

# **HISNAG – Յիսնակի**

## **Armenian Advent**

### **In the Armenian Church Tradition**

"Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." (James 5:8)

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)

The Advent Season "Christmas", is also celebrated by the Armenians, like the rest of the Christendom. It is called "**HISNAG-Յիսնակի**" from the Armenian number "**hissun**" means fifty (50).



As I am undertaking research these days on the connection between the Irish and the Armenians...I noticed that the Armenians modify their ideas to suit their requirements.

The Armenian Church fathers decided to celebrate the Advent season "**HISNAG-Յիսնակի**" in a Biblical way...It must be 50 days. **Leviticus 23:16**.

We celebrate the **Nativity and Theophany** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on 6<sup>th</sup> of January.

**HISNAG (Բարեկենդան Յիսնակի)** started last Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November, which was the first day of Advent in our calendar, till the sunset on 5<sup>th</sup> of January when the Armenian church will begin to celebrate Christmas – celebrating the revelation and the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

During "**HISNAG- Յիսնակի**", in ancient days, the believers used to fast in preparation for the celebration. Fasting was for 50 days.

Now some will say Wednesdays, Fridays and the last week of Advent are regularly observed as fast days.

Others they will start the Advent the first of week of fasting and it is called "the Fast of the Beginning of "**HISNAG- Յիսնակի**".

The second fast (one week duration) following the third Sunday of "**HISNAG- Յիսնակի**". This fast is known as "the Fast of St. James, Bishop of Nisibis."

The “**Christmas Tree**” is an Evangelical German tradition and was introduced early in 19<sup>th</sup> century with nice decorations.

Nearly 100 years later the “**Advent Wreath**” was introduced to the Roman Catholic communities...which consisted of 25 small candles, 4 medium candles and one large candle.

The small candles are lit each day, the medium one lit on Sundays and the large candle, representing Christ, is lit during the service on Christmas day.

The four medium candles and one large one is the norm nowadays.



Interacting with the west, the Armenians in Constantinople (Istanbul) started using the “**Christmas Tree**” as well as the “**Advent Wreath**”.

This tradition spread amongst the Armenians all over the diaspora.

As Armenians, instead of using 5 candles, we use 8 candles....!

The 7 medium candles are lit on each Armenian Advent Sunday and the large one, representing

the revelation of Jesus Christ, is lit at the sunset Service on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January.

Interestingly the colour of the 7 candles is purple. The purple colour represents “**repentance**” according to the Armenian Church tradition.

The purple colour is widely used by the Priests, Vartabeds, Bishops and the Catholicos of the Armenian Church.

The Armenian Church, however, encourages us about the significance of “**HISNAG-Յիսնակի**” in our journey in the Christian faith.

Rededicating our lives to Christ through our actions, thoughts, and prayers. This is an occasion for some or all of us to discover God’s loving gifts all around us. **We need to have an open heart to receive Christ—God’s greatest gift of all..!**

Enjoy **HISNAG- Յիսնակի**”