

THE ADVENT OF HOPE

ISAIAH 57:14-19/ TED HARRIS / DECEMBER 3, 2023



Advent Season celebrates the coming of Christ. Advent means arrival or coming. It is a time of year dedicated to remembering Christ's birth and anticipating his return.

John Eldredge, **"Hope is the confident anticipation that goodness is coming."**

Isaiah 57:14-19 – Reasons to have hope in God

1. **God lives at a different level.**
v. 15, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit."

2. **God thinks and acts at a different level.**
v. 15, "I dwell on a high and holy place,"

Isaiah 55:8-9, "for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

3. **God loves at a different level.**
Vs. 18, "I have seen his ways, but I will heal him. I will lead him and restore comfort to him and to his mourners."

Paul David Tripp, "The Christmas story reminds us that hope will never be found if you look horizontally. True hope is found only when you look for it vertically. It's not enough to say that God gives us hope. What the Christmas story declares to us is that *God is hope.*"

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Advent Wreath



The Advent wreath symbolizes the beginning of the church year. It is a circular evergreen wreath with five candles, four around the wreath and one in the center. The wreath's circle reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and His endless mercy, with no beginning or end. The green speaks of the hope that we have in God, the hope of renewal, of eternal life. The four outer candles represent the waiting period during the four Sundays of Advent, which themselves symbolize the four centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi and the birth of Christ.

The candlelight reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World who comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life, and hope. It also reminds us that we are called to be a light to the world as we reflect God's grace to others (Isaiah 42:6). The progressive candle lighting symbolizes our waiting experience. As the candles are lit over the four-week period, the darkness of fear and hopelessness recedes and the shadows of sin fall away as more and more light enters the world.

The center candle—the Christ Candle—is traditionally lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The central location of this candle reminds us that the Incarnation is the heart of the season, giving light to the world. When the Christ Candle is lit, worshippers rejoice that the Light has come into the world—the promise of long ago has been realized.

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