

ADVENT

In this lesson, we continue 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.

We are examining the four different aspects of the coming birth: HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE. In this lesson, we explore the Advent of Love.

Consider the following scriptures, as we learn of the love accompanying the birth of the Christ-child:

1. Read Micah 3:1-5. Several passages come to mind when we read this one. How do the following verses also apply? John 3:16-21 and Matthew 25:31-46.
 - a. ANSWER 1: God's great love and awesome judgment are highlighted in all three of these references.
 - b. ANSWER 2: God has made it clear that all will be judged and that the oppressed, those unjustly accused, and the defenseless will be vindicated when Christ returns and establishes his earthly kingdom.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Christ's Second Coming will happen quickly, and judgment will begin as soon as he returns.
2. Read Romans 8:18-25. In addition to the Romans passage, what do all of these additional verses tell us about our hope and God's love for us through Christ? 2 Peter 3:10-13, 1 Corinthians 15:35-58, Matthew 22:32, and John 14:1-3.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Our hope is in the promise that we who have put our trust in Christ will never die, and that upon Christ's return, we will be resurrected in a new eternal body.
 - b. ANSWER 2: The earth also looks forward to being reborn, resurrected and restored.
 - c. ANSWER 3: God is the God of the living. This means that while we may physically die in this mortal body, our spirit is eternal. God is our God eternally, and His love is what we put out hope in. Through His son Jesus we will live eternally, soon to be resurrected in our new and immortal bodies.
 - d. ANSWER 4: God loves us so much He gave His only son, Jesus, and Jesus is now preparing an eternal home for us that we will have the blessing of sharing with him in our new resurrected bodies.
3. Read Isaiah 52:7-10. Also read Matthew 24:26-28, and consider what these verses tell us regarding Christ's Second Coming.
 - a. ANSWER 1: It tells us that when He returns, there will be no doubt that He is the promised Messiah.
 - b. ANSWER 2: It also tells us that there is great joy in proclaiming His return, but there will also be many false prophets leading up to His return.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Finally, it tells us that there will be great joy and celebration when Christ returns, as the righteous are vindicated and the unrighteous judged.
4. Read Revelation 21:1-8. How does this passage speak to the love of God and the coming return of his son Jesus?
 - a. ANSWER: He loves us so much that not only are we going to be resurrected with new bodies, but he is also preparing a totally new creation for us live in eternally—and He will also live there with us.

Let's always be mindful of the great love that now lives in us and shines from us through having the Holy Spirit living in each of us. If you don't already know that love, and if you haven't yet accepted Jesus' great gift of eternal life, may God lead you today to accept that gift so that He may fill your life with love and hope, joy and peace.

Thanks for studying with us!

In Christ,

Wes