

Advent

Creation, Fall, & Promise

Intro: Christmas is a time of expectancy and celebration. Traditionally, many have enjoyed anticipating and commemorating the arrival of Jesus Christ by way of methodically recalling all that led up to the first Advent of Christ. Advent simply means “coming,” and we celebrate the Jesus’ first coming during the Christmas season. We want to remember that Christ’s coming was not unexpected for some who experienced it, but His arrival had been predicted for centuries. This message is the first of 4 that are designed to recall how God promised a Savior from the very beginning and reiterated that promise throughout history. It all started with Creation, and everything picked up speed from there.

Genesis 1:31-2:3, and 3:1-21

What is *Advent*?

- Advent is from the Latin *adventus* meaning “coming.” Advent is traditionally a time when Christians memorialize the coming of Christ in His first advent and anticipate Christ’s imminent second coming.
 - There are various themes and traditions involved with the Advent season, but the most common is the systematic lighting of 5 candles as part of an Advent wreath. Each candle is representative of a theme or concept related to anticipating and celebrating the coming of Jesus Christ. Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love are the word-themes most commonly associated with the first four candles. Each is lighted in succession over the span of 4 weeks, and the fifth candle is traditionally lighted on Christmas day. The last candle symbolizes Christ Himself, and its lighting becomes the final memorial of the Christmastime anticipation.¹

Outline:

- (1) In the beginning Creation is good.
- (2) The Bible provides the only *comprehensive* and *reasonable* explanation for suffering, dysfunction, and death.
- (3) God Promised a resolution – Salvation through Judgment.
- (4) God reiterated that Promise throughout history, and fulfilled it in Christ.

¹ For more explanation of the Advent wreath, see this brief article: <http://livinghopeomaha.com/special-services/holiday-worship-schedule-at-living-hope/the-meaning-of-the-advent-wreath/>

Exposition:

1. In the beginning Creation is good.

A. *“God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good”*
(Gen. 1:31).

i. The Bible provides a worldview that must be taken as a whole.

1. This aspect of the biblical worldview is crucial to everything the Bible teaches about God, sin, humanity, salvation, and heaven.

2. The Bible provides the only *comprehensive* and *reasonable* explanation for suffering, dysfunction, and death.

A. Genesis 3:14-19 – *“14 The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*

This explains the general enmity between light and darkness, good and evil, those who follow God/Christ and those who do not.

16 To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

This explains the pain of childbearing and the tendency towards dysfunction in male-female relationships.

17 And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.””

This explains the general reality in which we now live: order turns to chaos, pain and suffering are regularly experienced, and death is the expected end of human life.

3. God Promised a resolution – Salvation through Judgment.

A. *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall **bruise your head**, and you shall **bruise his heel**”* (Gen. 3:15).

- i. There is not the fullness of the Gospel here, but there are the basic elements of it.²
 1. There is conflict between good and evil.
 2. There is the promise of a human who will conquer evil.
 3. There is the promise that the human Savior will be bruised as He saves.
 4. There is the promise that the human who comes will be better than Adam and the serpent.
 - a. The resolution God promised here is not without judgment. In fact, we can see judgment always comes with the salvation God brings.

4. God reiterated that Promise throughout history, and fulfilled it in Christ.

A. God saved Noah and his family while judging and condemning all other humans by way of floodwaters.

- i. Genesis 6:17-18 – *“I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.”*

B. God promised to send Abraham’s (Abram’s) descendants to a land that was not their own, and He promised to save them, while bringing judgment upon the nation that had oppressed them.

- i. Genesis 15:13-14 – *“13 Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. 14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.”*

² See this article for further explanation: <http://feedingonchrist.com/stuart-robinsons-8-point-interpretation-of-genesis-315/>

ii. God delivered on this promise in the lives of Joseph and Moses.

1. Joseph was treated badly and there was a terrible famine that befalls the land, but God brought salvation through judgment and provided for His people (Gen. 37-50).

2. God raised Moses up from the humblest of beginnings and made him the greatest Old Testament prophet. Moses was the one God used to lead the people of Israel away from their affliction and towards their salvation. Again, God brought salvation through judgment (Ex. 3-15).

C. God designated another leader after Moses, named Joshua, who finally led the people of Israel into the physical inheritance that God had promised them (Joshua 1:1-9). While all the wicked people in the land were under God's judgment (Josh. 1:5), salvation came to God's people as they looked to Him for it (Josh. 1:8).

i. Ultimately, God fulfilled all that He had promised to do for the Israelite people.

1. [Joshua 21:43-45](#) – “43 Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. 44 And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. 45 Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass.”

D. After Joshua, God appointed successive judges that delivered the Israelites from their oppressors, but the people of Israel were constantly going right back into idolatry. All of the kings of Israel, even their greatest king (David), failed to exhibit the kind of “skull-crushing” success that God had promised all those years ago (Gen. 3:15).

i. Throughout the Scriptures we see the constant refrain of an inadequate ‘offspring.’ With every raised leader, and even the mass of peculiar people God created as His own, there is inevitably a less than impressive end to each story.

1. Noah is caught in wickedness soon after he survived the flood.

2. Abraham is a lying coward on a number of occasions, and let's not forget that he disbelieved the promise of God enough to force his own plan.

3. Joseph died in Egypt, away from the promised land.
4. Moses was only able to see the promised land from a distance, and he died in the desert.
5. The judges of Israel are inconsistent rescuers at best, and some of them are utterly selfish rage-monsters.
6. The kings of Israel, as well as Judah later on, make up one of the worst rosters of all time. Many are totally wicked idolaters, and all fail in one way or another.
7. The collective people of God are consistently unfaithful to the steadfast promise keeper, with only brief flashes of loving attention upon their divine Provider and Savior.

E. Then Jesus Christ arrived on the scene!

- i. Christ came when “the fullness of time had come!”
 1. [Galatians 4:4-5](#) – “4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”
- ii. The “mystery” of God’s promise to save was made known in Christ Jesus.
 1. [Ephesians 1:7-10](#) – “7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”
- iii. Jesus is the Son of Abraham and the Son of king David (Matt. 1:1).
- iv. Jesus is the promised “offspring” from long ago (Gal. 3:16, cf. Gen. 12:7, 17:7).
- v. Jesus suffered the bruise to His heel, as He endured the wrath of God upon the cross (Isaiah 53, cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).
- vi. Jesus bruised/crushed the “head of the serpent” in the same activity (John 19:30).
- vii. The fullness of all that God has promised belongs to all those who trust in Jesus Christ!
 1. Already and Not Yet

Application

- What is God commanding us to BELIEVE here?
 - God promised to save humans through His Son.
 - Jesus, God's Son, was born! He lived, He died, and He rose from the dead!
 - God has been at work to save guilty sinners for a long time.

- What is God commanding us to DO here?
 - Take comfort in the promise of God from long ago.
 - Make time to celebrate the first advent of Christ.
 - Make time to anticipate the second advent of Christ.

My Prayers

- May God comfort us with His presence as we remember His promise.
- May God help us to find joy, peace, and rest in Him this Christmas season.