Advent Study

At Home with God

(Part 1 of 2)

Advent is a time when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, God incarnate, born into the world to save His people from their sins. And look forward to His return in glory when we shall enjoy the fullness of His presence, at home with Him, forevermore.

In this the first of our **two-part** Advent study we remind ourselves of God's faithfulness to make us His own. The faithful God who drew near to redeem us, who were alienated from Him, so we could know, glorify, and enjoy Him.

We begin our study at the end. The end of time after Jesus returns. And this may seem like an odd place to start. However, it is as we know the future that God has planned for us that we better see His faithfulness to fulfill His plan in the past and have greater confidence that He will bring us into all He has purposed for us in the future.

OBSERVE

READ Revelation 21:1-4 and:

- underline every reference to *dwell with them / be with them*.

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed
away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of
heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from
the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and
they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away
every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor
crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

DISCUSS

21:1-4 – What glorious future awaits us as God's people?

OBSERVE

READ Revelation 21:22-23; 27 and:

- underline every reference to the *city (including pronouns)*.

22 And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the
Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it
light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 27 But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does
what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

DISCUSS

21:22-23 – What does the city have no need of? Why?

21:27 – Who will dwell with God? How will they live?

Back to the beginning

So, we know how the story ends. That one day the Lord will make all things new and we, the people of God, will live free from sin, in a place of unparalleled blessing, where we will enjoy the fullness of God's presence forevermore. But let's turn back now to the beginning to where it all began and see God's faithfulness to bring us to that glorious future, at home with Him.

The story begins with God, the Creator of all things, creating mankind in His image, and placing them (Adam and Eve) in the garden of Eden, where He dwells closely with them. However, as we are about to see the story takes a disastrous turn, but still according to God's plan:

OBSERVE

READ Genesis 2:15-17:

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

DISCUSS

2:16-17 – What command did the LORD God give the man (Adam)? Why?

Adam - When God created Adam, he appointed him as *our representative*. Our destiny, for good or ill, resting on his obedience to God's command (Genesis 2:15-17).

OBSERVE

READ Genesis 3:1-7 and:

- underline every reference to the *serpent (including pronouns)*.

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

DISCUSS

3:1,4-5 – What tactics did the serpent (Satan) use to tempt Adam and Eve to disobey God's command (2:16-17)?

3:6 – How do they respond?

3:7 – What happens when they sin? How do they try and cover themselves?

OBSERVE

READ Genesis 3:8-13 and:

- underline every *question* the LORD God asks.

8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and
the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the
garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said,
"I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid
myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I
commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she
gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that
you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

DISCUSS

3:8,10 – What did Adam and Eve try and do when the LORD God drew near? Why?

3:9 – Why does the LORD, who knows all things, call out to the man?

3:11,13a – What response is the LORD seeking to draw from them with His questions?

3:12-13b – How do they respond?

The consequences of Adam's failure to obey God's command as *our representative* was catastrophic. Sin now enters the world, and death through sin, physical and spiritual (Romans 5:12). Mankind now alienated from God, by nature rebellious to Him, destined for eternal punishment and to live a life on earth tinged with sickness, sadness, and pain.

However, whilst in Genesis 3:14-24 we see the LORD's judgement of sin we also see His mercy. The LORD God who draws near, who in judgment banishes Adam and Eve from the garden but who in His mercy is also preventing access to the tree of life (v22-24) and the One who provides a sacrifice to cover their sin (v21).

In addition, we are also given in these verses the first glimpse of the Good News that the LORD will raise up a Son from Adam's line who will be victorious over Satan (v15) – a promised Saviour, a new *representative*, through whom we are reconciled to God and able to draw near to Him.

Promised Saviour

So, who is this Promised Saviour?

OBSERVE

READ John 1:1-3,14 and:

- underline every reference to *the Word* (including pronouns & synonyms).

[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. [14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

DWELT – **STRONGS 4637 (skenoo)** – to tent or encamp, i.e. (figuratively) to occupy (as a mansion) or (specially), to reside (as God did in the Tabernacle of old, a symbol of protection and communion) - dwell.

DISCUSS

1:1-3;14 – What do we learn about *the Word*?

READ John 1:29:

[29] The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus [the Word become flesh] coming towards him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

DISCUSS

1:29 – Why was God born into the world?

OBSERVE

READ Romans 5:18-19:

- underline every reference to *one*.

[18] Therefore, as one trespass [Adam's] led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness [Jesus Christ's] leads to justification and life for all men. [19] For as by the one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's [Jesus Christ's] obedience the many will be made righteous.

JUSTIFIED (MADE RIGHTEOUS) – sinners who through trust in Jesus Christ are declared by God to be righteous, those whose sins He has forgiven and credited with the righteousness of Christ, His Son, who bore the punishment for their sins on the cross (Romans 3:21-26).

DISCUSS

5:18-19 – What comparison is made between Adam and Christ? What is now true for all who trust in Christ?

OBSERVE

READ 1 Peter 3:18a:

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God,

DISCUSS

Why did Christ die?

OBSERVE

READ Hebrews 10:19-22:

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

DISCUSS

10:19-20 – How can we now enter God's presence without fear?

10:21-22 – As a result – what are we, who have trusted in Christ, exhorted to do?

So, as we draw this study to a close let's pause and give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ who drew near to redeem us, to bring us to the Father. And let us now draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith, finding the grace and mercy we need (Hebrews 4:16), as we look forward to the day when faith will give way to sight, and the Lord will bring us into the fullness of our inheritance, at home with Him, forever. But more about that in the next study!!

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