

What is Advent? What's it all about?

Maybe you are like me. I grew up in an Advent-less home and when people talked about Advent, I was completely clueless. As far as I can remember, it wasn't a part of our Christmas traditions. So, I'm learning too here, as we go along.

Advent is the four week period before Christmas starting on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Eve. The word Advent is derived from the Latin word *adventus* which means "coming" or "arrival." Therefore, the four week period of time is a time for Christians to especially remember and celebrate the coming of Christ, the new life we have in Him, and to look forward to the time He returns.

The observance of Advent perhaps had its start in the 400s, when a time of fasting, prayer, and penance were called for by the Church. Today, many denominations (Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Lutherans, etc.) incorporate to varying degrees some emphasis on this season each year. This often includes the lighting of Advent candles in an Advent wreath ultimately ending with a white candle being lit in the center of the wreath symbolizing the coming of Jesus, the Christ child, the light of the world.

The four weeks of Advent often have a theme to help us focus on Christ's coming and its impact. Often the themes follow this pattern: Week One-hope or the promise; Week Two: Preparation or waiting and prophecy; Week Three: Joy, or peace; Week Four: love, or adoration.

Why Do We Need Advent Season?

I'm sure that every age can say this, but has there ever been a time when life seems so busy, people seem more agitated and worried, more stressed? This season is a time to pause, not struggle, but pause and remember Christ, and to ask Him to meet you in a new way.

We need a pause to free us from distractions.

We need to pause and focus on our worship life.

We need to pause and reflect on the grace of God found in the gift of His Son.

This December let's take time to reflect on the momentous day when Jesus came-The Day That Changed the World, the day that God became man to redeem His people. Let us for a while each day set aside our distractions and remember Him: His coming, His life and death, and His resurrection. Let us thank Him for the new life and new hope He brings.

The Day That Changed the World brought the fulfillment of God's promise, the ultimate revelation of God in human form, the provision for our salvation, and our hope for eternal life. As Christ followers, we live with faith, not fear; hope, not dread; confidence made sure-because He lives.

Oh, the great, great love of Jesus!

Son of God, Son of man;

Born of Mary, born of God,

Gift of grace, the very face of God.

He came to us. He came to us. He came to us.

Oh, the love of Jesus.

Until next time, God bless and may His light shine upon you.

Ron Parr

