

The Advent Experience of Christmas: FAITH

Hebrews 11:1-3 (NIV)

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (NLT)

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the LORD.

"And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

Jeremiah 1:5 (MSG)

"Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you. Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you."

Isaiah 44:2 (CEV)

"I am your Creator. You were in my care even before you were born!"

Luke 2:1-7 (NIV)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

The humble birth of Jesus is more than the story of Christmas, it is the purpose of Christmas.

Joseph, not **Caesar**

Luke 2:1 (NLT)

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire.

Bethlehem, not **Rome**

Luke 2:4-5

And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

A **Manger**, not a **Throne**

Luke 2:6-7 (NLT)

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Romans 10:10-15 (NIV)

For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. ¹¹ As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly

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blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵ And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Verse 17

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.