



# PASTOR'S

## Perspective

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*Advent not only points us back to the first coming of Christ but it also points us forward to the second coming of Christ.*

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Well, it is that time again. Thanksgiving has come and gone, the sales have been advertised and the shopping season is official. We've seen the early morning shopping craze on Black Friday as it has now come to be known and Christmas decorations are up all over the place. You guessed it! It is Christmas time again and of course it comes around a lot quicker than we ever wish it to. People are planning the Christmas parties at work, children are getting their speeches together for the annual Children's Christmas

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Program and we are turning our attention to who we need to shop for. What a great time of year this is. But this alone is not the real focus of this season.

I have often wondered what that first Christmas must have been like. In fact the more I think about it, I guess it really wasn't known as Christmas. The world then had no idea how to celebrate a holiday that would pass with little notice. This does not suggest that how God brought the good news of the birth of Jesus to the world was not significant. Instead it only says that people had no idea of what it meant. In fact the only thing according to Luke's Gospel that seemed to hallmark the time of year was the need for every family to return to their ancestral home to be taxed.

Like everybody else a young carpenter named Joseph "gassed up the SUV," loaded all the things into it, took his pregnant wife Mary and headed for Bethlehem. By the time they finally got to Bethlehem all of the rooms had been sold out and there was no where for them to spend the night. A benevolent inn keeper allowed them to stay in the inn's stable out back and there they made a home for the night in a place customarily reserved for livestock and other beasts of burden. There this couple saw their first child

born. This was the 'stuff' of the first Christmas.

It is important for us to think about this first coming of Christ because His second coming, the one we are really concerned with only makes sense in the light of His having already come. This is what this season known as Advent is really all about. Advent not only points us back to the first coming of Christ but it also points us forward to the second coming of Christ. Thus Advent is a time of expectation. It acknowledges that although God has already acted decisively on our behalf in Jesus' birth, there is still much about the Kingdom of God that we are growing to. Not only did the birth of Jesus signal "God with us" but it also signals that in Jesus we have the Kingdom of God in person. So then Advent finally, is a time for us to take stock of our lives and actions in light of the Kingdom of God which still awaits completion in every one of us. Our expectation of the coming Lord demands that we are in right relationship with the Kingdom of God and each other. Therefore when Christ comes again we want to be "dressed in His righteousness alone faultless to stand before the throne!" Enjoy this season of expectation.

*Advent*