

## Enlighten: an Advent Journey

I think for many people “Advent” simply means a countdown to Christmas, a little door to open on a calendar (did you ever buy one of those awesome calendars with a little chocolate behind each flap?). But Advent is traditionally a remembrance of God’s faithfulness, a commemoration of the long centuries that God’s people waited for the Savior.

I used to feel so out of sync in the weeks leading up to Christmas. My husband’s calendar was quite full between Mid-November and December 25. We put off our own festivities and decorating until Mark was done with school for the Christmas break. When the kids were little and they needed naps and early bedtimes, I spent most of the Advent season at home while everyone else seemed to be running around decorating and baking and celebrating from the moment they turned the calendar to the December page (or sooner).

One year I read an Advent devotional and I discovered that I was not at all out of sync. Millions of people all over the world spend this season waiting and anticipating, saving their celebrating for Christmas itself and the twelve days following. Celebrating Advent brings me peace and focuses me on God’s faithfulness. By “celebrating Advent,” I mean that I read about specific Biblical characters, and I light a wreath of candles while I remember these people and their faithful God. That’s it. It’s not a huge thing to add to my to-do list.

What is Advent anyway? It’s the four weeks that lead up to Christmas Day. “The word “Advent” comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “coming or arrival.” Advent is

*The “arrival” of Jesus Christ when he was born on the original Christmas Day  
The upcoming “arrival” of Jesus Christ when, as Christians believe, he will return to  
judge the living and the dead.*

*So, the season of Advent is a season of preparation and waiting:  
first for Christ’s second coming to judge the living and the dead  
(2 Pet 3:11-14; 1 John 3:2-3), but also  
to celebrate Christ’s first arrival at Christmas.*

*Just as the Israelites awaited a Messiah to fulfill God’s promises from Genesis 3:15 to  
Jeremiah 31:31-34 and beyond, so Christians await the return of Jesus the Messiah to  
make all things new (Revelation 21).<sup>1</sup>*

This simple study is a blending of an Advent book I wrote several years ago with a few new thoughts. I have arranged the study into three daily sections each week. I also put together a script of Scriptures to read as we meet together on Zoom. (These meetings are an optional part of this study. ) During those meetings, our first focus will be on this collection of Scriptures. I pray that this study will remind you of the treasures of comfort and joy in the story of our salvation.

The Biblical characters in this study are:

Week 1: Abraham and Sarah

Week 2: Isaiah and his wife

Week 3: John the Baptist, his parents, and his disciples

Week 4: Mary and Joseph

The season of Advent also includes several Saints' days--days to remember Biblical or historical people who followed Jesus. I began celebrating two of these to honor my heritage, and I have found them to be good reminders of godly attitudes during this season. These Saints are St. Andrew (November 30), St. Nicholas (December 6), St. Lucia (December 13), and St. Thomas (December 21).

Here is our schedule of discussion for 2021. You will want to read each week's study before our Zoom meeting, if you are attending.

**December 1: Waiting with Faith (Abraham, Sarah, St. Andrew)**

**December 8: Waiting with Hope (Isaiah, Mrs. Isaiah, St. Nicholas)**

**December 15: Rejoicing in the Light (John the Baptist, his parents & disciples, St. Lucia)**

**December 22: Living in the Savior's Love (Mary, Joseph, St. Thomas)**

Thank you for joining me. This is a No Guilt study. Follow the study guide and come to the Zoom meetings as you are able, but no one is grading you. December can be a busy hectic time of year, or it can be a quiet lonely time of year. The Lord knows your situation, and he is near to you. I pray that you have an Advent full of faith, hope, joy, and love,

Christ Over Us,  
Ruth J. Leamy

Note: unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptures quoted in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version.

1. <http://anglicancompass.com/advent-a-rookie-anglican-guide/>