



**Advent 2009**

**Overall Theme:** *Transformation*

The first coming (or advent) of Jesus Christ into the world two millennia ago radically transformed human history. Similarly, the second coming of Christ, for which we are still waiting, will result in profound transformation. The season of Advent is a chance for the Church and all believers to meditate on these transformations, both past and future.

In observing Advent, there is a deliberate tension between celebration of Christ's first advent and hopeful anticipation for His second advent. We first look back to remember the Old Testament prophecies of a Messiah and the fulfillment of these prophecies in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, resulting in a fundamental transformation of the relationship between God and man. We also look forward to the second coming of Christ and the new heavens and new earth that will subsequently be established.

Join us this Advent season as we meditate on the transformations that Christ's birth brought to our world as well as the transformations that are promised upon Christ's return.

**Week 1 Theme:** *From Darkness to Light*

As we read in Genesis, God is the creator of all light, both physical and spiritual. Yet, spiritual darkness fell upon man when sin came between him and God. God then chose the nation of Israel to be a light to the nations, yet time and again, Israel's heart toward God grew cold. Even so, God always preserved a remnant for Himself. By sending His only son Jesus into the world, God reached out to span the sin barrier that alienated all men from Himself. Jesus called himself the "light of the world." As you read the scripture readings for this week, meditate on how Christ's first coming transformed countless lives, including your own, from darkness to light.

**Prayer for the Week:**

Creator God,  
you remind us that the darkness of ignorance and doubt  
cannot overcome your life-giving Word.  
May your Holy Spirit, who first inspired these words of Scripture,  
shine your light and once again awaken us  
to the hearing and living of this radiant truth.  
In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Daily Scripture Readings:**

Sunday	Exodus 15:22-27
Monday	Genesis 1:1-5; John 1:1-18
Tuesday	Isaiah 9:2-7; John 8:12-19, 9:4-5, and 12:44-46
Wednesday	Isaiah 42:1-7; John 3:16-21
Thursday	Isaiah 60:1-3 and 19-22; Romans 13:11-14
Friday	Matthew 5:14-16; 1 John 1:5-11
Saturday	Luke 11:33-36; Ephesians 5:8-14

**Hymns:**

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel (Trinity Hymnal, 194)*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

*Refrain*

Rejoice! Rejoice!  
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell Thy people save,  
And give them victory over the grave.

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, O come, great Lord of might,  
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times once gave the law  
In cloud and majesty and awe.

Words by John M. Neale  
Music by Thomas Helmore  
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*Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies (Trinity Hymnal, 398)*

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,  
Christ, the true, the only Light,  
Sun of Righteousness, arise,  
Triumph o'er the shades of night;  
Dayspring from on high, be near;  
Daystar, in my heart appear.

Dark and cheerless is the morn  
Unaccompanied by thee;  
Joyless is the day's return  
Till thy mercy's beams I see;  
Till they inward light impart,  
Glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

Visit, then this soul of mine;  
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief;  
Fill me, Radiancy divine;  
Scatter all my unbelief;  
More and more thyself display,  
Shining to the perfect day.

Words by Charles Wesley  
Music by Charles F. Gounod  
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**Week 2 Theme:** *From Want to Plenty*

Man is a creature of many appetites – for food and water, for love and intimacy, for meaningful work, for rest and relaxation. Part of the human condition in the post-Fall world is that these appetites are never satisfied once and for all; as long as we are alive, we pursue these things. Another way of stating this is that man’s basic condition is one of *want*. We are not sufficient unto ourselves and must constantly fill ourselves up with external things.

Yet, Scripture warns against the life whose primary goal is appetite satisfaction. Throughout the scriptures, God’s people often found themselves in situations where material provision for the near future seemed uncertain (e.g., the Israelites in the desert, the crowd of 5,000 on the hill). It was through such situations that God taught His people to lean on Him and to trust in His providence.

Scripture also teaches that man’s most profound need (or “appetite”) is not for physical sustenance but for reconnection and renewed fellowship with his Maker, with whom man is now alienated because of sin. Jesus Christ, who called himself “the bread of life,” has dealt once and for all with our sin, allowing for the “God-shaped hole” in each of us to be filled. Those whose faith is in Christ have truly been taken from a condition of *want* to one of *plenty*! As you read and meditate on the scripture readings for this week, thank God for providing, through Christ, the perfect sacrifice to pay for the debt of all your sins – past, present, and future – and look forward with anticipation to the second coming of Christ, when all of our deepest longings will be satisfied for eternity.

**Prayer for the Week:**

Our Father,  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Do take care of all our physical needs  
so that we come to know  
that you are the only source of everything good,  
and that neither our work and worry  
nor your gifts  
can do us any good without your blessing.  
And so help us to give up our trust in creatures  
and to put trust in you alone.

**Daily Scripture Readings:**

Sunday	Exodus 16:1-18
Monday	Genesis 1:6-2:1; John 6:1-35
Tuesday	Genesis 12:1-3 and 15:1-6; Matthew 5:1-12
Wednesday	Exodus 3:1-12; Matthew 7:25-34
Thursday	Psalms 23; Hebrews 10:1-14
Friday	Isaiah 35; Ephesians 1:3-14 and 2:1-10
Saturday	Isaiah 55; Matthew 11:28-30

**Hymns:**

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (Trinity Hymnal 193)*

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
And with fear and trembling stand;  
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,  
For with blessing in his hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
As of old on earth he stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
In the body and the blood,  
He will give to all the faithful  
His own self for heav'nly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven  
Spreads its vanguard on the way,  
As the Light of light descendeth  
From the realms of endless day,  
That the pow'rs of hell may vanish  
As the darkness clears away.

At his feet the six-winged seraph;  
Cherubim, with sleepless eye,  
Veil their faces to the presence,  
As with ceaseless voice they cry,  
"Alleluia, alleluia,  
Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

Words: Liturgy of St. James, 5<sup>th</sup> cent., adapted by Gerard Moultrie  
Music: French melody, 17<sup>th</sup> cent.  
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*Jesus Paid It All (Trinity Hymnal, 308)*

I hear the Savior say, "Your strength indeed is small,  
Child of weakness, watch and pray, Find in me your all in all."

*Refrain*

Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it white as snow.

Lord, now indeed I find your pow'r, and yours alone,  
Can change the leper's spots, and melt the heart of stone.

For nothing good have I whereby your grace to claim –  
I'll wash my garments white in the blood of Calv'ry's Lamb.

And when, before the throne, I stand in him complete,  
"Jesus died my soul to save," my lips shall still repeat.

Words by Elvina M. Hall  
Music by John T. Grape  
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**Week 3 Theme:** *From Expectancy to Fulfillment*

Before the birth of Christ, God's people, the Jews, looked with hopeful expectancy to the coming of the Messiah as foretold by the prophets. As you read and mediate on this week's Old Testament readings, imagine what it must have been like to hear these prophecies centuries before the birth of Christ. Then imagine what it would have been like to be alive during the years that these prophecies were being fulfilled.

Today, we look back on Christ's birth two millennia ago with wonder and thankfulness. However, we still live in a state of hopeful expectancy. The scriptures relating to Christ's second advent and to the establishment of a new heavens and a new earth have yet to be fulfilled. Use the following resources this week to patiently prepare your heart for the fulfillment of these prophecies.

**Prayer for the Week:**

O God, whose will is justice for the poor  
and peace for the afflicted,  
let your herald's urgent voice  
pierce our hardened hearts  
and announce the dawn of your kingdom.  
Before the Advent of the one who baptizes  
with the fire of the Holy Spirit,  
let our complacency give way to conversion,  
oppression to justice,  
and conflict to acceptance of one another in Christ.  
We ask this through him whose coming is certain,  
whose day draws near:  
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

**Daily Scripture Readings:**

Sunday	Exodus 17:1-7
Monday	2 Samuel 7; Matthew 1:1-17
Tuesday	Isaiah 11:1-9; Jeremiah 23:5-6 and 33:14-16; Luke 1:26-38
Wednesday	Isaiah 40:3-5; Matthew 3:1-12 and 11:1-15
Thursday	Isaiah 7:10-14; Micah 5:2-4; Matthew 1:18-2:2
Friday	Isaiah 49:1-7; Acts 13:13-48
Saturday	Isaiah 65:17-25; 2 Peter 3:8-15

**Hymns:**

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (Trinity Hymnal, 196)*

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,  
Dear Desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Joy to those who long to see thee, Dayspring from on high, appear;  
Come, thou promised Rod of Jesse, of thy birth we long to hear!  
O'er the hills the angels singing news, glad tidings of a birth:  
"Go to him, your praises bringing; Christ the Lord has come to earth."

Come to earth to taste our sadness, he whose glories knew no end;  
By his life he brings us gladness, our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend.  
Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall;  
This the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,  
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
By thine all-sufficient merit, raise us to thy glorious throne.

Words by Charles Wesley and Mark E. Hunt  
Music by Rowland Hugh Pritchard  
Text of stanzas 2 and 3, ©1978 InterVarsity Christian Fellowship

*What Child Is This? (Trinity Hymnal, 213)*

What Child is this who, laid to rest  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
While shepherds watch are keeping?

*Refrain*

This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Why lies He in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,  
Come peasant, king to own Him;  
The King of kings salvation brings,  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

*Final Refrain*

Raise, raise a song on high,  
The virgin sings her lullaby.  
Joy, joy for Christ is born,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Words by William C. Dix  
Music: Greensleeves, 16<sup>th</sup> century English melody  
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**Week 4 Theme:** From Far to Near

In the Garden, Adam and Eve enjoyed intimate fellowship with their Creator. God was very near to them. Then Satan entered the Garden, and Adam and Eve succumbed to temptation. Consequently, the intimacy between God and man was broken; God, because He is holy, cannot allow even a trace of sin into His presence. Since we are all heirs of Adam and Eve, we are born into the world far from God, separated from Him by sin.

In the Old Testament, the only way for people to approach God was through a high priest, whose duty was to offer blood sacrifices for sin – both his own and those of the people. The priest was an intercessor – a very imperfect one – between God and man. God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, into the world to become the perfect lamb sacrifice that would cover the sins of all who placed their faith in Him. High priests are no longer needed for us to approach God. Rather, Jesus is our perfect high priest. Through Him, we may once again have fellowship with God. Yet, even with Christ, the fellowship we now have with God remains imperfect because of the continued presence of sin. One day, all sin will be wiped away and those who have trusted in Christ will be with God for eternity. As you read and meditate on the scriptures for this week, thank God for sending Jesus, who allows us to once again be near to our Maker, and look forward to the day when sin will be no more.

**Prayer for the Week:**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you have stooped to raise fallen humanity.  
Grant that we who have seen your glory revealed in our human nature,  
and your love made perfect in our weakness,  
may daily be renewed in your image  
and conformed to the pattern of your Son,  
Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Daily Scripture Readings:**

Sunday	Exodus 19:10-12 and 16-25
Monday	Genesis 3; Colossians 1:21-23
Tuesday	Genesis 15; Galatians 3:26-4:7
Wednesday	Exodus 28:1-4, 29:1-9, 44-46; Hebrews 4:14-5:10 and 7:11-28
Thursday	Exodus 33:12-23; Luke 2:1-40
Friday (Christmas)	Psalms 139; John 14

**Hymns:**

*Joy To The World! (Trinity Hymnal, 195)*

Joy to the world! The Lord is come:  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns:  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.

Words by Isaac Watts  
Music by George Frederick Handel, Arr. by Lowell Mason  
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*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (Trinity Hymnal, 203)*

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th'incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

Words by Charles Wesley  
Music by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Arr. by William H. Cummings  
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