

# Reflections for Advent

click [blue underlined](#) links to view verse(s)

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. [Isaiah 9:6](#)

“... Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man. ...” - [Nicene Creed](#)

## ADVENT

The word "advent" is derived from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming" or "arrival."

## FACT AND FIGURES - [Evangelical Alliance Surveys](#)

### What does Advent/Christmas mean?

- 51 per cent agreed with the statement "the birth of Jesus is irrelevant to my Christmas"
- 18 per cent agreed with the statement "I dread Christmas"
- 54 per cent agreed "Christmas is over-rated"
- 61 per cent agreed "Christmas is mainly for children"
- 36 per cent said they would be attending a Christmas service

### Religious Celebration of Christmas

- 2.5 million people attended Church of England churches at Christmas 2015
- 2.3 million people during Advent attended special services for the congregation and local community
- 2.7 million people attended special services for civic organisations and schools.

### Why do occasional churchgoers go to church at Christmas?

#### Motivation?

- 94 per cent said their motivation was the music.
- 75 per cent said they wanted to be reminded of the Christmas story.
- 55 per cent said they wanted to feel close to and/or worship God.
- 52 per cent said they wanted to find the true meaning of Christmas

#### What kind of service?

- 78 per cent said they prefer the service to be candlelit.
- 76 per cent said they prefer traditional rather than modern hymns.
- 94 per cent said they expected the service to be uplifting.

#### Belief in the Christmas story among occasional churchgoers

- 58 per cent believed in the birth took place in a stable
- 57 per cent believe in the role of the shepherds
- 55 per cent in the wise men
- 42 per cent in the virgin birth.

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Advent is the first part of a larger liturgical season that includes Christmas and Epiphany and continues until the beginning of Lent. Viewed as a whole, this time celebrates God the Father's wonderful gift to the world of His only-begotten Son, sent to save us from sin and death.

## THE CHURCH'S FOCUS DURING ADVENT

The focus of the church during the Advent season is Christ's threefold coming - past, present, and future.

- First, we remember the Lord's humble first coming in Bethlehem two thousand years ago.
- Second, we give thanks for His present and continual coming into our hearts through the Word and Sacraments.
- Finally, we look forward with hope and patience to His victorious second coming as Judge and King at the end of time.

## RECAP

What were the thoughts, emotions and actions of:

- Mary [Luke 1:29](#), [Luke 1:34](#), [Luke 1:38](#), [Luke 1:39-40](#), [Luke 1:56](#)
- Joseph [Matt 1:19](#), [Matt 1:24](#)
- The Shepherds [Luke 2:9](#), [Luke 2:15-17](#)
- The Wise Men [Matt 2:1](#), [Matt 2:2](#)
- King Herod [Matt 2:1-8](#) , [Matt 2:16](#)
- Simeon [Luke 2:25-32](#) ; and Anna [Luke 2:36-38](#)

## REFLECTIONS

- Why was Jesus' birth so important?
- Why was Mary's son called Jesus and not Emmanuel? [Matt 1:23](#)
- Why do we need to be saved and from what?
- What does salvation really mean?
- Is salvation for all? [Acts 11:18](#), [2 Pet 3:9](#)
- Is salvation personal (i.e. for the individual) or applied to all mankind regardless of what we believe? [Acts 16:30-31](#)
- How are we saved? [Eph 2:8-10](#) , [Rom 10:9](#)
- What about other religions who don't believe the gospel about who Jesus really was? [John 14:6](#) , [Acts 4:12](#) , [John 3:18](#)
- What is our duty: to God [Matt 28:19](#) ; to mankind [Rom 10:14](#) ?