

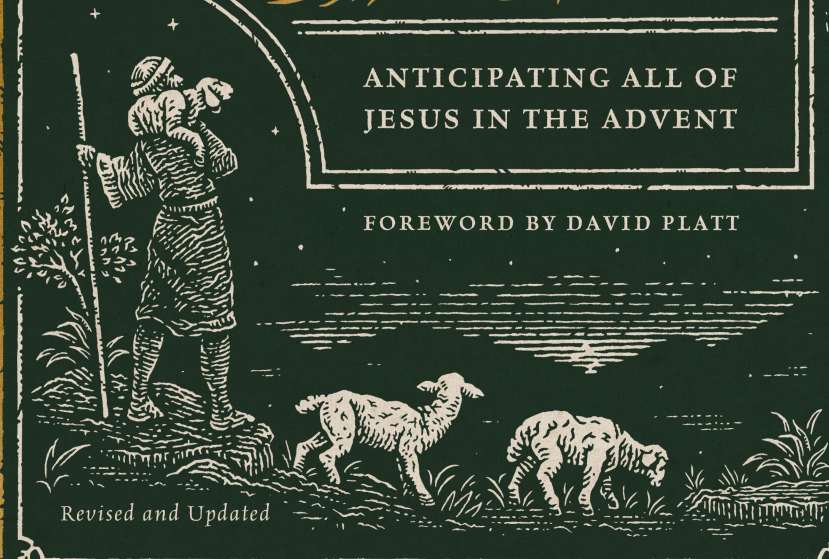


SCOTT JAMES

The
EXPECTED
One

ANTICIPATING ALL OF
JESUS IN THE ADVENT

FOREWORD BY DAVID PLATT



Revised and Updated

The
EXPECTED
One

The title is presented in a stylized, hand-drawn font. The word "The" is in a cursive script at the top left. Below it, the word "EXPECTED" is written in large, bold, block letters, contained within a white banner with a black, hand-drawn border. The banner has a slight curve. The word "One" is in a cursive script at the bottom right. The entire title is decorated with golden-brown wheat stalks and leaves, with some stalks appearing to grow from the banner.

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For my son, Will.
Always look to Him—the Joy
of every longing heart.

THE ORDER OF THINGS



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FOREWORD



BY DAVID PLATT

When we consider the mystery and majesty of God during Christmas, we realize that the birth of His Son and our Savior did not randomly appear on the pages of human history. Instead, over a period spanning more than a thousand years, God provided hundreds of prophecies concerning the coming of Christ, and on that evening in a stable in Bethlehem, the heavens and the earth witnessed the culmination of those promises from God to His people.

In light of these prophecies, it is extremely helpful for followers of Christ to pause before Christmas and consider the promises that preceded Christ's birth. Further, it is deeply

meaningful for God's people to gather together with family and/or friends in the days leading up to December 25 simply to contemplate the glory of the baby to whom all of history pointed and around whom all of history revolves. Jesus has come, Jesus has died, Jesus has risen, and Jesus will forever reign! Certainly these are themes worthy of our reflection.

For this reason, I enthusiastically recommend *The Expected One*, an Advent guide that one of the pastors at The Church at Brook Hills, Scott James, has written. It can be used in many different ways, whether alone, with your family, with friends, in a small group, or even as a church altogether. Scott faithfully serves children and their parents at Brook Hills, and he has written with a keen eye specifically aimed on fostering faith in the hearts of children. Ultimately, my prayer is that as you walk through this material (and most importantly the Scriptures referenced herein), you might feel in a fresh way the sense

of anticipation that captivated God's people who waited for Christ in the past, and that you might experience in a new way the sheer exhilaration that compels God's people to worship Christ in the present. ✦

INTRODUCTION: “HE’S COMING!”

This shout of anticipation is the heart of Advent, the time of year when we look forward to the birth of Jesus Christ. As we prepare our hearts during the weeks leading up to Christmas Day, we have an opportunity to reflect upon God’s priceless gift to us: the child Jesus. Rejoicing in Jesus’ birth certainly brings glory to God, but sometimes we can forget that God didn’t just send a child into the world; He sent a mighty Rescuer!

The image of the baby in the manger should fill our hearts with praise because we know what that baby would grow up to accomplish—He would save His people from their sins. This story is not just for those of us who live *after* Jesus’ time, though. The people of God have

always known what Jesus' mission would be. How did they know about this divine rescue plan before Jesus actually came? Because God promised the whole plan to them, and every single part of it was designed to become true in Jesus. He truly was the *Expected One*.

No, God didn't just promise His people that a miracle child would be born. He also promised that this child would grow up to be the loving Shepherd of His people, the place-switching Sacrifice, the resurrected Lord, and the righteous King who reigns in glory forever. But there is yet another promise: this King is coming back for His people! As we celebrate the first coming of the Expected One during Advent, let's also look forward in hopeful anticipation of His second coming. Let's keep in mind the whole picture of who Jesus is, worshipping Him as the fulfillment of all of God's promises to us, "For every one of God's promises is 'Yes' in Him" (2 Cor. 1:20).

The Old Testament passages laid out here are meant to guide you through the wide range of promises God gave us regarding His Son. They are by no means comprehensive, and not every one of them was a direct prophecy of Christ. Some were simply a sign of what was to come. All of them do, however, point to Jesus, collectively unfolding the promises of His long-awaited coming, His marvelous birth, His blameless life, His agonizing death, His glorious resurrection, and His reign as the eternal King of all. In order to express these truths, the passages here are arranged into six parts to reflect the glory of these different aspects of God's promises like a multifaceted jewel.

This book is primarily designed for families with children, but my hope is that anyone wanting to meditate deeply on the coming of Christ will find it helpful. Each day has a passage of Scripture accompanied by a brief explanation to help us "Trace the Thread" of God's unfolding

plan throughout the Old Testament. These devotional thoughts are intentionally concise and are designed to prompt your own time of reflection, discussion, and prayer. Each day therefore also includes a series of questions and prayer points to guide the whole family through the weeks of Advent. There are “Connect with Kids” questions to help foster thought and conversation during family worship (along with suggested answers given in parentheses to help parents guide the discussion). You’ll also find an additional question to help guide people of all ages into “Further Reflection,” as well as a call to prayer in the form of a “Prayer Point” that connects to the day’s passage.

If you are using these devotionals with your family, consider having a set time each day when you slow down, gather together, and worship God as a family. Perhaps sing a favorite hymn or carol before diving into the day’s passage and discussion. However you use your time together,

it is my prayer that this Advent season will be one of rich, gospel-centered reflection for you and your family as you make much of Christ. ✦

For a free guide to help with family worship, please go to www.theexpectedonebook.com for suggested ideas.



PART ONE

The
PROMISE
of
HIS
COMING

DECEMBER 1



GENESIS 3:15

I will put hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring. He
will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

TRACE THE THREAD

Although His perfect creation had just been corrupted by the arrival of sin, God promised that sin and Satan would not have the final victory. The Rescuer would come to crush Satan, ending the rebellion he led against God. His people may have been under the curse of sin, but God promised them that He would fight for them and win them back to Himself.



CONNECT
WITH
KIDS

Hostility means that two things are against each other. What set God and Satan against each other?

*Satan turned against God,
and then tempted man to do the same.*

Who does this verse say will defeat Satan in the end?

The offspring of woman—this points to Jesus.

How does it make you feel knowing that God has already written the end of the story?

It gives us confidence that God is in control.

FURTHER REFLECTION

Christ is our great Victor, defeating an enemy that we never could. Knowing that He intercedes on our behalf (Romans 8:34), meditate on what this means to you.

PRAYER POINT



Take some time to praise God for His perfect plan to rescue us from our sin and rebellion. Tell Him how grateful you are that, in Christ, the victory is won. ♦

DECEMBER 2



ISAIAH 11:1

Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

TRACE THE THREAD

God chose the nation of Israel to be the people through whom the Rescuer would come. Because of their disobedience, God sometimes referred to Israel as a cut-down tree. From this stump, God promised that the Rescuer would shoot forth like a fruitful branch from the family of an Israelite named Jesse.



CONNECT
WITH
KIDS

To what nation did Jesse belong?

The nation of Israel.

A new branch sprouting out of a tree stump is a picture of life coming from death. Can you think of any other examples of life coming from death?

Parents, talk with your children about how spring follows winter, or how a dead stalk of wheat carries the seeds for next year's harvest. Then lead your discussion to the ultimate example: Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

FURTHER REFLECTION

Imagine watching and waiting for a fresh shoot to grow out of an old stump. Think about the anticipation, and perhaps even the doubt, that the Israelites may have felt as they watched and waited for their Savior. How do you feel as you wait for His second coming?

PRAYER POINT



Ask God to fill your heart with hopeful anticipation as you long for His return. ♦

DECEMBER 3



JEREMIAH 23:5

—

“Look, the days are coming”—this is the LORD’s declaration—“when I will raise up a Righteous Branch for David. He will reign wisely as king and administer justice and righteousness in the land.”

—

TRACE THE THREAD

King David, the son of Jesse, was Israel's greatest king. He was a man after God's own heart, but he was not a perfect king. One day, there would come another king from the line of David whose reign would be marked by perfect righteousness.



CONNECT
WITH
KIDS

Righteousness means doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong. Who determines what is right and wrong?

God does. So, being righteous means obeying God.

Yesterday's verse spoke of a branch coming out of the stump of Jesse. David was Jesse's son; he was a good king, but he was not perfectly righteous. He still sinned. Can you think of a king from David's family who never sinned?

King Jesus.

How was it possible for Jesus to live without sinning?

Because Jesus is God.

FURTHER REFLECTION

In John 15:5 we are also called branches. We are described as being joined to the true vine, Jesus. How does it impact your daily walk to know that you are united with Jesus in this way?

PRAYER POINT



Thank God for His perfect righteousness. Thank Him that, through faith in Christ, He gives us credit for that righteousness. ♦

DECEMBER 4



EZEKIEL 34:23

I will establish over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will tend them himself and will be their shepherd.

TRACE THE THREAD

This righteous, coming King would watch closely over His people and protect them. Just like King David, He would be a servant of God and a great Shepherd who cared for His flock.



CONNECT
WITH
KIDS

David was a caring shepherd. Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd. How is Jesus our Shepherd?

He feeds, cares for, and protects His people—those who trust in Him.

How does it feel knowing that Jesus is caring for you in this way?

Parents, open up with your children about the deep comfort that comes from your relationship with Jesus.

FURTHER REFLECTION

Sheep cannot always see the hand of the shepherd at work. Can you think back to any instances when you did not appreciate God's leading or protection until after the fact?

PRAYER POINT



Ask God to help you grow in your dependence on Him, as a sheep looks to its shepherd. Ask Him to give you a greater awareness of the loving care He provides for you every day. ♦

DECEMBER 5



ZECHARIAH 3:8-9

“Listen . . . I am about to bring my servant, the Branch . . . and I will take away the iniquity of this land in a single day.”

TRACE THE THREAD

God said His Servant would shoot up like a branch from among His people, but He would not come only to rule over them. He would also come to take away the penalty for their rebellion against God. He would show how great God is by rescuing His people from their sin.



CONNECT
WITH
KIDS

Iniquity means sinfulness. How had God's people sinned against Him?

They had rebelled against His rule by disobeying Him.

How have we sinned against God?

Parents, talk with your children about specific ways we all disobey God's law. Let them know that you sin too and are in need of a great Savior.

How could all of this iniquity be taken away in a single day?

Because Jesus was punished for our sins all at once when He died on the cross.

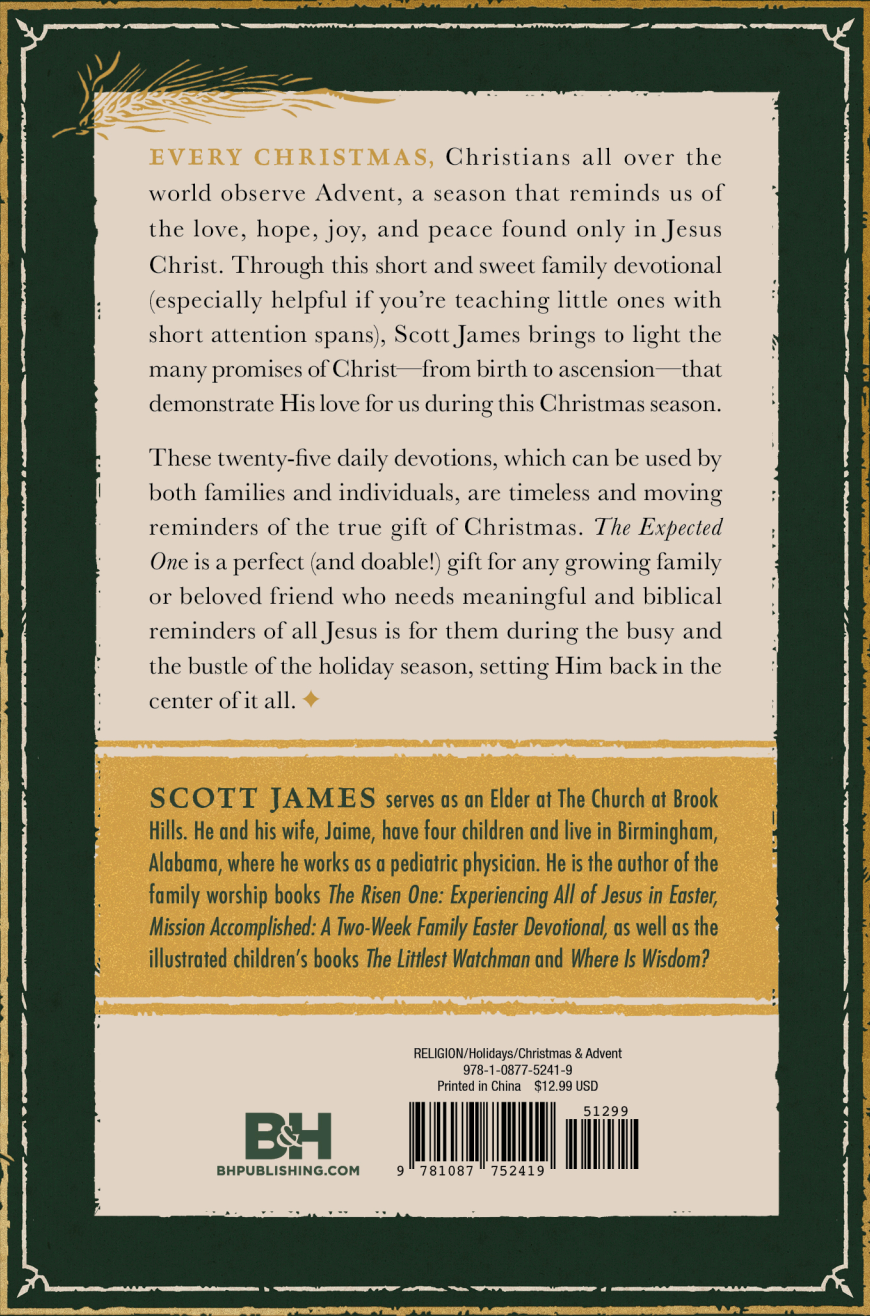
FURTHER REFLECTION

The penalty for sin has already been paid, but we are not yet free from its presence. What tensions do you feel between these two truths? If God has declared you righteous in Christ, how is that truth encouraging you to grow in personal righteousness as well?

PRAYER POINT



Take some time to praise God for the astonishing fact that He sent His Son Jesus to rescue us from our sin. ♦



EVERY CHRISTMAS, Christians all over the world observe Advent, a season that reminds us of the love, hope, joy, and peace found only in Jesus Christ. Through this short and sweet family devotional (especially helpful if you're teaching little ones with short attention spans), Scott James brings to light the many promises of Christ—from birth to ascension—that demonstrate His love for us during this Christmas season.

These twenty-five daily devotions, which can be used by both families and individuals, are timeless and moving reminders of the true gift of Christmas. *The Expected One* is a perfect (and doable!) gift for any growing family or beloved friend who needs meaningful and biblical reminders of all Jesus is for them during the busy and the bustle of the holiday season, setting Him back in the center of it all. ♦

SCOTT JAMES serves as an Elder at The Church at Brook Hills. He and his wife, Jaime, have four children and live in Birmingham, Alabama, where he works as a pediatric physician. He is the author of the family worship books *The Risen One: Experiencing All of Jesus in Easter*, *Mission Accomplished: A Two-Week Family Easter Devotional*, as well as the illustrated children's books *The Littlest Watchman* and *Where Is Wisdom?*

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