



IMMANUEL

WHEN THE CHRIST ENTERED THE CHAOS

2018 GUIDE FOR
ADVENT WORSHIP



PLANTING THE GOSPEL IN THE INLAND EMPIRE

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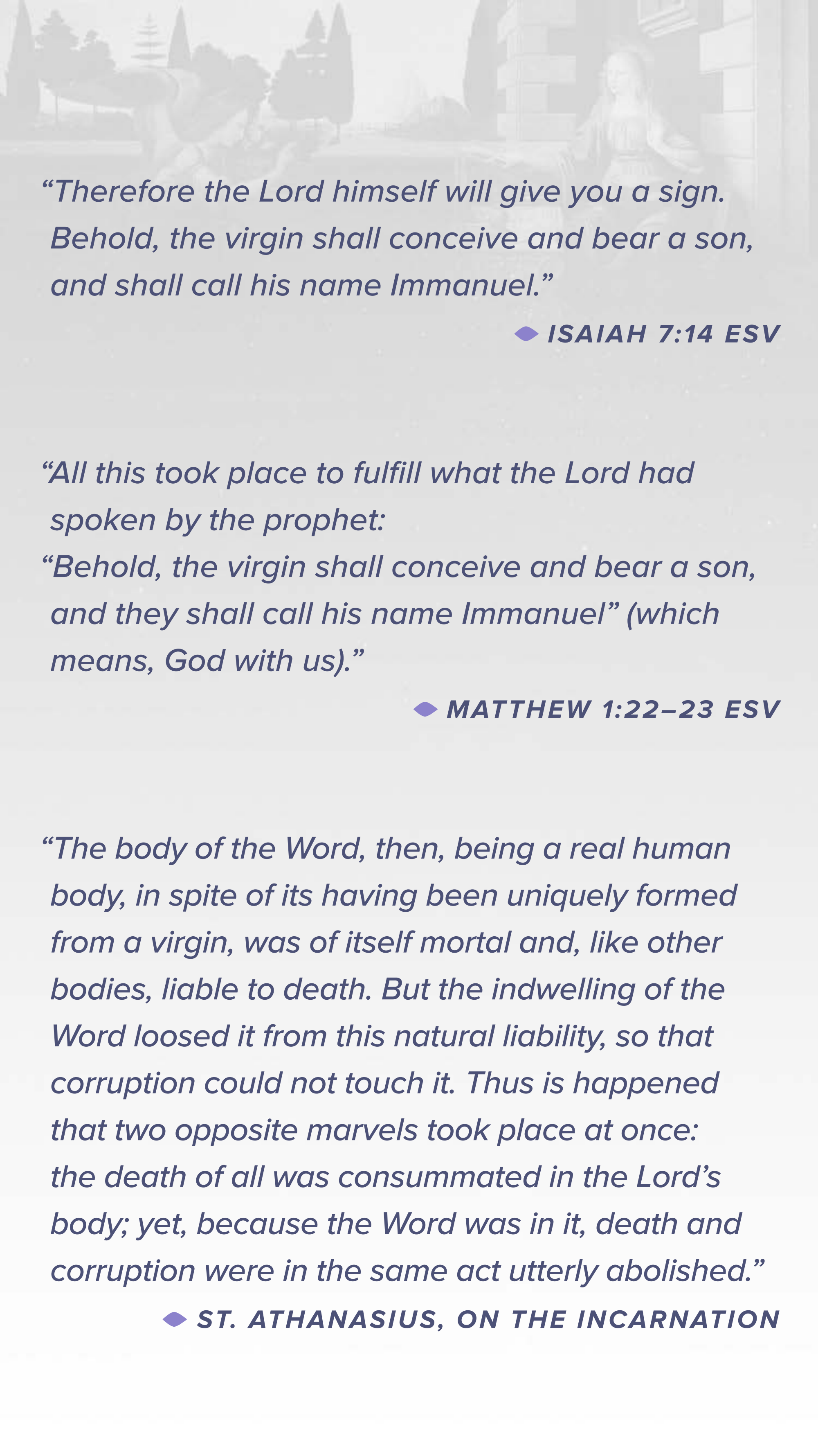
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“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

◆ **ISAIAH 7:14 ESV**

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”

◆ **MATTHEW 1:22–23 ESV**

“The body of the Word, then, being a real human body, in spite of its having been uniquely formed from a virgin, was of itself mortal and, like other bodies, liable to death. But the indwelling of the Word loosed it from this natural liability, so that corruption could not touch it. Thus it happened that two opposite marvels took place at once: the death of all was consummated in the Lord’s body; yet, because the Word was in it, death and corruption were in the same act utterly abolished.”

◆ **ST. ATHANASIUS, ON THE INCARNATION**

WHAT IS ADVENT?

The word “Advent” is from the latin *adventus*, which means “coming” and refers to the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. The Bible often uses four or forty to signify waiting, and so Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas when Christians use the four Sundays and the days in between to prepare their hearts and homes for Christ’s coming.

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WHAT TO DO EACH DAY

Set aside a special time each day for lighting the Advent candles, reading Scripture, singing and praying together. Make this a joyful time of preparation and sharing. Include all family members and guests.

During the first week, light the first candle each day; during the second week, the first two candles, and so on for the succeeding weeks. It helps to repeat the name of each candle as you light it, especially when children are involved. Traditionally, the youngest child lights the first candle and turns are taken from there. Then recite John 8:12 followed by an explanation of the candle. Once the candle is explained, sing the suggested carol, either *a cappella*, with musical instruments, or following an online video (*songs are linked to Youtube options*). Finally, read the

WHAT TO DO EACH DAY

(CONTINUED)

devotional passage for the day and pray for God to bring home the truths of that day's passage. If your family has small children there may be little opportunity for discussion; however, if older children are present, plan for discussion after lighting the candle. Finally, while some traditions leave the candle burning throughout the evening, others extinguish the flame after the devotional reaches its completion. Either approach is valid.

If a nativity scene is used, set out the Angel on the first Sunday; Mary and Joseph on the second Sunday; the Shepherds on the third Sunday; and the three wise men on the fourth Sunday. On Christmas Eve, set out the baby Jesus at the time of the lighting of the Christ candle.

HOW TO MAKE AN ADVENT WREATH

Advent is traditionally celebrated with five candles set in an evergreen wreath. Because a circle has no beginning or end, the wreath is traditionally laid out as a circle, picturing God's everlasting love for us. Furthermore, green is the color of life and growth, symbolizing our growing faith in Jesus Christ.

The candles for the first, second, and fourth Sundays are traditionally violet to symbolize our penitence and preparation. The candle for the third Sunday is pink as a symbol of joy. The Christ candle (*a larger white candle*) is placed in the middle, which is lit on Christmas Eve. If one wishes, all white candles are appropriate as well. Additionally, keep the wreath decorations simple until Christmas Day when more elaborate and festive elements are added.¹

¹ Spray any item added to the wreath with fire retardant and never leave candles burning unattended.

THE THEME OF THIS GUIDE

Christians observe Advent several ways. Some orient around the elements of the birth narrative (*Shepherds, Bethlehem, etc.*) while others focus on Biblical themes related to salvation.

This year, the Emmaus Advent Devotional will highlight the themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love in the candle lighting portions while the individualized reading plan follows the birth narrative found in Matthew's Gospel.

The overall message of Matthew's Gospel is that in Jesus Christ God has faithfully brought the reign of His Promised One despite the failings of His people. This is the good news of the Gospel—that Jesus Christ entered the chaos of our sin to save us.

From a genealogy rehearsing the tragic history

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THE THEME OF THIS GUIDE

(CONTINUED)

of Israel's inability to turn from their pagan ways, to the plotting of a murderous pagan king, to the worship of pagan priests; to understand the Christmas story we must embrace the story of chaos that came before it and into which the Christ came.

For He is Immanuel, God with us, descending into the chaos to bring us into the eternal Kingdom of the Christ.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



The Story of Chaos

MATTHEW 1:1–17

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Did you know that the New Testament, like the Old, begins with a “book of genesis?” The first two words of Matthew, *biblos geneseos*, could mean exactly that. This is the same language used to introduce creation and humanity before the fall (*Genesis 2:4*), and Matthew might very well be alluding to God’s original creation of the world.

The *geneseos* at the beginning of Matthew, however, is the story of the origins of the Messiah—his genealogy. In “Jesus Christ, the Son of David” God is restoring his creation! But just like the original creation arose out the chaos, formless and void, so the arrival of the Messiah begins with a genealogy of chaos and failure.

Used throughout the Old Testament, genealogies offered a shorthand overview of how God and His people worked out their covenantal relationship over time. Unfortunately, though, we see time

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and time again that the people of God fail to be faithful to the covenant and God must discipline and even curse them for their failures. God intends to bless them and bless the world through them, but they reject him and the grace he offers.

Matthew's genealogy deliberately highlights tales of the failure and chaos that results: from the attempt of "Judah and his brothers" (v2) to sell their youngest brother into slavery (*Genesis 37:28*), to the evil reigns of "Jechoniah and his brothers" (*2 Kings 24*); from the hypocrisy of Judah's impregnation of Tamar (v3) to David's murderous cover-up of his affair with "the wife of Uriah" (v6); Matthew's genealogy brings to mind the most scandalous scenes in Israel's history.

And the result of Israel's failures? Israel's most shameful moment: God actually removes the glorious sign of his presence from the Temple

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

(*Ezekiel 10*)! Shortly thereafter God's judgment results in the Exile, what Matthew calls the "deportation to Babylon" (v11). By removing his glory from Temple and deporting His people from Jerusalem, God sent a clear message: I am no longer dwelling with you, and you are no longer dwelling with me.

The prophet Isaiah described this as "distress, darkness, and the gloom of anguish" (*Isaiah 8:22*). This was a pronouncement of the spiritual death of Israel, which parallels another hallmark of biblical genealogies: they always end in death. That is, until Matthew's genealogy of Jesus Christ. In this genealogy we also see that even in the midst of chaos and failure God demonstrating His faithfulness through the least of all people (*Deuteronomy 7:7*).

This is why the genealogy begins with Abraham.

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God had promised Abraham that he would provide:

- a) an offspring who would bring
- b) blessing to all the nations of the world **and**
- c) provide a land in which He would dwell with His people.

This Promised One would be the Christ, the Anointed One of God. And as the dark side of the genealogy demonstrates, none of Abraham's offspring had fulfilled the promises of the Christ.

But now, Matthew says, in Jesus we have the long awaited One—the offspring of Abraham who will not only lead God's people out of their spiritual exile, but draw all nations to Himself. Just as Isaiah's prophecies didn't end with the "gloom of anguish" but looked forward to when "people who walk in darkness will see a great light!" (*Isaiah 9...3*), so the darkness in Matthew's genealogy is driven away by the arrival of Jesus.

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In his genealogy, Matthew points to God's faithfulness in enacting His covenant with Abraham to bring the reign of His Promised One despite the failings of His people. This is the good news of Matthew's Gospel; this is the beginning of a New Creation!

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DAILY READING

DECEMBER 2

Matthew 1:1–17

DECEMBER 3

Isaiah 9:2–7

The Prophecy of the Christ

DECEMBER 4

Genesis 12:1–3, 49:8–12

The Promises to Abraham

DECEMBER 5

2 Samuel 7:1–17

The Promise of the True King

DECEMBER 6

Psalms 89:1–4, 19–37

The Cry for the True King

DECEMBER 7

Galatians 3:15–29

How to Enter the Promises to Abraham

DECEMBER 8

Revelation 21:1–8, 22:16, 17

When the Christ will End the Chaos

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FAMILY WORSHIP

LIGHT

Each day light the first candle while saying,
“This is the Hope Candle.”

After lighting the candle, recite the words of
John 8:12:

*“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life.’”*

The Leader explains the Hope Candle:

*The Hope Candle reminds us that in a world
of darkness we have the hope of the Gospel;
the coming of the Messiah who would bring
peace, love, and salvation to the world.*

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FAMILY WORSHIP

READ

The passage from the daily devotion:

- Sunday ◆ **Matthew 1:1–17**
- Monday ◆ **Isaiah 9:2–7**
- Tuesday ◆ **Genesis 12:1–3, 49:8–12**
- Wednesday ◆ **Psalms 89:1–4, 19–37**
- Thursday ◆ **2 Samuel 7:1–17**
- Friday ◆ **Galatians 3:15–29**
- Saturday ◆ **Revelation 21:1–8, 22:16, 17**

PRAY

SING

The carol for the week is:

Joy To The World

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



The Christ Enters The Chaos

MATTHEW 1:18–25

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Because of their sin, God removed His holy presence from Israel, and removed them into captivity in Babylon, far from His temple in Jerusalem. But even in exile, God indicted His people for continuing to profane His name “among the nations to which you came” (*Ezekiel 36:22*). Therefore, the great question that plagued the exilic prophets was, “how will God turn the evil hearts of His people to do righteousness?” God responds, saying He will recreate His people by putting “my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes...” (*Ezekiel 36:27*).

More than mere proximity to His holiness, God will put His holy presence within His people, overcoming their uncleanness caused by their idolatry (*Ezekiel 36:25, also Isaiah 59:21*).

In doing so, God’s people will become temples of the Living God, filled with His Spirit; to bring

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the promised blessing to the nations because the presence of God is no longer limited by the geographical location of the temple.

But, the question remains, how will God bring this re-creation to past? The answer is found in the beautiful details of Jesus' arrival: His virgin birth and His divinely ordained names.

The virgin birth discloses the comprehensiveness of God's redemptive plan for His people. Long deceived by the false promises of sin, the world is in need of a Messiah conceived by the Holy Spirit who will live in faithful obedience to God's law. In describing Jesus' conception "from the Holy Spirit" (v18), Matthew was not attempting to exhaustively explain the how of the virgin conception, but rather that God would ultimately overcome sin's deception through this Christ. For while the incarnation of the "fullness of God"

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in human flesh is a mystery (*Colossians 1:19*), its outcome of “through Him reconciling to Himself all things” is not (*Colossians 1:20*).

As the Spirit was vital in God’s initial creation (*Genesis 1:2*), the Spirit of God is vital to God’s work of recreation in Jesus Christ (see also *John 16:4–15, 20:22*). The Christ is conceived by the Holy Spirit so freedom might come to those deceived first among Israel and then among the nations. It will take a work of the Spirit of God to overcome sins’ deception and destruction, but the result is a God not just “for us,” but “God with us” (v23).

This Christ is not only able to save us from the enemy outside us, but the enemy within us: sin and death. He is God, and He is not only for us, but with us; made possible by God becoming man and living as the faithful Spirit-led Israelite in the midst of the chaos of sin.

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These profound truths can be illustrated by the names the Messiah is given.

First, he is called Jesus. The name “Jesus” in Greek is the equivalent of the name “Joshua” in Hebrew. He bears the name of the hero of Israel’s ancient past, the man who led the people into the Promised Land and gave them their inheritance. As a mere man, however, he could not guarantee the Land as a permanent possession. But the Messiah was not only titled “Jesus” but also “Immanuel,” meaning “**God with us.**”

The arrival of the promised Messiah would be the reversal of the terrible punishment: God’s glorious presence would return! The Messiah would be no mere human savior, but God himself returning to Israel. So we cannot comprehend the significance of the Messiah without the name Immanuel, and we cannot enjoy the promise of

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Immanuel without the name of Jesus. Through the virgin, the Holy Spirit conceives the Son of God, who will lead His people out of their spiritual exile and into God's very presence.

All of these details are vital. If the Messiah were **fully God, but not man**, He could not truly be God-with-us as sinners. His holy presence would bring conviction but lack grace; and heaped upon the conviction of sin would be His wrath against it.

But if the Messiah were **fully man and not God**, He could be with us as a friend but God's presence would remain far off as in the Exile. After a time of brief companionship, wrath would still be inevitable.

But as both fully God and fully man, Jesus is truly Immanuel. He is given the name above all names.

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He's entered into the chaos to lead us to salvation in the truer and better land; the Kingdom of the eternal Christ with a city at its center over whose entrance reads Immanuel (*Revelation 21:3*).

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DAILY READING

DECEMBER 9

Isaiah 7:14 & Matthew 1:18–23

DECEMBER 10

Isaiah 11:1–10

The Prophecy of God's Spirit on God's Anointed

DECEMBER 11

Ezekiel 36:22–37:14 *Ezekiel's Exile*

Prophecy of God's Coming New Work

DECEMBER 12

Luke 1:26–38

Luke's Parallel Account

DECEMBER 13

Luke 1:46–56

Mary's Song of Praise

DECEMBER 14

Luke 1:67–80 *Zechariah Recognizes the*

Fulfillment of Prophecy in Jesus

DECEMBER 15

2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

The New Temple in the New People of Christ

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FAMILY WORSHIP

LIGHT

Each day light the first candle while saying,
“This is the Peace Candle.”

After lighting the candle, recite the words of
John 8:12:

*“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life.’”*

The Leader Explains the Peace Candle:

*The Peace Candle reminds us that Christ
has reconciled us to God, making peace
where there was enmity. Instead of exile
from God, we enjoy Immanuel, God with us.*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FAMILY WORSHIP

READ

The passage from the daily devotion:

Sunday ◆ Isaiah 7:14 & Matthew 1:18–23

Monday ◆ Isaiah 11:1–10

Tuesday ◆ Ezekiel 36:22–37:14

Wednesday ◆ Luke 1:26–38

Thursday ◆ Luke 1:46–56

Friday ◆ Luke 1:67–80

Saturday ◆ 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

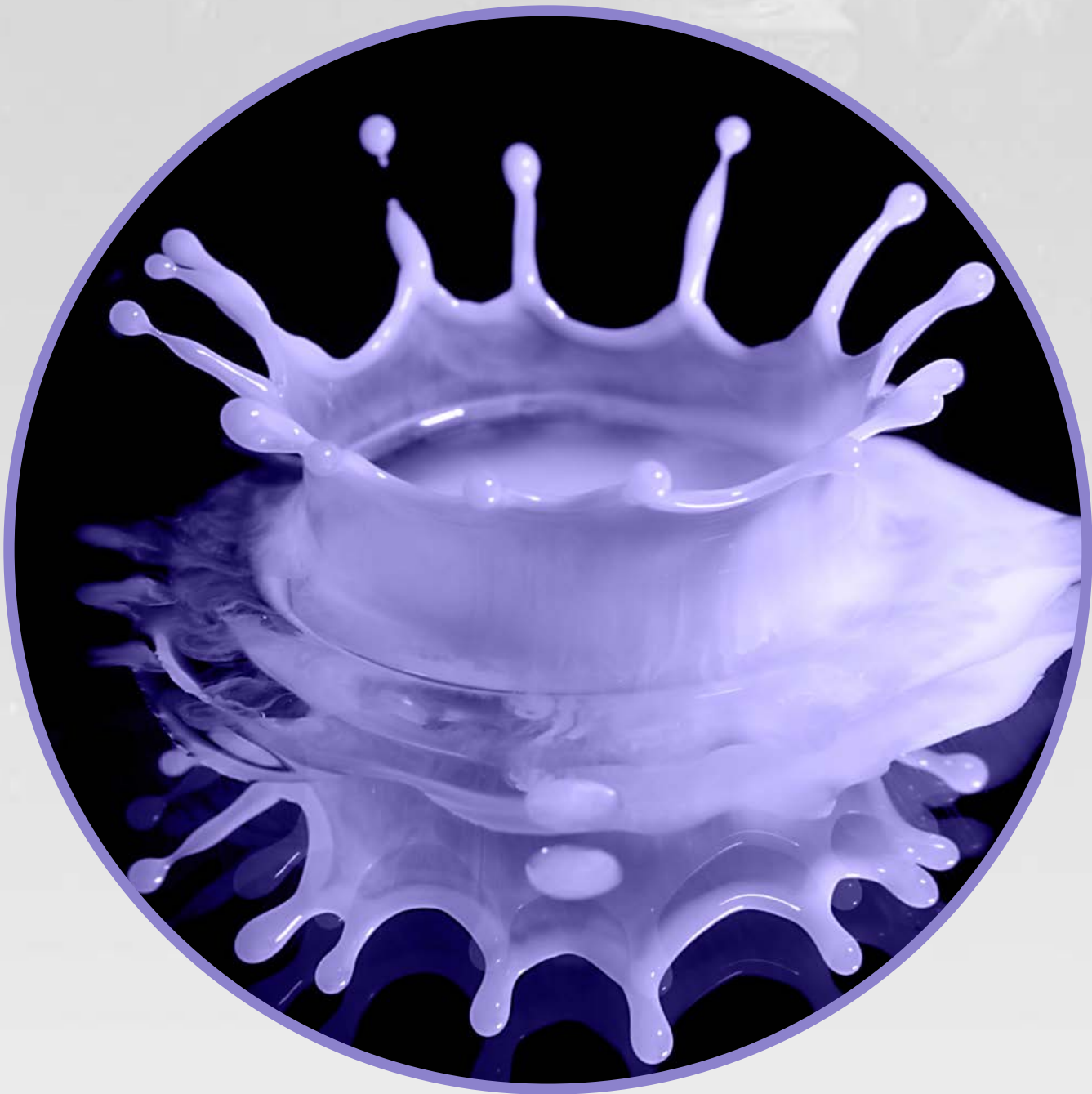
PRAY

SING

The carol for the week is:

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



The Chaos of The False Christ

MATTHEW 2:1-6

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

We're so used to thinking of Christmas as the birth of Jesus that we can forget that when Jesus was born two millennia ago, they were not his days, but the "days of Herod, the king" (v1).

Ruling from 37 to 4 BC, Herod was appointed King of the Jews under the authority of Rome. His many building programs and military conquests earned him the title "The Great" in the eyes of his subjects, leading Israel through one of the most prosperous times in her history. If ever Israel had found a King, Herod the Great was a viable candidate.

Yet Herod was a pretender to the throne: not the true, promised King, not the One who would bring Israel's redemption, not the one who would bring about Yahweh's order back into the chaos of the world. He was a ruthless ruler, a paranoid puppet of Rome, who ruled by silencing opposition. He

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murdered his own wife, several sons, and other relatives to keep a hold on his power. Herod's most lasting contribution was the new temple in Jerusalem. One of the most majestic buildings in the world, Herod's Temple lacked only one thing: the holy presence of God. God, it seemed, wouldn't dwell with His people through Herod's means, but His own (*Isaiah 4:2–6; 11:1–10*).

So despite Herod's greatness, a baby born in Bethlehem threatened everything. As Matthew says, "he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (v3).

You see, Israel's problem was never that they didn't have a king, or even that they didn't have good kings, but that they had any king that wasn't God himself. Starting with Saul, every human king of Israel (*even David!*) exhibited the weaknesses that would eventually bring down the nation: lust,

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greed, and a hunger for power, safety, and security from someone other than God. Israel's kings, even the great kings, could only be substitutes for the true ideal. Herod might have been the greatest king the Jews had had for some time, but for all that his claims were illegitimate.

This is why Jesus's arrival threatened Herod's power and Israel's corrupt religious and political leadership: they knew the only threat to their hold on the levers of power was the true God of the universe. It was He, and He alone, who has the right to sit on the Throne.

This is why prophecy is so important for Matthew: Jesus is the Anointed Ruler who God said would be born in Bethlehem of Judea (*Matthew 2:6; cf. Micah 5:2*). Israel's real King finally arrived! His reign represents the opposite of Herod's reign. Jesus, the long-awaited Christ, rules

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by “shepherd(*ing*) God’s people” rather than silencing and slaughtering them. Rather than taking the nations through military conquest, or fawning after their approval, Jesus draws the nations through heart conquest (v2), demonstrating Himself to be the ultimate desire of nations (*Haggai 2:7*).

He achieves His victory by taking our sin upon Himself and silently bearing our penalty in our place (*Isaiah 53:7*).

Most importantly of all, Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, entered into the Temple, and those who had eyes to see it knew that God’s glory had truly returned even if the people rejected it. And with Jesus’ resurrection, ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God began dwelling not merely among His people, but within His people (*2 Corinthians 6:16*) in a

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Temple more majestic than any human architect could imagine. At the center of this Temple we see Jesus, the true Christ, the true King, who has come to take His place upon the throne, and so these are now and for all eternity “the days of the Christ.”

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DAILY READING

DECEMBER 16

Matthew 2:1–6

DECEMBER 17

Micah 5:2–5

Micah's Prophecy About Bethlehem

DECEMBER 18

Isaiah 52:13–53:12

Isaiah's Prophecy of Suffering Servant

DECEMBER 19

Isaiah 61:1–3 & Luke 4:16–30

The Reign of God's True King

DECEMBER 20

Psalms 103

Praise for God's True King

DECEMBER 21

Ephesians 6:10–20 *Living in the Power of the Christ in the Present Darkness*

DECEMBER 22

Revelation 1:4–5, 17:8, 19:1–21

The One Who Is and The One Who Is Not

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FAMILY WORSHIP

LIGHT

Each day light the first candle while saying,
“This is the Joy Candle.”

After lighting the candle, recite the words of
John 8:12:

*“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life.’”*

The Leader explains the Joy Candle:

*The Joy Candle represents joy and
celebration, for Christ has come! In Christ,
the joy of God’s Presence has come into
the world, silencing the accusations of
the enemy.*

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FAMILY WORSHIP

READ

The passage from the daily devotion:

- Sunday ◆ **Matthew 2:1–6**
- Monday ◆ **Micah 5:2–5**
- Tuesday ◆ **Isaiah 52:13–53:12**
- Wednesday ◆ **Isaiah 61:1–3 & Luke 4:16–30**
- Thursday ◆ **Psalms 103**
- Friday ◆ **Ephesians 6:10–20**
- Saturday ◆ **Revelation 1:4–5, 17:8, 19:1–21**

PRAY

SING

The carol for the week is:

O Little Town of Bethlehem

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



**Exit The Chaos,
Enter the
Presence of
the Christ**

MATTHEW 2:7-12

IMMANUEL  WHEN THE CHRIST ENTERED THE CHAOS

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Have you ever thought about how strange a Christmas nativity scene is? Each little figure tells a story that is anything but normal: a virgin mother, some terrified shepherds, a crowd of onlooking animals, and guardian angels hovering overhead.

When we tell the stories of these little characters we find again and again something extraordinary! one side, the famous “we three kings,” the “magi.” Who were these remarkable men, and why in the world is their entrance worth noticing?

The “magi” (*a transliteration of the greek, magoi*), were most likely pagan priests from wicked Babylon, the very place of Israel’s exile (v7). Known for practices that included astrology, dream interpretation, sorcery and magic, these magi embody the idolatrous practices not only of the nations but specifically those which enslaved and destroyed Israel.

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In other words, Babylonian magi are representatives of the very system that the Messiah had come to save Israel from. Why would God let men like this into the story of Jesus' birth? What business do God's enemies have here in the presence of Israel's Anointed?

In short, by drawing the magi to Himself, we see that God's power can turn anyone from idolatry to joyous freedom in Christ. The magi's interest in Jesus is indeed a mystery; Jesus's reception of them is a profound expression of his love.

The arrival of the "wise men" signals to Matthew's readers a new chapter in God's redemptive plan, a chapter in which He fulfills the promise to bring blessing to all of the nations. Israel had failed to bring about this blessing, but God would bring it through the arrival of Jesus Christ. Whereas Israel desired to be like the nations and turned

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to their gods, Jesus was the true desire of these very nations, and causes them to turn from their idolatrous practices to Himself. For if God would receive these strangers, with all of their idolatrous baggage, then there is certainly hope for all those who repent and return to the King.

Under the cover of darkness the magi followed what wisdom they knew from their own practices, yet in the presence of the Christ they found true wisdom. Following the light of the star, they found the light of the world. Falling down in worship, they offered their riches.

Just so, because of Jesus Christ we too can enter into God's presence, falling down and worshipping the one our hearts have been searching for (v11). We no longer need the false kings that enslave us, but the King of Kings who entered the chaos (v12) and offers escape from our spiritual exile.

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Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy which included outsiders (1:3, 5, 6), and ends with Jesus' commissioning to "make disciples of all nations" (*Matthew 28:18*).

Through Jesus, God's Spirit is now present in a cleansed people who are no longer in exile but have drawn near to the light of, and to, all nations (*Isaiah 61:1–3*).

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FAMILY WORSHIP

LIGHT

Each day light the first candle while saying,
“This is the Love Candle.”

After lighting the candle, recite the words of
John 8:12:

*“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life.’”*

The Leader Explains the Love Candle:

*The Love Candle reminds us “that God
shows His love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).*

READ

◆ Matthew 2:7–12

PRAY

SING

The carol for the week is:

Oh Holy Night

ADVENT (CHRISTMAS EVE)



Christmas Eve

ISAIAH 59:16–60:3

LUKE 2:1–21

ADVENT (CHRISTMAS EVE)

FAMILY WORSHIP

LIGHT

Each day light the first candle while saying,
“This is the Christ Candle.”

After lighting the candle, recite the words of
John 8:12:

*“Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness, but will have the light of life.’”*

The Leader Explains the Christ Candle:

*The Christ Candle symbolizes Christ’s presence
in our world. Now all the candles are burning.
Christ is born! What cause for rejoicing!*

READ

◆ Isaiah 59:16–60:3; Luke 2:1–21

PRAY

SING

The carol for the week is:

Silent Night, Holy Night

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

DAILY ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

Come, Let Us Adore Him:

A Daily Advent Devotional by Paul Tripp

The Dawning of Indestructible Joy:

Daily Readings for Advent by John Piper

— FREE DOWNLOAD —

RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON THE TOPIC OF ADVENT

Jesus Light of the World:

Praying the Scriptures Through Advent

by Candace Crabtree

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus:

Experiencing the Peace and Promise

of Christmas by Various

Hidden Christmas:

The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of

Christ by Tim Keller

NATIVITY

The Christmas Star From Afar

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

YOUTUBE VIDEOS OF CHRISTMAS CAROLS

JOY TO THE WORLD

O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

OH HOLY NIGHT

SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT



PLANTING THE GOSPEL IN THE INLAND EMPIRE