

4-SESSION BIBLE STUDY  
WITH VIDEO ACCESS

*The*  
WONDER  
OF ADVENT

DELIGHTING IN THE HOPE, JOY,  
PEACE, AND LOVE OF CHRISTMAS

LIFEWAY WOMEN

*With Music by* ADRIENNE CAMP

# *The* WONDER OF ADVENT

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PEACE, AND LOVE OF CHRISTMAS



LIFEWAY WOMEN

*With Music by* ADRIENNE CAMP

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## **EDITORIAL TEAM, LIFEWAY WOMEN BIBLE STUDIES**

*Becky Loyd*

Director, Lifeway Women

*Tina Boesch*

Manager, Lifeway  
Women Bible Studies

*Chelsea Waack*

Production Leader

*Laura Magness*

Content Editor

*Tessa Morrell*

Production Editor

*Lauren Ervin*

Graphic Designer

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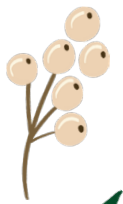
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# How to use this study



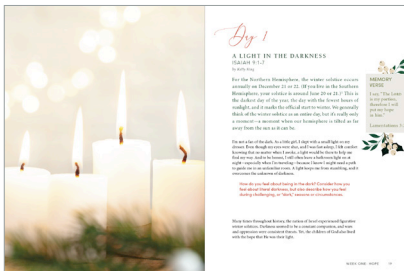
## WATCH

Each video features music from Adrienne Camp; an Advent-themed Scripture reading and candle lighting; and a brief teaching time. Watch the video at the start of your week, before you do the personal Bible study, and take notes on the **WATCH** pages.



## DISCUSS

Each session includes a **DISCUSS** page. If you are part of a *The Wonder of Advent* Bible study group, this is where you can take notes during your group time and jot down any prayer requests mentioned.



## PERSONAL STUDY

You'll study everything from Old Testament prophecies about Jesus to specific moments in the Christmas story and Jesus's time on earth. You'll even get to look ahead to some of the promises about His return. It's a lot to cover, so stretch your study out over seven days if you need to.



## ACTIVITIES

Christmas is one of the best times of the year to share the love of Jesus with others. The **ACTIVITIES** that accompany each session are designed to be Christmas-y and fun, but more importantly, they will help you open the door to those conversations.

## SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

Welcome! We're so glad you've picked up this book. Advent is a truly WONDERful time of year, a time when Christians around the world are focused together on the birth of Jesus and the promise that He will come again. The themes of Advent are timeless, but if you prefer to follow a more "traditional" Advent schedule, it's helpful to know that Advent begins four Sundays out from Christmas, on the Sunday that falls between November 27 and December 3.

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT** — Watch the video "Session One: Hope" and light the first Advent candle (see "Advent Wreath," page 164). Then read the Week One personal study during the week.

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT** — Watch the video "Session Two: Joy" and light the second Advent candle. Then read the Week Two personal study during the week.

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT** — Watch the video "Session Three: Peace" and light the third Advent candle. Then read the Week Three personal study during the week.

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT** — Watch the video "Session Four: Love" and light the fourth Advent candle. Then read the Week Four personal study during the week.

Regardless of when you study, our hope is that you will adopt an Advent mindset of wonder and expectation that lasts year round.


## LEADING A GROUP?

Thank you for leading a group through *The Wonder of Advent*! Here is a list of tools to help you lead.

**LEADER GUIDE** (pages 168–173) to help you structure each group meeting and facilitate small group discussion

**DEVOTIONAL VIDEOS** to watch together at each group session. You'll find detailed information for how to access the teaching videos that accompany this study on the card inserted in the back of your Bible study book.

**FREE DOWNLOADS** to help you promote the study in your church or neighborhood, including: invitation card, promotional poster, bulletin insert, and PowerPoint® template. You'll find these and more at [lifeway.com/wonder](http://lifeway.com/wonder).



YOU'LL FIND DETAILED INFORMATION FOR HOW TO  
ACCESS THE VIDEO SESSIONS THAT ACCOMPANY THIS STUDY ON  
THE CARD INSERTED IN THE BACK OF YOUR BIBLE STUDY BOOK.





# Introduction

More than any other time of year, Christmas brings an undeniable sense of wonder and awe. For some, it's the nostalgia of traditions that span generations—grandma's pie recipe, a Christmas Eve candlelight service, the same ornaments on the tree year after year. For others, it's watching the season through the eyes of a young child or simply enjoying a little less time working and a little more with family and friends.

If you're able to filter out all of the busyness, noise, and clutter and get to the heart of the season, the wonder is overpowering—God, the Creator of everything, sent His Son out of heaven and into our world to walk as we walk and live as we live. This Child, Jesus, was the rescuer God had been promising His children since everything went wrong back in the garden of Eden. God told the serpent: “He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

With Jesus's birth, God kept His word. Jesus became one of us so He could save a broken humanity from its sins. This is the good news of Christmas, but it's not the end of the story. Jesus is coming back! Advent is a celebration of both of these truths—Jesus came once, and He is coming again.

Setting aside this time of study and worship each Christmas season gives us the opportunity to delight in what we know is true in Jesus: the **HOPE** that He will return and make all things new; the **JOY** that comes from worshiping Him now and forever; the **PEACE** we experience with God today and we long for our world to experience when it is redeemed; and the **LOVE** of a God who sacrificed His own Son to be in relationship with us. These are the themes of Advent, and they fill us with wonder and awe as we reflect on our great God.

In *The Wonder of Advent*, we'll spend a week studying each of these themes. We'll look at Old Testament prophecies, scenes from the Christmas story, encounters Jesus had with people during His earthly ministry, teachings from Jesus, and promises from Revelation. When our eyes are opened to these threads in Scripture, we stand in awe of the glory and love of God and are motivated to share the wonder of Advent with the world.

Laura Magness



week one

Hope





Yet I call this to mind, and therefore I have hope:  
Because of the LORD's faithful love we do not perish,  
for his mercies never end. They are new every  
morning; great is your faithfulness! I say, "The LORD  
is my portion, therefore I will put my hope in him."

### Lamentations 3:21-24

Throughout the Old Testament, we read about how God's people longed for and hoped in God's promise of a Messiah, a ruler or "anointed one" whom God would send to bless and defend His people. In the New Testament, we read about the fulfillment of that hope—the humble birth of Jesus, God's own Son. Jesus was born into our world to restore our broken relationship with God. He would become like us, but without sin, and die for us to bring about that reconciliation.

Scripture also promises that one day Jesus will return, sin will be eradicated forever, and our broken relationship with God will be restored once and for all. We wait for that day with expectant hope because we know God keeps His promises. What a day that will be!

This week we'll look at specific promises from God and moments from the life of Jesus that teach us why our hope should rest on Him. We'll also see how we're to live until that future hope becomes our present reality. Here is where we're headed.

<b>DAY ONE</b>	God's promise of a Child King gave His children hope (Isa. 9:2-7).
<b>DAY TWO</b>	John the Baptist's birth renewed hope when things seemed hopeless (Luke 1).
<b>DAY THREE</b>	Jesus's power gives hope to the hopeless (Luke 7:11-17).
<b>DAY FOUR</b>	Jesus teaches why hope rests in Him (Luke 4:16-22).
<b>DAY FIVE</b>	Our hope will be fulfilled (Rev. 5).





O  
HOLY  
NIGHT





O Holy Night!  
The stars are brightly shining  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
Till he appear'd and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!

Fall on your knees  
Oh hear the angel voices  
Oh night divine  
Oh night when Christ was born  
Oh night divine  
Oh night divine

Truly He taught us to love one another  
His law is love and His gospel is peace  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother  
And in His name all oppression shall cease  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
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<sup>1</sup>







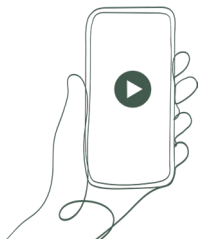
# Watch

Session One

WATCH THE VIDEO “Session One: Hope” (16:44) and use the space below to take notes.

**HYMN:** O Holy Night

**SCRIPTURE READING:** Isaiah 9:1-7



**TO ACCESS THE VIDEO SESSIONS,**  
USE THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE BACK OF YOUR BIBLE STUDY BOOK.







# Discuss

If you are part of a *The Wonder of Advent* Bible study group, use this page to take notes during your group time and to keep a record of prayer requests that are mentioned.



# Day 1

## A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

ISAIAH 9:1-7

by Kelly King

For the Northern Hemisphere, the winter solstice occurs annually on December 21 or 22. (If you live in the Southern Hemisphere, your solstice is around June 20 or 21.)<sup>2</sup> This is the darkest day of the year, the day with the fewest hours of sunlight, and it marks the official start to winter. We generally think of the winter solstice as an entire day, but it's really only a moment—a moment when our hemisphere is tilted as far away from the sun as it can be.

I'm not a fan of the dark. As a little girl, I slept with a small light on my dresser. Even though my eyes were shut, and I was fast asleep, I felt comfort knowing that no matter when I awoke, a light would be there to help me find my way. And to be honest, I still often leave a bathroom light on at night—especially when I'm traveling—because I know I might need a path to guide me in an unfamiliar room. A light keeps me from stumbling, and it overcomes the unknown of darkness.

**How do you feel about being in the dark? Consider how you feel about literal darkness, but also describe how you feel during challenging, or "dark," seasons or circumstances.**

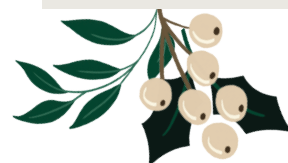
Many times throughout history, the nation of Israel experienced figurative winter solstices. Darkness seemed to be a constant companion, and wars and oppression were consistent threats. Yet, the children of God also lived with the hope that He was their light.



### MEMORY VERSE

I say, "The LORD is my portion, therefore I will put my hope in him."

Lamentations 3:24



Read the following Old Testament passages and paraphrase what you discover about God and light.

GENESIS 1:3-5	
EXODUS 13:21-23	
PSALM 119:105	
ISAIAH 9:2	
ISAIAH 42:6	

God assured Israel that He was their guide, His presence provided peace, and His words illuminated their paths, no matter how dark things seemed. Beyond that, He called them to be a light in the darkness of others because of their relationship with Him.

The more you read of the Old Testament, the clearer it becomes that much of Israel's hope came through the words of God's anointed prophets (such as Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Hosea), most importantly their promise of Israel's future Savior. No other prophet provided a better glimpse of Israel's future Savior—the Light who would break through their darkness—than Isaiah.

**READ ISAIAH 9:1-5.**

The prophet Isaiah reminded God's people that a new light was coming. A child would be born whom God would raise to be a king. The reign of the coming Messiah (the promised deliverer of the Jewish nation) was seen in contrast to the reign of Ahaz, a king of Judah who rejected God and would not listen to Him. This prophecy was a source of hope for the people of Judah. They had not forgotten God's promise to King David, even though it didn't seem to be true at this time in their history.

Take a few minutes to look over God's covenant with David in 2 Samuel 7:4-17. Look specifically at verses 9 and 16. What hope for David's lineage do you see?

When David was king, God made a covenant with him. Among the promises in that covenant were that God would make a great name for David (2 Sam. 7:9), and David's kingdom would endure forever (2 Sam. 7:16). Under King Ahaz, that lineage seemed to be in danger. But in Isaiah 9, we learn about a King who was coming who would be different from all the rest.

Reread the following verses from Isaiah 9 and list the promises that are outlined in this prophecy about a future leader.

VERSE 2	
VERSE 3	
VERSE 4	
VERSE 5	

At the start of this prophecy, Isaiah used phrases like “a light has dawned” (v. 2), “you have enlarged the nation and increased its joy” (v. 3), and “you have shattered their oppressive yoke and the staff of their oppressor” (v. 4). These are promises of light, joy, freedom, and victory. Such words of hope for a desperate people!



Consider your current circumstances and any darkness or difficulties you might be experiencing. Which of these promises speak hope to your circumstances?

Although our circumstances look different, we too can rest on God's promise that He is still working even when darkness seems to be engulfing us.

READ ISAIAH 9:6-7.

With these verses Isaiah continued his prophecy of a coming leader and Savior. The different imagery of this text speaks to the hope that rested on the shoulders of this King, a Child who would be born and be a light in their darkness, their lowest point, their winter solstice.

Write the four names Isaiah proclaimed about this child in Isaiah 9:6. He will be:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

These four names are sometimes considered the “throne” names—names that represent the royalty of Jesus. Unlike the personal name of Immanuel, which means God with us, these names speak to Jesus’s majesty and rule over the nations. They are descriptions of a King who carries out a mission that will cause the world to marvel.

*Wonderful Counselor* describes a king who performs wonderful acts with the skill of wisdom. God is the source of miracles, and He is the author and embodiment of wisdom.

*Mighty God* captures the idea that this child would be a mighty warrior, and He would be aligned with the name of God Himself. No other king could be identified with

God in this manner. There would be something unique about this child who would bear God's name.

The third name, *Eternal Father*, is one word in Hebrew, but it combines two ideas. The ideal image of a father is one who shows compassion and love for his children. For a ruler to show compassion to a people in darkness would give Israel hope for their future. The idea that this ruler would rule forever would sound too good to be true.

The final title, *Prince of Peace*, would have easily been understood by a people who rarely experienced peace and yet longed for it. The rule of Jesus brings about wholeness and well-being to individuals and to society. Peace is about more than just the absence of war. As the Prince of Peace, Jesus accomplished everything that was required to restore a relationship between individual humans—you and me—and a holy God. Today, we still long for peace in our world (that time is coming, as we'll see in Session Three), but we can claim the peace that Jesus offers to us now when we are reunited with God through belief in His Son.

**Which of these four names describes how you need Jesus to act in your life this Advent season?**

Over the next four weeks, this study will explore the themes of hope, joy, peace, and love. All four of these themes are present in this prophecy. Beyond that, Isaiah makes it clear that only through the Messiah are we able to live fully in the hope, joy, peace, and love of the Lord.

Last year, my daughter gave birth to our first grandson on December 21, the winter solstice. His name is Luken Michael. Luken is a form of Luke, which is an English form of the Latin word *lux*, meaning "light." On the darkest day of the year, Luken brought light into our family's world.

At the close of today's passage, we read, "The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this" (v. 7). In other words, God will keep His promise, and we know that He did. A baby was born to conquer the darkness of our sin. Jesus, the Light of the world, has come. ★









## SONGS OF HOPE

by Brooke Hill

The Old Testament is filled with a lot of “one days.” One day, Abraham and Sarah would have a baby (Gen. 15). One day, God’s people would be free of slavery and Egypt (Ex. 3). One day, a child would be born, and through Him, God would save the world (Isa. 9).

Sometimes, God’s timing doesn’t feel very convenient to us. Especially in our instant gratification, order-anything-in-minutes and talk-to-anyone-in-seconds technology-based society, we are not used to having to wait for things. Patience is hard, and there’s certainly a reason that it’s a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Yet, Peter tells us, “With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you” (2 Pet. 3:8-9). We have hope readily available to us because we know that the Lord does not delay His promise, even when our feelings don’t align with that truth.

The Psalms are filled with songs of people proclaiming praises because of the hope they have found in God. Psalm 27 declares, “I am certain that I will see the LORD’s goodness . . . Wait for the LORD” (vv. 13-14). What is the “one day” that you’ve been praying for your teen? Whether it’s for them to start caring about their grades, to use kinder words, to break free of that bad habit, or for them to come to know the Lord, it can be so hard to trust that God’s timing is

infinitely better than ours if we’re not actively reminding ourselves of the hope God has promised through Jesus.

### ACTIVITY

Music has a way of helping us express laments and praises we otherwise can’t find words for.

Make a joint playlist with your teen and add songs that bring you hope. Find some songs that make your heart excited for what’s to come and help you trust God’s promises.

Talk with your teen about why the songs you chose give you hope and ask them to share why the songs they chose give them hope.

If you and your teen are feeling extra creative, write your own psalm of praise to sing or pray to the Lord when you’re in need of hope. When either one of you is having a hard time trusting in God’s promises, come back to this playlist and listen to songs of hope.



# A THREAD RUNNING THROUGH IT

by Bekah Stoneking

The Bible is a huge book. It's full of many true stories that fit together to tell the one big story of God and His people.

There is a thread that runs through all of these stories. Not an actual piece of thread or string, but a common, consistent theme that connects the stories—Jesus.

The stories in the Old Testament books tell about God's holiness, people's sinfulness, and God's plan to send a Messiah to rescue us. The New Testament tells us about Jesus the Messiah. In the person of Jesus, God became a human like you and me. But Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life, died on the cross as a sacrifice for sin, and rose again on the third day.

But the story doesn't end there. The New Testament also tells us that one day, Jesus will return and make all things new!

The arrival of Jesus the Messiah is evidence of God's faithfulness. And because we know God always keeps His promises, we can confidently hope in Jesus and look forward with excitement to His return.

## SUPPLIES

Gather some cardboard tubes—like from an empty roll of paper towels or wrapping paper—some glue or tape, different colors of yarn, and a pair of scissors.

## DIRECTIONS

1. Cut the cardboard tube into 1-2" thick slices, then make one cut through each slice to create a cuff bracelet.
2. Use some glue or tape to secure the end of a long piece of yarn along the edge of your cardboard bracelet. Wrap the yarn around and around your bracelet until it is covered. Secure the end of the yarn with more glue or tape.
3. Next, wrap a piece of tape around the end of a differently-colored piece of yarn. Weave the taped end of that yarn through the yarn on your bracelet to make a pattern or design.

As you weave and thread the yarn, recall the thread running through Scripture. Can you remember who the thread is? Show or give your bracelet to a loved one. Explain the thread and tell them about the hope we have in Jesus Christ.