worship of the baby (2:8–20).

2:8–14. An announcing angel and other angels appeared at night to a group of shepherds and heralded the birth of the Savior in the town of David, that is, Bethlehem (v.

4). The shepherds may have been caring for lambs which were destined for sacrifice during the time of Passover. The appearance of the angel and of the radiant glory of the Lord ... terrified them. The Greek for “terrified” (lit., “they feared a great fear”) stresses the intensity of this fear.

The angels’ message was comforting. The shepherds were told not to be afraid (cf. 1:13, 30). The message was that “a Savior,” Christ the Lord, was born. This was good news of great joy. Throughout Luke “joy” (chara) is often associated with salvation. This news was to be proclaimed to all the people. These were specifically the people of Israel, but perhaps Luke also hinted that the Savior would be for all mankind. The angel was then joined by a great company of other angels engaged in praising God in the highest. The NIV’s on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests is preferred to the KJV’s “good will toward men.” God’s peace is not given to those who have good will, but to those who are recipients of God’s good will or favor.

Revelation 21:1-4

The new heaven and the new earth created (21:1)

21:1. The opening verses of chapter 21 describe the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, which chronologically follows the thousand-year reign of Christ described in chapter 20. Chapter 21 begins with the familiar words I saw, an expression repeated in verse 2 (cf. v. 22, “I did not see”). This new creation is described as a new heaven and a new earth. That it is a totally new heaven and a new earth, and not the present heaven and earth renovated, is supported by the additional statement, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away (also see comments on 20:11). An amazingly small amount of information is given about the new heaven and the new earth. But one major fact is stated in this verse: there was no longer any sea.

In contrast with the present earth, which has most of its surface covered by water, no large body of water will be on the new earth. The Bible is silent, however, on any features of the first heaven except the statement in 21:23 that there will be no sun or moon and, by implication, no stars. The new heaven refers not to the abode of God, but to the earth’s atmosphere and planetary space.

No landmarks whatever are given concerning the new earth, and nothing is known of its characteristics, vegetation, color, or form. The implication, however, is that it is round and is the residence of all who are saved. A few other references are found in Scripture in relation to the new earth, including Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; and 2 Peter 3:10–13.

Because in some of these passages the Millennium is also discussed, expositors have often confused the eternal state V 2, p 984 with the Millennium. However, the principle is well established in Scripture that distant events are often telescoped together. Examples of this are Isaiah 61:1–2 (cf. Luke 4:17–19), which speaks of the first and second comings of Christ together, and Daniel 12:2, which mentions the resurrection of the righteous and of the wicked together even though, according to Revelation 20:5, they will be separated by a thousand years. Sometimes even the chronological order is reversed, as in Isaiah 65:17–25 (vv. 17–19 refer to the new heaven and new earth whereas vv. 20–25 clearly refer to the Millennium). End-time events are all also brought in close proximity in 2 Peter 3:10–13, where the beginning and the end of the day of the Lord are mentioned in the same passage.

Though expositors have differed on this point, the principle that clear passages should be used to explain obscure passages supports the conclusion that the second coming of Christ is followed by a thousand-year reign on earth, and this in turn is followed by a new heaven and new earth, the dwelling place of the saints for eternity. With the absence of any geographic identification and the absence of a sea, the new earth will obviously be entirely different. By contrast, the sea is mentioned many times in relation to the Millennium (e.g., Ps. 72:8; Isa. 11:9, 11; Ezek. 47:8–20; 48:28; Zech. 9:10; 14:8). The evidence is conclusive that the new heaven and new earth are not to be confused with the Millennium.

The New Jerusalem described (21:2–8)

21:2. John’s attention was then directed to a specific feature of the new heaven and new earth, namely, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. The New Jerusalem is called “the Holy City,” in contrast with the earthly Jerusalem (which spiritually was compared to Sodom in 11:8). As early as 3:12 the New Jerusalem was described as “the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from

My God.” The fact that the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven and that it is not said to be created at this point has raised the question as to whether it has been in existence during the Millennium (see further discussion on this under 21:9).

Many expositors regard the promise of Christ in John 14:2, “I am going there to prepare a place for you,” as referring to this city. The suggestion has been made that if the New Jerusalem is in existence during the millennial reign of Christ, it may have been suspended in the heavens as a dwelling place for resurrected and translated saints, who nevertheless would have immediate access to the earth to carry on their functions of ruling with Christ. J. Dwight Pentecost, for instance, quotes F.C. Jennings, William Kelly, and Walter Scott as supporting this concept of the New Jerusalem as a satellite city during the Millennium (Things to Come. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958. pp. 577–79). In the Millennium the New Jerusalem clearly does not rest on the earth, for there is an earthly Jerusalem and an earthly temple (Ezek. 40–48).

The New Jerusalem then will apparently be withdrawn from its proximity to the earth when the earth will be destroyed at the end of the Millennium, and then will come back after the new earth is created. Though this possibility of a satellite city has been disregarded by most commentators and must be considered as an inference rather than a direct revelation of the Bible, it does solve some problems of the relationship between the resurrected and translated saints to those still in their natural bodies in the Millennium, problems which otherwise are left without explanation.

Here, however, the New Jerusalem is described as it will be in the eternal state, and it is said to be “a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.” Because the church is pictured in Scripture as a bride (2 Cor. 11:2), some have tried to identify the New Jerusalem’s inhabitants as specifically the church saints, excluding saints of other dispensations. However, the use of marriage as an illustration is common in Scripture, not only to relate Christ to the church but also Yahweh to Israel. Though the city is compared to a beautifully dressed bride, it actually is a city, not a person or group of people.

21:3–4. Following this initial revelation of the New Jerusalem John wrote, I heard a loud voice from the throne. This is the last of 20 times that the expression “a loud voice” is used in Revelation (first used in 5:2).

The final revelation from heaven states that God will then dwell with men, that the saints will be His people and He will be their God. In eternity saints will enjoy a new intimacy with God which is impossible in a world where sin and death are still present. The new order will be without sorrow. God will wipe every tear from their eyes, and death with its mourning, and pain with its crying will vanish, for the old order of things will have passed away.

Some have wondered if grief and sorrow will exist for a while in heaven and then be done away with here at the establishing of the new order. It is better to understand this passage as saying that heaven will have none of the features that so characterize the present earth.

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