

Advent

SERMON SERIES DEVOTIONAL

The Incarnation • Jesus as Prophet • Jesus as Priest • Jesus as King



Name





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Introduction to the Season of Advent

In the Valley, the season of Advent means that Christmas decorations have already been planned and more than likely, executed. For many, Advent is the time where a manger is built under a small shed that has been sheltered with palm leaves, fashioned with colorful lights, and detailed with shepherds, wisemen, and an angel all in front of the house for everyone to see. The season of Advent means that Christmas is near and the story and glory of Jesus will be celebrated loudly with the smell of fire grilled fajitas, plastic covered tables, and the sound of laughter that echoes through the city neighborhoods. Most importantly, in the Valley, all of this means that we will faithfully celebrate on Christmas Eve.

The gathering of family and friends is a wonderful gift from God for us to enjoy, but the season of Advent runs much deeper than that. Advent centers itself in a specific time in the life and ministry of Jesus. In this case, it is His arrival into our world through the virgin birth. The season of Advent means the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ who lived life like each of us only was without sin; it means that He celebrated as loudly as we did, but without compromise; it means that this was a great fulfillment in redemptive history that one day, this sinless savior would willingly give His life in our place and for our sin.

The season of Advent teaches us that God cares so much for His creation that He stepped into our mess and brought hope, forgiveness of sin, and salvation in Jesus Christ. The implication of Advent is not only that God dwelled among

us, but died for us so that we might know God through His life, death, and resurrection.

How to Use This Devotional

This devotional is designed to help you consider and apply God's word in practical ways. We have created content, such as this devotional, because we deeply long for the people of God to know Jesus better and to flourish as they pursue righteousness. Discipleship through devotionals is a great tool to help draw and immerse you in the pages of Scripture. Each devotional is meant to help you slow down and contemplate on the word of God as you apply it in the context of your everyday life.

I pray that you are blessed by this devotional and the creative work placed by several authors to better serve you. May the Holy Spirit be your great guide and counselor as you receive the word of God through Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Warmly,

Pastor Marco



Advent: The Incarnation

“¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” - John 1:14-18

One of the greatest values of our beloved Rio Grande Valley is proximity to those we love and cherish. When driving through the neighborhoods in McAllen and the surrounding cities, it’s not uncommon to see extended families living under the same household or families sharing a large property while occupying multiple homes. Proximity communicates intimacy, intentionality, and relationship. This cultural value of nuestro Valle isn’t simply a part of the heritage of many, it is actually something within us providentially placed by God.

In fact, God values proximity so much that He entered into human history by becoming flesh (this is where we receive the word “incarnate” or “in the flesh”) which speaks

to His intentional and relational attributes and by dwelling “among us” which further elaborates His intimacy with us. The incarnation means that Jesus embodied everything that is native to humanity yet without sin and without surrendering any of His deity. How can we know that God in Jesus values proximity? The Apostle John’s answer is simple – He moved in.

The incarnation of Jesus teaches us that God values proximity by making Himself known to us and pouring His grace out on to us in spite of our status, circumstance, and sin. The law of God is meant to reveal at least two things: our sinful nature and our need for a savior. The beauty of the gospel is that the incarnation of Jesus is the fulfillment of the law through His sinless life. Proximity is such a value for God that He was not only willing to live among us, but lovingly die for us in our place and for our sin all so that we would be reconciled to the Father through the work and proximity of Jesus on the cross (*2 Cor 5:21*).



Advent: Jesus as Prophet

"¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." - Mark 1:14-15

Any type of leadership change is tough. Maybe you've gone through one or two at your job and know what it is to have so many questions. Who's next? Will they be worse? Will they be better? When will they take over? If you've found yourself in that transition, then you can probably sympathize with Israel as their great leader, Moses, headed into the last moments of his life. Moses was Israel's law giver and emancipator, however, his biggest role was that of a prophet. As prophet, Moses represented God and would proclaim God's Word to Israel. Although it wasn't easy, the people responded well to Moses and followed him. Now with Moses departing, it left Israel to wonder what would happen next.

To assure the nation, Moses told Israel that God would raise up another prophet like him from among the people (*Deut. 18:15*). Many prophets came and went, yet, no sign of the one Moses talked about. It wouldn't be until 1,400 years later that they would see that prophet in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus started His ministry by, "proclaiming the gospel of God " (1:14). Just like the many prophets before Him, Jesus called people to turn away from their sin and to turn to God by believing in Him. Though this was one of the responsibilities of a prophet, Jesus is not just an ordinary prophet. He is the Ultimate Prophet. Not only does He speak to us the words of God as Moses would, He is the very Word of God made flesh (*John 1:1*). He not only teaches us the wise way in which to live as Moses would, but He is the incarnation of God's wisdom (*1 Cor. 1:30*).

Therefore, since Jesus is our Ultimate Prophet, let us look to Him for guidance as we travel through unknown valleys. Let us hear Him for understanding when we can't make sense of situations. Let us humbly follow His lead knowing that He will never lead us astray. In Christ, we have a prophet that loves His people. For He not only proclaimed it, but He showed it.



Advent: Jesus as Priest

"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." - Matthew 1:21

The role of the high priests was to offer gifts and make sacrifices for people's sins. He was the mediator between God and the people. These men dedicated their lives to intercede for the people of Israel. The duty of the high priest was a great calling; one appointed by God, just like Aaron and his sons (*Exod. 28*).

Likewise, Jesus was appointed as High Priest by God the Father (*Heb. 5*). He lives and intercedes for us (*Rom. 8:34*). Let us celebrate this good news. God the Son entered human history and dwelled among us. He lived the life we could not live and died the death we deserved. He offered himself as a sacrifice. He paid the ultimate price of sin with his own blood and purified "our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (*Heb. 9*). We are given redemption through the blood of Christ. He is the glorious High Priest.

Thus, let us glorify and exalt Him who purchased us out of darkness and brought us into his marvelous light (*1 Pet. 2:9*). Let us make much of Him who gave Himself for us so that we are freed from the grip of sin and death.

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.” - Heb. 4:14



Advent: Jesus as King

“³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, ³³and of his kingdom there will be no end.” - Luke 1:31-33

David was the King Arthur of Israel, an almost mythic figure whose life was full of daring battles and moral failures, yet marked by a devoted faithfulness to God. In this passage in Luke, the angel Gabriel tells a peasant girl named Mary from a backwoods village that she will bear the messiah, the promised king of the line of David. Heaven itself is telling her that Caesar is not her king. Herod is not her king. Instead, her son will be her king, and he will be like David and have David’s throne. More than that, Jesus is the better and truer David.

David fought off lions and bears that threatened to attack his father’s sheep (*1 Sam. 17:34-35*). Jesus fought sin and death, and our enemy Satan, that dragon and roaring lion, who threatened to kill and destroy his bride (*Col. 2:15; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 12:9*). David was anointed as king by the prophet Samuel in *1 Samuel 16* but wasn’t crowned until after a long war with Saul in *2 Samuel 5*. Likewise, Jesus

is on his throne in heaven, and we are in the “already but not yet” of his kingdom while his enemies are being made into his footstool (*Ps. 110:1; Luke 20:43*). David rescued his people from the Philistines and destroyed the Amalekites (*1 Sam. 17; 2 Sam. 30*). Jesus raids Satan’s dominion, liberating his captives and bringing them home (*Isa. 49:25; Matt. 12:29, Col. 1:13*). When David should have been campaigning with his armies at war, instead he stayed behind and slept with one of his soldier’s wives, leading to an unplanned pregnancy, a murder plot, and a national scandal (*2 Sam. 11*). Yet Jesus is faithful even when we aren’t, and he died for his people rather than sacrificing her to God’s wrath for her sins (*Mark 14:36; John 19:28-30; Eph. 5:25*).

While David was just a king of Israel, Jesus is king over all nations, ethnicities, and people groups. Dynasties, empires, and governments come and go, but Jesus’ throne lasts forever. If Jesus is king, then Rome is not, America is not, and you are not. Jesus as king means there is no neutral ground. Either Christ is our king, or we only have chaos.

Questions

1. What lesser kings do you follow and let influence you (from politics, to celebrities and social media)?
2. Study and find three verses that describe who you are in light of King Jesus. If Jesus is king, who does the Bible say you are?
3. Who do you know that needs to hear the good news that Jesus is their king and what will you do to tell them that news?

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Additional Notes

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STOREHOUSE
Community Church