

Advent is a pretty common element of the Christmas season but there are so many nuances of Advent that we don't often think about. The word "advent" does not appear in our Bible but it is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming" which in Greek is the word *Parousia* (arrival, or official visit).

Historically, Advent was thought of differently. John Holcomb (Christianity.com) explained the early church's mindset of Advent anticipated baptizing new believers at the Feast of Epiphany. It was preceded by 40 days of fasting, prayer and penance and had little to do with Christ's birth. By the sixth century the church was connecting advent to Christ's second coming. It would be hard for us to think of Christ's first coming with fasting with our cultural practices of massive consumption.

The beauty of Advent is not when Jesus was coming but the fact that Jesus even came. It never ceases to amaze me that God became flesh and dwelt among us. Mankind's sin did not warrant such mercy and yet God demonstrated His lavish love by sending His Son (Phil. 3:6-11). What a staggering "coming to grips with reality" moment to be one of the disciples when they realized the person inside this common flesh and blood body, was the God of the universe (Matt. 16:16). By the way Jesus was treated it is even more staggering that He will come again, but the fact that He will return as a conquering King makes sense.

We can humbly choose to bow to Him now, or we can wait until there is no choice.

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