

Reflection Questions

1. Prophecy is a timely word from God for the people of God. Reflect on a time when you received a prophetic word. How did you respond initially? What impact has that word had on you?
2. Read Isaiah 53:4-7. What parts of this passage resonate most with you? Consider journaling your responses and reflections on this passage.
3. What is one thing you can do (alone or with your family) this Christmas to focus on Christ and the hope of His return?

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth:

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent and convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief:

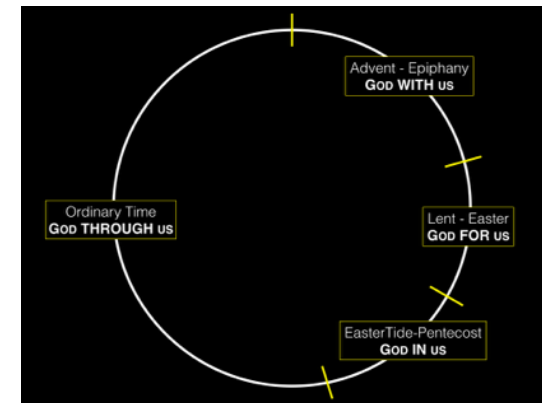
Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.



Isaiah 53
November 29, 2015

Advent

At Emmaus, we join churches around the world and throughout history as we recognize the major seasons of the Christian calendar. The Christian calendar helps us mark time according to the life of Christ. Each season has a major theological theme as illustrated in this picture:



Advent is the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. It is meant to be a season of looking back and looking forward. We look back and remember with joy the coming of the Messiah at the first Christmas. We look forward and eagerly anticipate His coming again.

Advent celebrates the truth that God is with us!

NOTES:

The Nature of Prophecy

Prophecy is often *misunderstood* as only future-telling. This turns the prophet into someone who has the inside track on the future and is responsible to share their inside knowledge with others. However, the purpose of prophecy is not to know tomorrow's headlines today!

Prophecy, properly understood, is a timely word from God for the people of God (and that word is often regarding the future). This means that prophecy has to do with our lives today. The prophet, then, is a voice of hope, life, or conviction as he (or she) speaks the words of God.

Whenever we come to prophetic writings, we must always look for what these words would have meant to the original audience. Are these words of hope, warning, or a call to repentance? Are these words convicting, correcting, or encouraging? Whatever they meant to the first audience, they will mean for us as well.

Prophecy is a timely word from God for the people of God. This means that anytime you've heard a line from a song, truth in a sermon, or challenge from a book and it "landed" on your heart - that was prophetic in your life.

Isaiah's Vision

"He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. -Isaiah 53:5 (NIV)

Isaiah prophesied in a world where each person bore the weight of their guilt before God. But he anticipated a day when a Suffering Servant would come. This One would take on the sin of all people so that they would no longer be declared guilty and their sin would be wiped away once and for all.

We now live in anticipation that what was accomplished on the cross be fully realized in our world. We live with hope and anticipation of the day when all things will be made new, the world will be at peace, violence will cease, and heaven and earth will become one!

Having experienced on a personal level the forgiveness of Christ, we look forward to the day when the effect of His death and resurrection will work its way to every corner of the earth!

NOTES:

Prayer

*O God of all the prophets,
you herald the coming of the Son of Man
by wondrous signs in the heavens and on the earth.
Guard our hearts from despair so that we,
in the company of the faithful
and by the power of your Holy Spirit,
may be found ready to raise our heads
at the coming near of our redemption,
the day of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*(Source: Revised Common Lectionary, Year C, Advent,
First Sunday of Advent, Scripture ([http://
lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/](http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/)))*