

# Advent—a Time of Preparing

This time of year leading up to Christmas is a special season for young and old. It is a time of preparing for Christmas.

## **What Is Most Important?**

Do we place too much emphasis on the externals? Has the material preparation become too important? On one hand, the planning, the shopping, and the gifts have become part of our tradition. Is not the inward preparation and celebration of the true meaning of Christmas most important?

In many homes the busyness of life seems to swirl around us. It often causes weariness. The psalm writer reminds us of God's counsel, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10). It is good for us in quietness and stillness to reflect on God's grace and blessing. Let us try to make time to speak of the true meaning of Christmas in our homes.

## **Christ's Grace and Forgiveness**

This little Christ Child was born for you and me, and for all people. May He dwell forever in the manger of our hearts. Jesus went on to prepare the way of salvation for sin-fallen mankind. Through His precious merit-work we have become heaven acceptable. Jesus willingly takes our sins upon himself and presents us His grace and forgiveness as the most precious gift.

During the four weeks of Advent we are reminded how Jesus comes in humility and great glory. He came to save mankind from sin, Satan, and death. During the final Advent Sunday is the exhortation, "The birth of the Lord is nigh." It reminds us of that eternal Christmas that is before us.

We are secure here in God's kingdom. Our Lord Jesus has prepared everything for us. The gospel carries us and is our strength on this journey as we await the coming of our Lord. May God bless you and your loved ones during this time of the Christmas celebration, and always.

George Koivukangas

## **Questions:**

1. In what ways do you prepare for Christmas?
2. During the four weeks of Advent, how can we prepare in a way that reminds us how Jesus comes in humility and great glory?
3. Read the words of SHZ #3, "O Bride, Rejoice and Sing." Discuss them, and then sing the song together.
4. See related Advent material in this issue—Advent Reading List, The Sabbath Word 1 and 3, A Featured Hymn, etc.

## **An Advent Reading List**

### **First Advent Sunday:**

*Your King Comes in Humility*

Ps. 24:7–10

Isa. 62:10–12

Rom. 13:11–14

Matt. 21:1–9

### **Second Advent Sunday:**

*Your King Comes in Glory*

Ps. 80:14–19

Hos. 2:18–20

1 Pet. 1:13–17;

Luke 21:25–33(34–36)

### **Third Advent Sunday:**

*Prepare the Way for the King*

Ps. 85:8–13

Jer. 3:21–25

1 Cor. 4:1–5

Matt. 11:2–10

**Fourth Advent Sunday:**

*The birth of the Lord Is Nigh*

Ps. 130:5–8

Zeph. 3:14–17

Phil. 4:4–7

Matt. 1:18–24

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