

The Significance of Advent!

We are beginning the season traditionally referred to as *Advent* (which comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming") and is a time observed in many Western culture Christian churches of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth (first advent) of Jesus at Christmas.

Many of us track or record the progression of the season with an Advent calendar, a practice introduced by German Lutherans. Advent calendars come in all shapes, sizes and themes...and flavors, if you use a chocolate or candy one. ☺ There are many ways to commemorate the Advent season – hanging of special greenery, displaying an advent wreath and lighting the advent candles – all which carry special symbolism such as newness of life, the Light of the World, hope, renewal, royalty, deity, etc.

So what is so special about Jesus' advent (coming)? There are obviously many reasons, but let's look at two unique aspects of Jesus' birth.

Prophecy exactly fulfilled

The coming of Jesus fulfills nearly 400 prophecies concerning His birth, life and death. Four hundred! According to mathematicians, the odds of even half of them coming true...for one person... are 1×10^{157} . No other person's birth and life in history was predicted with such volume and accuracy.

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."* (NIV), Matthew 2:20-23

Micah 5:2 - *"But you, **Bethlehem** Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans^[a] of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be Ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."* (NIV), Matthew 2:1-2, Luke 2:1-7

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."* (NIV), Luke 1:30-33, Matthew 1

A search through the rest of Scripture would reveal dozens of other details prophesied about the Messiah, including the following facts:

- He would enter Jerusalem on a donkey's colt ([Matthew 21:4-10](#); [Zechariah 9:9](#)).
- He would be betrayed by a friend ([John 13:18](#); [Psalm 41:9](#)).
- The betrayal would be for 30 pieces of silver ([Matthew 26:14-16](#); [Zechariah 11:12](#)).
- The money would be used to purchase the potter's field ([Matthew 27:3-10](#); [Zechariah 11:13](#)).
- The Messiah would die a sacrificial death for us ([Matthew 27:50](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [Daniel 9:26](#); [Isaiah 53:8](#)).

The Significance of Advent!

- He would die with criminals but His burial would be with the wealthy ([Matthew 27:57–60](#); [Luke 23:33](#); [Isaiah 53:9](#)).
- He would rise from the dead ([Matthew 28:6](#); [Psalm 16:8–11](#); [Isaiah 53:10](#)).
- He would say certain words on the Cross. He would be mocked, and people would gamble for His clothes ([Psalm 22:1, 8, 18](#)).

Incarnation

John 1:1, 2, 14 tells us - “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. **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.*” (NIV), See also Philippians 2:5-8, Hebrews 2:14-15

The Almighty God and Creator of the universe becoming flesh. This is an incredibly complex concept to grasp...but it is essential to biblical doctrine. The advent of Jesus is profound because:

- The **infinite** became *finite*
- The **eternal** became *confined to time and place*
- The **invisible** became *visible*
- The **supernatural** reduced himself to *natural*
- The **invincible** became *vulnerable*
- The **all-powerful** accepted *limitations*

But in all of this, He did not cease to be God.

I Timothy 3:16 sums up the gospel, the good news of Jesus coming/birth/advent like this:

“Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great:

*He appeared in the flesh,
was justified in the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.”*