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## Awake the Wonder: Rediscovering the Meaning of Advent

Every year Christmas seems to arrive faster, like a train thundering into the station before we've even packed our bags. We rush, we shop, we scroll and then sigh, 'Did I really encounter Christ this Christmas?'

That's why we have Advent.

Advent is the church's gentle yet insistent whisper: Pause. Prepare.

Pay attention.

It's not a dull countdown; it's a divine wake-up call, a reminder that Someone is coming. Advent is God's way of saying, 'Don't just rush to the cradle – prepare your heart for the King.'

## **1. Advent is Preparation for the Coming King**

The word 'Advent' means 'coming'. It looks back to Bethlehem where Jesus came as a baby, and forward to the day he will return as King. It prepares us spiritually and emotionally to receive Christ again. John the Baptist cried, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him' (Mark 1:3 NIV). Advent is that call. It clears the clutter and tunes the heart and soul before the Christmas song begins.

Every great celebration requires preparation. You wouldn't host a wedding without planning; how much more should we prepare for the arrival of the Bridegroom, Jesus?

Advent isn't a countdown, it's a call-up.

## **2. Advent is Protection for the Heart of Christmas**

Let's be honest, Christmas can easily lose Christ. The 'Festive Season' bulldozes its way through December until we collapse wondering what just happened.

Advent stands guard at the door of December. It slows the pace and

centres the heart. It reminds us that the greatest gift isn't *under* the tree, it's the One who hung *upon* the tree.

Paul wrote, 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind' (Romans 12:2 NIV). Advent renews us so that Christmas doesn't just happen around us, it happens within us.

The world decorates for Christmas; disciples prepare for Christ. Don't just decorate your home, dedicate your heart.

### **3. Advent is Proclamation – Heaven's Great Announcement**

In every shopping centre there are endless announcements about sales or parking. But one announcement often goes unheard:

*'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'* (Luke 2:11 NIV)

Advent is heaven's loudspeaker saying, 'Listen – the King is coming!' It reminds us that the baby in the manger was not merely born to bring peace but to bear a cross, and that he will come again.

Advent declares both comfort and challenge:

Be comforted – he came.

Be challenged – he's coming again.

The first coming was in humility; the next will be in majesty.  
The first was in mercy; the next will be in glory.  
The first was to save; the next will be to reign.  
The manger makes sense only when we remember the throne.

#### **4. Advent is Invitation – Heaven Knocking at Your Door**

Advent is not only about Christ's coming then or soon, it's about his coming now. Jesus said:

*'Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in.'* (Revelation 3:20 NIV)

Advent is that knock, God's personal invitation. This is the season to come home, not just to family but to the Father.

Don't miss him by being too busy preparing for him.  
Don't fill your diary and empty your soul.  
Don't just wrap presents – receive his presence.

#### **Awake the Wonder**

Advent slows our hurried hearts and rekindles our wonder – the wonder of God stepping into human skin, heaven's light piercing earth's darkness.

As candles are lit and carols are sung, breathe and believe: Christ has

come, Christ is here and Christ will come again.

Advent says he came once to save us; he's coming again to claim us.

### **A Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, as I wait this Advent, awaken my soul to your wonder. Prepare me for your coming, cleanse my thoughts and calm my heart. Protect me from the busyness that buries your light. Proclaim your truth through me to a world that's forgotten to listen.

And when you knock, may I open the door wide and welcome you in. Come to me, shine your light through me and come again in glory. Amen.

**J.John**

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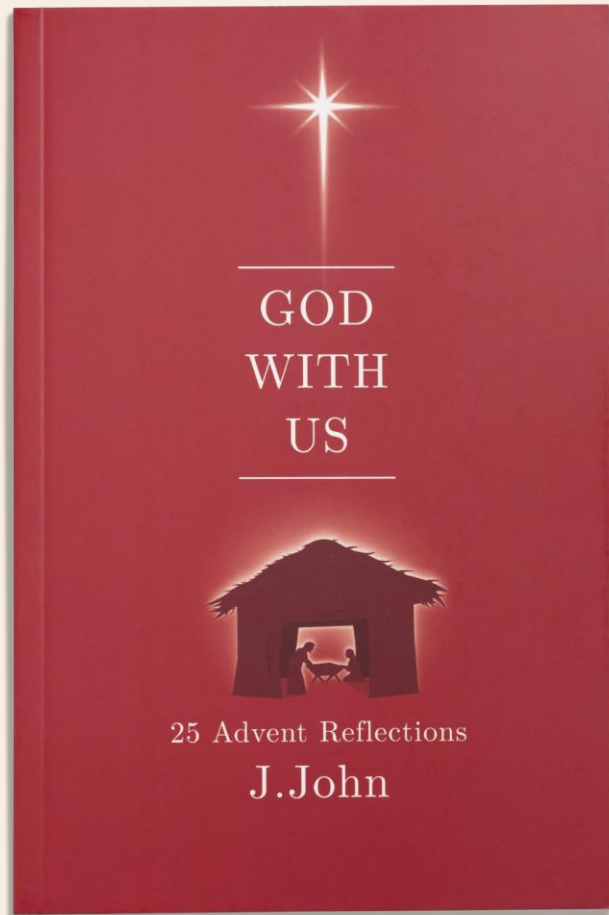
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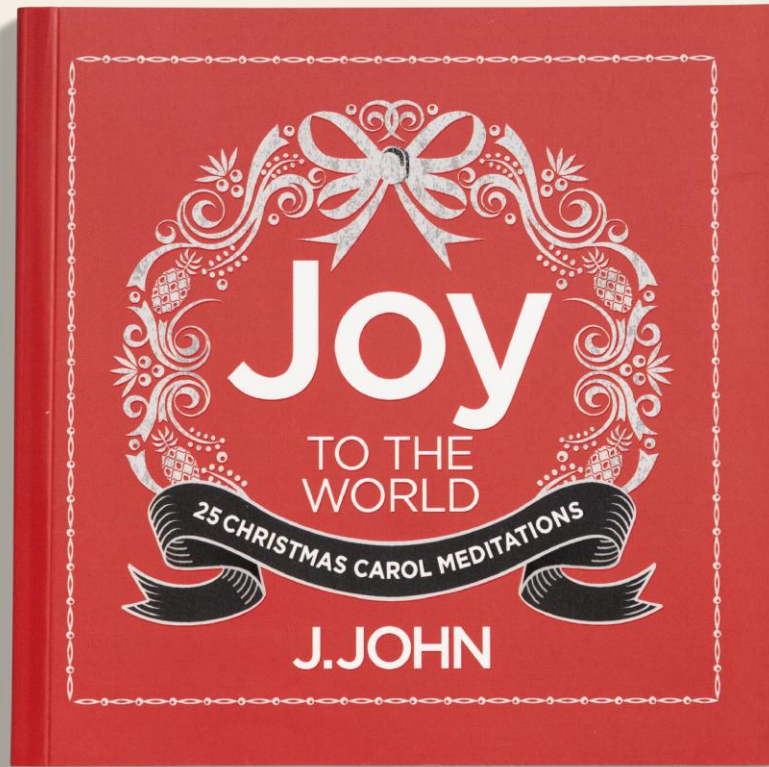
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