



ADVENT **Living Hope**

Bible Study

You can use these studies **on your own** to dig deeper into the daily Advent readings and Scripture passages. If you use these Bible studies **in a small-group setting**, encourage group members to read the daily devotions and Bible passages throughout the week, taking notes about ways God has spoken to them through his Word. When you gather, use the questions below to guide your study. Also invite group members to draw upon the daily reflection questions and Scripture passages to supplement your discussion.

WEEK 1
HE WILL
COME AGAIN
IN GLORY

BIBLE STUDY

1. This has been a hard year. What words would you use to describe 2020? What difficulties or challenges—be they personal, community-wide, or global—made the year stressful, painful, or discouraging?

2. How do you tend to think of the word *hope*? What stands out to you from Jay Y. Kim's article "Hope Is an Expectant Leap" as particularly important regarding Christian hope?

3. Read and reflect on **1 Peter 1:3–5, 13**. What does it look like to embody a "living hope"? How does this passage challenge you?

4. Read **Romans 5:3–5; 8:18–30**. In your own life, how have you experienced the connection between suffering, hope, and love? How does waiting in expectation of Christ's return play a part in that hope?

5. Read **Revelation 1:4–8; 21:1–5, 22–27; 22:1–5**. What draws your attention in these passages, particularly in light of the hardships you named earlier? Why is having the Second Advent in view so crucial for our lives in the here and now?

LOOK, I AM COMING
SOON! . . . I AM THE
ALPHA AND THE
OMEGA, THE FIRST
AND THE LAST,
THE BEGINNING
AND THE END.

Revelation 22:12–13

6. Read **Revelation 22:20**. In his article, Charlie Dates emphasizes the importance of saying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," amid our trials and frustrations. Reflect candidly on your own life: What does it mean for you to pray that today?

WEEK 2
GOD'S
PRESENCE AND
HIS PROMISES

BIBLE STUDY

1. Where do you see examples of hope in the Old Testament? How do they offer a unique perspective on hope?

2. Carmen Joy Imes highlights the way hope is depicted in Exodus: “Christian hope is rooted in God’s *seeing*. Nothing escapes his notice. The heart of Advent is knowing that God sees a world gone wrong and that he will do something to make it right.” What’s your reaction to her observation about hope? About Advent?

3. Read **Psalm 46** with the experiences of 2020 in mind. What lines or phrases resonate with you?

4. Read **Isaiah 2:1-5; 40:1-11; 64:1-9**. Like many biblical prophecies, these passages point toward multiple layers of fulfillment. How do you see these passages pointing toward Jesus’ birth and his life on earth? How do they point toward the Second Coming and Christ’s reign over all things?

5. Read **Isaiah 9:2-7**. How do the descriptions of the Messiah in this passage speak to our deep human longings and needs?

6. What is one phrase or expression from **Psalm 46** or the **Isaiah** readings that best expresses your response to God this week? How do you desire to strengthen your hope in him?

**FOR TO US A CHILD IS
BORN, TO US A SON IS
GIVEN. . . . HE WILL
REIGN ON DAVID’S
THRONE AND OVER
HIS KINGDOM.**

Isaiah 9:6-7

WEEK 3 IMMANUEL: GOD WITH US

BIBLE STUDY

1. The familiar characters in our Nativity scenes were real people, a lot like us. In what ways might you relate to Mary, Joseph, Zechariah, or Elizabeth?

2. Step into the stories of Zechariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, and Mary. What might they have wondered as the events leading up to Jesus' birth took place? What would you have thought or felt if you were in their place?

3. Read **Luke 1:5-38**. Compare the experiences of Zechariah and Mary. What similarities and differences do you see in their stories? In their responses to God? How are these similarities or differences significant?

4. Read **Luke 1:46-55, 67-79**. What do Mary's and Zechariah's songs reveal about God? About his plan of salvation? About the hope we can find in him?

5. Read **Luke 2:1-7**. Catherine McNiel points out the significance of the details Luke includes, saying, "Jesus is born into history . . . The true God came near to us physically, tangibly, in a way that we can see with our eyes and touch with our hands." How do these details underscore the nature of God's love for us and our reason to hope in him?

6. How do you experience God's presence with you in your life? How do you desire to grow in intimacy with Immanuel?

**YOU WILL CONCEIVE
AND GIVE BIRTH TO
A SON, AND YOU ARE
TO CALL HIM JESUS.
HE WILL BE GREAT
AND WILL BE CALLED
THE SON OF THE MOST
HIGH. . . . HIS KINGDOM
WILL NEVER END.**

Luke 1:31-33

WEEK 4
A SAVIOR
IS BORN

BIBLE STUDY

1. The shepherds, Simeon, Anna, Herod, and the Magi each had different responses to Jesus. How would you summarize their responses in a word or a phrase? What do you find most compelling or convicting about each?

2. Read **Luke 2:8–38**. Scripture is clear that both the shepherds and Anna almost immediately began telling others about Jesus. How does their natural response of evangelism inspire you? Are there people God is bringing to mind whom you can tell about Jesus?

3. Read **Matthew 2:1–12**. What does the Magi’s worship of Jesus reveal about the gospel and the nature of God’s kingdom? Why is their worship significant?

4. Read **Matthew 2:13–18**. Anthony Carter describes this scene as “the brutal and blunt reminder of why Jesus came into the world in the first place.” In your own words, why does this event belong in our remembrance of the Christmas story? What do we miss if we overlook it?

5. Read **John 1:1–18 and Philippians 2:6–11**. As you ponder the Incarnation, what sparks questions, wonder, or praise? How does it kindle hope?

6. As you reflect on this Advent journey, how has your understanding of hope changed? How have you experienced a deepened hope in your daily life?

**MY EYES HAVE SEEN
YOUR SALVATION,
WHICH YOU HAVE
PREPARED IN THE
SIGHT OF ALL
NATIONS: A LIGHT
FOR REVELATION TO
THE GENTILES AND
THE GLORY OF YOUR
PEOPLE ISRAEL.**

Luke 2:30–32