



# The Weary World Rejoices

**A 27-Day Christmas Devotional Journey**

**By: Dr. Laws Rushing II**



## Acknowledgments

**I am indebted to Mrs. Whitney Creasy for the idea of writing a Christmas devotional book and for the work involved in its publication.**

**Thank you to Laura Spears for editorial input.**

**Thank you to all the staff and families of RCA for your love and support.**

**Thank you Stacey and River for your love of Christmas and for helping me out of my Bah Humbug occasionally! Love you!!**

## Dedication

**This volume is affectionately dedicated to the lovely students of Riverside Christian Academy.**



## Preface

Our world is weary, but there is a reason to rejoice because with God all things are possible.

It was on December 25, 1914, in the midst of one of the most murderous wars that something unthinkable happened. The gunfire ceased and the quiet voice of silence whispered into the soldiers' souls, the name *Christ*. Voices were lifted from the German lines and the men sang Christmas carols to each other. They sang across the great divide that was soaked in youthful blood, dead bodies, and bitter tears. The men, who were enemies, came out of their deep trenches to cross "no man's land" and exchange gifts with one another. German Lieutenant Kurt Zehmisch recalled: "How marvelously wonderful, yet how strange it was. The English officers felt the same way about it. Thus Christmas, the celebration of Love, managed to bring mortal enemies together as friends for a time." Our world is weary with cynicism, doubt, hate, suffering, division, sickness, and death. Yes, it may sound "strange" but the "kingdom of God is at hand." There is a reason to rejoice because "with God all things are possible." Welcome to the new creation and rejoice because God's eternal love has been born in our broken humanity.

Sunday, November 29



Sometimes the greatest worship is simply **silence**. Mary treasured these thoughts of Jesus' childhood. Scholars believe that the Nativity story presented in Luke may have come directly from Mary herself because this phrase is repeated in the early stories of Jesus. Luke begins his Gospel by relating, "they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word." Mary kept these memories and pondered them throughout her life, trying to make sense of all that was happening to her.

Christmas is a time to lose ourselves in the mystery of God which brings utter silence.

***"But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." (Habakkuk 2:20)***

Silence is a beautiful sign of trust and contentment. Have you ever enjoyed the company of a dear friend or loved one in silence? It is a sign of trust and love to be silently content with each other.

## Silent Night

Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
'Round yon virgin Mother and Child  
Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight!  
Glories stream from heaven afar;  
Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!

Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, oh, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth




Monday, November 30

The first Christmas involved a substantial journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Joseph was required by the Caesar Augustus decree and census to return to the place of his lineage. The journey of Joseph and Mary took anywhere from four to seven days. They most likely took the shortest route, given the pregnancy of Mary.

The Jewish historian Josephus Flavius said, "It is the custom of the Galileans at the time of festival to pass through the Samaritan territory on their way to the Holy City."

Christmas and the season of Advent can be a spiritual journey for each of us. **Welcome to this 27-day devotional journey to Bethlehem.** I invite you to ponder the greatest event known to man, which is the advent of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ***What begins in the lowly manger of Bethlehem is crowned in the glory of God.***

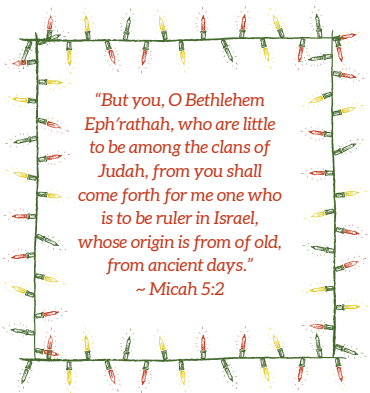


***"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child."***

**~ Luke 2:4-5**



Tuesday, December 1



*"But you, O Bethlehem  
Eph'rathah, who are little  
to be among the clans of  
Judah, from you shall  
come forth for me one who  
is to be ruler in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days."  
~ Micah 5:2*

This prophecy of Micah was written over 700 years before the birth of Christ. The prophetic word gives us the exact town in which the Messiah would be born.

"Little" Bethlehem holds great significance because of its connection to King David. It is through the Davidic lineage that the Messiah would come. The story of Ruth primarily takes place in the town of Bethlehem (Ruth 1:1, 2, 19, 22; 2:4; 4:11). King David was a descendant of Ruth and Boaz and regarded as "the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse" (1 Samuel 17:12). Jesus was a descendant of David (Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:1).

Hear the people call His name. The blind man desperately pleaded, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" During the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, they call out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

*Bethlehem* literally means "House of Bread." The Scriptures weave an intricate tapestry of the Son of David, who says, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Christ, newly born in Bethlehem is from the "ancient days."

## *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

For Christ is born of Mary  
And gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love  
O morning stars together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God our King  
And peace to men on earth

Wednesday, December 2

***"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel."***

***Isaiah 7:14, KJV***

The miraculous birth of Jesus is foretold by the forlorn Isaiah. It was shrouded in the deep mystery of prophetic utterances which were a **"lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."** The ancient confession of the early Church, "born of the Virgin Mary," goes back to the Garden of Eden. God spoke the promise that through "her seed" the curse of death would be vanquished. Mary was "overshadowed" by the power of the Most High and the "child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." The daughter of Eve becomes the mother of the new creation found in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:10). The church of our Lord continues against the "gates of Hades" to restore what was lost in Eden. **"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet"** (Romans 16:20).

## O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel  
O come, O come, Thou Lord of might  
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height

In ancient times didst give the law  
In cloud, and majesty and awe  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel  
O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny  
From depths of hell Thy people save  
And give them victory o'er the grave





Thursday, December 3

## "His name shall be called Immanuel."

MATTHEW 1:23

The loneliness of sin has befallen our world. It has created an eternal chasm between God and humanity. The Gospel of Matthew echoes the words of the prophet Isaiah desiring Immanuel, "God with us." The patriarchs of the distant past knew his presence, prophets saw visions and heard His voice, but now was the time of God's visitation. Jesus drew near to the city of Jerusalem weeping and said that judgment was imminent "because you did not know the time of your visitation."

- **Immanuel, there is healing.** "And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people" (Matthew 4:23).
- **Immanuel, there is forgiveness.** "And he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven'" (Luke 7:48).
- **Immanuel, there is rest.** "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).
- **Immanuel, there is love.** "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

**Emmanuel God and humanity are finally united in the One named, Jesus.**

## O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here;  
And drive away the shades of night  
And pierce the clouds and bring us light!  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heavenly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.  
O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,



**"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"**

**~ 2 Corinthians 9:15**

*Friday, December 4*



***GK Chesterton once remarked, "When we were children we were grateful to those who filled our stockings at Christmas time. Why are we not grateful to God for filling our stockings with legs?"***

God is the grand giver. He not only has put legs in our stockings but given the indescribable gift of Heaven itself, Jesus Christ. God spared nothing on the first Christmas and has created a perpetual, eternal gift in His son Jesus. This season should be one of enormous gratitude for all that the Lord has provided. **"Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).** Thanks be to God!

Saturday, December 5

**The Heavens literally declared “the glory of God” by announcing the birth of the Savior (Psalm 19:1).**

The Magi beheld the star and were guided by the light.

**“When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.”**

MATTHEW 2:10

The children of Israel were led by the Lord in similar fashion: “And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night” (Exodus 13:21).

The darkness of night can overwhelm us at times, but it was in the smallest of starlight that the world found its greatest hope. Christ is our polar star, our celestial guide through the shadows of dark night. **“I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star” (Revelation 22:16).**

## Noel by Chris Tomlin

Love incarnate, love divine  
Star and angels gave the sign  
Bow to babe on bended knee  
The Savior of humanity  
Unto us a Child is born  
He shall reign forevermore  
Noel, Noel  
Come and see what God has done  
Noel, Noel  
The story of amazing love!  
The light of the world, given for us  
Noel  
Son of God and Son of man  
There before the world began  
Born to suffer, born to save

Born to raise us from the grave  
Christ the everlasting Lord  
He shall reign forevermore  
Noel, Noel  
Come and see what God has done  
Noel, Noel  
The story of amazing love!  
The light of the world, given for us  
Noel  
Noel, Noel  
Come and see what God has done  
Noel, Noel  
The story of amazing love!  
The light of the world, given for us  
Noel, Noel



Sunday, December 6

The Scriptures reveal an amazing scene on the night of Jesus' birth. A multitude of Heavenly hosts caught up in rapturous praise to God! Did you know that the angels of God "desire to look into" the blessing of the Gospel that we share (1 Peter 1:12)?

Even though we are made a "little lower" than the angels, God chose humanity to be crowned in Christ (Psalms 8:5-9 & Hebrews 1: 9). "You have made Him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet."

The purest praise also comes in relationship to each other. The angels declare peace among men. **The greatest peacemaker is Christ** who promises, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives; do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27). Christ proclaims, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5: 9). **Christmas is a time to join the angels in praise to God and peace among men.**

**"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth  
peace among  
men with whom  
he is pleased!"**

LUKE 2:14

## Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations rise;  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With angelic host proclaim  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! the herald angels sing  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

## Prayer

Father,  
We join with the hosts of Heaven,  
We praise your Son's name,  
We pray peace on earth among men,  
In Jesus name,  
Amen

Monday, December 7

The nativity of Jesus is not just the story of His birth, but of the cosmic saga of good versus evil. Herod the Great (misnomer) plays a part in Satan's attempt to foil God's plan by his bloodthirsty and covetous heart. Herod's brutality is historically well-known. Augustus once said, "It's better to be Herod's pig than son." Herod executed three of his sons and wife Mariamne. Herod lived as a Jew, so a pig was safer from slaughter than his own sons. Satan tries to destroy Jesus before He can bring salvation through His atoning sacrifice and resurrection.

In Revelation, we see the cosmic saga unfold. "And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth." **Satan was attempting from the very beginning to thwart the will of God. Christ prevails in His birth and death!**

"Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men."

~ Matthew 2:16

Tuesday, December 8

**Hosea's words are remarkably both remembrances and prophecy.**

Israel was called God's son. Moses was told, "Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son" (Exodus 4:22). During the Passover, God's firstborn son is spared through the blood of the lamb. Egypt is judged and the firstborn perishes by the obstinacy of Pharaoh's heart.

The holy family now escape to Egypt in their flight from Herod's bloodthirsty pride. They will eventually return to Nazareth from Egypt just as Israel. (Matthew 2:19-23).

Jesus also fulfills His own exodus when He is baptized as Israel (1 Corinthians 10:2) and journeys through the wilderness for forty days and forty nights to meet the temptations of Satan. Jesus is the perfect Son who fulfills "all righteousness."

**It is "in Christ" that we truly become sons and daughters of the Father (Galatians 4:1-7).**

**"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."**

HOSEA 11:1

*A Christmas Alleluia by Chris Tomlin*

Alleluia, Alleluia  
Christ, the Savior of the world  
He has come!  
Alleluia, Alleluia  
To the highest name of all, Alleluia  
Alleluia, Alleluia  
Christ, the Savior of the world  
He has come!  
Alleluia, Alleluia  
To the highest name of all, Alleluia  
The heavens roar, the Angels sing  
All glory to our God and King!

O night Divine forevermore, Alleluia  
The heavens roar, the Angels sing  
All glory to our God and King!  
O night Divine forevermore, Alleluia  
Alleluia, alleluia  
Christ, the Savior of the world  
He has come!  
Alleluia, alleluia  
To the highest name of all  
Alleluia!  
You're the highest name of all  
Alleluia!



Wednesday, December 9

What do you want for Christmas? It is a common question, but do we trust God for His answer?

**Take a moment to relish the goodness and wisdom of God in His providential care.** The Father is not content in giving you a stone or serpent, but the very best for your eternal well-being. If we, being evil, know how to give gifts to our children or grandchildren, how much more is our heavenly Father able and willing to do so for us? "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." (James 1:17) **Spend time in prayer with the Father and trust Him for the many gifts from His immutable goodness.**

"Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?"

~ Matthew 7:7-11



Thursday, December 10

**God did not exempt Himself from our tears, sorrows, struggles, sin, or suffering.** The "Man of sorrows" is "fully acquainted with our grief." Life brings victories and joy but also defeat and death. Jesus occupied another place removed from earth; condemned, cursed, crucified on a criminal's cross suspended between Heaven and earth.

The joy of Christmas is forged in the shape of a cross, which reveals God's own broken heart. "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalms 34:18). It is in His utter humiliation that God brings exaltation.



Christmas might bring tears to you because of the sorrow of this age. Remember, that even on the first Christmas, there was a shadow of a cross. A shadow that brings light. **"For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (II Corinthians 4:6).**

"Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."  
~ Philippians 2:6-12

Friday, December 11

**"Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"**

JOHN 8:12

Can you imagine how dark this world would be if Jesus had not been born? Dr. James Allen Francis spoke of the paradoxical and powerful influence of Jesus:

*He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, his executioners gambled for His garments, the only property He had on earth. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend. Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today He is the central figure of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one solitary life.*

The solitary life of Christ is the greatest light among all the Christmas bulbs. Christ is the light of the world! Have you ever considered all of the good that has resulted from the teaching of Christ? Christ brought a new consciousness to humanity! Many earthly blessings developed as a result of Christianity such as the modern hospital, orphanages, care for the poor, democracy and science itself! This is not to mention the most important thing, eternal hope!



Saturday, December 12

***G.K. Chesterton's poem recalls, "A Child in a foul stable, where the beasts feed and foam, only where He was homeless, are you and I at home."***

The thought of Christmas is usually a warm home with loved ones but the picture of the nativity of Jesus is far from home. Mary and Joseph left the comfort of their town and house to give birth in a stable. Can you smell the animals and hear them neighing?

Furthermore, Jesus is from a place more distant yet. "Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made" (John 17:5). "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20)

**This Christmas remember as you nestle in the warmth of your home that Christ was homeless at birth so that you and I could have an eternal home.**

**"the babe lying  
in a manger."**

LUKE 2:16

## *Away in a Manger*

Away in a manger  
No crib for His bed  
The little Lord Jesus  
Lay down His sweet head  
The stars in the sky  
Look down where He lay  
The little Lord Jesus  
Asleep on the hay  
The cattle are lowing  
The poor Baby wakes  
But little Lord Jesus  
No crying He makes

I love Thee, Lord Jesus  
Look down from the sky  
And stay by my side  
'Til morning is nigh  
Be near me, Lord Jesus  
I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever  
And love me, I pray  
Bless all the dear children  
In Thy tender care  
And take us to Heaven  
To live with Thee there



Sunday, December 13

**“They fell down  
and worshiped  
him.”**

MATTHEW 2:10

Christmas is a time of adoration and worship. The wise men seeking the Messiah fell down and worshiped Jesus in reverence and veneration. Some have estimated that they journeyed over 400 miles to worship Christ. How long was your commute last Sunday? This season offers many opportunities to keep the first commandment of worship to Almighty God.

**What do we mean by worship? William Temple gave one of the most comprehensive definitions: "Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God. It is the quickening of the conscience by his holiness; the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose—all this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable."**

Worship involves all the endowments of the human soul. Take a moment to take in the grandeur and glory of God!

## *O Come All Ye Faithful*

O come all ye faithful  
Joyful and triumphant  
O come ye,  
O come ye to Bethlehem  
Come and behold Him  
Born the King of Angels  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
O come let us adore Him  
Christ the Lord

## *Prayer*

Father, Creator,  
Fill us with wonder and adoration,  
We worship your Son, Jesus,  
We fall down in the sight of our  
salvation.  
In Jesus name,  
Amen

Monday, December 14

Isaiah outlines the prophetic picture of the Messiah that is so brilliantly painted in the colors of Jesus' life. The "son is given" hearkens the voice of the Apostle John, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God is at hand and now sits at the right hand of God reigning (Matthew 3:2, Acts 2:33). His ministry was filled with **wonder**, miracles and signs (Acts 2:22). The lame, blind, leprous, and even dead became whole before the witness of Israel. The demons and storms were shushed by His **mighty** voice. He, as a **counselor**, exceeded the wisdom of all the sages over the millennia. He truthfully declared, "I and the **Father** are one." The **Prince of Peace** in the order of Melchizedek ushers forgiveness and communion among all nations. Only one person in all history can answer to the myriad of names given by Isaiah: Jesus of Nazareth.

**"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'"**

ISAIAH 9:6

Tuesday, December 15

**"You shall call  
his name Jesus,  
for he will save  
his people from  
their sins."**

MATTHEW 1:21

Shakespeare is often quoted, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Yet, we know that there is power in a name. There is a significant difference in the feeling you get from seeing your mother's name on an arrived letter than the I.R.S.

The name *Jesus* or *Yeshua* came from a Heavenly origin. The angel of the Lord that appeared to Joseph announced His name (Matthew 1:18-21). The name *Jesus* is a derivative of the name *Joshua*, meaning savior. This name holds prophetic resonance. Moses prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:18, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him." The name of the prophet in succession was amazingly the same Joshua. The English transliteration of the Greek is *JESUS*. The prophets and angels testify of His name which is exalted above all names (Philippians 2:12, Acts 3:22).

## *Light of the World by Lauren Daigle*

The world waits for a miracle  
The heart longs for a little bit of hope  
Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel  
A child prays for peace on Earth  
And she's calling out from a sea of hurt  
Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel  
And can you hear the angels singing  
Glory to the light of the world  
Glory, the light of the world is here  
The drought breaks with the tears of a mother  
A baby's cry is the sound of love  
Come down, come down, Emmanuel  
He is the song for the suffering  
He is Messiah, the Prince of Peace has come  
He has come, Emmanuel  
Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world

Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world  
For all who wait  
For all who hunger  
For all who've prayed  
For all who wonder  
Behold your King  
Behold Messiah  
Emmanuel, Emmanuel  
Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world  
Glory to the light of the world  
Behold your King  
Behold Messiah  
Emmanuel, Emmanuel  
The world waits for the miracle  
The heart longs for a little bit of hope  
Oh come, oh come Emmanuel





Wednesday, December 16

**"Then, opening  
their treasures,  
they offered  
him gifts,  
gold and  
frankincense  
and myrrh."**

MATTHEW: 2:11

The Magi representing the Gentile nations bring their homage to the newborn king of Israel. The gifts are of important significance and distinction: gold, frankincense, myrrh. The word *treasures* carries the connotation of abundance in measure.

These first Christmas gifts express great symbolic meaning for us. The gold was a gift worthy of royalty and conveys Jesus' regal status as the rightful King. The frankincense carried the idea of something offered to God or a substance of anointing and epitomizes Christ's divinity. The myrrh had medicinal value but also could represent the humanity of Christ. Myrrh was commonly used in burial, and it provides a foreshadowing of His death. (John 19:39) "And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds."

The gifts of the Magi come full circle at the end of Matthew when it is revealed that the Gospel is not just for Israel but for Gentiles too. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."



Thursday, December 17

**“The words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’”**

ACTS 20:35

Anne Frank echoed these sentiments by saying, “No one has ever become poor by giving.” Christ clarifies where the blessing of Christmas and life resides. It is in our generosity and giving that we find the greatest blessing.

It should be apparent that having the ability to give is the initial commendation but that the blessing of giving doesn’t end there. Our gifts become a part of the eternal economy in the Kingdom of God. So, it is in giving that we truly gain and never lose. Moreover, Jesus declared from the mount, **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).** The greatest gift is to be the giver.



Friday, December 18

The Gospel of John's nativity story begins in the unfathomable eternity. **The prologue of John presents Jesus as the eternal Word (Logos) united with the very essence of God even before the beginning.** It reminds us of the creation story and the true home of Jesus of Nazareth which is with the Father from everlasting to everlasting. The Gospel challenges us to see behind the veil of humanity and see Jesus for who He really is, God. The Gospel of John opens our eyes to seeing the glory of God revealed in Jesus.

**Church father Athanasius spoke no truer words when he said, "Whom I know as my Redeemer cannot be less than God."** The great Apostle Thomas, when confronted with the risen Savior, declared, "My Lord and my God!" **Christmas is the story of God dwelling with man.** The word "dwelt" carries the meaning of "pitching a tent." Our minds shift back to the tabernacle of Moses when God's radiance was found in the wilderness among Israelites. **Now, we have truly beheld His glory in the tabernacle of His Son.**

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

JOHN 1:1-3, 14

O Come,  
All Ye Faithful

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,  
Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be the glory given;  
Word of the Father,  
Now in the flesh appearing,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

Prayer

Father in heaven,  
Help us to see you in your son,  
Reveal to us who you are,  
Let us see your glory,  
In Jesus name,  
Amen

Saturday, December 19

**“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”**

MATTHEW 5:14-16

**The light of Christ is meant to be shared with others. Christ in His sermon of the mount declared, “Let your light so shine.”** One of the first observations of this command is the word, *let*. The Divine imperative is one that is to be spiritually animated through a power from elsewhere and not in ourselves.

Christ doesn't require us to make, ignite, or build, but to simply "let" the power of the light reside in ourselves through the Holy Spirit. Christ commands us to acquiesce to His strength, control, and elucidation. This light, however, is personal and described as yours with its own color and purpose.

**God has created you for this special reason in your corner of the Kingdom! It is to “so” shine that others see and understand that your light glorifies the Father in “whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning.” (James 1:17) Shine on Christmas lights!!!**



Sunday, December 20

**Christmas is a time of song.** The season is inaugurated by the beautiful carols heard everywhere. The song of Mary is recorded in the Gospel of Luke and sometimes referred to in the Latin as the Magnificat. Just as John the Baptist leaped in the womb of Elizabeth, **Mary's heart leaped in praise to God for His blessing and favor.** The song is in the lineage of the song of Moses, Miriam, David, and especially Hannah. The words reveal God using the humble to achieve His great purposes. God acknowledges the "lowly state of His maidservant" in contradistinction to the proud. We see God's sovereignty by putting "down the mighty from their thrones." God's faithfulness is emphasized by the "remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our Fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever." **Let your heart magnify the Lord as did Mary for His purposes, sovereignty, and faithfulness.**

#### PRAYER

**Father,  
We magnify Your name,  
You choose the humble and meek,  
To accomplish Your good pleasure,  
Thank You for Your sovereignty  
and faithfulness.  
In Jesus name,  
Amen**

## *The Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55*

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.  
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;  
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
And his mercy is on those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,  
he has put down the mighty from their thrones,  
and exalted those of low degree;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent empty away.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."



Monday, December 21

**"And Mary said,  
'Behold, I am  
the handmaid  
of the Lord; let  
it be to me  
according to  
your word.'"**

LUKE 1:37-38

**Christmas is not just about the blessing and favor of God but also faithful obedience.** Mary was given tremendous honor and favor by God in giving birth to His only begotten Son. Mary acknowledged, "For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed." (Luke 1:48) The angel declared, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." (Luke 1:30) **The continued words of Mary, "let it be to me according to your word" express obedience to His divine will.**

God's intervention into Mary's life was far from convenient or even comforting. She was pregnant and unmarried. The nativity story goes on to share many hardships and challenges. Can we forget, a grieving mother standing eventually at the cross? Simeon prophesied concerning Mary's favor and blessing at the presentation of the holy child at the temple: "a sword will pierce through your own soul also." **Mary was blessed as much as obedient.**

## *Let it Be*

When I find myself in times of trouble,  
Mother Mary comes to me  
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be  
And in my hour of darkness  
she is standing right in front of me  
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be  
Let it be, let it be  
Let it be, let it be  
Whisper words of wisdom  
Let it be  
And when the brokenhearted people  
living in the world agree  
There will be an answer, let it be  
For though they may be parted,  
there is still a chance that they will see  
There will be an answer, let it be

## *Prayer*

Father,  
We pray as Mary,  
Let it be according to thy word,  
In the name of Christ,  
Amen





Tuesday, December 22

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.'"  
MATTHEW 1:2

The "men from the east" were also called "wise men" in Matthew 2:7. These wise men traveled great distances seeking the Savior. **Wise men and women still seek Him today.**

God's word says, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you" (James 4:8). Christmas is a time of seeking God and His will. What lengths will you go to know Him? The Scriptures are a great place to begin in the search for the will of God. "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16,17). God also promises to provide us wisdom if we ask: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him" (James 1:5-6). **The wisest thing you can still do is seek Christ and His kingdom just as those ancient men from the East (Matthew 6:33).**

When from the East the wise men came,  
Led by the Star of Bethlehem,  
The gifts they brought to Jesus were  
Of gold and frankincense and myrrh.  
Bright gold of Ophir, passing fine,  
Proclaims a king of royal line;  
For David's son in David's town,  
Is born the heir of David's crown.  
The incense clouds, with fragrance rare,  
The presence of a God declare;  
Lo! kings in adoration fall,  
For Mary's Son is Lord of all.  
The myrrh, with bitter taste, foreshows,  
A life of sorrows, wounds, and woes;  
The deadly cup, that overran  
With anguish for the Son of Man.  
Our gold upon Thine altar lies;  
Our prayers to Thee, as incense, rise;  
Accept as myrrh our tears and sighs;  
O King, O God, O Sacrifice

Wednesday, December 23

**"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."**

LUKE 2:7

There was no room for the holy family at the Bethlehem inn. **We must open our hearts to receive Christ and not turn him away. "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12,13).** When we receive Christ through faith, we become children of God. "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41).

**When we receive Christ our lives are transformed by His presence.** Zacchaeus received Christ into his home and was forever changed! "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold" (Luke 19:8). **Receive the Lord through faith and obedience.**

## *No Room in the Inn*

No beautiful chamber, no soft cradle bed;  
No place but a manger, nowhere for His head;  
No praises of gladness, no thought of their sin,  
No glory but sadness, no room in the inn.  
No room, no room, for Jesus,  
O give Him welcome free,  
Lest you should hear at Heaven's gate,  
"There is no room for thee." No sweet  
consecration, no seeking His part,  
No humiliation, no place in the heart;  
No thought of the Savior, no sorrow for sin,  
No prayer for His favor, no room in the inn.  
No one to receive Him, no welcome while here,  
No balm to relieve Him, no staff but a spear;  
No seeking His treasure, no weeping for sin,  
No doing His pleasure, no room in the inn.





## Christmas Eve Thursday, December 24

The arrival of Christ to the world was at the exact moment God had destined. **Time and eternity, spirit and flesh, created and uncreated, God and man converged in the person of Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world.** There was nothing coincidental or accidental in His life. "And Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified.'" (John 12:23)

**The first advent of Christ is the testimony and validation of the second.** There stands another hour when all things will be delivered unto the Father. "Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live." (John 5:25) Christ will come again with the clouds of heaven and great power. "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain will be made low; and the uneven ground shall be level and the rough places a plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

**"But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law"**

GALATIANS 4:4





Christmas Day  
Friday, December 25

**“Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”**

1 TIMOTHY 3:16

Merry Christmas! The “great mystery” is the knowledge of God revealed in Christ! **Christmas is about God showing up. Yahweh has manifested Himself in all of reality.** He is known in the highest of heavens as the great I Am. He is known in our creatureliness as an infant subdued by the finiteness of space and time. He is known in our suffering and death, crucified as the “man of sorrows.” He is known in our heart of hearts through belief as the risen Lord. Have faith dear friend! God is here!

Athanasius so eloquently stated, **“The Self-revealing of the Word is in every dimension - above, in creation; below, in the Incarnation; in the depth, in Hades; in the breadth, throughout the world. All things have been filled with the knowledge of God.”** All things have been filled with the radiance of the Son of God! All things are possible and you are loved! God is here!! Merry Christmas!!!