

Come, LORD Jesus, Come!

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion for behold, thy King cometh unto thee." Zechariah 9:9

We quickly approach the middle of the Advent celebration. Expectation, longing and yearning are the emotions which fill our hearts during this glorious season of the Church year. Drawn from the Latin word "*adventus*" which means "coming," Advent is a time of waiting for the coming of our Saviour at Bethlehem, and a time to prepare for His imminent Second Coming.



During this holy season we celebrate the historical fact of Christ's birth (laying the foundation for His death and resurrection). How grateful we are that our faith is rooted in the soil of actual history. It is with joy that we root ourselves anew in the absolute truth of Christ's birth, life, teachings, death and resurrection. Jesus of Nazareth is the mighty Son of God who was born of a Virgin, lived, died, rose again, and ascended into heaven to the right hand of God the Father!

Advent is also a wonderful opportunity for self-examination. We ask, "How is God changing me? How has God come to me with His transforming presence? In what ways has my belief in Christ's birth and death shaped my behavior? Seven benchmarks of followers of Jesus aid us in self-examination. As we pray for Jesus to come personally into our hearts, we look for progress in these areas:

1. Do I hate sin as being offensive to God? Thankfully, we do not hate the sinner, for then all would be condemned. But we hate the sins that hold others and ourselves in bondage.
2. Do I seek to confess Christ and bear witness to the true Faith, not merely by spoken words, but by earnestly obeying His commands?
3. Am I denying myself and bearing my cross? Bearing one's cross is never easy, but God does enable our obedience by His grace.
4. Do I long to obey God's will? Pray and mean it when you say, "Thy will be done."
5. Is there zeal within me to see sinners converted to Jesus? Our hearts cry, "Thy kingdom come" and we want to spread the faith.
6. Do I love my brothers and sisters in Christ? The badge of membership in the Church of Jesus is love for one another.
7. Do I experience the joy of Jesus? Gladness of heart stands in contrast with the gloom of the secular world.

Christmas Day is drawing near (only 13 days away!). Let's stand on tiptoe watching for the coming of Jesus into our lives! May we take a look "under the hood" and thank our LORD for the ways He has come to us and changed us within. We pray, "Come, LORD Jesus, come! Prepare us to fully worship thee with gladness, sincerity, and truth."