

Advent Study

Picture Perfect

Picture perfect. No artist, no matter how good, can perfectly portray us. The picture will never be perfect. However, this Advent we take time to reflect on and celebrate the coming of Jesus. Jesus, **God with us**, the perfect picture of God who came that we might know Him. Jesus, **God for us**—who through His sinless life and atoning death shines forth God's glory, that we would put our trust in Him and He would live in us. **God in us**—transforming us into His image that we would be a picture of God to those around us.

John 1:1-3

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Genesis 1:1

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Hebrews 1:1-3a

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

John 1:14-18

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") ¹⁶ And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Glory (Greek - 'Doxa') —magnificence, brilliance.

Grace & Truth — God's grace is His love shown to us through Jesus, that we didn't deserve, nor can we earn. Whilst truth is Him remaining faithful to who He is, never compromising His holiness or leaving sin unpunished.

Law—given by God through Moses by which we know how God wants us to live. However, we are law-breakers and cannot be made right with God by trying to obey the Law. Rather it is by God's grace through faith in Jesus we are saved—who perfectly obeyed the Law for us and died to take the punishment from God our sins deserved.

'God with us'

Let's turn first to see how Jesus's coming is that of Immanuel—**God with us**, who came to make God known.

READ John 1:1-3 that tells us about Jesus—the **Word**. Underline the phrase 'in the beginning' and mark every reference to the 'Word' (including pronouns) with a † and to 'God' with a ▲.

READ Genesis 1:1 and underline the phrase 'in the beginning' and mark every reference to 'God' with a ▲.

The phrase 'in the beginning' in John 1:1—when does this points us back to (see Genesis 1:1)? Who was there 'in the beginning'? What do we learn about Him?

READ Hebrews 1:1-3a marking every reference to the 'Son' (including pronouns) with a †, to 'God' with a ▲ and circle the phrase 'exact imprint of his nature'.

V1-2—Who is God's 'final word' to humanity?

V3— How is the Son described? How does this uniquely qualify Him to make God known? How then should we respond to the Son?

"If men cannot learn about God from the Son, no amount of prophetic voices or actions would convince them." (Guthrie)

READ John 1:14-18 marking every reference to the 'Word' (including pronouns & synonyms) with a †, put a ★ beside the word 'glory' and put a □ around the word 'grace'.

V14 —What did the Son do? Whose glory (magnificence) did He reveal? What do we learn about God's glory through His Son? Does knowing God is 'full of grace and truth' change how you see Him?

V16-17—What do we (who have trusted in Jesus) receive from His fullness? How does the truth that your sinfulness will never eclipse God's grace to you make you feel?

V18— Who is closest to the Father and one with Him? When we see how glorious the Son is, who is He perfectly representing?

Hebrews 2:17

¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 4:15-16

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Romans 8:29

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2 Corinthians 3:16-18

¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

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'God for us'

As we reflect on Jesus's coming we also see 'God for us'. The eternal Son of God becoming human. The God-Man came to live perfectly for us and die in our place, taking the punishment from the Father that we deserved. In Jesus we see God's grace and truth in all its fullness. What a glorious Saviour!

READ Hebrews 2:17 & 4:15-16 and mark every reference 'he' - Jesus (including synonyms) with a †, underline the phrase 'in every respect', mark 'propitiation' with a ○ and put a ↑ beside the phrase 'let us then'.

Ch2V17—How human is Jesus? Why did He become like us?

Propitiation—Jesus enduring God's wrath that we deserved as punishment for our sins so that we don't have to.

Ch4V15—How much was Jesus tempted? What was the result? How does Jesus being the propitiation for our sins display God's glory—His grace and truth?

Ch4v16—How should we respond who have Jesus as our sympathetic high priest?

'God in us'

Finally, Jesus came so we could be like Him, and for the Holy Spirit to live in us who have put our trust in Jesus, so that we become more and more pictures of God in our everyday lives.

READ Romans 8:29 marking 'he' (God) with a △, and 'Son' (including pronouns) with a † and also underline the phrase 'predestined to be conformed'.

V29—What is the destiny of those who have put their trust in Jesus? How is this truth an encouragement when we fail to be like Christ?

READ 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 and underline every reference to the 'Spirit' and mark 'veil' with an X, 'unveiled' with a ✓ and put a □ around the phrase 'beholding the glory of the Lord'

V16—How is the veil (blindness to Christ's glory) removed?

V17-18—How are we transformed? How do we behold the glory of the Lord? Who helps us in this? How should this change the time we devote to studying God's Word?

Reflect on all you have learned from God's Word and write down one key truth. Bring this truth to God in prayer, asking Him to help you live in the light of it.

About this study...

This resource has been designed to allow you to jump into God's Word and study it closely. It requires no preparation, and provides you with a structure to study a passage, with questions to help you think and reflect on it.

This study gives you a small insight into the world of inductive Bible study through three key parts:

Observe - What does the text say?

Understand - What does the text mean?

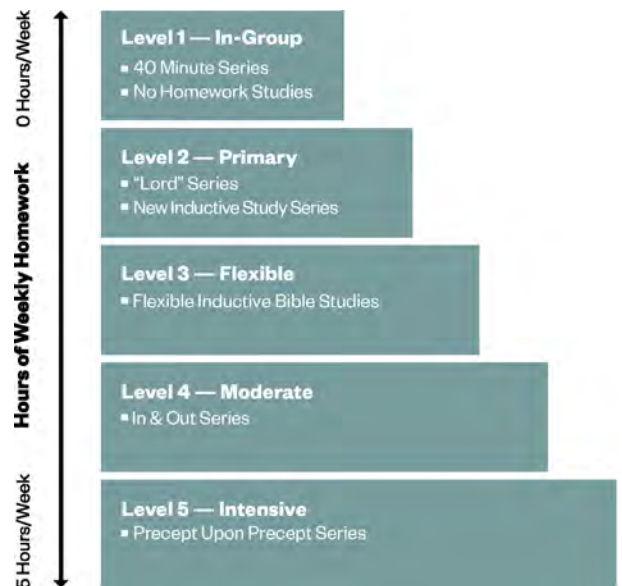
Apply - What does this mean for me?

By using this approach, we can study the Bible in a way that allows us to know God deeply, and to live differently.

About Precept Ireland...

Precept was founded in 1970 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and now works in 160 countries, and has Bible study material translated in over 70 languages. In 2001 Precept was established in Ireland, and has grown through it's mission to engage people in relationship with God through knowing His Word. Precept Ireland seeks to resource and train Bible study leaders to help students like you discover God's truth for yourself and be transformed by it. With more than 250 unique titles ranging from zero to five hours of weekly homework, Precept has a Bible study that meets you where you are.

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Get in touch with us to see how we can help you or your church.

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