

Christmas

Advent 1 : God's Promise to the Patriarchs

Foundation

Bible passage: Genesis 18.18 etc. & Gal 3.8-9

Advent is the time leading up to Christmas. It has come to be seen as a time for preparing for Christmas, but originally, it was a time to remember the promises of God about the coming of Jesus and the promises of Jesus that He will come again. In the past Christmas festivities only began on Christmas Eve, after Advent, and went on for 12 days. Nowadays some people are fed up with the festivities by the time Christmas comes and some put their decorations away when it begins!

“God...preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’”

On the First Sunday in Advent people have remembered the promises of God to the Patriarchs. That is to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who lived about 4,000 years ago. God made three main promises. First, when Abraham had no children and looked like he would have none, God promised he would have lots of descendants. Second, when Abraham had no land, God promised him a land of his own. Third, God promised that through him all the nations of the world would be blessed.

In the Old Testament we can see how the first two promises came true but for two thousand years nobody really knew what the third promise was about. It was only when Jesus came that the meaning of the promise became clear. Jesus sent



His disciples into the world with a message about Him. That is why lots of people became followers of Jesus, became known as Christians and eventually began to specially celebrate the birth of Christ, calling it Christmas.

The disciples told people that through Jesus they could find forgiveness for their sins, that they could have a new life, and find peace with God, and so a sure hope for the future. Therefore, in Galatians chapter 3 verse 8 and 9 we are told that as people believe in Jesus, they become people of faith, like Abraham, and so are blessed along with Abraham.

Prayer at the lighting of the first candle

God of Abraham and Sarah, and all the patriarchs of old, you are our Father too. Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of David. Help us in preparing to celebrate His birth. As we remember your promises help us to put our faith and trust in Jesus to tell others of why He came, and to wait for His return. We ask this through Jesus Christ, the light who is coming into the world. Amen.



Advent reminds us that, as God promised Abraham, people from all nations are blessed as they put their faith in Jesus.