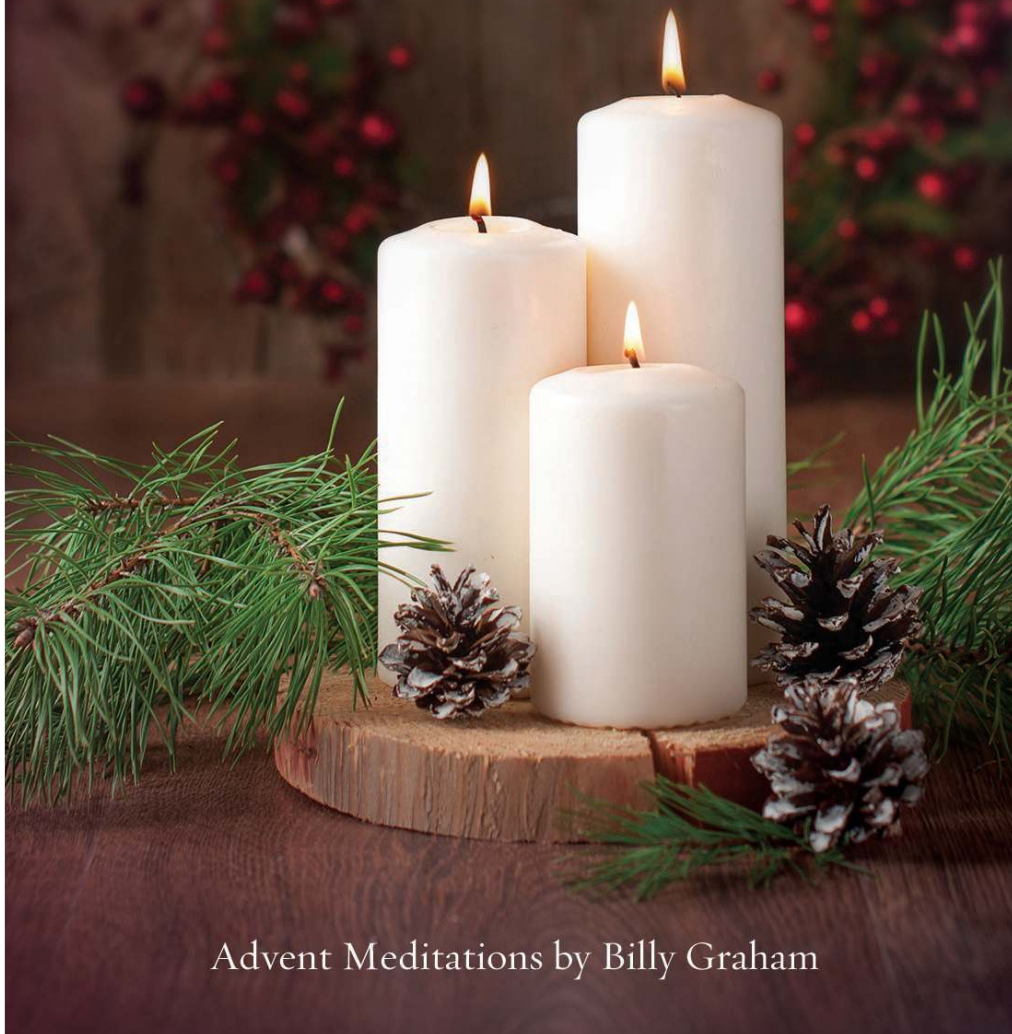


# ARRIVAL

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*Preparing to Celebrate Christ's Birth*



Advent Meditations by Billy Graham

The word

# ADVENT means ARRIVAL,

and it refers to the arrival of Jesus Christ into the world.

The “Advent season” usually starts four weeks before Christmas and concludes with the celebration of Christ’s birth.

Some churches emphasize the Advent season more than others, but all Christians look forward to celebrating Christ’s birth during this season of the year. Why was Jesus’ birth so important? The reason is because slightly over 2,000 years ago, God stooped down from Heaven and became a human being: Jesus Christ. As the Bible says,

“*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*” — John 1:14, ESV

Think of it: God became a man! He did it because He loves us—and that’s what we should celebrate as Christmas approaches.

Take time between now and Christmas to reflect on this great truth. This pamphlet provides a reading for each week as you prepare to celebrate the coming of the Christ child.

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## Week One

READ ISAIAH 9:6

In this Scripture we find the message and meaning of Christmas. Isaiah the prophet gave five awe-inspiring names of our Lord that encourage us, thrill us, and fill us with hope at this Christmas season.

1. **Wonderful.** When He did His many miracles, the Scripture says, “*The people marveled*” (Luke 11:14, ESV).
2. **Counselor.** The people said, “*No one ever spoke like this Man!*” (John 7:46, NKJV).
3. **The Mighty God.** He is the God-Man. He said that He and the Father are one (John 10:30).
4. **The Everlasting Father.** It was by Him, the living Word, that all things were created. He is the designer of the whole universe (John 1:3; Hebrews 11:3).
5. **The Prince of Peace.** There will never be lasting peace on earth until He comes again to reign in righteousness. But He is also the Prince of Peace in other ways. None can have peace with God apart from Him and the peace that He made through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20).

The full meaning of these words from Isaiah should give us enough strength, hope, and joy to face any crisis, endure any sorrow, and meet any temptation.

How has Jesus shown you recently that He is “*Wonderful, Counselor ... the Prince of Peace*”?



## Week Two

READ MATTHEW 1:19–21

We're given just a little glimpse of Mary and Joseph before Jesus was born. They lived in the hill country of Galilee. Joseph was a religious man. Mary gives every evidence of having a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, even though she was a teenager. The Bible teaches that God was so pleased with her that He chose her to be the mother of Jesus. Mary and Joseph weren't married, and yet Mary became pregnant.

I've often put myself in Joseph's place—imagined his thoughts, his aspirations about the girl to whom he was engaged. But Joseph decided to break the engagement privately.

While he was thinking about these things, God's angel appeared to him in a dream to give Joseph an explanation of the situation. All Joseph's suspicions were put away. He accepted what God had said through the angel, and he was immediately married to Mary.

Both Joseph and Mary followed the call and plan of God, and through their obedience the way was prepared for Christ to come and bless us.

*Are you seeking to follow God's call on your life? Are you actively responding to Him?*

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## Week Three

READ LUKE 2:8–10

On that first Christmas night, the angels appeared to shepherds on a hill near Bethlehem. Alfred Edersheim, the great 19th-century Jewish-Christian scholar, wrote in his book *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* that the shepherds and the sheep to whom the angels appeared near Bethlehem were no ordinary shepherds and sheep. The sheep were those bound for the temple sacrifices. The shepherds were outcasts because of their necessary isolation from religious ordinances. And their manner of life rendered legal observances unlikely, if not absolutely impossible.

How wonderful that in God's wisdom and love the angels should appear to them—the doomed and the outcast—that night.

Today we can declare to the world that the Good Shepherd cares for all people and wants to give them peace. Christ came on that first Christmas for one great purpose—to die on the cross for our sins. Now God offers forgiveness, inner peace, and eternal life to all who will repent and believe in His Son. This is the Christmas message!

*Do you know people who need to hear about God's love and forgiveness? Will you share the true Christmas message with them this year?*

## Week Four

READ LUKE 2:11, 13-14

The greatest sermon ever preached was delivered by angels on this historic night. It has always been interesting to me that this message was delivered at night. It wasn't night because the sun had gone down. It was night because the world was surrounded in spiritual and moral gloom. People were driven by greed, intolerance, and lust for power. Religion had become a device for the rich in the exploitation of the poor. Men robbed and swindled and profited under the cloak of religion; they even fought wars in the name of religion. In every arena of life, it was night when Jesus came.

Things haven't changed. Today, there seems to be a moral night that has settled over our world—sexual immorality, pleasure-mad people, lusting for money and power—the same as it was in the days when Jesus came 2,000 years ago.

It is in the darkest hour that Christ often comes. He brings the joy, the thrill, the peace, and the glory such as you have never known—when you and your loved ones give your lives to Him.

How has Jesus shown Himself to you in your darkest hour?

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## Week Five

READ JOHN 3:16; 5:24

### Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

The word *Christmas* begins with Christ: the virgin-born Christ child, our Savior. The babe of Bethlehem was not merely a remarkable child but the Son of God. In His infinite grace, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born into this world as a man, yet He never ceased to be God.

Jesus Christ in His infinite love did not begin when He was born in a stable and laid in a manger; He left Heaven's best to come to this world to be the Savior of mankind. He was offered as a free gift.

God's gift to the world was despised and rejected 2,000 years ago. In the life of every person who has rejected Him since that time, there has proved to be a fatal defectiveness. Only when we accept the free gift of eternal life through Christ can we know the true meaning of Christmas, the forgiveness of sin, and life everlasting.

God gave His *all* for you. By giving Him *your* all this Christmas, you will reach others with the Gospel that they, too, may receive God's gift.

In what tangible ways can you give Jesus your all today and in the coming year?



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