



# HE SHALL BE CALLED

AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

THIS DEVOTIONAL GUIDE CAN BE ENJOYED INDIVIDUALLY, AS A COUPLE, OR WITH A GROUP.  
EXCERPTS FROM THE ADVENT DEVOTIONAL "UNWRAPPING THE NAMES OF JESUS" BY  
ASHERITAH CIUCIU.

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## WEEK 1 HOPE JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

**BIBLE VERSE: Isaiah 9:2-7 and John 1:9**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. God planned Jesus' arrival thousands of years before it happened. What does that tell us about God?
2. How does Jesus' light in our world give us hope?
3. In what ways can we allow Jesus' light to shine through us?

### READING: (from Asheritah Ciuciu-Unwrapping the Names of Jesus)

Throughout Scripture, darkness often represents evil and falsehood while light represents goodness, truth, and holiness. We naturally fill our homes with light and do our best to avoid dark places where danger may linger in the shadows.

Therefore it comes as no surprise that Jesus assumes this title: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). But there is more to that statement than we may first realize.

Jesus illuminates our lives with His brilliance, shining into every nook and cranny. Even the revelation of hidden sin is a gift, like the fortunate early diagnosis of a deadly cancer. He reveals not only our sins but also all that is beautiful surrounding us. He awakens our souls to see the history of redemption and the wonderful works of God all around us. As David says, "In your light we see light" (Ps. 36:9).

Those who believe in Jesus will go to be with Him. At death, those separated from Him will enter darkness and gloom, but we will live in everlasting light and joy with Jesus. This truth gives us hope because no matter how gloomy our lives may be this side of eternity, we know that our future destination is in the kingdom of light, where there will be no night, no darkness, no tears, and no distress.

As Jesus is the Light of the World, so He sends us as lights into the world to illuminate our surroundings with His love and life. Just as the moon reflects the sun's light, so we also reflect Jesus' light, loving our families and our neighbors, serving our church and community with our spiritual gifts, and sharing truth in love in a bleak world.

Jesus, the Light of the World, has placed us in a particular time and place in history, in the lives of specific people, within a specific place to shine brightly for Him, holding forth the Word of life in a million different little ways (Phil. 2:14-16). We carry His light within us, and those who see it cannot help but be attracted to the Light. The True Light desires to give light to everyone; and what's more amazing, He wants to use us, His people, to spread that light.

CHALLENGE:

The Holiday season is filled with lights; strings of lights on Christmas trees, colourful lights on rooftops, inflatable light-up figures on front lawns, light shows in arboretums, and lighted signs announcing the best sales of the season. It's easy to allow commercial light pollution to drown out the shining light within us. Today, ask the Spirit to shine God's light in your life and help you see God's work all around you; Then ask him to shine through you so that others may see the hope of life eternal and turn to Him.

FURTHER STUDY:

John 1:4-9, 12:35-36, 1 John 1:5:7

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## WEEK 2- PREPARATION THE MESSIAH

**BIBLE VERSE: John 1:4-5 and Isaiah 40:3-5**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. God wanted His people to be ready for the coming Messiah, so He sent prophets throughout history to remind them to prepare their hearts. He also sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for Jesus' coming. What does this tell us about God?
2. How can we prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth of Jesus?

READING: (from Asheritah Ciuciu-Unwrapping the Names of Jesus)

"Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew term Messiah, which means "The Anointed One." In the Old Testament times, anointing signified being set aside for service, particularly as a king or priest, set apart not by any man but by God himself.

When John the Baptist appeared on the scene, his contemporaries were attracted to his fierce preaching and rugged appearance. Many were convinced he was the Messiah, but he repeatedly told them he was only the forerunner, and called the people to repent in preparation for the Messiah's arrival. The scene was set, and many waited with bated breath to meet the One who would deliver them from all their enemies.

Except Jesus wasn't what they expected. The Jews wanted a military leader who would liberate them from Roman oppression but Jesus was meek and quiet in spirit. They wanted an established leader, one the rules of the world would listen to and respect-but Jesus was born in questionable circumstances and possessed no earthly valuables. They wanted a poster child for Jewish superiority -but Jesus hung out with outcasts and upended cultural norms. In short, many Jews were disappointed in Jesus, but the Christ did not come to win a popularity contest.

Jesus is the One on whom all history hinges. All kings and priests before Jesus pointed to Him, the Magi brought gifts for Him, John the Baptist prepared the people for Him, and the Father anointed Him. And as we move forward, we still look back, counting the years since His coming (the dating system we use today is based on the number of years since Jesus's approximate birth) and circling calendar events celebrating His birth, death, and resurrection.

Jesus was God's answer to Israel's prayers; He was the Messiah, but they rejected Him. "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:11-12). So gracefully we celebrate Him as the Christ, the Anointed One not just for Israel, but for all humankind who believe in Him.

#### CHALLENGE:

Have you tried to fit Jesus into your idea of who He should be or how He should act? Take Time this season to read through the Gospels. Reacquaint yourself with Jesus. Marvel at His miracles. Chuckle at His witty responses to the Pharisees' snide remarks. Weep as His people reject Him and He walks toward Golgotha. Rejoice as the stone is rolled away and the tomb is empty. Go beyond surface familiarity with the stories and engage with the Anointed One as He is revealed in the pages of Scripture.

#### FURTHER STUDY

Job 19:25; Matthew 2:4; 16:16; Luke 9:20; John 1:41

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## WEEK 3- JOY THE BREAD OF LIFE

**BIBLE VERSE:** Psalm 97:11-12 and Matthew 2:10-11a

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When Jesus was born, God sent angels to announce Jesus' birth and also a star to celebrate. The wise men saw the star and traveled a long way to find and worship Jesus. What do these acts tell us about God?
2. How does the birth of Jesus give us joy?
3. In what ways can we spread the joy of Christmas to others?

READING: (from Asheritah Ciuciu-Unwrapping the Names of Jesus)

In the ancient Middle East, bread was a staple part of people's diet. It was the most reliable source of energy for the body and was readily available with little preparation. For the Israelites in particular, bread was considered a special food because of its religious connotations. In the tabernacle and later the temple, there was a table of showbread in the Holy Place that symbolized God's desire to fellowship with His people as well as the bit of manna that was hidden in the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies as a symbol of God's provision.

When Jesus used the phrases "Bread of life" and "bread...from heaven," His listeners would have immediately thought of the story of manna. God gave manna to the traveling Israelites in the wilderness to save them from certain death by starvation. In a similar way, God gave Jesus into the world to save us from certain death by separation from Him.

But Jesus wasn't simply drawing a parallel to Moses. He taught that the Bread of Life is greater than the manna their ancestors received under Moses. In fact, His declaration came shortly after the feeding of the five thousand, a miracle that became an object lesson about the greatness of Jesus over Moses. The manna God provided through Moses satisfied only temporarily. The manna Jesus was offering, his very life, satisfies eternally.

Jesus offers Himself to all who believe in Him, an invitation to fellowship that isn't restricted to priests as the showbread was but is open to all-Just as Jesus Himself ate with tax collectors, prostitutes, and sinners. And in the beautiful picture of the Last Supper, we're reminded that Jesus' broken body secures our place at God's table. As a morsel of bread because part of our bodies and gives us energy, so Jesus becomes part of us when we believe in Him and opens access to fellowship with God. He satisfies everyone longing and desire within Himself: "In your presence there is fullness of JOy; at your right hand there are pleasures forever more' (Ps. 16:11 ESV). The Bread of Life invites us to feast on Him.

#### CHALLENGE:

Many people try to fill the void in their lives with more stuff-more shopping. More money, more friends, more food-but they're always left wanting more. As Christmas draws near, examine your heart and your desires. Do you crave more stuff, or do you crave more of Jesus? Ask Him to give you a hunger for more of Him.

#### FURTHER STUDY

Leviticus 24:5-9; Matthew 5:6; John 6:25-27; 14:6

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WEEK 4- LOVE  
IMMANUEL GOD WITH US

**BIBLE VERSE: Isaiah 9:2, and John 3:16**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. God could have wiped out all humans and started over, but he chose to sacrifice Jesus so He could rescue us. What does this tell us about God?
2. How does the birth of Jesus show us God's love?
3. In what ways can we allow God's love to pour out through us into the lives of others?

READING: (from Asheritah Ciuciu-Unwrapping the Names of Jesus)

The verse (Matthew 1:23-"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" Which means 'God with us') is the first of forty-three Messianic quotes from the Old Testament that Matthew included in his gospel narrative. By linking Jesus' life to the Old Testament promises, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus' birth and life fulfilled Old Testament prophecy, to show God's provision for His people and His faithfulness in following through.

Jesus' birth and life physically manifest a spiritual reality: God wants to be with His people. He created humans with this relationship in mind, breathing His own life into us, creating us in His own image, and placing within us souls so we may commune with Him.

In the garden of Eden, God's presence was very real to Adam and Eve as He walked with them in the cool of the evening. Although Adam's and Eve's sin separated them from God, He was never far from His people. When he led the Israelites out of Egypt, He went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. His glory was visible in a cloud covering Mount Sinai, the tabernacle, and the temple as a manifestation of His presence.

Throughout history, God has demonstrated His longing to be close to His people. Sin has marred our relationship with Him, but Jesus' embodiment shows God's commitment to dwelling with His people.



This is mind-blowing when you think about it: God Himself set aside His brilliance, took on human form, and became one of us. He walked among us, ate, laughed, cried, slept, and felt tired, angry, happy. He, the Creator of the world, became as one of the created, because He longs to be with us. And He was willing to do whatever it took, even setting aside His glory, humbling Himself to the point of death-on a cross-just to be with us forever. Amazing love!

CHALLENGE:

Today take time to respond to God's Immanuel by spending time in His presence, worshipping Him. Even if it's just two minutes, set aside your gift shopping, cookie baking, holiday frenzy and take a few moments to just be. With. him. He longs for you and waits for you. Immanuel.

FURTHER STUDY:

Genesis 2; Exodus 13:21; 24:15-17; 1 Kings 8:10-13; Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; Colossians 1:27

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CHRISTMAS  
JESUS

BIBLE VERSE: 2 Corinthians 4:6 and John 1:14

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. The eternal God entered this world as baby in a manger, as a Gift for all people; rich and poor, educated and unschooled, young and old. What does this us about God?
2. How can we respond to God's great gift?

## REFLECTIVE NEXT STEPS:

If you've grown closer to Jesus these last four weeks as you've journeyed through a portion of excerpts from "Unwrapping the Names of Jesus" by Asheritah Ciuciu, as she mentions at the ending of the devotional book, you might be wondering, what now? Where do I go from here? She writes out a few ideas for continuing to move ahead.

First of all, I'd encourage you to spend time reflecting on your relationship with Jesus: What have you learned about Him over the past few weeks? About yourself? About worship? Ask yourself, 'Is God leading me to a specific action or change in my life as a result of this study? Ask God, 'Where do you want me to go from here?' God promises that when we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us (James 4:8). What a wonderful promise!

Secondly, I encourage you to connect with others in your local church and look for ways to serve and grow...

Here at Calvary, there are plenty of ways to connect with others, if you want to know mor information about this or areas where you may want to serve please contact us at [info@calvaryptbo.church](mailto:info@calvaryptbo.church) or call the church office at 705-876-1696.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!