



## **WOW: Word Of the Week**

### **Advent / Appearing**

**December 7, 2022**

The first Wednesday of December. This week, I take a moment to reflect upon a tradition that has become increasingly popular across Cristendom. Advent season began last week.

Depending on your religious heritage, you may or may not be familiar with the word Advent. The four weeks of Advent are observed by some religious groups as a season of preparation for Christmas, also marking the beginning of the liturgical year. In 2022, Advent began on the last Sunday of November and will end on Christmas Eve. Two of the four Sundays of Advent have already passed. Some know Advent as a time of lighting candles—candles of hope, peace, love, and joy.

The word Advent literally means coming. For some, reflecting on Jesus' coming involves both his birth and his expected return. Jesus came in the Incarnation. Jesus will come again. The word Advent does not appear in most English Bibles.

I like to observe that we live between two advents—between two appearings. Titus 2:11-13 says that the grace of God has appeared and that we are awaiting the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. This passage reminds us that we live between the “already Advent” and the “not yet Advent.” That is why our alternative “Word of the Week” is the word Appearing.

Application! What should we learn? The traditional themes of hope, peace, love, and joy are certainly in view at this season of the year. But Titus 2:12 would lead us in a different direction. Christians who are aware of living between two appearings – the appearing of God's saving grace and the glorious appearing of the fulfillment of all we hope for, for such Christians the lesson is focused in how we live.

Teaching us to renounce ungodliness, to deny the passionate lifestyle of the world, to live lives characterized by sanity and self-control, righteousness and justice, and holy godliness in a world that often seems headed in the opposite direction.

It is not difficult to extol hope, peace, love and joy once a year for a few days. What is difficult, but essential, for those who understand the biblical message of appearings (and Advent) is to make certain that our lifestyles reflect gratitude for his grace made possible in his first appearing, and holy hope that looks forward to his second appearing.