

Why Should We Care About Advent?

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 29, 2015 • Advent Week One • Pastor Chris Lankford

I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

~Isaiah 42:6-7

1) **A People In Darkness**

- A) Today marks the first Sunday of Advent. Advent (from an old Latin word) means “coming,” and is celebrated the month prior to Christmas. Accordingly, Advent anticipates the coming of Jesus Christ. This season is a celebration of many wonderful and comfortable traditions, including seasonal music, traditional foods, and the excitement of giving and receiving gifts.

- B) But before “O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,” there must be a right realization that as we move toward the great celebration of Christmas, there is also the memory of a time before Christ, when the world was lost in terrible darkness (Isaiah 8:14-22).

- C) In the same manner which Israel fell into darkness because of their sin, the whole world has been in deep and desperate darkness, without hope and without relief (Romans 3:10-18). But in the midst of great darkness, God has always provided hope (cf. Genesis 3:15, 12:1-3).

2) **A God of Light**

- A) God did not leave us alone, fumbling around in the dark without any hope of finding our way out of our trouble. Very specifically, God promised that those who were in darkness would be rescued by the One who is the Light of the world (Isaiah 9:2-7).

- B) For many centuries the Jews waited, living for the coming, the arrival, the realization, the advent... of their Light-bearing King. And then, John the Baptist, a prophet of Israel (40:3-5), came proclaiming repentance from sins in preparation for the Light (John 1:6-8).

- C) Finally, the Light was coming! Finally, the One whom the prophets had foretold was coming into the world to save the Jews and bless the nations! Finally the long-promised Messiah, the Christ, was coming to rescue His people!

3) *A People Pleased In Darkness*

- A) But the people had been coping with the darkness for so long they had forgotten what life with Light was really like. The people who had walked in darkness found that coping in the darkness, depending on their own means and their own ways for their own happiness, felt more secure and pleasant than some far-off promise of a mystical Light (John 1:11).
- B) Rather than embrace their long-awaited-for Messiah, the people who were supposed to be living for the Light rejected the Light, choosing the medicated-numbing comfort of darkness over the painful-squinting discomfort of living in the Light (John 3:19-20).

4) *How Can We Live Displeased With Darkness*

- A) The reality is shocking! How does anyone miss the Light?! Why choose darkness over the wonder and promise of Light?! How could someone miss Voice, the loud cry of the Message, the Prophets, the Angels from Realms of Glory proclaiming Come and Worship the Christ?!
- B) It's simple really. All you need are two things. First, pretend Advent is a traditional season and not your life. Second, pretend that darkness is your life and not a season. Then, you too can miss His coming. Not His first coming of course, that has already happened. But there is another coming... coming.
- C) So I cry out to you, repent, for His Kingdom has come, and will soon reign in all its glory. Pray for His will to be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Do not miss these words, He is coming again. I invite you to once again live Advent-ulously, anticipating the wonder of Bethlehem's babe, the Creator of the Universe clothed in frail humanity, your King and Lord Jesus Christ.

- D) Why care about Advent? The whole world needs it. Once again, we all need the Christ.