

## Our Need and God's Response

- As we continue to celebrate and enjoy the “expectation” of Advent, let’s remember the reason for this great need!
  - We know that life is supposed to be different, that the world is supposed to be kinder and more loving, but we forget at times the reason it is not!
  - Simply put, we forget the separation that creation experienced when man decided he wanted to do things his way instead of God’s!
  - We forget that we still tend to do things our own way today! ANYTHING other than God’s will, His way, separates us from the God Who loves us!
- I. There is a depth to the Advent Season that we simply had rather ignore! There is a desperation to the Christmas story that we are not used to admitting!
- A. We had rather submerge ourselves in the busyness of the season rather than slow down long enough for the Spirit of the Lord to draw us into the necessity of the Incarnation!
1. At times I think we are simply afraid of what we may hear!
  2. Let’s face it, none of us like to hear that we are wrong!
- B. Let’s listen as the Prophet Isaiah explains to us the reason we desperately need God to come near!

Isaiah 1:12-18, 7:13-14, 9:2-7, 11:1-5, 55:1-13, 61:1-2, 66:1-2 (NLT)

12 When you come to worship me, who asked you to parade through my courts with all your ceremony? 13 Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings disgusts me! As for your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath and your special days for fasting—they are all sinful and false. I want no more of your pious meetings. 14 I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals. They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them! 15 When you lift up your hands in prayer, I will not look. Though you offer many prayers, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with the blood of innocent victims. 16 Wash yourselves and be clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways. 17 Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the cause of orphans. Fight for the rights of widows. 18 “Come now, let’s settle this,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool.

7:13-14

13 Then Isaiah said, “Listen well, you royal family of David! Isn’t it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience of my God as well? 14 All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will

conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').

9:2-7

2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. 3 You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice. They will rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder. 4 For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian.

5 The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire. 6 For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

11:1-5

1 Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot—yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root. 2 And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 He will delight in obeying the Lord. He will not judge by appearance nor make a decision based on hearsay.

4 He will give justice to the poor and make fair decisions for the exploited. The earth will shake at the force of his word, and one breath from his mouth will destroy the wicked. 5 He will wear righteousness like a belt and truth like an undergarment.

55:1-13

1 "Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink—even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk—it's all free! 2 Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. 3 "Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David.

4 See how I used him to display my power among the peoples. I made him a leader among the nations. 5 You also will command nations you do not know, and peoples unknown to you will come running to obey, because I, the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, have made you glorious." 6 Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on him now while he is near. 7 Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he will forgive generously. 8 "My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. 9 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. 10 "The rain and snow come down from the heavens and

stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. 11 It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it. 12 You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands!

13 Where once there were thorns, cypress trees will grow. Where nettles grew, myrtles will sprout up. These events will bring great honor to the Lord's name; they will be an everlasting sign of his power and love."

61:1-2

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.

2 He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies.

66:1-2

1 This is what the Lord says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Could you build me a temple as good as that? Could you build me such a resting place? 2 My hands have made both heaven and earth; they and everything in them are mine. I, the Lord, have spoken! "I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word.

C. Listen as the Prophet carries us on a journey of understanding our need and revealing God's answer!

II. The story of Christmas is one of...God coming near!

A. Every rebellious act, every illicit behavior, every desperate response to the things life throws at us is actually nothing more than...  
Man's deep subconscious desire to be near God once again!

B. The Epistle of James is an unlikely place to find the Christmas story, yet he tells it so well.

James 4:5-8 (NLT)

5 Do you think the Scriptures have no meaning? They say that God is passionate that the spirit he has placed within us should be faithful to him. 6 And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world.

C. I desire deeply to live out the Christmas story every day of my life!

1. I want to glean the scriptures for the nuggets of gold concerning my salvation and redemption.
2. I want the Spirit in me to empower me to live out the life of God!
3. I want to humble myself as I realize my desperate need for God and my total dependence upon Him!
4. I want to resist anything contrary to the life of God by living near Him in my daily walk with Him!
5. I want to be careful to guard my heart from anything contrary to the heart of God!
6. I want pure and undivided loyalty to God!