



# THE PROMISED ONE

*Advent Readings from Christianity Today*

2022

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*The Promised One: Advent Readings from Christianity Today*  
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Christianity Today, 465 Gundersen Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188  
ChristianityToday.com

Printed in the U.S.A.

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# Christ, the Everlasting Lord

KELLI B. TRUJILLO



**O**f all the common signs of this season leading up to Christmas—lights strung upon homes, Nativity scenes set out on display, trees decorated with ornaments—the one I most look forward to is the music. The songs of Advent and Christmas invite us to picture the familiar events: the holy family at the crèche, angels singing to awestruck shepherds, wise men journeying toward the “little town” of Bethlehem. These beloved hymns and carols warm our hearts.

Yet within many of our favorites are woven lyrics that break through our familiarity and declare an astonishing theological reality: The newborn in the manger *is the Mighty God*.

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing” and “We Three Kings” exhort us to comprehend who this infant truly is: “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity.” “Glorious now

behold him arise; King and God and sacrifice.”

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” sounds out this profound paradox in simple words: “Born a child and yet a King.” These lyrics resound with the truth of Isaiah 9:6-7: This child is the Promised One who will reign eternally on David’s throne, establishing his kingdom of justice, righteousness, and peace.

It’s an unfathomable mystery the New Testament also invites us to dwell upon. The author of Hebrews proclaims, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory” and the “heir of all things” (1:2-3). Paul emphasizes that “in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. . . . In him all things hold together” (Col. 1:16-17). Jesus Christ is supreme over all things and the fullness of God dwells in him.

This is the promised child God’s people awaited and whose birth we are preparing to celebrate. This is the Lord for whom God sent a messenger to prepare the way, preaching a message of repentance. This is the Savior who, in his mission of love and redemption, would defeat the power of sin and death through his sacrifice on the cross and victorious resurrection. And this is the one whose return we await in hope, trusting in “the King of kings and Lord

of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:15-16).

This reality—that the child in the crèche is the Mighty God—is far beyond what we can fully comprehend. *And yet it is true*. In awe and humility, we heed the exhortation in “Oh Holy Night”—“Fall on your knees!” In humble gratitude, we worship him.

Let all within us praise his  
holy name.  
Christ is the Lord! O praise  
his name forever!  
His power and glory  
evermore proclaim!  
His power and glory  
evermore proclaim!

*Ponder* Isaiah 9:6-7;  
Colossians 1:15-20; and  
Hebrews 1:1-12.  
*Optional: Also read*  
1 Timothy 6:13-16.

Which description of Jesus’ might and power in these passages draws your attention? Why? How can this truth shape your worship this Advent season?

*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.*

ISAIAH 9:6

# The Greatest Hope of All

GLENN PACKIAM

Imagine a boy being bullied on the playground. Kids surround him, taunt him, push him onto the ground. He’s fighting back the tears, but that’s about all he can fight; there’s no way to stop the terror and the torment.

Then, almost out of nowhere, a car pulls up. It’s the kid’s father. “Get in the car, son,” the dad yells. Rolling out of the other kids’ grasp, the boy scrambles to his feet and stumbles to the car. They speed off. As the boy looks briefly out the window, he is sure the bullies are laughing. The boy is safe, but there’s no way to count that as a win. An evacuation is not a victory.

The end of the Book of Revelation—the end of the Bible itself—shows us a picture not of our evacuation or escape but of God’s arrival. Jesus conquered sin and death on the cross. In John’s

gospel, Jesus said from the cross, “It is finished” (19:30). Here, in John’s revelation, the one who is seated on the throne says, “It is done.” The first statement was an announcement of completion; the second is a proclamation of things coming to pass. The victory of Jesus on the cross was made manifest in his resurrection, but it will arrive in fullness at his return.

We know that the season of Advent is a time of waiting between two arrivals. But the truth is, it is also a waiting between two *victories*. Jesus the Mighty One has overcome, and Jesus the Mighty One is coming again.

And when he comes, he comes to *dwell*. The vision of the end that Revelation provides is of God making heaven and earth new, uniting the new heaven and the new earth as one, and filling it with his presence





# A Vision of Peace

CAROLYN ARENDS

*Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.*

ISAIAH 2:4

Perhaps the greatest evidence that the Promised One is the Mighty God is this: He is the one—the *only* one—with a power great enough to bring lasting peace. He not only brings peace, he *is* peace. The Prince of Peace.

We are, of course, accustomed to a world in which peace is maddeningly elusive. In 2003, journalist Chris Hedges set out to determine whether there have been any sustained periods of peace on the human record. Defining *war* as any “active conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives,” he reviewed 3,400 years of history and discovered just 268 war-free years. In other words, approximately 92 percent of recorded history is marked by active conflict.

Of course, the people of ancient Israel did not need a journalist to tell them that human existence is plagued by wars and rumors of wars. They had



plenty of firsthand, trauma-inducing experience with conflict, violence, and oppression. What they *did* need was a prophet who could provide them with a vision of peace vivid enough to counter the horrific images already seared into their memories.

Isaiah brought them—and us—just such a vision. Consider the images in the second chapter of Isaiah. All the nations come streaming together to the mountain of God. That’s where they discover that the supposed dichotomy between peace and justice has been false all along. The Lord brings peace *through* justice. He judges between the nations and settles disputes, resolving not only wars but also their underlying causes.

And then watch what happens when humans find themselves in the presence of the Prince of Peace: The swords and spears they’ve brought to the mountain—weapons they’ve

long assumed were necessary to their survival—seem suddenly out of place. The people lay down their arms. But the Prince of Peace has something even more beautiful in mind. Soon, the people are working together to convert their weapons into gardening tools. Human ingenuity is redeemed and redirected from destructive ends to creative ends.

Isaiah is not naive. He has seen the brutality that can and does characterize the human condition. But he’s also caught a glimpse of the verdant, vibrant, peace-infused future the Prince of Peace has planned for his creation. It’s the sort of vision that gives a weary prophet hope—a vision about the sort of prince who will one day cause angels to exclaim, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14).

*Meditate on* Isaiah 2:1-5 and 9:6-7.

What most strikes you about Isaiah’s vision of peace? How does this hope speak into our world today? Pray, expressing praise to the promised Prince of Peace.

## Jesus Is Our Peace

KELLY M. KAPIC

Two truths can be in conflict, and yet if they *are* true, we need to affirm them both.

First, our world is filled with genuine pain and trouble. As the Old Testament prophets warned, our rebellion against God has twisted us and our world. To pretend otherwise is to be naive at best or hard-hearted at worst. God doesn't ask us to lie about the hardships of life.

Second, Jesus is our peace—not in a cheap or cheesy way but in an earthy, knowing, cosmos-altering way. He is the only answer to this pain and trouble. Sent by the Father in the power of the Spirit, the Son of God became fully and truly human. This God of peace breaks into our broken world as

one of us and starts a renewed world, realizing the ancient prophetic hope. “He himself is our peace,” since “in his flesh” he breaks down the “dividing wall of hostility”—not just between the sinner and God, but also between Jew and Gentile, male and female, rich and poor, heaven and earth (Gal. 3:28; Col. 1:15–22).

And these two truths clash.

Jesus is our peace, not merely in some psychological manner, but also in a concrete, whole-life way. He is our peace, not by numbing us, but by forgiving and healing us and enfold-ing us into in his love and life. Even in the darkness of night and when confusion, doubt, and chaos swirl, Jesus still says, “Do not let your hearts be





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## Ideas for Families

### THROUGHOUT ADVENT

- With teens or preteens, read and discuss the devotions together each evening. With younger kids, focus on just the Scripture passages and reflection prompts.
- Begin a family journal for Advent. At the top of each page, write, “Jesus is . . .” After reading and discussing the day’s passage, invite family members to write a phrase or sentence or doodle an image to record their ideas about Jesus.

### ANY TIME DURING ADVENT

- Put a simple puzzle together as a family *without* using a picture of the puzzle’s completed image. Afterward, discuss how seeing parts of the puzzle come together helped you see the big picture more clearly. Discuss how the Bible’s promises help us develop a fuller picture of who Jesus is.
- Play Who Am I? (also called 20 Questions) as a family. Discuss how the more we learn, the easier it is to identify or recognize someone. Talk about how Scripture’s promises about Jesus help us understand his identity.

### WEEK 1: MIGHTY GOD

- Look together at baby pictures of each family member. Discuss the limitations and abilities of a human newborn. Explore how amazing it is that Jesus—the Mighty God—was born as a human infant.
- Use Legos, building blocks, or other craft supplies to create a castle. Talk together about the eternal kingdom and reign of God using ideas in Revelation 21:1–4.

### WEEK 2: PRINCE OF PEACE

- Create placemats to use during Advent by coloring maps of the world. Discuss the idea that Jesus’ peace and the salvation he offers are for the whole world—for people of all nations, languages, and cultures.
- Invite everyone to name injustices, wrongs, sorrows, fears, or instances of violence in the world today that they long for Jesus to put right. Write them on pieces of construction paper. Together, tear those papers up, then glue the pieces together (text side down) in the shape of a cross to represent the ultimate peace Jesus will bring.

### WEEK 3: LIGHT OF THE WORLD

- Go stargazing or look online at pictures from NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope. Discuss how light breaks through darkness—and how Jesus is like a light to us, shining even during dark times.
- Talk together about sharing the light of Jesus with others. Purchase glowsticks together and create tags with a simple message your children want to share, like “Jesus is the Light of the World. Jesus loves you!” Then walk or drive to nearby homes to give them to friends and neighbors.

### WEEK 4: IMMANUEL

- As you walk through the stories and experiences of people in the Nativity, bring their experiences to life by discussing these questions together: What do you imagine this person felt, thought, or wondered? How do you imagine you’d react if you were in their place? Why?
- Make simple yarn or bead bracelets together and wear them daily during the week. Encourage your kids to remember this truth every time they see it: *God is with us*, right here, right now.