

W E E K O N E

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Come



DAY ONE: NOVEMBER 30

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

*O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
Born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!*

(“O Come All Ye Faithful,” translated to English from “Adeste Fideles” by John Francis Wade, 1751)

The scene at the nativity on the night Jesus was born is a familiar one: Mary, Joseph, shepherds, animals, and three foreign kings gathering to look upon their infant King. Each one present at this sacred assembly responded to an invitation to come.

The word “come” appears in many traditional Christmas hymns probably because it is a primary theme throughout the Bible. Jesus often beckoned people to come. Sometimes the invitation was about receiving a revelation of God

through him and others it was a summons to intimacy with him. His earthly ministry as an adult reflects his desire for personal connection. But even in the very first hours of his time on earth, heaven saw it fit for people to draw near to him.

It could have remained intimate—just Jesus and his parents resting after their long journey and troublesome time finding a place to stay. Instead, heaven could not contain its joy and praise at the arrival of Jesus!

First an invitation:

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”
(Luke 2:8-12)

Then, a proclamation:

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

(Luke 2:13-14)

And the response:

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

(Luke 15-16)

Heaven responded to the birth of Jesus with an invitation to come—and the shepherds responded to without hesitation.

Come with haste, Jesus is here!

READ: *Matthew 16:24*

REFLECT: *What does it mean to you to come "with haste" to Jesus?*

PRAY: *God, I thank You that You always welcome me and beckon me to draw close to You. This week, help me to respond to your open invitation to "come" without hesitation or distraction. Amen.*



DAY TWO: DECEMBER 1

The Christmas story includes a series of invitations. Before the heavenly host of angels proclaimed the birth of Jesus over a field in Bethlehem, his earthly parents received unconventional invitations to be part of the story.

God chooses to partner with humanity to build His kingdom on earth. When you think about it, it's a remarkable and unlikely partnership. I mean, this is God! The creator of all things! And He invites you and me to co-labor with Him.

God calls each of us to purpose in Him and His mission to redeem all people back to Him. For Mary and Joseph, it was the tremendous responsibility of raising, protecting, and caring for the child Jesus.

You could say that that their calling was more prophecy than invitation. When the angel Gabriel is sent by God to appear before Mary, he doesn't really ask if she's interested in the job.

He says things like:

You *have* found favor
You *will* conceive
You *shall* call his name Jesus
He *will* reign

Her response demonstrates the heart of a willing vessel:

And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.
(Luke 2:38)

READ: Luke 1:26-38

REFLECT: What is God asking you to carry and steward in this season—mercy, peace, generosity?

PRAY: God, whatever You ask of me, help me to have a heart like Mary, humble, happy, and willing to accept all that You call me to. Amen.



DAY THREE: DECEMBER 2

Joseph was a man of honor. We know this because scripture tells us in Matthew 1 that he “was faithful to the law,” and honored Mary in that he “did not want to expose her to public disgrace” when he learned that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

To his community, her pregnancy would only be viewed as an act of impurity which could be punishable by death. Both of his responses indicate righteousness. He did not want to go against the law by keeping his betrothal to Mary—but he also honored her by choosing not to expose her.

It is at this moment that Joseph receives his “come” invitation. While Mary’s angelic visit focused more on information, Joseph’s held the encouragement he needed to

take the counter-cultural step of pursuing his marriage to Mary.

To fortify his invitation, the angel refers to an ancient prophecy from Isaiah 7:14 that Joseph would have known well:

*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:
“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”
Matthew 10:22-23*

When God invites us to “come,” He has already prepared the way—we need only accept His invitation.

READ: Matthew 1:20-25 & Isaiah 7:14

REFLECT: How can you let go of fear of judgement or misunderstanding from others to honor God’s invitation to “come” today?

PRAY: Thank You, God that You still speak, guide, and encourage. I want to hear and follow Your voice so that I can step into everything You call me to with confidence. Amen.



DAY FOUR: DECEMBER 3

Have you ever waited so long for something that once it arrived it almost felt too good to be true?

Our beloved Christmas hymns paint the arrival of Jesus as a stunning moment. It was! For 4,000 years, the people of God waited for their promised Messiah —one generation telling the next to remain in hope and assurance that He would come. And suddenly He was here!

The end to the waiting was reason enough for joyous celebration, but I imagine it was overwhelming to fully take in the truth of Immanuel. The second, lesser known, verse of “O Come All Ye Faithful” captures this remarkable truth:

*God of God, Light of Light
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin’s womb;
Very God, Begotten, not created*

You probably won't be singing this verse in church this Christmas. (Took me a minute to figure out how the lyrics align with the melody!) It holds two important truths:

First, Jesus is begotten of God—not created like you and me but born of the Spirit of God before being born through Mary. Second, even in his perfectly holy state of being God, Jesus did not despise being close and connected to imperfect people—not Mary, and not you or me.

Maybe a love like this seems too good to be true—you may even be tempted to disqualify yourself from receiving this invitation to “come.” Know that Jesus doesn’t just tolerate closeness with you, he desires it.

READ: Read: Isaiah 9:6 and John 7:37

REFLECT: Take time today to reflect on Jesus's invitation in John 7:37.

PRAY: Thank You, God that all are invited to be refreshed and sustained by Living Water. I don't want any thought, doubt, or deed to keep me from drinking deeply from Your love and mercy. Amen.



DAY FIVE: DECEMBER 4

No one directly invited the three wise men to come honor Jesus. There was no angelic appearance or heavenly choir. It's actually widely understood that they were not present on the night of Jesus's birth. I've heard of people placing their wise men figures in a different room than their nativity manger to reflect this.

But the wise men did come.

These scholarly men caught wind of Jesus's birth while focused on what they knew best—studying and observing. They were not Hebrews, but they knew the ancient Hebrew scriptures. They probably studied all forms of scientific and historic records. So when they “saw his star” (Matthew 2) they were applying deep and wide-ranging knowledge.

The wise men knew from their studies that this was no ordinary child and we see this in their willingness to journey to him and also in the gifts they give him.

We typically think of them setting out on their journey with gifts selected in advance to present to Jesus. But scripture says, they saw the child, fell down and worshiped him, and then opened their treasures to give him gifts. It seems their generosity was a direct response to being in Jesus's presence.

They presented gifts that honored Jesus's majesty, divinity, and future sacrifice because they knew the ancient scriptures. This young child was the prophesied one, worthy of worship and honor.

READ: Matthew 2:1-12 and Isaiah 60:3

REFLECT: What do you think God wants His people to understand through the diversity of people who made the journey to “come?”

PRAY: God, You are drawn to a humble heart, regardless of my status or circumstances. Take me deeper today and lead me to whole-hearted honor and worship. Amen.



DAY SIX: DECEMBER 5

O come let us adore Him!

Six words packed with profound theological foundation. The invitation, the adoration, the reality of free will all reflected in this familiar refrain. As Jesus grows and his story continues, these themes will keep coming up.

Throughout the gospels we see Jesus's invitation to "come." The two most prominent invitations he spoke were:

"Come follow me"

"Come to me."

The first invitation is the phrase Jesus commonly used to call the twelve into discipleship and ministry.

The second invitation is seen in Matthew 11 and comes right after Jesus chooses his disciples and sends them out to minister:

“And proclaim as you go, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse, the leopard, cast out demons.” (Matthew 10:7-8)

Doubts had began to swirl about whether Jesus is the promised Messiah because he isn't acting the way they expected their Messiah to act. The kingdom of heaven was supposed to usher in righteousness —why isn't his ministry about bringing judgment to unrepentant people *right now*? It's causing a stir!

Jesus addresses the concerns and also the state of our human spirit when he says,

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
(Matthew 11:28)

Nothing about Jesus's relationships was surface level. His ministry is marked by intentional personal

encounters that often began with an invitation to “come.”

He says, “Draw near to me, depend on me, grow through me.” It’s your choice through free will to choose or decline, but the invitation remains: come.

READ: John 1:35-39 and Luke 19:1-5

REFLECT: Jesus valued personal connection through spending time with his loved ones. How does this truth influence or change how you want to respond to his invitation to draw near to him this Advent?

PRAY: Jesus, I acknowledge that your invitation to “come” is for my good and the good of your kingdom. I prioritize giving you my “yes.” Give me new opportunities today to respond to your invitation.



DAY SEVEN: DECEMBER 6

Before Mary had the angelic visit that would change her life forever, a man named Zechariah had a similar prophetic encounter where an angel told him that his wife Elizabeth will have a son who they would name John.

The angel has a lot to say about the man that John will become including this:

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

(Luke 1:16-17)

Through John, another ancient prophecy would be fulfilled, that one would come who would “prepare the way for the Lord.”
(Isaiah 40:3)

John fulfilled this role by calling people to repentance and baptizing them in the Jordan River. John and Jesus were cousins and close in age. John was fervently fulfilling his ministry before Jesus began his, and as such he is considered the forerunner to Jesus.

As you and I await the second coming of Christ, we are to be like John the Baptist, helping to prepare the way for every man and woman to receive him.

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One of the first evangelists in the Bible was a woman who met Jesus at a well. The woman was there to hide her shame, but Jesus came to liberate her and pull her from the shadows of shame by speaking truth over her.

At the end of this encounter, the woman rushes back to the town announcing:

“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”
(John 4:29)

Scripture tells us that many “believed in him because of her testimony.”

At the well, Jesus invited her to come and she did. In response, she went into her community with the same invitation, “come.”

READ: Luke 3:106 and Isaiah 57:14

REFLECT: You are called to help prepare the way for others to encounter Jesus. How can you take steps in that today, inviting people around to “come, see?”

PRAY: Thank You, God for Your open invitation to “come.” I want my life to be billboard that proclaims your faithfulness and goodness. Help me prepare the way and fill me with courage to extend your invitation to come through my words and actions. Amen.

End of Week One