



## Where did Advent come from?

What is "Advent" and why do those Christians who observe it light so many candles? Seriously, it is truly impossible to determine the start of Advent. However, virtually all denominations and traditions of the Church have had special celebrations in the 4 weeks before Christmas. Both Easter and Christmas became the most recognized celebrations in church history during the 4<sup>th</sup> Century (around 380 AD). Easter was easy, as it was connected to Passover which had been observed since Moses and Israel's deliverance from bondage. There are theories about calendars and computations being used to determine the day we would celebrate His birth, and that it was chosen because it is so close to the darkest and shortest days of the year (celebrating that the Light of Christ would pierce the darkness).

While Church historians have commonly held that Christmas Day was set on December 25<sup>th</sup> to redeem Roman pagan holidays such as Saturnalia, it was definitely in response to heresies entering the Church about Jesus not really being present in a physical form, but only being spirit. **Advent** was a season (a period of time set aside) to celebrate the incarnation (in human flesh) or coming of the Lord. Emphasis was given to an actual virgin birth! **Advent** is translated as *the coming*. It has a dual meaning: The first coming of God the Son in Bethlehem, as Jesus. But also *the coming* of Christ AGAIN, when the King of Kings returns to reign on the earth, as He does in heaven!

## Advent at Agape Church!

We are excited to celebrate Advent with all of you at Agape Church. Our theme for this year is *The Word Became Flesh*. As we journey through this season together, we ask you to consider making these 4 commitments:

1. Commit to pursuing Jesus Christ by increasing the time you spend in His word and prayer.
2. Commit to daily Family Worship in your home, using the scripture readings on the back of this guide. *This time of worship may also include the singing of Christ centered Christmas songs or hymns, the lighting of candles signifying Jesus as the light of the world, and prayer for your church and community.*
3. Commit to laying yourself aside through a form of fasting or sacrificial giving to others for the pursuit and the glory of God.
4. Commit to a daily prayer of thankfulness, reminding yourself of all that God has done for you and given you in Christ. Advent is a season of REJOICING and there is power in being thankful to God!

## Daily Scripture Readings for Advent 2019

To join with us in this Advent celebration and receive daily reminders and reflection questions, simply text **AgapeAdvent** to 84576 or go to <https://agapepinson.flocknote.com/Advent/> to sign up

- December 1 (The Lord's Day):** John 1:1-18 (Christ is the Focus of God's Revelation)
- December 2:** Luke 2:13-14 (Angels Sang because Hope had Come)
- December 3:** Hebrews 12:1-3 (A Willing Savior for an Unwilling People)
- December 4:** Micah 5:1-6 (He keeps His Promises)
- December 5:** Revelation 19:1-10 (Glory Songs about God the Son)
- December 6:** Ephesians 2:1-10 (Humanity was –and is- so Broken, Jesus is the only Solution)
- December 7:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17-21 (The Perfect Substitute for Us)
- December 8 (The Lord's Day):** Ephesians 2:11-22 (Jesus is Peace between God and Us)
- December 9:** Philippians 3:12-20 (Glory Forsaken by God the Son, to have Glory Restored in Our Living for Him)
- December 10:** John 14:1-14 (Christ Is the Way, He is the truth from God, and Jesus is Life)
- December 11:** Matthew 6:19-33 (That Baby in a Stable came to be King; May we seek His Kingdom as Priority)
- December 12:** Romans 5:6-11 (The Bad News: Our Greatest Problem is Internal; but He is Himself Good News)
- December 13:** Galatians 4:4-7 (History Marched toward His Birth, and Marches into Our Lives Today)
- December 14:** 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (Your Agenda and Plans, Or HIS? He came as a babe, but is the Sovereign)
- December 15 (The Lord's Day):** Romans 10:14-15 (Tell of His Coming)
- December 16:** Luke 24:24-25, 45-49 (Christmas Celebrations mixed with grief over this suffering Servant)
- December 17:** James 4:1-10 (The Son's Coming means embracing His Grace to destroy our Selfishness)
- December 18:** 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:3-5 (God the Son Left what was His right, to obtain a Gift for Us)
- December 19:** Romans 5:1-5 (Hope in the Christ of Christmas requires Hopelessness in Us)
- December 20:** James 1:21-24 (Rejoicing begins with Brokenhearted Weeping over Sin. Jesus Came to Forgive...)
- December 21:** Philippians 3:1-11 (Christ's Birth Destroys our Self-Righteousness. We are all in need of Help)
- December 22 (Lord's Day):** Matthew 2:1-12 (God Extends Grace to the Nations as The Gospel comes to even Us)
- December 23:** Psalm 95 (Angels sang when Christ arrived, and so may Christmas Songs give us Satisfaction in Him)
- December 24 (Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - Agape Church at 9pm):** 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:8-14 (Preparations for weeks & even months for Christmas, but how much more should we be ready for His Second Advent...)
- December 25 (Christmas Day):** Luke 2:1-20 (Jesus' Birth and the Shepherds' Response. May it be Ours)

*\*This Advent Guide was drawn from several sources, but credit must be given to Paul David Tripp*