



# Advent

**A Season of Hope, Peace, Joy  
and Love**

---

*Rev. Ralph E. Williamson, D. Min*

# **CHRIST OUR REDEEMER**

© 2015 REW Ministries, Inc.  
All rights reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information, storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1997 Copyright Act or in writing from the author.

Request for permission should be addressed in writing to:

REW Ministries

ISBN: 978-0-87265310-8

REW Ministries, Inc.

Logo © 2014 – All rights reserved

Manufactured and distributed by

Christ Our Redeemer AME Church

Printed in the USA

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
The History of Advent .....	4
The Advent Wreath .....	4
The Advent Candle .....	5
The Candle of Hope .....	6
A Week of Hope .....	7

## Introduction

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.      John 1:1-2, John 1:14 NKJV*



As we commemorate this Advent Season, we celebrate with living hope, knowing we are secured with the promise of Christ appearing. According to His abundant mercy: Our salvation is grounded in God's mercy, and His act of compassion toward us despite our sinful condition. God has given us a new, spiritual life through our salvation that enables us to live in an entirely different dimension than the one of our physical birth. We have both a present and future, a living hope through the resurrection of Christ. Our life will not end here but will continue throughout all of eternity.

# Advent



## The History of Advent

Advent derived from the Latin word “adventus”, the word advent means “arrival” or “coming”. In this instance, it is used to indicate set time(s) during the month of December to commemorate the coming of the Messiah in Jesus Christ. Advent, like Christmas, is a season of expectation, celebration, and hope, connected to the birth of the prophesied Messiah and the promise of Christ’s subsequent ministry.

## The Advent Wreath

Advent wreaths were originally fashioned out of evergreens, twisted together in a circle to symbolize continuous life across the seasons, from the death of winter to the new life of spring. Naturally, this earthly symbolism also points to the spiritual symbolism of newness and the promise of eternal life and salvation offered through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (John 3:16). The circular nature of the wreath, similar to a wedding ring or band, is further

meant to reflect the unending love of Christ and eternal life offered through salvation.

Holly leaves, berries, and seeds are sometimes added to the Advent wreath as well. Holly leaves can be prickly and therefore used to represent the crown of thorns placed on Jesus's head during his crucifixion. Berries, which are typically red, also point to Christ's sacrifice and the blood shed for sins. Pinecones, seeds, and nuts are also placed within the wreath as a symbol and promise of new life. Together, the elements of the Advent wreath reflect the new life and eternal salvation offered through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who we now celebrate.

## **The Advent Candles**

In almost all Advent traditions, the lighting of candles is also a prominent feature of each week's commemorative celebration.

Each candle is lit on one of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. The color of these candles can vary, but it is common that the first, second, and fourth candle is purple, while the third candle is rose-colored, red, or a pinkish hue. In some cases, all the candles are red, blue, or white, and often, a fifth white candle is placed in the middle of the wreath and lit on Christmas Day itself.

In most traditions, the lighting of the four candles (or multiple candles) is meant to be done as a family and will often be used to reflect on the hope, faith, joy, peace, light, and purity that came into the world with the gift of the Messiah.

Advent is a time for all believers and families to commemorate the arrival of the Messiah, prepare for his second coming, and celebrate the joy of Christmas together.<sup>i</sup>



“The first candle purple, the “**CANDLE OF HOPE**” means His promise and hope. We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises, He made to us. Our hope comes from God.

“And again, Isaiah says, the word of God shall spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the gentiles shall hope.” **(Romans 15:12-13)**

## A Week of: HOPE



*Oh, that I might have my  
request, that God would grant  
what I hope for.  
Job 6:8*

Hope is having confidence; trust and looking forward to something with the expectation that it will happen. The great American poet Emily Dickinson said’ “Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, and sings the tunes without the words, and never stops at all.” Do you find yourself at this very moment surrounded by needs, and nearly overwhelmed with difficulties, trials, and emergencies? Each of these is God’s way of providing vessels for the Holy Spirit to fill. If you understand their meaning, you will see them as opportunities for receiving new blessings and deliverance. The Lord is saying to you, bring them here to me. If you firmly hold the vessels of your heart before Him in faith and prayer you will discover God's grace in ways you had

Sunday

## GRATITUDE



Each moment and day we live, we have opportunity to experience new adventures, meet new people and discover new ideas. We hope that each person or experience will improve our lives, who we are, and for what we aspire to become. Gratitude is taking the time to give thanks to the one who arranged every moment.

*In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith— of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

**1 Peter 1:3-9**

Every opportunity in life is a blessing and a living hope from above. How will you share your gratitude?

My Reflections


Monday

## MESSAGE OF HOPE



Often in life, we are faced with adversities that easily overwhelm us and deplete our strength. When we allow unforeseen circumstances to control our lives, it leads to depression, hopelessness, and despair. You can choose to remain hopeless, or you can choose to search for hope. If you want hope, you must trust your heart, renew your faith with confidence in the Lord, and begin to refocus on the positive. Hope can be found if you chose to search for it.

*Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.*

**Romans 5:2-7 NIV**

Within each passage of scripture  
are messages of hope. What message  
has God revealed to you?

My Reflections


Tuesday

## THERE IS HOPE



A wrestles spirit is anxious thoughts and nervous energy embedded within a person who is not in control. A content person's heart believes that some promises are deferred but always answered.

*Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea. “If he comes along and confines you in prison and convenes a court, who can oppose him? Surely, he recognizes deceivers; and when he sees evil, does he not take note? But the witless can no more become wise than a wild donkey’s colt can be born human. “Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then, free of fault, you will lift up your face; you will stand firm and without fear. You will surely forget your trouble, recalling it only as waters gone by. Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning. You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety. You will lie down, with no one to make you afraid, and many will court your favor.*

**Job 11: 7-19 (NIV)**

Reflect and write down God's words of wisdom  
and hope for your life.

My Reflections


Wednesday

## HOPE IN GOD



Many individuals make promises that they cannot deliver. They prey on those who are weak in mind and spirit. Hope is not found, in get rich schemes, and in those with persuasive words. There is only one who gives hope in every situation in a life that is worthy of praise.

*Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him! The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit. The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground. Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp. He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call. His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of the warrior; the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!*

**Psalm 147:1-11 (NIV)**

Use this moment to write down the many ways you can find hope in the Lord.

My Reflections


Thursday

## HOPE AND ASPIRATION



*LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.*

1 Chronicles 29:16-18 NIV

An aspiration is a hope or ambition of achieving something. Write your plans goals and aspiration for the coming year.

My Reflections


Friday

## JESUS IS HOPE



What happens when a need in your life, is not met? To what extent are you willing to move beyond where you are, to get what you need?

*As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.*

**Luke 18:35-43 (NIV)**

Write down your hopes and share them  
with the Lord.

My Reflections


Saturday

## NEVER GIVE UP



Patience is the key to every prayer. Let God work on the details of your request. Keep your hope, wait patiently, and meditate on the inspired Word of God.

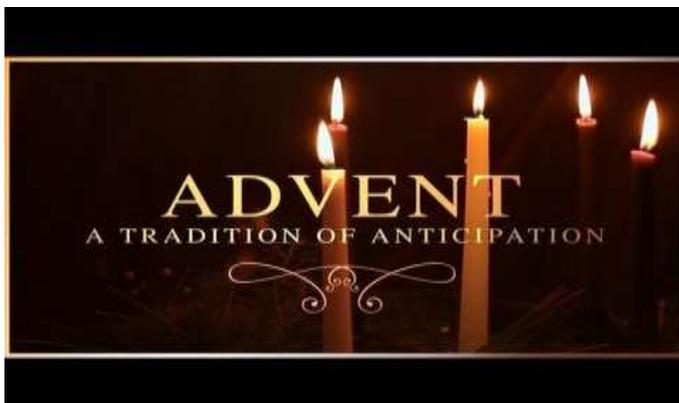
*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life. Whoever scorns instruction will pay for it, but whoever respects a command is rewarded. The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a person from the snares of death. Good judgment wins favor, but the way of the unfaithful leads to their destruction. All who are prudent act with knowledge, but fools expose their folly. A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.*

**Proverbs 13:12-17 (NIV)**

What blessings did you receive after almost losing your hope?



## ***HOLD ON TO YOUR HOPE***



**Never forget that we have a great advocate in  
Jesus Christ our Lord.**

With Jesus on your side, He will turn every obstacle into an opportunity for Him to do wonderful things in your life. Even when it appears impossible for you, it is not impossible for the Lord. He can heal, forgive, mend the torn heart and restore the confused mind. Jesus alone is our living hope, for now, and forever!

**Notes:**

# Notes

---