

When God Shows Up

Sermon Study - 11.30.2025

Introduction

Advent Week 1

Hope

Advent Week 1: Hope

(Adapted from The Bible Project's Advent Series: bibleproject.com)

Introduction to Advent

What is Advent?

Advent is a four-week season in the Church calendar dedicated to anticipating the arrival—or “advent”—of Jesus of Nazareth, the long-awaited Messiah and King. Christians from many backgrounds celebrate this time with reflections on hope, peace, love, and joy. While their traditions may vary, all focus on the hope-filled arrival of Jesus.

The Big Idea

For Christians around the world, Advent refers to the four weeks leading up to Christmas—weeks filled with remembering and celebrating the arrival of Jesus and joining together in the hope of His ultimate return.

What does “Advent” mean?

The word Advent means “arrival” and signifies the start of an event or the coming of a person. In Christian communities around the world, Advent is a season of remembering and celebrating the arrival of Jesus on Earth. It's a time to reflect on the unexpected nature of His humble birth and to anticipate the day when He will come again to reunite Heaven and Earth once and for all.

Why is Advent important?

For some, Advent is a simple and joyful countdown to Christmas. But for those who follow Jesus—the incarnation of God and the long-awaited Messiah—Advent becomes a shared experience of meditation, prayer, and worship, celebrating the miracle of His arrival and the promise of His return.

Leader Corner

Theme: Hope

Scripture Focus: Genesis 8:6–12; Psalm 130; Luke 2:22–33; Luke 3:15–22

Main Idea: Biblical hope is not optimism. It's confidence in the unchanging character of God—even when circumstances give no reason to expect improvement.

Main Practice: Waiting on God with trust, anchored in His faithful character rather than current conditions.

Leader Note: This study draws from The Bible Project's Advent series on Hope. As they put it:

“Biblical hope is not optimism. In fact, the most hopeful people in the Bible often had very few reasons to believe that things would get better anytime soon. But biblical hope is based not in circumstances but in the unchanging character of God.”

As you lead, help your group see that hope is not passive wishing—it's active waiting (the Hebrew word *yakhal* means “to wait”). Encourage participants to consider: What does waiting with hope look like in our lives right now?

Prayer & Praise

Worship Together:

- Living Hope — Phil Wickham
- Be Thou My Vision — any version (Shane & Shane recommended)

Group Prayer (read aloud):

Lord, teach us to wait on You with expectant hope. When our circumstances seem uncertain, remind us that You are faithful and unchanging. May our trust in You bring peace, healing, and renewal to our hearts and to those around us. Amen.

Prayer Focus:

Invite group members to share where they currently need to wait on God. Encourage gratitude for how He has already shown faithfulness. Pray for endurance to wait with confident hope rather than anxious control.

Principle

Watch the Bible Project Advent Video Hope: Yakh'al

Discussion Guide:

1. Discuss any sermon related notes or passages that connect with this theme of Hope.
2. Hope in the Waiting — read Genesis 8:6–12
 - After months of uncertainty, Noah waited (yakh'al) in the ark.
 - What assurance was Noah waiting to receive? How did the dove deliver that assurance?
 - How might Noah's waiting shape our understanding of hopeful patience today?
3. Hope in Forgiveness — read Psalm 130
 - Read Psalm 130 aloud. The psalmist admits that if God kept a record of sin, no one could stand—but his hope rests in God's forgiveness.
 - What specific truths about God bring the psalmist relief?
 - What is he waiting (yakh'al) to receive from God?
 - How might despair, without hope in God's mercy, lead to corruption and violence (compare to Genesis 6–8)?
 - How does forgiveness remove corruption while preserving life?
4. Hope in God's Promises — read Luke 2:22–33 / Leviticus 12:1–8
 - Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple after forty days—a biblical rhythm of waiting.
 - Simeon is “waiting for the consolation of Israel.”
 - What is Simeon hoping for? How does he respond when he finally sees the Messiah?
 - How can we model Simeon's expectant, Spirit-led hope in our own waiting?
5. Hope Fulfilled in Christ — read Luke 3:15–22
 - John the Baptist says the people are waiting for the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.
 - Compare the Spirit's appearance as a dove at Jesus' baptism with Noah's dove. What similarities and differences stand out?
 - How does the arrival of Jesus bring the ultimate assurance humanity has been waiting for?
 - In what ways does Jesus anchor your hope today?

Practice

Waiting in Hope Exercise:

- Invite each person to identify one area of life where they are waiting on God.
- Have them write a short “hope statement,” e.g., “Even though I don’t see the outcome yet, I trust God’s goodness and timing.”
- Encourage revisiting this statement throughout the week as a reminder that hope is rooted in God’s character, not in circumstances.

Hope in Action:

- As a group, brainstorm one tangible way to share hope this week (encouraging someone, serving a neighbor, or writing a note of hope).
- Pray over these opportunities and commit to following through.

Further Resources

Daily Readings on Hope:

Monday — Amos 9:11–13

“In that day I will restore David’s fallen shelter... I will bring my people Israel back from exile.”

Ponder: Where do you need to trust God’s promise of restoration? How can remembering His past faithfulness help you wait with hope today?

Tuesday — Isaiah 7:14

“The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

Ponder: What does “God with us” mean for how you experience hope in uncertainty?

Wednesday — Luke 1:45

“Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her!”

Ponder: How can Mary’s faith inspire you to believe God’s promises even when you can’t yet see their fulfillment?

Thursday — Luke 2:7–8

“She gave birth to her firstborn, a son... and there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.”

Ponder: Why do you think God revealed His hope first to humble shepherds? What does that reveal about the nature of His kingdom?

Friday — 1 Peter 1:3

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Ponder: What does it mean that your hope is living? How does the resurrection shape your confidence and endurance today?