

*survivors of cities!*” Just as with the prophecy of Judah, Balaam declares the coming of a king. Where Jacob foresaw that Jesus would rule the peoples Balaam sees that he will also judge his enemies. How ironic seeing Balaam later shows himself to be one of those enemies of God! The baby who came in Bethlehem came to save his people and to also bring judgement on all who refuse to turn to him.

#### Discussion Questions

- Why do you think God used a pagan prophet to tell about the coming of Jesus? What does that tell us about God?
- What makes the difference between those Jesus will rule over and those he will judge? Which one are you?

#### **Day 5 – Recite memory verse**

Scripture slowly and beautifully creates a portrait of the coming redeemer Jesus Christ. He is prophesied to be a coming king. Moses further reveals that he will be the final prophet. Deuteronomy 18:15 *The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen.* Peter quotes this verse to the Jews in the temple in Acts 3 after he heals the man lame from birth. He says that Jesus came as the prophet of God *to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.* Since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, all people have been born in sin, ignorant, without knowledge. What sort of knowledge do we need? We need knowledge of God. In our sin we twist every revelation of who God is. We try to make him into our image, by violence forcing him into the form of idols of our own making. When he forces his truth upon us, by the reality of creation, the testimony of our own conscience, and the clarity of his revealed Word, we rebel against Him. We have a willful ignorance for which we are destined for judgement. That is why we need Jesus to come as the greatest prophet. Jesus came and was born as one of us, so that he might teach us about God. He sends his Spirit to change our hearts so that we can both understand and believe what he says.

#### Discussion Questions

- In what ways is Jesus a greater prophet than all who came before him?
- Have you ever misunderstood someone because you didn’t want to listen to them? How is that similar to our ignorance of God? Are you listening to Him now?

A d v e n t

# Family Worship Guide



## West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

### Advent Devotional

#### Suggested Memory Verse

*Luke 24:25-27 And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

### **Day 1 – Recite memory verse**

The next 3 weeks we will be taking a break from our normal catechism study to spend time considering the advent of Christ. Advent refers to the coming of Jesus into the world when he took on human flesh and was born as a baby. Historically, Advent has been celebrated prior to Christmas to remember how the people of God, along with creation, were anticipating the coming of the Savior. If you are going to anticipate something you have to know it is coming ahead of time. Did people know ahead of time that Jesus, the Son of God, was coming into the world as a man?

Actually, they did! Jesus made this clear when he spoke with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. After his resurrection he appeared to these two downtrodden disciples and declared to them what the scriptures had revealed plainly all along. Luke 24:25-27 *And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.* As we approach Christmas time we will have a opportunity to look at many of the scriptures which predict the coming of the Messiah. May we also grow in our own anticipation of his coming to us!

#### Discussion Questions

- Since Jesus has already come, is there any benefit to spending time anticipating his coming with the Old Testament scriptures? Why or why not?
- Why is it important for Christians to anticipate the second advent (second coming) of Jesus? Have you been anticipating his return?

### **Day 2 – Recite memory verse**

Jesus taught that the Bible speaks about him. When we start examining the scriptures we find that the promise of the advent of Jesus is one of the very first things that God reveals. In Genesis we read of the creation of the world, the creation of Adam and Eve, and God’s commands given to them by which they might live. Adam and Eve sinned and brought death on themselves and all of us. We are born dead in our sins because we all descended from Adam and Eve, our first parents. Yet, in the very moment when all seems lost God speaks a word of hope and promise which God’s people have held onto ever since. Gen 3:15 *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.* Put yourselves in Adam’s shoes. He realizes he has sinned. Though he tried to hide from God, God knew. He stands awaiting judgement. Death is all he can hope for as he listens to God curse the serpent. Once God is done with the snake, Adam and Eve are next. Yet the words of curse God declares on Satan reveal that God is not done. The story is not over. A promised son, descended from Adam and Eve, will one day bring victory over Satan. He will crush the serpent’s head! This promised son is Jesus Christ. Adam’s hope is now our hope as well.

#### Discussion Questions

- Why was it important that the one to kill Satan was one of Adam and Eve’s descendants?
- How does that make you feel to realize that God had a plan to save sinners from the very beginning?

### **Day 3 – Recite memory verse**

We are studying the advent of Jesus. The promise of a coming redeemer was given in the first pages of the Bible. God cursed the serpent and promised a son would one day be born who would kill Satan. As the storyline of history continues to develop the picture of this redeemer begins to take on greater clarity and shape. God chooses Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be the fathers through whom the line of promise will come. At the end of his life Jacob speaks as God’s prophet over his twelve sons. As he works his way through the twelve he comes to his 4<sup>th</sup> son Judah. Gen 49:10 *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.* We find that the seed of the woman promised in the garden will be a king. Kings in ancient Israel were anointed with oil. This gave them the name of ‘anointed one’ which in Hebrew is ‘Messiah’ and in Greek is ‘Christ’. Jesus would be born a king. What is his kingdom? Judah also gives insight here. *And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.* He will rule all the nations of the world. Many years later wise men from the East would arrive in Israel looking for a newborn king to worship. He came so that all peoples would worship him, including you!

#### Discussion Questions

- Do you know any other kings descended from Judah? What is Jesus’ relationship to them?
- Why is it important that Jesus is a king? Consider the children’s catechism question, ‘Who you need Christ as a King?’

### **Day 4 – Recite memory verse**

God uses many different kinds of people to both predict the coming of Jesus, as well as to move the story of history along toward his advent. Often he uses his chosen people, such as Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. Sometimes God decides to do something a little different. In the book of Numbers we find a prophesy of Jesus that comes, not from God’s people, but from a pagan prophet who is one of the enemies of Israel. The prophet Balaam is called in by the king of Moab in an effort to curse Israel and stop their march through the land. Though Balaam is an evil man, God prevents him from cursing Israel. Rather God uses this pagan prophet to bless Israel instead! In his 4<sup>th</sup> and final prophecy Balaam offers another glimpse into the promised redeemer that would one day come. Numbers 24:17,19 *I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel...And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the*