The Season of Advent: A timeline of its historical development

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Abstract
Beyond the pragmatic benefit of background briefing about the origins and development of the season of Advent, this Timeline is meant to be a pastoral tool to help focus on the deepest meaning of Advent being a unique time for reflection on the many ‘comings’ of Christ in the past, in the present and in the future.

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[ This timeline is now very outdated ] [ This timeline was released January 2016, when the show was in the middle of its seventh season ] [ The series finale aired September 2018 ] [ Much of the formatting and text for this timeline has also gotten messed up while the updated version was being created. ]

This timeline is designed to take you through every major lore event from ancient history to modern times, from the primordial universe and creation of the Ice Crown, to Joshua and Margaret the dogs’ adoption of Finn the Human. British history is, like that of all other countries, a continuum of developments, changes, continuities, major and minor events, and so on; but our minds are such that it helps us if we impose a structure on it. So, when I think of the period, say, 1000 to 1500, my mind conjures up the label “Middle Ages”, or “Medieval England”. Of course, I know that the England of 1450 had more in common with the England of 1550 (Tudor England) than it did with the England of 1150. So, I think it’s important that English children develop a clear overview of their history which goes something like: Ancient Britain, Roman Britain, Anglo-Saxon England, Medieval England, Tudor and Stuart England, Georgian England, Victorian England, and 20th Century England.

Unlike modern Advent ceremonies, most celebrations of Advent in history had a twin focus. The Latin word adventus was the translation of the Greek parousia—a word used for both the coming of Christ in human flesh and his Second Coming. Advent, then, always tended to focus on both. For the first two weeks of Advent, the church would reflect on the Second Coming. Numerous Advent devotionals, calendars, and homespun methods of marking the season have sprouted up in recent years as a result. One notable lack in modern Advent celebration, though, is the twin focus of both the Incarnation and the Second Coming. Both of these themes make Advent instructive, not only historically but also in terms of biblical theology.