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WEEK ONE

HOPE



*The people walking in darkness have seen
a great light; on those living in the land of
deep darkness a light has dawned.*



ISAIAH 9:2



WEEK ONE
ADVENT CELEBRATION



HOPE

If you are going through this devotional with your family, you can go to onethingalone.com/advent and print out the questions and Scripture readings on separate slips of paper and distribute them among your family members in order to involve everyone. Most of these components are simple enough for even small children to read alone or with help.

OPEN WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

LIGHT THE FIRST CANDLE ON YOUR ADVENT WREATH

READ THE FOLLOWING VERSE ALOUD:

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

— John 8:12

SOMEONE ASKS:

Why do we light this candle?



SOMEONE RESPONDS:

This candle reminds us of the promise that a Messiah would come, bringing peace and love to the world.

READ THE FOLLOWING VERSE ALOUD:

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” — Isaiah 9:2

TAKE TURNS READING THROUGH THIS PART OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY:

Isaiah 9:2–7



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. God planned Jesus' arrival thousands of years before it happened. What does that tell us about God?
2. How does Jesus' light in our world give us hope?
3. In what ways can we allow Jesus' light to shine through us?

SING THE FOLLOWING CAROL TOGETHER:

Silent Night

As you read the daily devotions this week, light the first candle and thank Jesus for being our Hope.



JESUS

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

MATTHEW 1:21

The name *Jesus* is a transliteration of the Hebrew name *Joshua*, which means “the LORD is salvation.” In Bible times, it was not an uncommon name, just like Jesus Himself didn’t appear out of the ordinary to those who grew up with Him. Yet His given name holds great significance to who He is and what He did on earth.

In the Old Testament, Joshua led the Israelites into Canaan. He saved the people through courageous leadership, charging into battle upon bloody battle, leading hundreds of thousands into the Promised Land. In contrast to the first Joshua, the second Joshua (Jesus) saved through an epic battle that He fought alone, quietly making the way for His people to enter the Promised Land of God’s presence.

Jesus came to save people from their sins. What the first Joshua was powerless to do, the second Joshua was born to accomplish.

During Jesus' lifetime, the Israelites were waiting for a political leader like Joshua who would free them from the yoke of Roman oppression and allow them to live in the land God had promised them, just as their forefathers had been freed from Egyptian slavery and led into Canaan. They wanted a macho man who would reinstate Israel as an autonomous country and make the Romans run in fear.

But Jesus' perspective is always bigger than ours. His gaze was set on the universal dilemma of sin. His battle was one of cosmic proportions, to deliver all who believe in Him from the bondage of soul-deadening sin and welcome us into the family of God.



CHALLENGE

As you enter this season of Advent, what expectations do you have of Jesus? Are you expecting Him to provide finances, heal a loved one, mend a marriage, or fulfill some other request? He very well may . . . but He may not. Regardless of what happens or how He answers, open yourself to His saving touch, and ask Him to show you what He wants to do in your life. Begin the Advent season with an open heart filled with hope because of Jesus our Savior.

PRAYER

Precious Jesus, thank You for coming to save not just Israel but all those who call on You. I often get wrapped up in my own self-righteousness and feel like my salvation is done and over with, but You desire a continual renewal of my heart; You want to save me from my own self-righteousness and transform me into Your image. “Search me, God, and know my heart . . . See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23–24).

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 139; Isaiah 53; Matthew 21:11; Luke 2:11; Romans 11:26



JESUS IS THE
RESURRECTION
AND THE LIFE

I am the resurrection and the life.

The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.

JOHN 11:25

Many people's greatest fear is death. For those who do not believe in God, the thought of dying can be overwhelming, since they don't know what awaits them once they pass away.

Martha and Mary faced the reality of death when their brother, Lazarus, died of a severe illness. He was most likely their sole protector and provider, since neither husbands nor parents are mentioned in their stories. Martha demonstrated her faith in Jesus when she asked Him to resurrect her brother because "God will give you whatever you ask" (John 11:22).

Although Martha properly acknowledged Jesus' relationship with His Father, she failed to understand that Jesus Himself is the

resurrection and life. The power of life and death are in Jesus. He spoke the world into existence and breathed life into Adam.¹ He carefully fashions every child in their mother's womb, and several times in the New Testament He filled dead bodies with life again (see "For Further Study" notes below).

Jesus nullified death's hold on His creation when He willingly laid down His own life. He didn't just stop or end death—He overcame it by entering it and annihilating it from within, rising from the dead without requiring anyone's intervention. As Scripture says, "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54).

Because Jesus rose to life, we who have believed in Him have also been raised to new life with Him. Although we groan with creation under the weight of the current decay death causes in the world, we do not mourn as those without hope. Even in the face of death, whether a cancer diagnosis or an empty place at the holiday table, we embrace the hope of a physical resurrection—ours and that of all who belong to Jesus.

But resurrection is not just a future event. Jesus' words in this passage remind us that resurrection is also a current reality: those who believe in Jesus will ultimately never die. We may experience temporary physical death, but our souls and spirits will continue to live until we receive glorified bodies. We are a resurrected people, and when Jesus returns, we will fully enter His resurrection—body, soul, and spirit. On that day, we will join the chorus of believers

who will cheer our resurrected Lord and taunt our former enemy: “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Cor. 15:55).

Jesus’ historical resurrection gives us hope both for today and for the future. Death is defeated in Jesus as He transitions us from temporal life to life eternal. We live the lives of the resurrected.



CHALLENGE

What does it mean to live like the resurrected? What implications does this mindset have on your relationships, job, finances, service, evangelism, and pastimes? Today, pick one of these areas and ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to engage in it as one for whom life is eternal.

PRAYER

Lord, You are the Resurrection and the Life. Our world is still torn by sin and destruction, but we acknowledge Your rule over it and we look forward to the day when there will be no more death, no more sorrow, and no more grieving. In the meantime, help us live out the resurrection of Your Son. May we be an aroma of life to a dying world so that they, too, may enter eternal life with You.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Psalm 139:13; Luke 7:12–16; 8:41–56; John 11:39–45; Acts 3:15; Romans 8:18–25; Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–16; Revelation 1:18

