



Abide in Advent

Psalm 146 Galatians 4:4-7 2 Corinthians 1:18-22 Matthew 1:18-25
November 27, 2022
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How many **Advent** seasons have you celebrated throughout your life? For many of us, we've been celebrating **Advent** every year of our lives; for others, **Advent** may be somewhat new, and for others, maybe even unknown.

Advent is part of the **Church Year** -- the Church Year is basically a calendar where each day and every Sunday has a theme with particular Scripture lessons assigned to it¹. Throughout the Church Year, there are different *seasons*, and that's where **Advent** comes in. **Advent** is the first *season* of the Church Year – it lasts about four weeks – and it is a preparation time for the **Christmas** season. Then after the Christmas season, we move into **Epiphany**, which leads us into the **Lenten** season, which prepares us for the **Easter** season.

The important thing about the Church Year; and remembering and celebrating these “seasons”, is that **it keeps us focused on Christ and His Word**. These *seasons* teach us the story of Christ every year. Even though we celebrate these seasons every year, they do not get boring nor tedious. **They are fresh, new, and exciting each time**. This is one of the most important ways that we *abide in Christ* and *abide in His Word* until He returns on the Last Day. We *make our home* in the story of Christ; we *learn and relearn* to truths of Scripture, we *deepen our understanding* of the doctrines of the Faith, we *hear and put into practice* the teachings of Jesus, and we *sing the great hymns and songs* of the Christian faith. The seasons of the Church Year, like **Advent**, give you a proven and effective way to *abide in Christ* and *His Word*!

The word **Advent** is a Latin word means *arrival, or approach*. In the Church Year, it has the nuance of the *arrival of the Messiah*²; we remember that God had promised to send the

¹ If you would like to read a little more about the Church Year, see <https://trinitylutheranchurch.360unite.com/the-lutheran-church-year-explained>

² “Messiah” is an Old Testament Hebrew word that means “anointed.” (The New Testament Greek word for “Messiah/anointed” is “Christ.”) This word is used to describe the One God promised to send and “anoint” with the Holy Spirit to be the Savior of the world. You could say that the word “Messiah” means the “Office and Work of the Savior.” Jesus is this Messiah, who is given the Office and Work of salvation: Jesus is the Christ who

Messiah throughout the Old Testament times. The Messiah is the Savior that God promised to send. A Savior that we all need. **The Messiah is Jesus**; He is the Son of God and the Savior of the world!

Over and over again, by words and actions, in **prophecies and types**³, through Prophets and Kings, God renewed His promise to send the Messiah who save us all from our sins. Here are some examples:

- † God promised Adam and Eve that one of Eve's sons would crush Satan's head
- † God promised Abraham that one of His descendants would bless the entire earth, giving life and salvation to all people
- † God promised Moses that God Himself would raise up a prophet like him who would speak the very words of life and salvation
- † God promised King David that one of His descendants would be a great King who will have an eternal Kingdom that will never end
- † Through the prophet Isaiah, God promised that the Messiah will be born of a virgin and that He will be our substitute in sin, guilt and death; He would give His life so that we would live forever!
- † Through the prophet Micah, God promised that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem and He will be the eternal King of Israel
- † Through the prophet Jeremiah, God promised that there will be forgiveness of sins through the Messiah and that God will *never ever remember your sins again*
- † Through the prophet Malachi, God promised to send a messenger to prepare the way -- that messenger was *John the Baptist*.

There are **many, many promises** in the Old Testament that God kept when He sent Jesus to be our Messiah and Savior. It is no wonder that one of the major themes of Advent is **God's faithfulness: God keeps His Word!**

God keeps His word and promises to you as well.

God's faithfulness is an important way to think about God's work in your life. Think of **God's Faithfulness** in two ways:

saves us from our sins! The entire Old Testament was anticipating His arrival on earth in fulfillment of God's Promises. Advent is a time when we rehearse this fascinating story, remember the great promises, and thank God for His faithfulness!

³ Prophecies and Types are how the Old Testament taught the Israelites about the Messiah. Prophecies are OT promises about the coming Savior that the NT quotes and identifies are fulfilled in Jesus (see Matthew 1:21-22 as an example). A "type" is a person or thing in the OT that foreshadows and teaches something about the coming Messiah (see John 3:14-16 as an example).

First, all the Advent promises that God kept means that you have a Savior, sent by God Himself. Jesus is the One whom God sent to rescue you from sin.

Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:20-21

Mary's Son is given the name **Jesus** (which means "Savior") and He is **GOD HIMSELF!**

GOD Himself came into the world to rescue you from sin, guilt and death. ***It's as if God wasn't going to take any chances on your salvation --- He came down from Heaven Himself to do the work so that you can be 100% certain.*** The life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ **guarantees** that you are saved, forgiven, and rescued from death. In Christ you have **the assurance** of life and salvation --- God Himself **secures** it!

God's faithfulness is seen in the promise of Salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ! God promised to send a Savior throughout the Old Testament times, and in the Jesus, **God kept that promise!** Your sins are forgiven and you have eternal life!

A second way to think about God's faithfulness is to remember all the other promises that God makes to you. If God makes a promise to you in Holy Scripture, **He will keep it.** **You can trust Him!** Believe His promises!

Because of God's promises, we look to Him for all good things, and we turn to Him in times of trouble! **God promises to comfort, strengthen, and stabilize you each day.** For instance, here is a sample of promises God makes to you each day:

- Watches over your life (Psalm 121)
- Defends you from all evil (Psalm 97:10)
- Provides your daily bread (Matthew 6:11)
- Makes all things work for good in your life (Romans 8:28)
- Listens and answers your prayers (Psalm 5:3)
- Strengthens you when you are weak (Isaiah 41:10)
- Comforts you when you mourn (Psalm 34:18)
- Guides and directs every step of your life (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- Empowers you for godly living (Romans 8:11)
- Assures you of His love and forgiveness (Hebrews 10:22)
- Gives you hope, peace and security each day (Psalm 62:1-2)

God is your refuge and strength – an ever present help in times of trouble!
God is Faithful to you: His promises comfort, strengthen, and stabilize you each day!

The problem is that sin enters your life and you start to doubt or you don't believe or you even forget God's promises.

- You go your own way
- You listen to your sinful nature
- You get distracted by the world
- You follow the devil's temptations
- You surround yourself with bad influences

Sin gets the upper hand when you doubt, when you don't believe or when you forget God's promises.

God, of course, calls you to repent of that kind of living, confess your unfaithfulness, and trust that He is faithful and just, and that He will forgive your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. God sent Jesus to remove your sins and cleanse you from your guilt. You are renewed and forgiven through faith in Christ!

Through faith in Christ and the forgiveness of your sins, you learn to **keep God's Promises in front of you** each day: you learn them, write them down, and even memorize them.

No matter what you are facing, no matter how much you stress you have; no matter how much worry and fear: **keep God's promises in front of you: God is faithful: He keeps His Word!** Turn to the Lord in times of trouble and look to Him for all good things!

Advent is one way that we have to **abide in Christ** and **His Word!** As we start **Advent** today, we remember one of the major themes of **Advent: God's faithfulness:**

- God is faithful and He kept His Old Testament promises to send the Messiah, the Savior, born in Bethlehem.
- God is faithful and He promises that you are saved from sin, guilt and death: He Himself came down from Heaven and does the work of salvation *for you* --- His life, death and resurrection guarantees your salvation!
- God is faithful, and you can trust His Promises in Scripture to comfort, strengthen and stabilize you each day!

God is faithful:
YOU CAN TRUST HIM!

Amen!

God the Father, we thank You for Your faithfulness throughout the Old Testament times, and for sending a Savior to rescue us from our sin.

As we begin Advent today, help us to further abide in You and Your Word.

Allow the truths of Advent to uplift and strengthen our faith.

Help us to trust Your Word and give us a deep conviction of Your faithfulness.

For sending Your Son Jesus to be the Messiah, our Savior,

we praise and thank you!

Amen!

Psalm 146

1 Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. 2 I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. 3 Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. 4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. 5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, 6 the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them-- the LORD, who remains faithful forever. 7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, 8 the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous. 9 The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. 10 The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD.

Galatians 4:4-7

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. 6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

2 Corinthians 1:18-22

But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. 20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). 24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

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