



GRACE IN THE WORD

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PROPHECY AND BIRTH OF CHRIST



**“THEREFORE THE LORD HIMSELF WILL GIVE YOU A SIGN.
BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON,
AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL.” ISAIAH 7:14**

**“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’**

(WHICH MEANS, GOD WITH US).” MATTHEW 1:22-23



A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PROPHECY & BIRTH OF CHRIST

ABOUT THIS READING PLAN:

This reading plan is focused on walking you and your families through the prophecies in the book of Isaiah about the coming of Jesus. The word “Advent” means the arrival of a notable person, thing, or event, so the book of Isaiah is a perfect spot to be in for this season. The book of Isaiah points to the coming of Jesus, how He would come, what He would do when He came, and how He would die.

Each week has a theme (LOVE, HOPE, JOY, and PEACE) with a central passage in Isaiah and a few follow-up passages that correlate. In traditional Advent celebrations, a candle is lit during the scripture reading. We encourage you to set aside a time each week during December to light a candle, gather around these scripture passages, listen to the recommended song, and pray the prayer for the week. If you have children, there is also a family discussion to add to your weekly experience.

In the final week of this study, leading up to Christmas, there are daily readings. Each day, we will look at the accounts in the gospels that lead to the culmination of Christ’s birth.

This reading plan comes with space to journal thoughts, quotes, and ideas. It also has questions for personal reflection and family activities that can be done individually or with family. We hope that this study will bring greater meaning to you of what Advent is all about, but more specifically, to make a more profound impact in your relationship with Jesus.

ADDITIONAL STUDY RESOURCES:

Check out our website at graceclarksville.com/graceintheword and join our online community on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/graceintheword

The study material that helped shape this study include: the He Reads Truth and She Reads Truth “God with Us” study, He Reads Truth “The Nature of the Kingdom” study, She Reads Truth “The Lord of Hosts, the Only Refuge”, Enduring Word bible commentary, the BibleProject, and Lifeway’s Family Advent Guide.

WHY ISAIAH?

Before beginning this study, it is important to answer the question most of us are probably asking, why Isaiah? When most people think of the Christmas story, or when we think of Advent, we probably don't immediately think of the prophet Isaiah and his prophecies for the kingdom of ancient Judah. We instead probably think of Luke chapter two with angels meeting shepherds in a field, wise men guided by a star, and a not so quiet night in a barn with the birth of our Savior. The truth is that we can't celebrate the amazing night our Savior was born in Bethlehem without first looking back to the desolate, broken, and fear-ruled kingdom of Judah that we read about in Isaiah.

As He Reads Truth explains it, the book of Isaiah is "a record of Isaiah's prophecies concerning the nation of Judah's rebellion against God, His coming judgment, and the call for them to repent and turn back to Him. It also includes a promise of restoration and prophecies of a coming Servant King who will bear their sins." This Servant King is Jesus Christ. The same Christ we celebrate every year at Christmas. Hundreds of years before the shepherds in the field, the wise men, or the barn in Bethlehem, there was Isaiah. What Isaiah had to say was significant to the people of Judah, the Jewish people for years to come, and for us today, because when we study Isaiah's prophecies of the coming of Jesus, we find a significant meaning to the beautiful truth behind Advent. Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would come, how He would come, what He would do when He came, and how He would die. It is an excellent backdrop for the Advent season as it helps us look with anticipation to the birth of the Promised One.

BACKGROUND OF ISAIAH

Isaiah is the first of the three books of Major Prophets in the Old Testament. The book is full of God-breathed prophecies to Isaiah to be given to the king and people of Judah. It is believed that this book takes place around 722 BC. He Reads Truth explains the timeline of events this way, "Isaiah 6:1 records that Isaiah received his prophetic call in the last year of Uzziah's reign over Judah (about 740 BC), and Isaiah 37:38 suggests that he lived until the death of Sennacherib (681 BC). The events in Isaiah occurred between those dates, around the time when the kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 BC." Outside of his prophecies, not much is known about Isaiah as a person.

Isaiah is a powerful example of what it looks like to let God become our whole identity, which is why the book of Isaiah focuses far more on the words of God than on the man relaying them. As you prepare for this study, be encouraged to follow Isaiah's example. Focus on the words of God, not on your own needs, desires, or wants. Let this study focus on who God is, what He has done, and what this means for our relationship with Him and His people.

WATCH: The BibleProject Video - Isaiah Overview - graceintheword.cc/isaiah

Name & Contact Information:

What is your hope for this Advent study?



ADVENT

LOVE • JOY • HOPE • PEACE

WEEK 1

LOVE // WEEK OF NOVEMBER 28TH

Read Isaiah 43:1-13, John 3:16-17, Romans 8:38-39, 1 John 4:9,19

What stands out to you from these passages?

List some of the promises God makes in Isaiah 43:1-13. Which ones resonate with you the most? Why do those promises stand out?

Notice the time that this Isaiah prophecy was given. Over 600 years before the birth of our Savior Jesus, God is speaking to His people. He is not absent. They are not alone. Never. Before Jesus came to earth, God reminds His people in Judah that He is with them, for them, preparing a way for them, their children, their children's children. God reminds them of a truth we all need to hear today: He is God and He loves us.

God's words to Isaiah are a reminder for the people of Judah, but also for us, that He is for us, with us, and loves us. God's greatest act of love for us comes through him sending His son to become the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. This is what God has always wanted for us, to experience His saving love. A love that even our fears and worries can't separate us from.

As you meditate on this truth of Advent, remember that even before Jesus came to earth, there was always God. His love for us was always present, and it is the same for us today. Take time to read and remember His love for us in the evidence He gives in Isaiah 43.

- He created and formed us

-Isaiah 43:1, Genesis 1:26-31

- He is with us

-Isaiah 43:2

- He saves us through Jesus

-Isaiah 43:3

-Hebrews 2:1-16

Additional resources can be found at graceclarksville.com/intheword.

WEEK 1

OPTIONAL FAMILY DISCUSSION:

This season is about celebrating the birth of Jesus. It was in Bethlehem that Mary and Joseph, Jesus' earthly parents, welcomed Jesus into the world. They had traveled to Bethlehem because the law said that Joseph had to go to his hometown to be counted in a census. 1 John 4:9 says that "God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him." God sent the gift of Jesus into the world to be born in the little town of Bethlehem to demonstrate His deep and everlasting love for us. We can love others because of the love that God shows us through His son Jesus.

How do we see God's love in our family?

How do the verses we read show us God's love for us?

How can we show love to others this Christmas? Get creative, let everyone share an idea and brainstorm as a family how to make it happen.

SONG // Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

WATCH // The BibleProject Video - LOVE - graceintheword.cc/love

PRAYER // God, thank You for this season of Advent. Help us use these weeks to look with anticipation toward the coming of your Son. Thank you for sending this gift of love to us through Jesus. Help us during this season to reflect and rejoice that love has come to us in the form of a baby born in Bethlehem. Help us to find ways to share this love you have given us with others during this season. We love you Lord, In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



FUN FAMILY ACTIVITY FOR THE MONTH

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Pick a night during this month to drive around and look at Christmas lights and listen to Christmas music. (Bonus: Take some hot chocolate) On the drive, talk about how the lights of Christmas bring peace and joy to people who see them. Remind your family that the Bible calls Jesus the Light of the World. Discuss ways your family can be a light this holiday season by sharing the love, joy, hope and peace of Jesus to others.

If you would like fun family activities for each day in the month of December, see page 15 (inside back cover)

WEEK 2

JOY // WEEK OF DECEMBER 5TH

Read Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 1:20-23, Romans 15:13, Psalm 16:11

What stands out to you from these passages?

How do you see joy in the promise of a Savior? How might you experience this joy in greater measure this season?

At the beginning of Isaiah chapter 7, we're told that the king of Judah and all of his people were afraid for their lives. They had two enemies to contend with, Assyria and Israel. In many ways, they felt surrounded, defenseless.

And yet, they were not alone. In the midst of these harrowing geopolitical circumstances, Isaiah told the people of Judah, "Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid" (Isaiah 7:4). Isaiah also makes a strange promise: the people would receive a sign that God was still good. A virgin would give birth to a child and His name would be Immanuel—God with us (v.14)...

God is with us, even in calamity. Our fear is not proof that our God is absent. So often I want an Isaiah in my life. I want someone to come and tell me specifically what's going to happen this year, next year, and the year after that. I want details. Dates. Times. I want a sign. In reading today's passages, I realize that even if I got what I wanted—even if someone like Isaiah really did come to tell me what was to come—it might only lead to more confusion. It would likely only lead to fear of my circumstances, rather than fear of my Lord. Perhaps all I really need to hear are the promises. Perhaps all I need to do is wait.

The name Immanuel, or "God is with us," appears in the book of Isaiah in key prophecies predicting the coming of the Messiah. The name carries a sense of nearness, including intimate knowledge of the needs, struggles, and hopes of humanity. When Isaiah prophesies about the virgin birth, he says that her child will be called Immanuel. This is not a proper name as much as it is a description of what the Messiah would be like.

In Matthew, an angel tells Joseph to name the child Jesus, because "He will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:23). This name describes what Immanuel would do. Together, the names Immanuel and Jesus mean "God will be with His people and He will save them from their sins." God saves His people and is close to them. The power of Jesus to overcome sin, darkness, and pain gives me a source for joy. And when things are tough, beyond my own ability to find a glimmer of joy, I am met in the midst of my pain. In His presence there is "abundant joy" (Psalm 16:11).

-She Reads Truth

WEEK 2

OPTIONAL FAMILY DISCUSSION:

What brings you joy? Think about a time you were expecting something good to happen and then that good thing happened, I bet that moment brought you great joy. For many that is how they felt about the birth of Jesus. For many years, they had been promised a Savior that would be born as a baby in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph were told to name this baby Jesus and that Jesus would be called Immanuel which means "God with us". Jesus came to earth to be with us and to offer His life as a sacrifice for us. So, the birth of Jesus brought great joy because it was good news. Good news that we are never alone, we have the joy of Jesus. The exciting news of Jesus also leads us to respond by joyfully worshiping Him. As we worship Jesus, we will be able to share our excitement about the good news of Jesus with anyone who will listen. What great joy has come into the world!

What is something that brings you joy at Christmastime?

How does the good news of Jesus' birth bring us joy?

SONG // Joy to the World

WATCH // The BibleProject Video - JOY - graceintheword.cc/joy

PRAYER // God, you promise us in your Word that we are not alone. Thank you for sending Jesus, our greatest joy into the world. May we worship Jesus' coming into the world with great joy in this season and look to Him for our happiness over the things the world has to offer. In your presence there is fullness of joy and for that we are truly grateful! We love you, in Jesus' name, Amen.



WEEK 3

HOPE // WEEK OF DECEMBER 12TH

Read Isaiah 8:11-17, Romans 5:2-5, Psalm 33:20-22

What does this name teach you about God? How does that bring you hope today?

What hope are you clinging to for this Advent season?

We have a storehouse of hope. It is the ultimate trust fund, a hope chest full of the promises of God. While we have yet to see our God face to face, we've been given the gift of faith to believe in Him, know Him, and love Him now. Ours is a living and active hope in a living and active God, who has unfathomable blessings in store for us. And yet, there are days, lots of them, when our living hope seems to be doing little more than gathering dust. The gap between this present moment and future glory may seem impossibly large. Still we rejoice. Because we have a hope kept in heaven that can never be destroyed. One day we will trade in the suffering of these "various trials" for the many gifts God has tucked away for us. Hoping in Him will never disappoint us the way the world does time and time again. Because "God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit" we can learn to rejoice and hope again, even in our pain (Romans 5:3,5). But it's only in clinging to Him that we will find the strength to move forward in faith, one step at a time. Our circumstances do not change our Hope. Our lives and surroundings, our days and our hearts—we are all different. We have a myriad of fears and joys and challenges among us, but we have a singular hope. Ours is the hope that has proved faithful since the time of Abraham, since Hope Himself promised Abraham the impossible and delivered on that promise. The same God who was the hope of Abraham is our hope. The same God who watched over Israel watches over you and me. He is our collective hope and help as the Church, one body of believers stretching worldwide. He is our personal, intimate hope as individuals, our keeper and the One who watches over our going out and our coming in. He is by our side, always close at hand. He is the good shepherd, truly, and He cares for every, single, Sheep. This life is unsure. Our circumstances are unsure. Our God, He is sure. And He is our hope.

-She Reads Truth

WEEK 3

OPTIONAL FAMILY DISCUSSION:

When we think about hope, we might say, “I hope to get a new video game for Christmas” or “I hope it snows this year on Christmas Eve.” In those cases, we don’t know if what we are hoping for will really happen. We have no control over the outcome. But when the Bible talks about hope, there is a certainty, not because of what we hope for, but because of WHO we hope in. The Bible teaches us that we can hope in God. Throughout history, God has never left His people hopeless. God promised to send Jesus to rescue people from sin and make a way for us to be welcomed into God’s family for eternity. This is the best gift ever!

In the Old Testament, God had special messengers called prophets who would share God’s promises called prophecies. Isaiah was a prophet sent by God to share these promises (prophecies) with the people. Isaiah promises that a child will be born whose name will be Immanuel which means God with us. That promise spoken by Isaiah was made to God’s people hundreds of years before Jesus was born. When we read the New Testament, we see how God kept his promise to send Jesus into the world as a baby. This shows us that we can trust God to keep all His promises. This brings us Hope that God keeps His promises. God sent His son Jesus to be our hope, to be with us when things are hard.

What’s the difference between hope in the things of the world and hope in Jesus?

How does Jesus give us hope?

SONG // O Holy Night

WATCH // The BibleProject Video - HOPE - graceintheword.cc/hope

PRAYER // Thank you God for sharing your plans and promises in your Word to give us hope for the future. Thank you for sending Jesus into a weary world to be with us and to be our hope when things feel hard. Help us to bring hope to those who feel hopeless around us and to share with them the hope of your Son with others. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.



WEEK 4

PEACE // WEEK OF DECEMBER 19TH

THIS WEEK AS WE LEAD UP TO CHRISTMAS, THERE IS A READING FOR EACH DAY

Sunday: Read Isaiah 9:1-7, Matthew 4:12-17, John 14:27, Philippians 4:7-8, Colossians 3:15

What stands out to you from these passages?

How do you think we can find peace in waiting?

In Isaiah, the prophet describes how the people rejoice as if they were only dividing the spoils of war. It is like the triumph of a conquest, but instead, the trampling boots and bloodied garments of conquest are burned in the fire. This is all the celebration of a great victory, not against other people or other nations, but over violence and death itself. Peace, justice, prosperity, and righteousness follow in the wake of all conflict's end.

Jesus's kingdom is not a wave of military triumph; instead, His kingdom is the inauguration of peace... Instead of drums and heralds, Luke shows how Jesus's ministry started as a quiet moment in His home synagogue (Luke 4:14). It is a mic-drop moment long before there were microphones. Jesus reads those words from Isaiah that promised His coming: "He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1). And when He finished reading, Jesus just sat down...

That is the kingdom we're a part of now as believers...In love and goodness, we walk with the Holy Spirit, as Christ brings us into His peace, joy, and righteousness.

-Written by David Chaniott- *He Reads Truth*

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful" (John 14:27). Jesus promises us that peace truly is possible: in our hearts, in our homes, and even in our world. Christmas comes into our darkness, lighting up our hearts with joy and peace.

WEEK 4

OPTIONAL FAMILY DISCUSSION:

Isaiah 9:6 promises that Jesus will be our Prince of Peace. Jesus is our peace, and He came to give us the gift of peace. How would you define peace? Peace is the feeling of being safe and secure. We can have this peace by knowing that God is in control and he promises to care for us. Peace is an important part of Christmas. God sent Jesus to provide the way for us to receive God's love and be at peace with Him (Romans 5:1). The Bible says that it was God's love that brought Jesus into the world as a baby. Just like the angels did when Jesus was born, it is important that we worship Jesus and tell others about His birth and the peace He offers. We don't have to fear, we can choose to hold on to Jesus, our prince of peace.

What does it mean to have peace?

What can we remember is true about Jesus when we feel afraid?

SONG // Silent Night

WATCH // The BibleProject Video - PEACE - graceintheword.cc/peace

PRAYER // Thank you God for the gift of peace that you give us through your son Jesus. We are grateful that the peace of Jesus guards our hearts and minds and surpasses anything that we can understand. We do not have to fear because of the peace you leave with us. May we live in light of this peace everyday. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen



WEEK OF CHRISTMAS

MONDAY DECEMBER 20TH

Matthew 1:1-17, John 1:1-18

What is something that stands out to you from these passages?

Have you ever thought of Jesus as God revealing Himself to us? How does this change how you view the significance of Christ's birth?

TUESDAY DECEMBER 21ST

Luke 1:5-25, Isaiah 40:3-5, John 3:1-18, Malachi 3:1, Mark 1:1-8

Why do you think it was important for someone like John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus?

How can we prepare the way for Jesus with our family, friends, and others we meet?

WEEK OF CHRISTMAS

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 22ND

Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-25

How have we seen through our study of the prophecy and birth of Jesus that “the word of God will never fail.”?

Mary and Joseph showed incredible obedience to God. How does obedience bring about love, hope, joy, and peace for our lives and in our relationship with God?

THURSDAY DECEMBER 23RD

Luke 1:39-80

What is something that currently feels impossible for God to do in your life?

How can you pursue peace with God over this thing that feels impossible? How might that bring joy back into your life?



MAKE PLANS

Join us for Christmas Eve services at Grace at 2:00 or 3:30pm on December 24th.

FRIDAY DECEMBER 24TH

Luke 2:1-20

The birth of Christ was promised for hundreds of years, but it still came as a surprise to many and it came in an unexpected way. This Christmas season, you may have had some surprises and things went in ways that were unexpected as well. But we have seen through this study that God is faithful and always working. How can we share LOVE today? How can we offer HOPE today? How can we feel JOY today? How can we be at PEACE today?

SATURDAY DECEMBER 25TH

Isaiah 9:6, John 3:16-17

The story of Jesus' birth isn't a work of history, but a living and active path for our future eternity.

Why do we celebrate Christmas? It is a special day because it is a day that we pause to remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Long before Jesus was born, God had a plan to send His Son into the world to rescue us from our sins. The Bible tells us that Jesus came to bring light and life to everyone who trusts in Him.

Today, we celebrate the gift of Jesus, the promised Savior God sent for us. Jesus is called Immanuel. Do you remember what that name means? (God with us) At the perfect time, in the perfect way, and because God loves us, He sent His Son Jesus to be born into the world. God the Creator became Immanuel God with us (Matthew 1:21-23). Jesus was born as a baby. He lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be called children of God. This is the best gift ever! Today, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world, we pray for His light to be seen in our lives as we worship Him.

How can we take the LOVE, HOPE, JOY, and PEACE offered to us in this season into this new year ahead as we walk daily with Christ?

SONG // O Come All Ye Faithful

PRAYER // God, we thank you today for the birth of your son Jesus! May we carry the love, hope, joy and peace of our Savior to the world around us. We love you, in Jesus' name we pray Amen.



NOTES

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Gather around every day this month to read the story of how God sent joy to the world with the gift of His Son, Jesus. While you're at it, spread some joy of your own as a family!

ADVENT 2021: THE PARENT CUE FAMILY CALENDAR

<p>3</p>  <p>What's stressing you out right now? <i>Share with each other.</i> Then pray that God would give you His peace this season. Luke 1:29-30</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Luke 1:30</p> <p><i>Break out a pack of glow sticks. Have a Christmas dance party with upbeat Christmas music.</i></p>	<p>1</p> <p>Light a candle at dinner time or bed time. Share your favorite Christmas tradition that you <i>don't want to miss</i> doing together this year. Luke 1:27</p> 	<p>2</p>  <p>Choose 1-3 relatives or family friends. Record a short selfie video Christmas greeting as a family and text it to them. Luke 1:26-28</p>
<p>6</p>  <p>God's plan for Christmas surprised everyone. If you could plan Christmas this year <i>exactly</i> the way you wanted, what would it look like? Luke 1:32</p>	<p>7</p>  <p><i>Taking care of a new baby is a big challenge!</i> Take a meal to a family you know with a new baby, or pick up diapers to donate to a local shelter or food bank. Luke 1:34-36</p>	<p>8</p>  <p><i>Bake a batch of Christmas cookies</i> (no shame if you grab a tube from the grocery fridge section!) Share a snack together <i>and</i> take some of them to a neighbor. Luke 1:38</p>	<p>9</p>  <p>Create a playlist of everyone's favorite Christmas carols and worship songs. Play it while on the go all week—and <i>don't be afraid to sing along!</i> Luke 1:39-56</p>
<p>10</p> <p>Luke 2:1-4</p> <p>Parents, share about a particularly <i>special</i> or <i>unique</i> Christmas that you experienced as a child.</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>Take a trip around the neighborhood or other areas of your town or city to check out the <i>amazing Christmas lights</i> along the way. Luke 2:5</p>	<p>12</p>  <p>Using Google Maps, take a look at the modern-day streets of Bethlehem. <i>What do you think Bethlehem was like when Jesus was born?</i> Luke 2:6</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Luke 2:7</p> <p>Use a Nativity set or stuffed animals to <i>act out the Christmas story</i> as a family member reads it from Luke 2.</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Luke 2:9</p> <p>What would YOU do if a brilliant angel from God appeared in your home? <i>Share how you would react.</i></p>	<p>17</p>  <p>Make Christmas cards for anyone in your life who might need a little joy today, from the mailperson to the crosswalk guard. <i>You could even add a gift card or small treat.</i> Luke 2:10</p>	<p>18</p>  <p>Try making "<i>real</i>" hot cocoa with cocoa powder, melted chocolate, sugar, and milk of your choice. While the cocoa heats, share with each other something big you are waiting for right now. Luke 2:11</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Luke 2:9</p> <p>Tell your child how you shared the good news of their birth (or arrival in your family) with others.</p>
<p>20</p>  <p>Choose or make a special ornament for your Christmas tree that represents <i>something good</i> God has done for your family this year. Luke 2:13-14</p>	<p>22</p>  <p>Share your favorite Christmas movies with each other. Then pick one (or two!), <i>make some popcorn</i>, and settle down in Christmas PJs for a Christmas movie marathon. Luke 2:17-18</p>	<p>23</p> <p>What's the biggest thing you want to thank God for right now? (In addition to Jesus!) <i>Share with each other and give God a giant round of applause.</i> Luke 2:20</p>	<p>25</p>  <p>Before opening gifts, take time to read the story of God's greatest gift of all time, Jesus, in Luke 1:26-2:21.</p>
<p>21</p>  <p>Grab a gingerbread man or other Christmas cookie for each member of the family to place on their forehead. Race to see who can shimmy the cookie down and bite it first before it drops. <i>No hands!</i> Luke 2:15-16</p>		<p>24</p>  <p>Jesus' name means "the Lord is salvation"! Share with each other what your name means. (Google is your friend for this.) Then <i>share the story</i> behind your name if you know it. Luke 2:21</p>	

