

What Are You Waiting For?

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Advent is the season dedicated to preparing for the coming of Jesus.

Part 1

In churches that base their services around a liturgical year, that is, in those churches that divide the year into seasons, this is the Advent season. "Advent" means "coming." It is the season just before Christmas when the church puts special emphasis on the coming of the Jesus, as prophesied in the Bible. Let's begin our broadcast with Ellen White's commentary on some of these prophecies from chapter 58 of Prophets and Kings, titled, "The Coming of a Deliverer."

Through the long centuries ... marking the history of mankind from the day our first parents lost their Eden home, to the time the Son of God appeared as the Saviour of sinners, the hope of the fallen race was centered in the coming of a Deliverer to free men and women from the bondage of sin and the grave.

The first [hint] of such a hope was given to Adam and Eve in the sentence pronounced upon the serpent in Eden when the Lord declared to Satan in their hearing, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15.

... In the prophecy concerning the breaking of Satan's power they discerned a promise of deliverance from the ruin wrought through transgression. The Son of God was offering to atone with His own lifeblood for their transgression. To them was to be granted a period of probation, during which, through faith in the power of Christ to save, they might become once more the children of God.

...

This hope of redemption through the advent of the Son of God as Saviour and King, has never become extinct in the hearts of men. ... [It was] to the children of Israel, the chosen people through whom was to be given to the world the promised Messiah, [that] God imparted a knowledge of the requirements of His law, and of the salvation to be accomplished through the atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son.

The hope of Israel was embodied in the promise made at the time of the call of Abraham, and afterward repeated again and again to his posterity, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:3. ...

This same blessed hope was foreshadowed in the benediction pronounced by the dying patriarch Jacob upon his son Judah:

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise:
Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies;
Thy father's children shall bow down before thee. . . .

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come;
And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."
Genesis 49:8-10.

Again, on the borders of the Promised Land, the coming of the world's Redeemer was foretold in the prophecy uttered by Balaam:

"I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but
not nigh:
There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter
shall rise out of Israel,
And shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all
the children of Sheth."
Numbers 24:17.

... God's written word was given through the Hebrew prophets, ... words that outlined with unmistakable clearness Christ's work among men as a suffering sacrifice and as a conquering king. In the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures [we] read that the One who was to appear was to be "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "His visage . . . so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Isaiah 53:7; 52:14. The promised Saviour of humanity was to be "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; . . . smitten of God, and afflicted;" yet He was also to exercise His mighty power in order to "judge the poor of the people." He was to "save the children of the needy," and "break in pieces the oppressor." Isaiah 53:3, 4; Psalm 72:4. ...

The prophet Isaiah, looking with rapture upon this glorious deliverance, exclaimed:

"Unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given:
And the government shall be upon His shoulder:
And His name shall be called
Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God,
The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of His government and peace
there shall be no end,
Upon the throne of David,
And upon His kingdom,
To order it, and to establish it
With judgment and with justice
From henceforth even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."
Verses 6,7.

In the later centuries of Israel's history, prior to the first advent, it was generally understood that the coming of the Messiah was referred to in the prophecy, ... John the Baptist ... proclaimed, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet [Isaiah]." John 1:23.

...

The steadfast among the Jewish nation, descendants of that holy line through whom a knowledge of God had been preserved, strengthened their faith by dwelling on these and similar passages. With exceeding joy they read how the Lord would anoint One "to preach good tidings unto the meek," "to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives," and to declare "the acceptable year of the Lord." Isaiah 61:1, 2. ...

Of the treatment He was to receive, He prophesied, "Dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones: they look and stare upon Me. They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." Psalm 22:16-18.

... "it pleased the Lord to bruise" and to put to grief, in order that He might become "an offering for sin," ...

It was love for sinners that led Christ to pay the price of redemption. ...

...

It was further prophesied of the Messiah: ... The Son of God was to "magnify the law, and make it honorable." Verses 4, 21. He was not to lessen its importance and binding claims; He was rather to exalt it. ...

Through the promised Seed, the God of Israel was to bring deliverance to Zion. "There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good." Isaiah 11:1; 7:14, 15.

"And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: ... with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and His rest shall be glorious." Isaiah 11:2-5, 10.

"Behold the Man whose name is the Branch; . . . He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne." Zechariah 6:12, 13.

... Thus, through patriarchs and prophets, ... God spoke to the world concerning the coming of a Deliverer from sin. A long line of inspired prophecy pointed to the advent of "the Desire of all nations." Haggai 2:7. Even the very place of His birth and the time of His appearance were minutely specified.

The Son of David must be born in David's city. Out of Bethlehem, said the prophet, "shall He come forth ... that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Micah 5:2, margin.

"And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,
Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:
For out of thee shall come forth a Governor,
Which shall be Shepherd of My people Israel."
Matthew 2:6, R.V.

The time of the first advent and of some of the chief events clustering about the Saviour's lifework was made known by the angel Gabriel to Daniel. ... A starting point for this period is given: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be .. sixty-nine weeks... The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem ... went into effect in the autumn of 457 B.C. [See Ezra 6:14; 7:1, 9]. ... According to the prophecy, this period was to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One. In A.D. 27, Jesus at His baptism received the anointing of the Holy Spirit and soon afterward began His ministry. Then the message was proclaimed, "The time is fulfilled." Mark 1:15.

Then, said the angel, "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one [prophetic] week [seven literal years]." For seven years after the Saviour entered on His ministry, the gospel was to be preached especially to the Jews; for three and a half years by Christ Himself, and afterward by the apostles. "In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Daniel 9:27. In the spring of A.D. 31, Christ, the true Sacrifice, was offered on Calvary. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain, showing that the sacredness and significance of the sacrificial service had departed. The time had come for the earthly sacrifice and oblation to cease.

The one week--seven years--ended in A.D. 34. Then by the stoning of Stephen the Jews finally sealed their rejection of the gospel; the disciples who were scattered abroad by persecution "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4); and shortly after, Saul the persecutor was converted and became Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. ¹

Before we look at more of the prophecies about Jesus and how many of them He fulfilled, Let's listen to the Grace Lutheran Church Hand Bell Choir play, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel".

[music - Grace Lutheran Church Hand Bell Choir, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"]

Part 2

The Old Testament contains many Messianic prophecies. Some predicted the birth, ministry, and death of Jesus. Others predicted Jesus return in the clouds, sometime in the near, but unspecified future. Many of these prophecies were mentioned in the first segment of our broadcast. Let's look at some more.

Modern Christians are generally well aware of the prophecies about the birth of Jesus. Every Christmas we hear what the wise men were told in Matthew, chapter 2.

When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

¹ Ellen White, Prophets and Kings, "The Coming of a Deliverer", <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/pk/pk58.html>

**“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.” [Mt. 2:4-6]**

The prophecy the priests quoted was Micah 5:2.

Then, later in chapter 2, Matthew reminds us of the prophecy in Hosea 11:1.

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” [Mt 2:14-15]

This is followed immediately by the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:15.

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

**“A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.” [Mt 2:16-18]**

Modern Christians might smugly wonder how Jews could not see that Jesus is the promised Messiah based on these prophecies; but we must point out that many Jews in Jesus' day did see how Jesus' birth fulfilled these prophecies.

It is true that the leaders of the Jewish church rejected Jesus as the Messiah; but that was more likely based upon personal ambition than ignorance of the scriptures. The stoning of Stephen did mark the end of the prophetic period in which God proclaimed the Jewish religion to be the chosen instrument to proclaim His message, and the beginning of the ministry to the Gentiles. But although the orthodox Jewish church ceased to be God's church, the apostolic church God raised up in its place was composed almost entirely of sincere Jews.

That's why Matthew begins his Gospel with the long, boring genealogy that modern Christians tend to skip over. That genealogy was not boring to the Jews because it proved that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy concerning the ancestry of the Messiah. All the prophecies about the Messiah's birth, death, and ministry, must have been compelling in New Testament times because thousands of Jews became Christians on Pentecost, and for the next few years the church was really a sect of Judaism that accepted Jesus as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and rejected the corrupt priests as legitimate representatives of their God.

Acts 21:20 tells what happened when Paul went before the Apostles in Jerusalem.

When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: “You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. [Acts 21:20]

Yes, the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus, perhaps because of jealousy; but thousands of Jews accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah. And, they were zealous law keepers. They did not think that Jesus had abolished the law.

Acts 15:5 tells what happened more than 20 years after the crucifixion.

Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.” [Acts 15:5]

Some of the believers were Pharisees. Apparently there were enough of them that their concerns had to be addressed. They thought that new believers had to become Jews before they could become Christians.

As more and more Gentiles joined the church, Satan took the opportunity to use cultural differences to drive a wedge between Christians and Jews. This mutual hatred reached its peak in the Dark Ages. Satan used this hatred of the Jews to deceive Christians into declaring themselves free from the “Jewish” laws, including the Sabbath Commandment and requirement not to eat unclean meats.

But the Sabbath is one of God’s Ten Commandments, which has been in force since creation week. It isn’t a Jewish law—it’s God’s law. And, after Adam and Eve sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, God replaced the simple test of not eating from one tree by prohibiting certain other foods. God’s command not to eat unclean meat today is no different from His command not to eat the forbidden fruit back in the Garden of Eden.

Jesus said, as plainly as He could,

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew 5:17-19]

The prohibition against eating unclean meats might seem like “one of the least of these commands,” but Jesus sternly warned His listeners not to set it aside or teach others to set it aside.

If Jesus had abolished the law against eating unclean meats, or changed the Sabbath, there would have been no need for false witnesses to testify against Him at His mock trial. Centuries later, when a corrupt church made these very changes out of hatred for the Jews, Satan won a major victory.

We could spend the rest of this broadcast discussing the Messianic prophecies that Jesus fulfilled at His first coming and not cover them all. Instead, let’s move on to the prophecies that Jesus is about to fulfill.

Many of these remaining prophecies are found in the Old Testament, which many modern Christians ignore because Satan successfully introduced the idea into the church centuries ago that the Old Testament is just for the Jews. But these Old Testament prophecies were important enough for Jesus and His disciples to repeat them in the New Testament.

The book of Zephaniah, which is only three chapters long, is entirely devoted to the Day of the Lord, when Jesus will return. We encourage you to read all three chapters of Zephaniah, but here are a few

representative excerpts. Bear in mind that Zephaniah is only one of several prophets who foretold the second coming. They all say things like this:

**“I will sweep away everything
from the face of the earth,”**

declares the LORD.

**“I will sweep away both man and beast;
I will sweep away the birds in the sky
and the fish in the sea—
and the idols that cause the wicked to stumble.”**

**“When I destroy all mankind
on the face of the earth,”**

declares the LORD,

**“I will stretch out my hand against Judah
and against all who live in Jerusalem.**

**I will destroy every remnant of Baal worship in this place,
the very names of the idolatrous priests—**

those who bow down on the roofs

to worship the starry host,

those who bow down and swear by the LORD

and who also swear by Molek,

those who turn back from following the LORD

and neither seek the LORD nor inquire of him.” [Zephaniah 1:2-6]

Clearly this prophecy of universal destruction has not yet been fulfilled. It is still in the future. Perhaps even the near future. Please note that the worldwide destruction applies not only to unbelievers, but also to those who claim to be followers of God, but whose actions don't match their profession.

Here's more of what Zephaniah said:

Of Jerusalem I thought,

**‘Surely you will fear me
and accept correction!’**

**Then her place of refuge would not be destroyed,
nor all my punishments come upon her.**

**But they were still eager
to act corruptly in all they did.**

Therefore wait for me,”

declares the LORD,

“for the day I will stand up to testify.

I have decided to assemble the nations,

to gather the kingdoms

and to pour out my wrath on them—

all my fierce anger.

The whole world will be consumed

by the fire of my jealous anger.

“Then I will purify the lips of the peoples,

that all of them may call on the name of the LORD

and serve him shoulder to shoulder.

From beyond the rivers of Cush

**my worshipers, my scattered people,
will bring me offerings.
On that day you, Jerusalem, will not be put to shame
for all the wrongs you have done to me,
because I will remove from you
your arrogant boasters.
Never again will you be haughty
on my holy hill. [Zephaniah 3:7-11]**

The Jews apparently thought that their relationship would save them. God promises that haughty people will be removed from His fellowship despite their arrogant boasts that they are children of Abraham—God's chosen people.

Sadly there are some modern Christians who are trusting in their claim to be children of God to save them. But Jesus knows his followers by their fruit, not their words.

Zephaniah did have some good news for the few faithful believers who would be left on the Earth when Jesus returns.

**But I will leave within you
the meek and humble.
The remnant of Israel
will trust in the name of the LORD.
They will do no wrong;
they will tell no lies.
A deceitful tongue
will not be found in their mouths.
They will eat and lie down
and no one will make them afraid.”
Sing, Daughter Zion;
shout aloud, Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!
The LORD has taken away your punishment,
he has turned back your enemy.
The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you;
never again will you fear any harm.
...
At that time I will deal
with all who oppressed you.
I will rescue the lame;
I will gather the exiles.
I will give them praise and honor
in every land where they have suffered shame.
At that time I will gather you;
at that time I will bring you home.
I will give you honor and praise
among all the peoples of the earth
when I restore your fortunes
before your very eyes,”**

says the LORD. [Zephaniah 3:12-15, 19-20]

The Old Testament is full of passages like these which are largely ignored by modern Christians who think the Old Testament has been replaced by the New Testament. So, let's hear what the New Testament says. Matthew tells us,

Leaving Nazareth, [Jesus] went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

**“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—
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.”**

**From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”
[Matthew 4:13-17]**

Matthew said that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies by preaching a Last Days Judgment message.

One of the last sermons Jesus gave is recorded in Matthew 24. In it, He quotes Isaiah's prophecy of the second coming.

For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

**“Immediately after the distress of those days
“the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.””**

Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. [Matthew 24:27-31]

Clearly Jesus taught that the Old Testament prophecies about The Day of the Lord should not be neglected by His followers.

In the introductory paragraph of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul said,

He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [1 Corinthians 1:8]

Later in that same letter, Paul told the Corinthians to punish a man who was in an openly incestuous relationship “so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.” [1 Corinthians 5:5]

And Paul told the Thessalonians,

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. [1 Thessalonians 5:1-3]

Preparation for the Day of the Lord is an important New Testament teaching that permeates the gospels and epistles.

The intentionally ambiguous title of this broadcast is, “What Are You Waiting For?” Usually, a question like this really means, “WHY are you waiting?” That’s certainly an important question, and it should be addressed, too; but that’s not the question the title asks. Let me ask it again. “WHAT are you waiting for?”

Are you waiting for a Santa Claus Messiah? Are you waiting for a Messiah who is making a list, but not checking it very carefully, who isn’t going to make a distinction between who’s naughty and nice? Is the Messiah you are waiting for going to let you go on sinning and protect you from the consequences of your sin because He loves everyone too much to punish them?

Are you waiting for a baby Messiah who is powerless to do anything, good or bad, who comes every December and just lays there in a manger? Are you waiting for a baby Messiah who makes merchants put things on sale, gives choirs an excuse to sing happy songs, and then disappears for 11 months?

Are you waiting for nothing at all? Do you expect to live a shallow, miserable life until your body finally gives out, and then lose consciousness forever?

Or, are you waiting for a Messiah who is coming to judge the quick and the dead, just as the Old and New Testaments say? Are you waiting for a Messiah who will utterly destroy all unrepentant sinners, and give the righteous new glorious bodies and an eternal home on a recreated Earth, free of sin?

If you are waiting for a Santa Clause Messiah, a helpless baby Messiah, or nobody, then there really is no need to wait. That Messiah isn’t coming. But if you are waiting for Jesus—the real Jesus described in the Bible—then you need to get ready. You need to be one of the righteous believers living a new life in Christ, not an unrepentant sinner doomed to eternal destruction.

If you have not yet accepted Christ, and are not yet living a new victorious life in His power, then the title of this broadcast takes on the second meaning. Why are you waiting? Why are you waiting to accept Christ as your savior? Why risk waiting too long, and not being ready when Jesus comes again?

So, as you hear the Christmas music and see the Christmas decorations this Advent season, ask yourself, “WHAT are you waiting for?” And possibly, “What are you WAITING for?”

Let’s close our broadcast now as Kimmie Witzel and JoAn Witzel perform “Are You Ready For Jesus to Come?”

[music – Kimmie Witzel and JoAn Witzel, “Are You Ready For Jesus to Come?”]