



Advent and Evangelism Series



Alexander Sunday Bible Study – Christmas Season

Lesson #3 – JOY | December 14, 2025

To end the Year 2025, we’re conducting a 4-week series studying the traditional advent wreath and a series on evangelism. We’ll explore the Romans Road, which is a wonderful Biblical resource for sharing the Gospel. As we do each week there will be a lesson, a little homework (questions in GREEN), and lots of great discussions.

Listed below are the four candles associated with the Advent Wreath and the sequence of lighting.

- **First Sunday:** Light the first purple candle (**Hope** or Prophets' Candle).
- **Second Sunday:** Light the first purple candle again, along with the second purple candle (**Peace** or Bethlehem's Candle).
- **Third Sunday:** Light the first two purple candles and the pink candle (**Joy** or Shepherd's Candle).
- **Fourth Sunday:** Light all three previously lit candles plus the final purple candle (**Love** or Angel's Candle).
- **Christmas Day:** A fifth, white candle (Christ Candle) is often lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to represent the arrival of Jesus.



Introductory Remarks (and a little Christmas History)

The third of the Advent Candles is JOY. I would argue what should differentiate Christians is our capacity to exhibit joy, regardless of circumstances. As we discussed in our Fruit of the Spirit series earlier this year, joy is a by-product of the Holy Spirit working in our lives. Like a magnet with a compelling force that draws objects together, joy in the life of a Believer maximizes our impact the world. We’re all attracted to Believers who exhibit joy, but many of us find it difficult to be around those who are negative, overly confrontational, and possess a critical spirit. Like Scrooge in Charles Dickens’ *Christmas Carol*, joy changes the world.



“Joy to the World” was written in 1719 by Isaac Watts as a poetic interpretation of Psalm 98, not as a Christmas carol. Watts included it in *The Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*, writing lyrics that look ahead to Christ’s future return and His righteous rule. Lines such as “He rules the world with truth and grace” and “No more let sins and sorrows grow” reflect this forward-looking theme more than the story of Christ’s birth.

The melody we all know came much later. In 1848, American composer Lowell Mason arranged a tune called “Antioch” that drew from musical passages he believed were written by Handel. Published in *The National Psalmist*, Mason’s setting quickly gained popularity. Over time, the hymn’s triumphant tone and universal message led congregations to adopt it as a Christmas carol. Though originally about Christ’s second coming, it is now one of the most beloved songs of the Christmas season.

The JOY brought by Jesus’ birth

The birth of Jesus brought a joy unlike any the world had known. When Christ entered humanity in a humble manger, heaven announced “good news of great joy” because God Himself had drawn near. His arrival fulfilled centuries of longing as reflected in Old Testament prophecies, confirming God’s promise to redeem His people. Jesus brought joy by revealing God’s love, as appropriately defined by Emmanuel, “God with us.” His life would heal the broken, comfort the weary, and offer forgiveness to all who trust in Him. The joy of His birth was not temporary or seasonal; it was the beginning of restored relationship with God and the dawning of hope for people from every nation. Even



in a world marked by fear and darkness, the coming of Christ assured that light had overcome. This is why Christians throughout the ages celebrate His birth with joy because Jesus came to bring salvation, peace, and everlasting hope to the world. Provided in the table below are Old and New Testament verses related to the joy Jesus brought into the world.

| Reference | Text |
|----------------------|---|
| Old Testament Verses | |
| Isaiah 9:2-3 | The people walking in darkness have seen a great light... You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy. |
| Isaiah 61:1, 3 | The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me... to bestow on them the oil of joy instead of mourning. |
| Zechariah 9:9 | Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you... |
| New Testament Verses | |
| Luke 2:10-11 | I bring you good news of great joy... Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. |
| John 15:11 | I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. |
| Hebrews 12:2 | ...For the joy set before him he endured the cross... |

Questions for Consideration

1. How has knowing Jesus and appreciating God's power and His sovereignty brought JOY to your life? Consider the above verses in developing an answer.
2. In what areas of your life are you most likely to experience a lack of JOY? In what ways do you engage the Lord and power of the Holy Spirit in battling against this area in your life?
3. In what ways do we see a lack of JOY impacting the secular, non-Christian world? Be specific and consider how a lack of gratitude impacts the answer to this question.

JOY through Evangelism

Provided in the table below is the comprehensive version of *The Romans Road* that integrates eight (8) verses from the book of Romans presented in Lesson #1. The key is to make our interaction with people conversational and let the Holy Spirit speak through us. Most of us tend to get stressed and feel pressure to say the perfect things. We do need to be prepared, but the key is a willingness to share and a love for the person to whom you're speaking.

The Romans Road – the Path to Salvation

| Step | Observation | Verse |
|------|--|--|
| 1 | Everyone has sinned. | Romans 3:23 – <i>For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.</i> |
| 2 | No one is righteous on their own. | Romans 3:10 – <i>There is no one righteous, not even one.</i> |
| 3 | Sin has a penalty. | Romans 6:23 (a) – <i>For the wages of sin is death...</i> |
| 4 | God offers a free gift. | Romans 6:23 (b) – <i>...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.</i> |
| 5 | Christ died for us. | Romans 5:8 – <i>But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.</i> |
| 6 | We must confess and believe. | Romans 10:9-10 – <i>If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved...</i> |
| 7 | Salvation brings peace and acceptance. | Romans 5:1 – <i>Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.</i> |
| 8 | Nothing can separate us from God's love. | Romans 8:38-39 – <i>Neither death nor life... nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God...</i> |

4. How does being a follower of Jesus bring JOY in your life?

