

## THAT Festive Feeling

### CONNECT RESOURCE

#### Campaign Introduction

**Dates:** Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December to Christmas Day 25<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Key point:** To preach into the expectation of hope, joy, peace, and love that the birth of Christ brought to the world. The tone of this campaign is celebration, hope and expectation of the coming of Christ at Christmas.

**Week 1:** The Hope of Advent: Pre-recorded Preach

**Week 2:** Joy (C3 SYD Christmas Parties 10 mins)

**Week 3:** Peace

**Week 4a Christmas Eve:** Love: Waiting for the Light

**Week 4b Christmas Day:** Love: The Light Has Come

## Week 1: Ps Alex pre-recorded preach

**Weekly subtitle:** THE HOPE OF ADVENT

**Date:** Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023

**Key response:** To see the rich spiritual significance of this season. The waiting, and the anticipation of the gift of Jesus to come.

**Key scripture:**

Isaiah 9:6

*"For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

**Historical context, commentary + supporting references:**

**Understanding Advent**

This Christmas we are structuring our campaign around Advent. Advent is observed in traditional Christian denominations as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of Christ at Christmas and His second coming. The term Advent comes from the Latin word "Adventus," which means "coming" or "arrival." Advent was initially a period of preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth, similar to Lent's preparation for Easter. It was a time of fasting and repentance, waiting and expectation. Advent begins in the dark. We begin the season of Advent, not with bright lights and joy, but with a sense of anticipation, a nurtured hope that promises everything even though it assumes nothing. Advent simply means arrival. The question follows, the arrival of what? Often, believers have a rather simplistic response — "Jesus, of course!" But this answer betrays the intricacy, significance and depth that remains unexplored. The coming of Jesus to Earth is known formally as the doctrine of the Incarnation. Incarnation is an old Latin word, simply meaning, 'in the flesh'. We are waiting for the promise of God, the promised Messiah, God in flesh.

**Supporting points to key point:**

When we see Christmas decorations starting to appear in the shops, even though it is only October, it brings a sense of excitement, expectation of what is coming. The Instagram clocks begin to countdown, 99 days to Christmas. It is **That Festive Feeling**, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. The expectancy of family gatherings, incredible feasts, presents and Santa.

This year, we want to highlight that sense of hope, joy, and expectancy that the festive feeling brings, and get a fresh understanding of what the birth of Jesus did in this world, through the journey of Advent. This year we are going to walk through the three steps of Advent: Joy, peace, and love (note these are not the traditional order but the order we have chosen). Each week reminding ourselves of what happened on that incredible day 2000 years ago when God Himself sent His Son to earth to bring hope, life, joy, peace, and love to all who believe.

This season is so much more than just decorations, gifts, and festivities; it's a time of spiritual significance, of reflection and contemplation of what God is up to in our lives. The time leading up until Christmas day is Advent. Advent is the season in which we are expectant of the arrival of the light of the world. Christmas is the season we celebrate and worship Him.

## **John 3:16**

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

## **Isaiah 9:6**

*"For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

## **Background:**

Isaiah is speaking into a time where the Kingdom of Judah felt powerless, being pressured by Israel and Syria to join forces and fight Assyria, the small Kingdom of Judah was afraid of their enemies that were growing in strength, and they were unsure if God was with them. 700 years before the coming of Christ, Isaiah prophesies twice (Isaiah 9:6 and Isaiah 7:14-16), the coming of a child, who would represent God's presence, embody His characteristics, and govern His people. The expectation is set, we are waiting for a child, a son, with the government on His shoulders, Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace.

### ○ **A child is born**

The same expectation of the coming of a baby into a family is the sense of Advent. But we are not just waiting for the arrival of a human baby. This one is the son of God, 100% human, 100% divine. God with us in human form. This one is special, and the arrival of this child will change the course of history and time.

### ○ **A Son is given**

This child will be the son of God. John 3:16 shows the love of the Father for the world, so much so that He would send His son to earth to die for our sins. The Son is a gift from Father God, a climax of God's will to restore and redeem what was done in the Eden.

### ○ **The government will be on His shoulders**

This child will not just be great, but the government will be on His shoulders. The fact that such an incredible declaration is made 700 years before Christ was born. And then He is born in a lowly manger, however all who heard, even the Magi that came from the east (Matthew 2) knew that this baby was the King of the Jews.

### ○ **Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**

I love this declaration; Jesus is the Prince of Peace. This is an incredible statement when the statement before declares that the Government will be on His shoulders, in other words this leader will bring peace and not just to Israel but to the nations.

The second prophecy is found in Isaiah 7:14

*"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."*

Before Jesus was born the world was a mess, hate filled, divided, darkness, no peace, no joy, no answers. The days before the birth of Jesus the Bible tells us that things were starting to rumble, something was happening. The people were holding onto the promises in Isaiah, one day a child will come that will change this forever. After 400 years of silence, between the last prophet spoke Micah, there came one crying in the wilderness preparing the way of the Lord, *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”* Matthew 3:2. The promise was about to be fulfilled; Jesus was about to be born!!

## Week 2: C3 SYD CHRISTMAS PARTIES

**Weekly subtitle:** THE EXPECTATION OF JOY

**Date:** Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December (10-minute gospel message)

**Key point of this week:** As we wait for the coming of Christ, we are expectant of great joy. The joy of a promise fulfilled the light of the world is coming.

**Key scriptures:** Matthew 2:1-12, and Luke 2:8-12.

**Supporting points to key point:**

### Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King!  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.  
Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.  
~ Isaac Watts

There is a profound relationship between hope and joy, particularly during the Advent season. Advent is a season of preparation and anticipation, it's not merely a countdown to Christmas but a season of purposeful anticipation. Jesus is coming, and in this season as a church, we are the bride waiting for Her bridegroom. Our hope in the promised Messiah's arrival fills us with joy, even in times of waiting and uncertainty. It is true that waiting can be challenging, but when anchored in hope, it can become a catalyst, leading to a deep and abiding joy.

### Luke 2: 8-12 NIV (SHEPHERDS)

*"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

### Matthew 2:9-12 NIV (MAGI)

*"After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, **they were overjoyed.** <sup>11</sup> On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route."*

## **The coming of Christ brings salvation and joy to the world!**

When the angel came to the shepherds. He said, *“Do not be afraid, I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people, joyful news.”*

The great joy of the birth of Christ, God who seemed far off had to come to them in human flesh, as a baby. He was to be called “Immanuel,” which means God with us (Isaiah 9:6-7).

### **Forgiveness of sins**

Have you ever found yourself saying, “I’ve got some business to do with God”? This is what Jesus Christ was born for, that you would have forgiveness of sins, a place where you can come and say sorry, laying down all your burdens. Maybe this Christmas you can take the time to do this, to kneel at the feet of Jesus, and lay down any shame.

### **1 John 1:9**

*“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

## **The coming of Christ brings salvation and joy to the world!!**

The Christmas song “Joy to the World” celebrates the joy filled occasion that Christmas is, the coming of the one that is the King of kings, born in a manger, so that we could have eternal life. Jesus purpose in His first coming was not to judge but to save. Jesus brought joy to the world in His first coming and He will bring to the world when He comes back again as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16.)

### **John 3:16-17**

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

The wait for His first coming was over, the Magi, the Shepherds, the camels, the donkeys, all knew the King had arrived. The angels announced His arrival with great fanfare. Jesus had come for forgiveness of sins, to live his life in the power of the Holy Spirit, to die a sinner’s death, so that we can have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

So, although our earthly life may be filled with troubles, we have reason for hope. Because Jesus came the first time and is poised to come the second time, we can sing with conviction, “Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king!”

### **Romans 15:13**

*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

10<sup>th</sup> December 2023

THE EXPECTATION OF JOY

**GATHER:** (ensure that these questions centre around community)

- What are some of the circumstances that can make Christmas a difficult time?
- Share some of the ways you can keep Jesus at the centre of the Christmas season.

**GROW:** (ensure that these questions prompt discussion on personal growth and maturity)

- It's easy to get caught up in Christmas shopping and menu planning, but are you expectant of what God is going to do in you this season?
- What is the difference between the joy and peace that Jesus brings and the festive spirit of the world in December?

**GO:** (ensure that these questions prompt discussion on going and spreading the good news)

- Are there people in your world who are finding Christmas hard? Part of the joy of Christmas is that God cared enough about us to send Jesus to rescue us. How can you make them feel seen and cared for?
- Who are you inviting to church at Christmas in the hope that they will meet Jesus? Pray for opportunities to talk about what Christmas means to you.

**Connect Group Resources:**

[Bible Project: Joy](#)

## Week 3

**Weekly subtitle: THE EXPECTATION OF PEACE**

**Date:** Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December

**Key point of this week:** The birth of Jesus signifies the arrival of the Prince of Peace, our world so desperately needs peace, and this week as we travel through Advent we feel the anticipation not only of Jesus bringing us Peace with God now – but we long for a day when His peace will be fully manifest when His Kingdom comes to earth in the end of days.

The birth of Jesus signifies the arrival of the Prince of Peace. Right now, our world so desperately needs peace, and this week as we travel through Advent we feel the anticipation of both Jesus bringing us Peace with God now, and long for a day when His peace will entirely manifest when His Kingdom comes to earth in the end days.

**Key scriptures:** Isaiah 9:7, Luke 2

**Historical context, commentary + supporting references:**

The Jews knew that they were awaiting a Messiah who would bring peace to their world, Isaiah had prophesied it, and they were in eager anticipation of it.

The word peace that is used in the Isaiah scripture is Shalom. Shalom is not just the absence of conflict – it has a much deeper meaning; it means completeness, safety, health, prosperity, peace in human relationships and with God. It means to make something whole.

The Meaning of Shalom article <https://www.thenivbible.com/blog/meaning-shalom-bible/>

The Messiah is the one who will make humanity whole again.

**Supporting points to key point:**

**Silent Night Lyrics**

Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, and all is bright  
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

This week in the Advent calendar we are talking about the expectation of peace that comes at the birth of Christ. The world that Jesus entered was filled with hatred and divisions, and on that incredible day the Prince of Peace himself was born. This week let's have a look at some of the promises of peace that the birth of Jesus fulfilled; that we can have peace with God, peace in our hearts and bring peace to those around us.



## 1. The Old Testament speaks of one that will bring peace, restoring Shalom to the earth.

This is the picture of **shâlôwm** - *peace / wholeness / flourishing*

### Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**.  
Of the **greatness of his government and peace**  
there will be no end.  
He will **reign on David's throne**  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the Lord Almighty  
will accomplish this.

From the promises in the Old Testament, the Jews were eagerly awaiting the Messiah who would be their Prince of Peace. The promise of one who will bring peace is a promise seen throughout the Old Testament. And that peace can only come from God, Yahweh Himself: Numbers 6:24-26, Psalm 4:8, Psalm 29:11, Psalm 34:12-14, Psalm 37:10-11, Psalm 119:165.

## 2. The Angels proclaimed to the Shepherds that the Messiah has come, in the form of a baby, that now there is peace on earth.

In announcing the birth of Christ, the angels brought reconciliation and peace to those who were outcasts, like the Shepherds. The lower class (the shepherds) the highest class (the Magi and Kings) of society were there at the birth of Jesus.

### Luke 2:13 NIV

*"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,*

***"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests."***

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*

The birth of Jesus brought peace, **John 14:27**

<sup>27</sup> *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid"*

### Philippians 4:6-7

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Today we have peace because of the birth of Jesus.

### 3. Peace is so much more than absence of conflict; it means that we can be made whole again.

We have peace with God through Jesus. *“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”* (Romans 5:1).

Romans speaks of peace with God, the incredible gift that the birth of Christ gives us.

### 4. Because of what happened at Christmas, we live our lives as ones who bring peace.

- Because of the peace we received in Jesus we are called to live at peace with everyone: Romans 12:17-18, 8:6, 14:19, 15:13, Hebrews 12:14.
- Peace is part of the fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-23
- Jesus destroyed the barrier between people, making peace: Ephesians 2:14-18, 4:6-7, Colossians 1:20, 3:15, 3:12-15, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15, 2 Thessalonians 3:16
- We are called to be peacemakers Matthew 5:9

Ephesians 6:15 NLT, tells us to put on the shoes of peace that comes from the Good News. Jesus Christ was born so that we could be reconciled to God, reconciled to Shalom and that the Good News of the Gospel brings us peace that we walk out in the world around.

#### Ephesians 6:13-15 NLT

*“Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. <sup>14</sup>Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. <sup>15</sup>For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.”*

#### O Holy Night Lyrics

Truly He taught us to love one another  
His law is love and His gospel is peace  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother  
And in His name all oppression shall cease  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name

## Week 4a: Christmas Eve

### Weekly subtitle: LOVE: WAITING FOR THE LIGHT

**Date:** Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Christmas Eve

**Key point of this week:** Christmas Eve is the final night of Advent and we are waiting for the light of the world to come

**Key scriptures:** Luke 1:26-38, Luke 2:1-7

#### Historical context, commentary + supporting references:

Practically the world was still in darkness on this night awaiting the Messiah.  
In reality Jesus was still hidden within Mary's womb in darkness waiting to be revealed.

The Son of God was incarnate in Mary's womb for 9 months before he was born.  
Mary's journey to Bethlehem to birth the Saviour represents us all. Note the language in the birth announcement here, identified Mary's son with the Mighty God, Messiah of Israel described in Isaiah 9. This connects this week with our earlier message on Jesus as Prince of Peace. There is a constant thread in scripture that is connecting the prophecies about Messiah to the experience of the incarnation of Jesus. The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem was probably a four-day journey – it is about 133km. Joseph probably did not need to take Mary to pay the taxes, but it may have been he did not want to leave her in advanced pregnancy. This may also indicate that she lacked support in her community due to the nature of her pregnancy.

The journey to birth Jesus was not an easy one. On Christmas eve we commemorate their journey from beginning to end for his parents and for the world – waiting to see the Messiah revealed

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-luke-1/> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S42szZFGmZw>

*"The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come."*

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

#### Supporting points to key point:

##### Luke 1:26-38 (The Story of Mary)

*"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.'"*

<sup>29</sup> *Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.'*

<sup>34</sup> *"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*

<sup>35</sup> *The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called<sup>[a]</sup> the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail.”*

<sup>38</sup> *“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.*

The journey of Advent is almost done, tomorrow we will see the promise of the light of the world. Tonight, we journey with Mary and Joseph as they walk from the promise of a child to the birth. The journey wasn’t easy, the journey had its trials but what was sent by the love of the Father was carried by the love of a mother to fulfill the promises of God to the world.

## 1. God’s love for us, sent His Son to earth

### John 3:16

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

### 1 John 4:9-10 NIV

*“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”*

The birth of Jesus is the greatest expression of the love of God - that the Father would send the Son, that the Son would humble Himself to be born a man, by the power of the Spirit coming on a Jewish girl.

It was God’s love for us that caused Him to send His Son to earth (John 3:16); it was Mary’s love for her God that she said yes to carrying the promise. In Luke 1 God sends Gabriel to announce the plan to Mary. Imagine this moment; this girl engaged to be married is told that God has chosen her to carry the Son of God. What an incredible and life changing moment for this young girl. What a step of faith, it was her humble heart and love for God that drove her to accept.

## 2. It was Mary’s love for her God that gave her the courage to say yes

It was Mary’s love for God that gave Mary the courage to say yes to what was about to happen to her. She was about to be rejected by her fiancé, Joseph (remember God had to send an angel to fix this situation (Matthew 1:18-25) rejected by those around her for being pregnant and unmarried.

Yet she carried the promise of God in her womb, through the trials and tribulations, through the doubts and fears, the journey was not easy but remember the promise that Gabriel gave her “For no word from God will ever fail.” (Luke 1:37)

## 3. The journey to the promise is not easy

Mary and Joseph were waiting for a baby to be born. For the child to be revealed out of the darkness of Mary’s womb. The world was waiting for the Light to come, and it certainly wasn’t an easy journey.

### Luke 2:1-7 NIV

*“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.” (This was the first census that took place while<sup>[a]</sup> Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup> And everyone went to their own town to register.*

*<sup>4</sup>So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup>He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup>and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.”*

#### **4. Today our world is waiting for Light to come to them**

The light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness has not overcome. Jesus Christ is the light of the world and tomorrow we celebrate the coming of that light.

We are expectant and celebrating what will come tomorrow, the birth of our Saviour, the Messiah, the light of the world!

## Week 4b: Christmas Day

**Weekly subtitle: THE LIGHT HAS COME**

**Date:** Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Key point of this week:** Jesus is the light and today we celebrate his arrival and birth that changed the world forever.

**Key scriptures:** Isaiah 9:2, John 1:1-10. Key story: **Luke 2:22-38 NIV**

**Historical context, commentary + supporting references:**

The birth of Jesus, the Light of the World shows He is a light for revelation to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32). The whole world can walk in light, including those who have been in darkness.

*"Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man."*  
~ Pope Francis

Not only does Advent focus on the first coming of Jesus, but the Advent themes focus on the "comings" of Christ: His first coming in Bethlehem, as we mentioned, His continued 'coming' into our hearts, and His future Second Coming that we anticipate to see in the future.

**Supporting points to key point:**

### **Isaiah 9:2**

*"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."*

### **John 1:1-10**

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome<sup>[a]</sup> it."*

Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ as the true light of ALL mankind.

He is the only light that brings us into connection with the Father. He is the great Lighthouse. When we see His Light we experience peace in the storm, joy that we can see ahead and know the Father loved us enough to send the one who would be the Light to lead us home. He is the fulfillment of all the prophecies and the longing of mankind – He is the Light of the World.

Today we celebrate the promise fulfilled. Every promise of the first coming of Christ in the Old Testament was fulfilled 2000 years ago, over 300 prophecies. We should honour and celebrate the coming of the light to the Gentiles. We are now no longer in darkness, because we can have the light of God in us!

**The Wait is Fulfilled: Key Story Simeon**

## Luke 2:22-38 NIV

*"When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord<sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"<sup>[b]</sup>), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons.*

*"<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup> Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:*

*<sup>29</sup> "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,  
you may now dismiss<sup>[d]</sup> your servant in peace.*

*<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation,*

*<sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:*

*<sup>32</sup> **a light for revelation to the Gentiles,**  
and the glory of your people Israel."*

Simeon was waiting, expecting the light of Jesus to come to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel to be born. Imagine this moment when that expectation and waiting was fulfilled, when he held Jesus in his arms, praising God. That is the hope of Christmas morning, when the light has come, and we can rejoice. Not just a promise to Israel but a promise to all nations: of light, love, peace and joy!

Three things we get out of this story of Simeon.

### 1. The promise is fulfilled. The Light of the World has come.

Today we celebrate not just a baby being born – but the coming of the Light of the World. Just as Gabriel declared God's word will never fail, His promises are yes and Amen! Today, His promise that began in Genesis 3:15, is fulfilled, the light of the world has come.

## Isaiah 60:1

*"Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."*

## John 8:12

*"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

### 2. He is our salvation: we no longer walk in darkness.

In God's great love for us, He didn't want us to live in darkness, He wanted us to see him and know him.

## John 1:5-9

*"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."*

Without the Light we live in spiritual darkness – we are ignorant of who God is. Jesus was born to show us who God is.

Phillip Yancy says “Jesus is God with skin on”

### **Matthew 4:16**

*“the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”*

### **Psalms 27:1**

*“The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?”*

## **3. A light to all nations**

Jesus is the light of the world, so that we no longer live in darkness, but have the light. This promise was not just for one nation: Israel, but that all nations and all people will come to the light of Jesus.

### **John 9:5**

*“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*

### **John 12:46**

*“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”*

### **Isaiah 60:3**

*“Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.”*