

ADVENT

In this lesson, we begin our four-lesson study of events leading up to the birth of Jesus. Referred to as the season of Advent, we will be using a publication from Rose Publishing entitled *The Christmas Story* by Loren D. Bishop to guide our study. You can also obtain a copy from OliveTree.com.

Divided into four lessons, we will examine four different aspects of the coming birth: HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE. In this lesson, we explore the Advent of Hope.

Consider the following scriptures, as we examine the Advent of Hope regarding the coming Christ child:

1. Read Isaiah 11:1-10. This passage refers to four spirits who will descend on Christ. Who are they?
 - a. ANSWER 1: The Spirit of the Lord;
 - b. ANSWER 2: The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding;
 - c. ANSWER 3: The Spirit of Counsel and Might; and
 - d. ANSWER 4: The Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of the Lord.
 2. Two specific events that will bring hope to the poor and oppressed of the earth are mentioned. What are they?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Jesus, the Messiah, will provide justice for the poor of the earth.
 - b. ANSWER 2: He will also strike the earth and slay the wicked.
 3. Read Isaiah 65:17-25. How do these verses relate to our hope in Christ today?
 - a. ANSWER: We are promised a time in the future when God, through His son Jesus, will eternally set things right for all those who have trusted in him.
 4. Read Luke 1:26-38. Why is the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin so important? Suppose that Mary was not actually a virgin. What would the harm be with respect to the Christmas story?
 - a. ANSWER 1: First, it would not have fulfilled exactly what God had prophesied. This one fact alone would cast a shadow over the accuracy of the Bible and the credibility of God's perfect knowledge.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Second, how could we say that Jesus was the true and only Son of God, if Mary was not a virgin?
 - c. ANSWER 3: Third—see the next reading.
 5. Read Isaiah 7:10-14. Jesus, Emmanuel, was to be born of a virgin. Why did Isaiah say that God was doing this?
 - a. ANSWER: The virgin birth would serve as a "sign" from God so that everyone would know that Jesus was the Redeemer, Emmanuel, "God with us".
 6. Read Matthew 1:18-24. Did Joseph know what Jesus would go on to do, i.e., save the lost, and/or did he accept on faith the assertion that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit?
 - a. ANSWER: Actually both of these questions can be answered in the affirmative. He accepted on faith what the Angel Of The Lord told him regarding Mary; and he also accepted that the reason for Jesus' birth and life on earth was to be the savior of the lost.
-

If you are studying at home without access to the previously-cited publication from Rose Publishing, then also read the following scriptures, since they point to the Hope of Christ that was fulfilled at his birth in Bethlehem.

- Malachi 4:5 – "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes." [NIV]
- Isaiah 40:3 – "A voice of one calling: 'In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.'" [NIV]
- Psalm 89:3-4 – "You said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'" [NIV]

- Isaiah 9:6-7 – "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this." [NIV]

Thanks for studying with us!

In Christ,

Wes