



Advent Season Gathering

Week 3





Welcome

We gather together to prepare our hearts for God's arrival into our world. During this hour, and this Advent season, we acknowledge God's arrival in History, through the nation of Israel and through the birth of His Son, Christ Jesus.

We patiently wait and expect God to daily arrive in our hearts and in our communities. We long for the Second Coming of the Lord to fully establish His eternal kingdom.

For the Lord tells His people:

“My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.”

(Ezekiel 37.27)

As Christmas Day draws near, we feel the joy of family, friends, and traditions. Likewise, we rejoice that God has come, is present with us, and will come again. The Lord brings wholeness and healing to His people, which ignites joy and gratitude within the people of God.





O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*

O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.*





The Lord Brings Songs of Joy

Those who wait on the Lord shall be rewarded with joy. The Psalmist proclaims that the Lord restores the broken; He turns sorrow into songs of joy:



- ¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.
- ²Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.
Then it was said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
- ³**The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.**
- ⁴Restore our fortunes, LORD,
like streams in the Negev.
- ⁵Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
- ⁶Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.

(Psalm 126)





The Light of the World

Jesus, the Light of the World, came to the world, that the world might be healed. The Apostle John tells us that our healing makes us children of God; and heirs to His kingdom:



¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²**Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God**—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.** We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1.1-5,9-14)





The Third Candle of Advent

Gracious Father, you brought forth the Light of the World in your Son, Christ Jesus. Blessed are you, O Lord, for you have looked favorably on your people and have redeemed them. No longer do we live in fear or darkness. We bask in your glorious light.

O God, we light the third candle of Advent.

We light it with Joy. Through the darkness of our world, your light breaks through. Through all the trials and pains of this world, we look to you and we will rejoice.





I Want to Walk as a Child of Light

I want to walk as a child of the light
I want to follow Jesus
God sent the stars to give light to the world
The star of my life is Jesus

*In Him there is no darkness at all
The night and the day are both alike
The Lamb is the light of the city of God
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus*

I want to see the brightness of God
I want to look at Jesus
Clear sun of righteousness, shine on my path
And show me the way to the Father

*In Him there is no darkness at all
The night and the day are both alike
The Lamb is the light of the city of God
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus*

I'm looking for the coming of Christ
I want to be with Jesus
When we have run with patience, the race
We shall know the joy of Jesus

*In Him there is no darkness at all
The night and the day are both alike
The Lamb is the light of the city of God
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus*





News of Christ's Coming

With fear and reverence, the humble servant waits on the Lord. But the servant has faith in God's goodness and hope in His promises. We read the account of Mary receiving the news of Christ's coming. We pray for the same obedience as Mary and joy in her expectation of God's arrival:



²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "**Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.**"

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.





³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail.”

³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

(Luke 1.26-38)





Rejoice Always

The life of the believer ought to be one marked with joy. Being one of the fruits of the Spirit, it is clear that joy is from the very essence of God. Indeed, the Apostle Paul gives believers the command for joy:



¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.

²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

(1st Thessalonians 5.16-24)







Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Rejoice, rejoice, believers!
And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing,
And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising,
And soon he will draw nigh;
Up! pray, and watch, and wrestle!
At midnight comes the cry.

See that your lamps are burning;
Replenish them with oil;
Look now for your salvation,
The end of sin and toil.
The watchers on the mountain
Proclaim the Bridegroom near,
Go meet him as he cometh,
With alleluias clear.



Our hope and expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, thou Sun so longed for,
O'er this benighted sphere!
With hearts and hands uplifted,
We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption,
And ever be with thee! Amen.





Benediction

O Lord, mindful of your great mercy, grant that I might serve you without fear, in holiness and righteousness, this day and all of my days.

Break upon me like the dawn, O Lord, to give me your light this day and to guide my feet into the way of peace.

O God, grant us occasions to praise your goodness and righteousness. With your outstretched arm, reveal your might and power, and give us new songs of joy.

Give us your Spirit, that we might rejoice, always!

God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come.

