

dec 24, 2022

the advent of Jesus

"do not be afraid, for behold, i bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. for there is born to you this day in the city of david a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." luke 2:10-11

the word "advent" means coming. advent is a season of expectation and preparation, as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ in first His incarnation, we also look ahead to His final advent at the end of time, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and authority and power.

this advent, Lord, come to the manger of my heart.
fill me with Your presence from the very start.

as i prepare for the holidays and gifts to be given,
remind me of the gift You gave when You sent Your Son
from heaven.

the first christmas gift, it was the greatest gift
ever.

You came as a baby born in a manger.

wrapped like the gifts i find under my tree,
waiting to be opened, to reveal Your love to me.

restore to me the wonder that came with Jesus' birth,
when He left the riches of Heaven and wrapped Himself
in rags of earth.

Immanuel, God with us, Your presence came that night.
and angels announced, "into your darkness, God brings
His light."

"do not be afraid," they said, to shepherds in the
field.
speak to my heart today, Lord, and help me to yield.

make me like those shepherd boys, obedient to Your
call.
setting distractions and worries aside, to You i
surrender them all.

surround me with Your presence, Lord, i long to hear
Your voice.
clear my mind of countless concerns and all the holiday
noise.

slow me down this christmas, let me not be in a rush.
in the midst of parties and planning, i want to feel
Your hush.

this christmas, Jesus, come to the manger of my heart.
invade my soul like bethlehem, bringing peace to every
part.

dwell within and around me, as i unwrap Your presence
each day.
keep me close to You, Lord. it's in Your wonderful name
i pray.

-- renee swope, "the manger of my heart" from proverbs
31 ministries

who was in the manger that first Christmas morning?
some say He would become a great moral leader. others,
a social critic. still others view Jesus as a profound
philosopher, a rabbi, a feminist, a prophet, and more.
many are convinced he was the divine Son of God. what
say you?

gracious Father,
thank you that you have not left this world in
darkness,
but have sent your eternal Son as the light of the
world,
to show us your glory, to give us new life and joy.
open our eyes to see Jesus more clearly,
to trust him more fully,
to serve him more joyfully,
and to find all our satisfaction in Him.
amen

we celebrate the birth of God's Son, our Savior and
King, who alone can give joy and lasting peace in a
dark world so desperately in need of His grace.
ministry of prayer hopes all the gifts He came to bring
be yours this season as we honor His birth, death and
restoration... restoration to fellowship with the One
who birthed us all.