The background of the entire page is a dark blue night sky. In the upper right quadrant, there is a bright, multi-pointed star. In the lower left quadrant, the silhouettes of two people are visible: one person is riding a horse, and another person is walking alongside it, holding a lead. The horizon shows a dark, hilly landscape under the starry sky.

“For unto you is
born this day In
the city of David
a Saviour, Who is
Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:11

ADVENT *Devotions*

By Pastor Stephen Hildebrandt

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Advent Devotions is written and edited
by Pastor Stephen Hildebrandt

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ADVENT

The four weeks leading up to Christmas can be an especially rich time of reflection and meditation upon the birth of our Lord. These *Advent Devotions* are designed to focus the Christian's attention upon Christ and off of the materialism and commercialism surrounding the American celebration of Christmas.

Using an advent wreath, each of the four weeks leading up to Christmas will focus upon one of Christ's names revealed at His birth in the following passages:

“And the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a ¹SAVIOR, who is ²CHRIST the ³LORD’” (Luke 2:10-11). “‘And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.’ Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name ⁴IMMANUEL’ which translated means, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:21-23).

Buy or construct a wreath and place four candles (red, purple, gold and green) spaced evenly around the wreath with a white candle in the center. These candles will be used to represent names of Christ and corresponding attributes. During your daily family devotion time, light the candle (and all previous weeks' candles), and then read the daily devotion. On December 24th and 25th light all the candles as well as the candle in the center. Have your children learn what each of the candles represent.

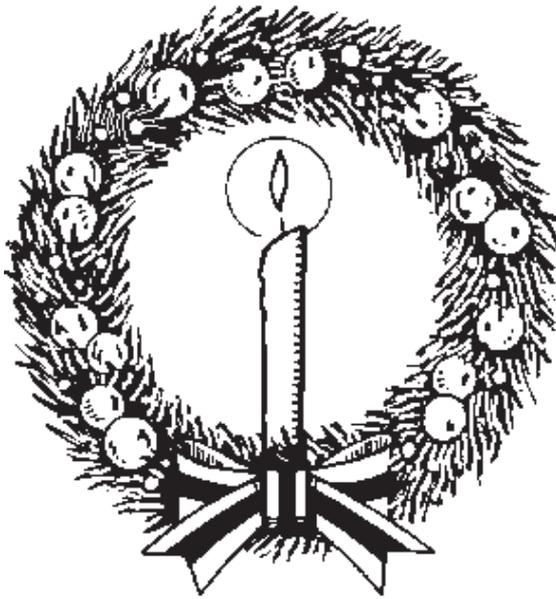
<u>ADVENT WEEK</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>CANDLE</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>
1st Week	Savior	Red	Sacrifice
2nd Week	Christ	Purple	Royalty
3rd Week	Lord	Gold	Deity
4th Week	Immanuel	Green	Humanity
Dec. 24th & 25th	Light of the World	White	Glory



Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.'" – Matthew 1:20-21

ADVENT WEEK 1

Candle: *Red*. Symbol: *Sacrifice*.



Jesus is the

SAVIOR



A Great Savior For Great Sinners



“I bring you good news of a great joy” – Luke 2:10

DEAR Christian, is Jesus’ birth “good news of a great joy” *to you*? Some may think that is a silly question to ask a Christian. But is it? Look into the mirror. Be honest, what do you see -- “great joy” -- or something else? Perhaps you see someone who is not necessarily overjoyed, but a pretty good person nonetheless. Friend, have you forgotten who you are? – a *sinner*, saved by grace! Let me approach all of this from another direction. Do you know why too Christians don’t evangelize, don’t share the Gospel, don’t even tell their own family and friends about Christ? O there are many excuses, but the primary reason is this: We don’t see what big sinners we are. Find a man who understands a bit of his own depravity (Rom. 3:10-18), the eternal damnation his sins deserve (Rom 6:23), and the glory of God’s grace in the birth, life, and substitutionary death of Christ, and you will see a man filled with “good news of a great joy” which he feels compelled to tell. He understands himself to be a *great sinner* and hence Christ a *great Savior*. Yes, God sent His only-begotten Son into the world to “save His people from their *sins*” (Mt. 1:21). To the self-righteous, that is hardly newsworthy, but it is “good news,” great news, headline news to those who understand the depth of their sinfulness (Mt. 21:31)! Jesus said, “I have not come to call the [self] righteous, but *sinners*” (Lk. 5:29-32). Sinners need a Savior and *great sinners* need a *great Savior*! The apostle Paul wrote, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*, among whom *I am foremost of all*” (1 Tim. 1:15). The truth of the matter is that all of us are *great sinners* (Rom. 3:23), but to those who cannot accept this, Christ is a little Savior, the cross a little cross, salvation a meager thing, and Jesus’ birth just good Christmas card material. Without a clear grasp of these two things – one’s own sinfulness (Rom. 3:23) and the eternal penalty of sin (Rom. 6:23) – we can never fully appreciate Christmas. These are themes we dare not dwell on too little. Begin today to prepare your heart for Christmas by meditating on this: Jesus is a *great Savior* who atoned for the *great* transgressions of *great rebels*. This is truly “good news of a great joy!”



 1st Sunday
in Advent



Amazing Grace

by John Newton, 1779

D *D7* *G* *D*
Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,

That saved a wretch like me;
A *A7*

D *D7* *G* *D*
I once was lost but now am found,

Was blind but now I see.
A *G* *D*

D *D7* *G* *D*
Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears relieved;
A *A7*

D *D7* *G* *D*
How gracious did that grace appear.

The hour I first believed.
A *G* *D*

D *D7* *G* *D*
Through many dangers, toils and snares,

I have already come.
A *A7*

D *D7* *G* *D*
Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,

And grace will lead me home.
A *G* *D*

D *D7* *G* *D*
When we've been there ten thousand years,

Bright shining as the sun;
A *A7*

D *D7* *G* *D*
We've no less days to sing God's praise,

Than when we'd first begun.
A *G* *D*

Bridge to Life

“But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” – Ephesians 2:13

IMAGINE a bridge spanning the Atlantic Ocean, connecting America to Europe, 4500 miles long, over waters at an average depth of 10,000 feet! As much of an engineering impossibility as that may be, such a bridge is trivial compared to the infinitely broad separation between God and man, because of sin (Isa. 59:2). It is an impassable gulf than none can forge, but One – Jesus Christ. Many have tried, through one man-made religion or another, but all “fall short” (Rom. 3:23). Christ was born in Bethlehem to span the gap. That little baby was a bridge to eternal life. His birth set the beams, His perfect life hung the supports, but it was His death on the cross that paved the road. Dear friend, you can stand with confidence upon Him. He is a tested trestle, a bridge of proven strength and He will bear you up. Apart from Immanuel’s Bridge *nothing can join us* to God, we are completely cut off; but of those who hope in Christ, the opposite is true – *nothing can separate us* from God:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” – Romans 8:35, 38-39

The incarnation marks Christ’s descent from Heaven, like a draw-bridge descending across a bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1-2). There is *one* bridge (Acts 4:12), albeit a narrow bridge (Mt. 7:13-14), but a bridge nonetheless! – And not a toll bridge, for all who wish may freely cross! (Rom. 6:23). But you must forsake all futile notions of getting across any other way and trust in Christ alone! Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (Jn. 14:6).

Kids Project



Have your children color a picture of a great valley – label it “sin”. Have them write “God” on one side and draw a picture of themselves on the other, with a bridge across labeled “Christ”. Discuss the picture.

How Great Thou Art

Words & Music by Stuart K. Hine, 1899
© 1955 Manna Music, Inc.

^G O Lord my God! When I in ^C awesome wonder,
^G Consider all the worlds Thy ^D hands have made,
^C I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
^G Thy power throughout the universe displayed:

CHORUS

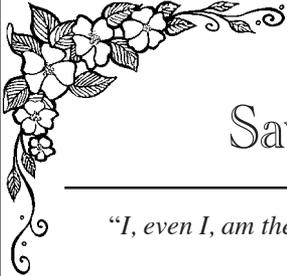
^G Then sings my soul, my ^C Savior God, to ^G Thee:
^D How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
^C Then sings my soul, my ^G Savior God, to ^G Thee:
^D How great Thou art! How great Thou art!

^G And when I think that God, His ^C Son not sparing,
^G Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
^C That on that cross, my burden gladly bearing,
^G He bled and died to take away my sin:

(CHORUS)

^G When Christ shall come with shout of ^C acclamation,
^G And take me home, what ^D joy shall fill my heart!
^C Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
^G And there proclaim, my ^D God, how great Thou ^G art!

(CHORUS)



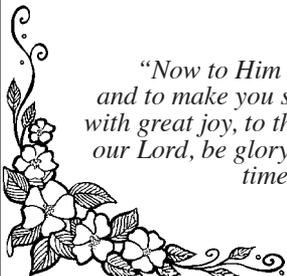
One Savior From Sin



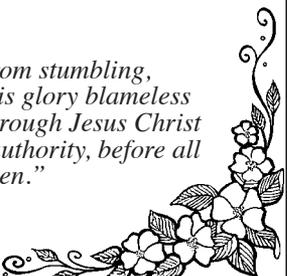
“I, even I, am the Lord; and there is no Savior besides Me”
– Isaiah 43:11 –

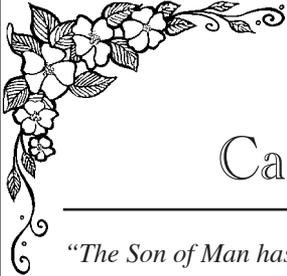
EVERY day thousands of babies are born. Some will grow up to become doctors and save innumerable lives from sickness and disease. Others are born who will grow up and save people from burning buildings, rescue people at sea, liberate hostages, deliver food to the starving, and risk their lives to snatch helpless victims from the jaws of death. But only One was ever born who can save people from their sins and that is Jesus Christ. The Lord said, “I, even I, am the Lord; and there is no Savior besides Me” (Isa. 43:11). “There is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me” (Isa. 45:21). “For there is one God, and one Mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). The angel said to Joseph, concerning Mary, “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21). Yes, He and He alone is able to save us from sin. If I call 9-1-1, any number of people might respond; but if, despairing of my sins, I cry out for salvation, only One can come to my rescue, that is Christ. As lowly a place as a manger is to lay the Savior of the world, there was only room there for one Savior. This one, and this one alone, is the only Savior and Redeemer of men’s souls. “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). So then, Christmas is a celebration of one birth above all others, the One who was born to save men from the present power and the eternal penalty of sin. We dare not lose this one birth among the billions of others, for this one is distinct. Prepare your heart now, that the gifts and festivities of Christmas would not steal your attention away from the One who is truly worthy of all of our devotion. “Turn your eyes upon Jesus,” as the song says, the one Savior from sin.

JUDE 1:24-25



“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”





Only God Can Forgive Sins

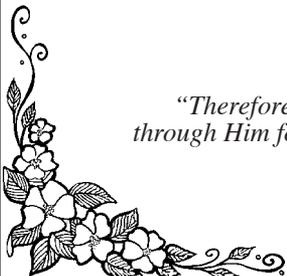
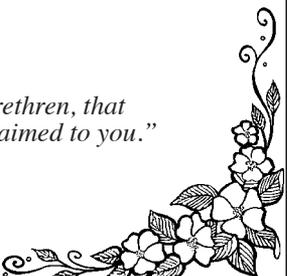


“The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – Matt 9:6

ONE day Jesus said to a man, “‘Friend, your sins are forgiven you.’ And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, ‘Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?’” (Lk. 5:20-21). The scribes and the Pharisees rightly understood that *only God can forgive sins*, but what they failed to recognize or perhaps refused to admit was *Jesus is God*, Immanuel, “God with us” (Mt. 1:23), who *alone* is invested with authority to forgive sins. Certainly there is no shortage of man-made religions today which offer forgiveness of sins: “Do good works,” they tell us, “Perhaps the scales will be tipped in your favor.” Men in fancy robes hear the confessions of their parishioners, wave their hands, and magically absolve them of their sins, but it is a charade for *only God can forgive sin!* Even the spiritually blind scribes and Pharisees understood that much. Christ alone is invested with such authority. “I, even I, am the *One* who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins” (Isa. 43:25). “For there is one God, and *one Mediator* also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5), “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14). Christ is our Priest; He and He alone. Only He can forgive you of your sins. He alone has the authority. Your “good” works cannot absolve you (Isa 64:6; Rom 3:28; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9), no earthly priest can pardon you (1 Tim 2:5; Lk 5:21), and no amount of penance will wash away your guilt (1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:13-14). But the “good news” of the Gospel is that “there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:10-11), who “has authority on earth to forgive sins” (Mt. 9:6). So then, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9). “For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon Thee” (Psa. 86:5).

ACTS 13:38

“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.”

Nothing But the Blood of Jesus

Words and Music by Robert Lowry, 1876

C *Am* *C* *G C*
 What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
C *Am* *C* *G C*
 What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

CHORUS

C *Am* *F* *G* *C*
 O, precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow.
C *Am* *C* *G C*
 No other fount I know; nothing but the blood of Jesus.

C *Am* *C* *G C*
 For my pardon this I see: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
C *Am* *C* *G C*
 For my cleansing this my plea: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

(CHORUS)

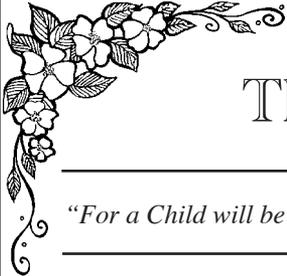
C *Am* *C* *G C*
 Nothing can for sin atone; Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
C *Am* *C* *G C*
 Nothing good that I have done; Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

(CHORUS)

C *Am* *C* *G C*
 This is all my hope and peace: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
C *Am* *C* *G C*
 This is all my righteousness: Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

(CHORUS)





 The Gift
 

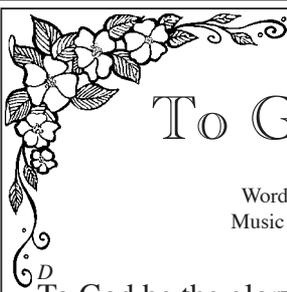
“For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us” – Isa 9:6

GUR advent devotions bring us now to the topic of gift-giving – not the exchange of gifts that has become a traditional part of the secular celebration of Christmas, but rather God’s gift of His Son. Several characteristics of gift-giving are worth noting in this regard. First, a gift must be the initiative of the giver; that is, it must be voluntarily given, otherwise it is not a gift. With this in mind, we turn our thoughts to the gift of God’s Son, initiated in the mind of God, “before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet. 1:19-21), “by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). God’s gift of His Son, the incarnation, Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, His life, and His death on the cross were planned by God *before* the fall of mankind, before the Creation of the world, before anything! “O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” (Rom. 11:33). Second, we look at the value of God’s gift. Most of us are familiar with the old adage, “It’s the thought that counts.” What then, of a gift upon which the infinite mind of God has thought from all eternity! But God’s gift of His Son is more than an infinitely precious thought – it is also of infinite cost and “surpassing value” (Phil. 3:8), for “you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold ... but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Thirdly, look at the motive behind the gift. Of God’s gift we read: “For God so *loved* the world, that He *gave* His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16). God gave His Son “because of His great love with which He loved us” (Eph. 2:4). Finally, we note the free nature of the gift to its recipient. God gave His Son as a “free gift” to His people as an atonement for their sins (Rom. 5:15,16, 6:23). This Christmas, when you give gifts to one another, never forget the greatest gift ever given, with the greatest forethought ever made, initiated within the infinitely loving heart of God, and bought at the most expensive price ever paid.

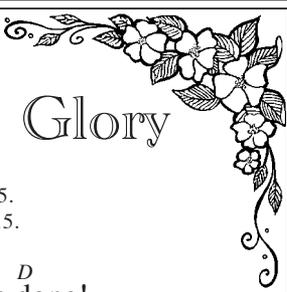
JAMES 1:17

“Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.



To God Be the Glory



Words by Fanny J. Crosby, 1820-1915.
 Music by William H. Doane, 1832-1915.

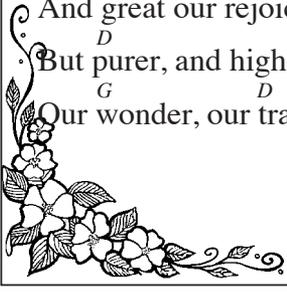
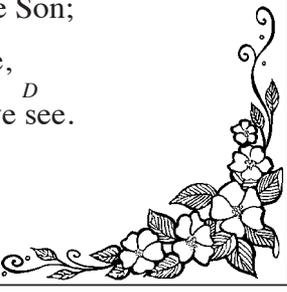
^DTo God be the glory, ^Agreat things He hath ^Ddone!
^GSo loved He the world that ^DHe gave us His ^{E7}Son,
^DWho yielded His life an ^Aatonement for ^Dsin,
^GAnd opened the life-gate that we may go ^Din.

CHORUS

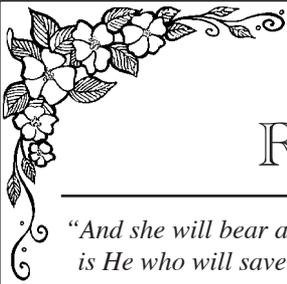
^DPraise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear ^AHis voice!
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people ^Drejoice!
 O come to the Father, through ^AJesus the ^DSon,
^GAnd give Him the ^Dglory, great things He hath ^{A7}done!
^DO perfect redemption, the purchase of ^Ablood!
^GTo every ^Dbeliever the promise of ^{E7}God;
^DThe vilest offender who truly ^Abelieves,
^GThat moment from ^DJesus ^{A7}forgiveness ^Dreceives.

(CHORUS)

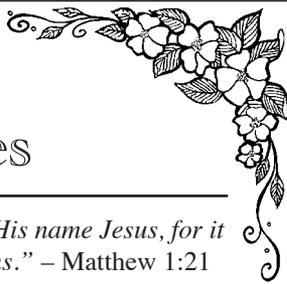
^DGreat things He hath taught us, ^Agreat things He hath ^Ddone,
^GAnd great our rejoicing through ^DJesus the ^{E7}Son;
^DBut purer, and higher, and ^Agreater will be,
^GOur wonder, our transport, when ^DJesus we ^{A7}see.

(CHORUS)



Jesus Really Saves



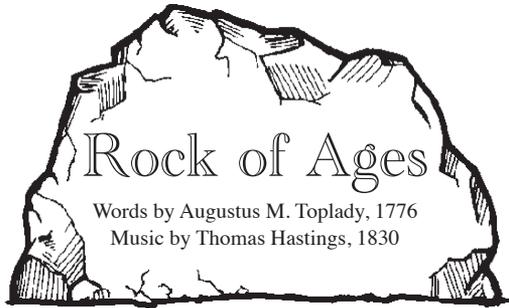
“And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.” – Matthew 1:21

THE angel announced to Joseph, who was betrothed to Mary, “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21). Herein lies the *purpose* Christ came into the world: to “save His people from their sins” (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15). This He would perfectly accomplish, for our passage says, He *will* do it. Christ did not die on the cross to make all men *potentially* savable, that those who choose to believe, by the sheer exertion of their will, would be saved. No, He came to seek and to actually save (Lk. 19:10). Listen friend, if it were left up to you and I to choose God, none of us would be saved! “There is no one who seeks for God” (Rom. 3:11). Aware of our helpless condition, God sent His Son, not potentially to save men, but to actually save them; that is, to *render certain* the salvation of His people (Jn. 6:37-40, 10:28-29) whom He chose (Jn. 15:16) before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Those trapped in a burning building do not need one who could hypothetically rescue them, or one who has the potential to save them, but one who will actually go in and pull them out of the flames. Much more then, those in danger of the eternal fires of hell need, not a theoretical savior, but One who actually saves. The ugly reality of sin requires a real salvation that is neither potential, theoretical, nor hypothetical. Actual sin requires an actual SAVIOR. Christmas then, is a reminder that God’s redemptive plan is in progress – “*at the right time*, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman ... in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to *make certain* about His calling and election of you” (2 Pet. 1:10). Having done that, “Let us draw near with a sincere heart in *full assurance* of faith ... Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful” (Heb. 10:22-23). Bethlehem’s babe is our “hope of glory”! (Col. 1:27).

LUKE 19:10

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”



G C G
 Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee;
 D G D G
 Let the water and the blood, From Thy wounded side which flowed,
 C G
 Be of sin the double cure, Save from wrath and make me pure.

G C G
 Could my tears forever flow, Could my zeal no languor know,
 D G D G
 These for sin could not atone – Thou must save, and Thou alone:
 C G
 In my hand no price I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling.

G C G
 While I draw this final breath, When my eyes shall close in death,
 D G D G
 When I rise to worlds unknown, And behold Thee on Thy throne,
 C G
 Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.

1 SAMUEL 2:2

*“There is no one holy like the Lord,
 indeed, there is no one besides Thee,
 nor is there any rock like our God.”*

Jesus Keeps On Saving

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

~ Philippians 1:6 ~

CERTAINLY you understand that the gifts you bought last Christmas have no merit this Christmas. If you don't think that is true, try wrapping them up and giving them again! But Jesus is the gift that keeps on giving. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...” (Jn. 3:16). The value of earthly gifts fades away, but who can calculate the present value of Christ, who, once received, loses not His luster or newness, but increases in His effect over our lifetime! We are short-sighted if we view salvation as complete upon conversion; that is only our “*introduction*” by faith into this grace in which we stand” (Rom. 5:2). Dear friend, Jesus has much more to give. Has He released you from the past *penalty* of sin (justification)? Good! Then let Him work on the present *power* of sin in your life (sanctification), “For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace” (Rom. 6:14). You would never think of opening only part of a gift and leaving the rest unwrapped, would you? Then do not be satisfied with your justification, there is much more to unwrap! There is something new for you *today!* “The Lord’s loving-kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning” (Lam. 3:22-23). This is the present effect of salvation: deliverance from the love of sin, rescue from the habit of sin, setting free from the desire of sin – not once, but daily! Yes, Jesus keeps on giving, and keeps on saving. Let Him improve upon your sanctification. Earthly gifts will never satisfy (Isa. 55:1-2), but Christ can meet the deepest longings of your heart. Christian, this Christmas, “kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you” (2 Tim. 1:6).

Kids PROJECT



See if each of your children can remember the presents they received last Christmas – make a list. How about two or three years ago? Discuss with them the passing excitement of earthly presents versus the continual enjoyment of Christ.



There's Something About That Name

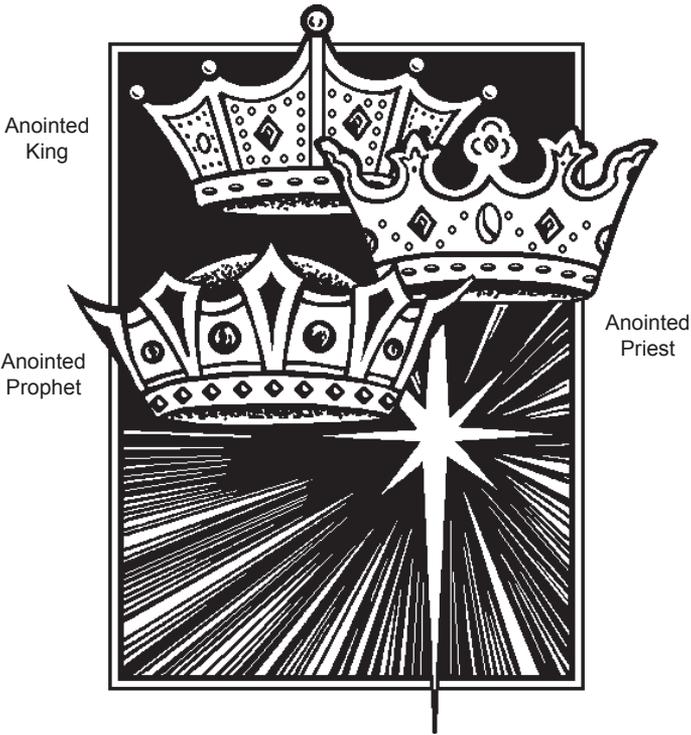
Words by Gloria and William J. Gaither; Music by William J. Gaither
© 1970 by William J. Gaither. All rights reserved.

C *C7*
 Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!
F *G* *C*
 There's just something about that name!
C7
 Master, Savior, Jesus!
F *G7*
 Like the fragrance after the rain;
C *C7*
 Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!
F *G7* *E* *E7*
 Let all Heaven and earth proclaim:
A *A7* *Dm7*
 Kings and kingdoms will all pass away,
F *G* *C*
 But there's something about that name!

Jesus!



CROWN HIM WITH MANY CROWNS!

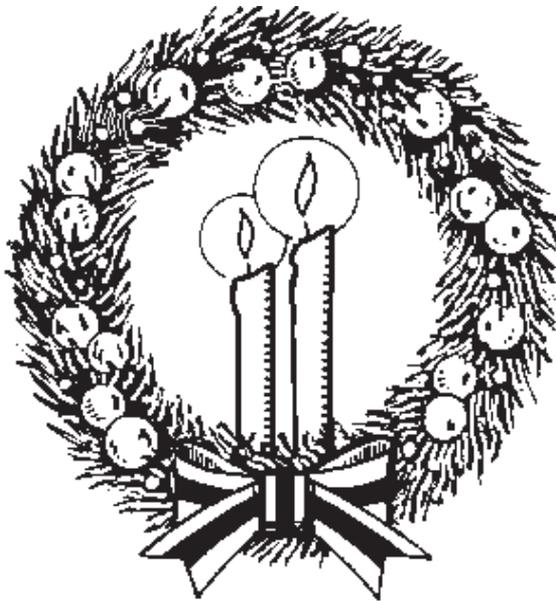


“And upon His head are many diadems”

Revelation 19:12

ADVENT WEEK 2

Candle: *Purple.* Symbol: *Royalty.*



CHRIST

Christ The Anointed' One

“But of the Son He says, ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee’” – Hebrews 1:8

AND in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. And the angel said to the shepherds in the field, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is CHRIST the Lord’” (Lk. 2:8-11). From birth, Jesus was identified as the CHRIST which means the *Anointed One*. Notice, this is no worldly speculation, but a heavenly announcement, “CHRIST, the Anointed One, is born!” That Jesus is the CHRIST was “news” to men, but ancient history to these angels who now proclaimed it. In Jewish culture the ancient Hebrews *anointed* their prophets (1 Kgs. 19:16), priests (Ex 30:30), and kings (1 Sam. 10:1, 16:13) with oil for their respective offices. These three offices governed all of life in Hebrew society: prophets governed the moral life of God’s people, priests governed religious practice, and the king governed civic duties and responsibilities. Likewise, CHRIST was anointed with the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:16; Acts 10:38), of whom oil is merely a symbol, as the *final Prophet* in the likeness of Moses (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:19-24), the *final Priest* in the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 3:1, 4:14, 7:1-8:6), and the *final King* in the line of David (Lk. 1:32-33). So then, when CHRIST comes into a life He comes to govern all of life as Prophet, Priest, and King. Dear friend, look again into the manger. What do you see – a baby? Yes, this Christmas adore Him again as a baby, but obey Him as your Governor, for He is “the CHRIST appointed for you” (Acts 3:20) and He has come to govern every aspect of your life.

 2nd Sunday
in Advent

Crown Him With Many Crowns

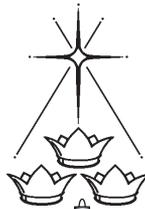
Words by Matthew Bridges, 1851. Music by Sir George J. Elvey, 1868
© 1976, Paragon Associates, Inc. All rights reserved.

^C Crown Him with many crowns, the ^F Lamb upon ^C His ^F throne: ^C ^G
^C Hark how the heavenly ^D anthem ^G drowns all music ^F but its own! ^G ^{G7}
^C Awake, my soul, and sing of ^F Him who died for thee; ^D ^G
^C And hail Him as thy matchless ^F King ^C through all eternity. ^F ^G ^C

^C Crown Him the Lord of love: behold His hands ^F and side, ^C ^G
^C Rich wounds, yet visible above, in beauty ^D glorified; ^G ^F ^G ^{G7}
^C No angel in the sky, can fully bear that sight, ^F ^D ^G
^C But downward bends his wondering eye at mysteries so bright. ^F ^C ^F ^G ^C

^C Crown Him the Lord of life: Who triumphed o'er the grave, ^F ^C ^F ^C ^G
^C Who rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save; ^D ^G ^F ^G ^{G7}
^C His glories now we sing, Who died and rose on high, ^F ^D ^G
^C Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die. ^F ^C ^F ^G ^C

^C Crown Him the Lord of years: the potentate of time, ^F ^C ^F ^C ^G
^C Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime. ^D ^G ^F ^G ^{G7}
^C All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou has died for me; ^F ^D ^G
^C Thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity. ^F ^C ^F ^G ^C



Jesus The Messiah

“The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’”
~ John 4:25-26 ~

MESSIAH is the Old Testament Hebrew equivalent of the New Testament Greek word *Christos* (CHRIST), meaning “Anointed One”. Jesus is “the CHRIST” (Mt. 16:15-16), the Messiah. “I am He!” Jesus said (Jn. 4:26). But Israel’s hopes for a Messiah had degraded throughout Old Testament history into merely a desire for a warrior prince that would deliver them from foreign domination and reestablish Israel as a world power. By the time CHRIST came, Israel was not nearly as interested in deliverance from the yoke of sin, as in deliverance from Roman rule. Throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry He sought to wean the disciples away from such notions and explain to them that God’s predetermined plan was not for Messiah to set up an earthly kingdom, but to die on the cross for the sins of His people (Acts 2:23). This year as we approach Christmas, what is your interest in CHRIST? Are you as interested in Him delivering you from your present sins, as fulfilling all of your wants and desires? “Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the CHRIST appointed for you” (Acts 3:19-20). For thousands of years, Israel hoped, waited, and prayed that Messiah would come, but when He did they missed it! And what of us? We look forward to the day that commemorates His birth, yet we ought to reexamine our motives for doing so, lest Christ be lost amidst the festivities, and we suffer a Christless Christmas, i.e. X-mas! The world may have X’d CHRIST out, but we must not be so irreverent. It is trite but true: Jesus is the reason for the season.

the Messiah

What Child is This Who Laid To Rest?

Words by William C. Dix

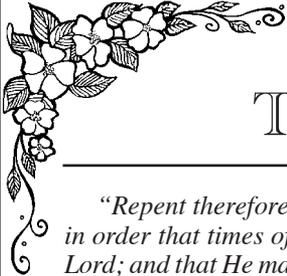
Em What child is this, who, *D* laid to rest,
Em On Mary's lap is sleeping? *B7*
Em Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, *D*
Em While shepherds watch are keeping? *B7* *Em*

CHORUS

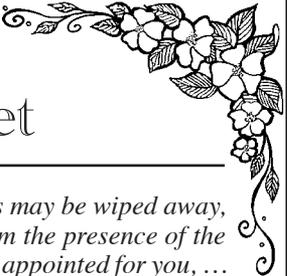
G This, this is Christ the King, *D*
Em Whom shepherds guard and angels sing: *B7*
G Haste, haste to bring Him laud, *D*
Em The Babe, the Son of Mary. *B7* *Em*

Em Why lies He in such mean estate, *D*
Em Where ox and ass are feeding? *B7*
Em Good Christian, fear: for sinners here *D*
Em The silent Word is pleading. (CHORUS) *B7* *Em*

Em So bring Him incense, *D* gold, and myrrh,
Em Come peasant, king, to own Him; *B7*
Em The King of kings salvation brings, *D*
Em Let loving hearts enthrone Him. (CHORUS) *B7* *Em*



The Prophet

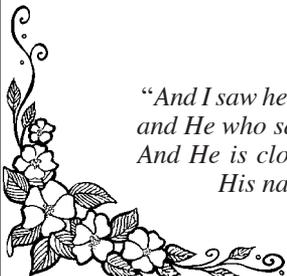
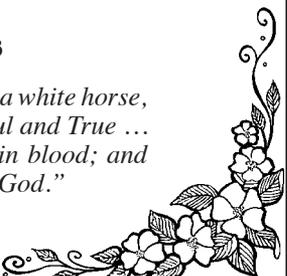


“Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the CHRIST appointed for you, ... Moses said, ‘The Lord God shall raise up for you a PROPHET like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.’” – Acts 3:19-20, 22-24

HOR today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is CHRIST the Lord” (Lk. 2:10-11) – No greater words than these have graced the lips of angels! CHRIST, the Messiah, the anointed Prophet, Priest and King in One, had arrived! In all His offices He had no successor. He is called “*The Prophet*” (Jn. 6:14, 7:40), for He is the *final* Prophet to mankind: “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son” (Heb. 1:1-2). “All the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days” (Acts 3:24, cf. 10:43). The last was John the Baptist, who declared, “He [CHRIST] must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). The prophet’s job was to point to CHRIST, and when CHRIST arrived, their job was done. They *prophesied* the Word, but Jesus *is* the Word (Greek: *Logos*), the final Word of God to man (Jn. 1:1-2; Rev. 19:13). In Him, God’s revelation is complete, for “He is the radiance of [God’s] glory and the *exact representation* of His nature” (Heb. 1:3). No more prophecies *about* God were necessary, for God Himself had appeared, born in Bethlehem: “And the *Word* became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14). Christmas is a celebration of the Incarnate Word. Let CHRIST have the final word in your life. Let His Word, the Bible, have absolute sway over your heart.

REVELATION 19:11,13

“And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True ... And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God.”

The Church's One Foundation

Words by Samuel J. Stone, 1866; Music by Samuel S. Wesley, 1864
© Oxford University Press.

^C The Church's one foundation is ^G Jesus ^F Christ ^G her ^C Lord,
^{FC} She is His new creation, ^F by ^C water ^G and the ^G Word.
^C From ^F heaven ^C He came and ^G sought ^C her, to be His ^F holy bride,
^C With His own blood ^G He bought ^C her, and for her ^G life ^C He died.

^C Elect from every ^G nation, yet one ^F o'er all the ^G earth,
^{FC} Her charter of salvation: ^F One ^C Lord, one ^G faith, one ^F birth;
^C One ^F holy name she ^C blesses, ^G partakes ^C one ^F holy food,
^C And to one ^G hope she ^C presses, with every ^G grace ^C endured.

^C 'Mid ^G toil and ^F tribulation, and ^G tumult ^C of her war,
^{FC} She waits the ^F consummation ^C of peace ^G forevermore.
^C 'Till with the ^{FC} vision ^G glorious, ^C her ^F longing ^F eyes are ^F blest,
^C And the ^G great ^C Church ^G victorious shall be the ^C Church ^C at rest.

^C Yet she on earth ^G hath ^F union ^G with ^C God, the ^C Three ^G in ^C One,
^{FC} And ^F mystic ^C sweet ^G communion ^F with ^C those ^G whose ^C rest ^G is ^G won.
^C O ^F happy ^C ones ^G and ^C holy, ^G Lord ^F give ^F us ^F grace ^C that ^C we,
^C Like ^G them, the ^C meek ^G and ^C lowly, on ^G high ^C may ^C dwell ^C with ^C Thee.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:11

*"For no man can lay a foundation other than the one
which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*



A Faithful High Priest



“Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same ... that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” – Hebrews 2:14,17

WHERAS conception marks our first point of existence, the eternal Son of God had an active part in His incarnation – He “*partook of flesh and blood.*” And He did so for this express reason: “That He might become a merciful and *faithful high priest* in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” The Son of God came to earth to be our High Priest. Of this duty, our text tells us, He would be “faithful”. A thousand years before CHRIST, the Lord promised, “But I will raise up for Myself a *faithful priest* who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always” (1 Sam. 2:35). CHRIST is our faithful High Priest; He *alone* holds that unique position. “For there is one God, and *one* Mediator also between God and men, the man CHRIST Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). “He was faithful to Him who appointed Him” (Heb. 3:2, cf. Heb. 3:5-6). Were CHRIST unfaithful in His high priestly duties we could lose our salvation, but even now He intercedes on our behalf: “Hence, also, He is able to *save forever* those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). “CHRIST intervenes between God and man, not merely to sue for peace, but armed with power to do all that is necessary to establish it. ... He labors in things pertaining to God and in things pertaining to man, in the objective legal sphere, and in the subjective moral sphere. In the former He propitiates the just displeasure of God by expiating the guilt of sin, makes intercessions for those whom the Father has given Him, and actually makes their persons and services acceptable to God. And in the latter He reveals to men the truth concerning God and their relation to Him with the conditions of acceptable service, persuades and enables them to receive the truth, and directs and sustains them in all circumstances of life, so as to perfect their deliverance.” (Berkhof).

HEBREWS 10:23

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful”

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Words by Thomas O. Chisholm, 1866-1960

Music by William M. Runyan, 1870-1957

^C Great is Thy ^G faithfulness, ^{G7} O God my ^C Father!
^F There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
^G Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not:
^F As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

CHORUS

^G Great is Thy ^C faithfulness, ^A great is Thy ^G faithfulness,
^C Morning by morning new mercies I see.
^G All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
^G Great is Thy ^C faithfulness, ^G Lord unto me!

^C Summer and winter, and ^{G7} springtime and harvest,
^F Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
^G Join with all nature in manifold witness,
^F To Thy great ^C faithfulness, ^G mercy and love.

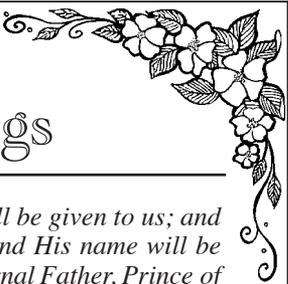
(CHORUS)

^C Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
^F Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
^G Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
^G Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside.

(CHORUS)



King of Kings



“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom” – Isaiah 9:6-7

AND the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end’” (Lk. 1:30-33). “Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk. 2:19). Here was Mary’s dilemma: The angel had told her that her Son was a king – she had God’s word on it. But everything Mary experienced seemed to point the other direction: The angel said, “He will be great,” yet Mary gave birth to Jesus in the worst of conditions. The angel said, “He will be called the Son of the Most High,” instead they said He was possessed by Beelzebub (Mk. 3:22). The angel said He would reign on the throne of David forever, but she saw Him, not reign forever, but die the most cruel of deaths in the prime of life. She saw no crown and no kingdom, only hardship and persecution. Which would she believe, her experience or God’s Word? Which do you trust – the Word of God, or your feelings and experiences? Christian, we walk by faith not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Now faith is ... the conviction of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). We are *not* waiting for CHRIST to be crowned; He is, right now, the “King of kings” (Rev. 17:14, 19:16). His kingdom, now invisible and spiritual (Lk. 17:21. KJV), will one day be established on earth (Dan. 2:35; 2 Pet. 3:13). Treasure these things in your heart, but proclaim them with your mouth: The King of kings is born in Bethlehem! Let Him reign in your heart today!



Kids PROJECT



Have your children make four Christmas decorations, one for each of the names we are studying for Advent: Savior, Christ, Lord, and Immanuel. Use them to decorate your home or tree.



Angels From The Realms of Glory

Words by James Montgomery, 1816; Music by Henry T. Smart, 1867
© 1968, Fred Bock Music Company. All rights Reserved.

G *C* *G* *D* *G*
Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
G *Em* *D*
Ye who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:

CHORUS

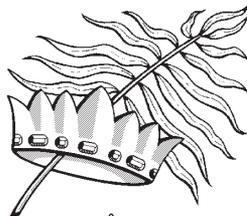
D *G*
Come and worship, come and worship,
C *D* *C* *D* *G*
Worship Christ the new-born King.

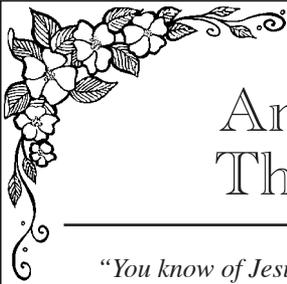
G *C* *G* *D* *G*
Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,
G *Em* *D*
God the man is now residing, yonder shines the infant Light: (CHORUS)

G *C* *G* *D* *G*
Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
G *Em* *D*
Seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen his natal star: (CHORUS)

G *C* *G* *D* *G*
Saints, before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,
G *Em* *D*
Suddenly the Lord, descending, in His temple shall appear: (CHORUS)

G *C* *G* *D* *G*
All creation, join the praising God the Father, Spirit, Son;
G *Em* *D*
Evermore you voices raising, to the Eternal Three in One: (CHORUS)





Anointed With The Holy Spirit



“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power...” – Acts 10:38

HEAR again the angel’s message, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is CHRIST the Lord” (Lk. 2:10-11). As we have seen, Jesus is the CHRIST, the Anointed One – anointed, i.e. baptized with, the Holy Spirit. “And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him” (Mt. 3:16). That answers the misconception within the Church today that a person can receive Jesus without receiving the Holy Spirit or that one can be baptized into CHRIST without being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Impossible! Jesus, who lives inside of you, is the CHRIST, the Anointed One – anointed and baptized with the Holy Spirit. Moreover, John the Baptist said, “He [Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Mt. 3:11). How? By coming into your heart: “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water’” (Jn. 7:38). “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). The Spirit’s baptism and filling are not the exception, but the rule of the Christian life (Eph. 5:18). Dead, dry Christianity is a contradiction in terms – it is no Christianity! Anyone that does not have the Spirit does not belong to Christ (Rom. 8:9). Are we Christian’s in name only, or have we been sealed by the Spirit? (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 4:30). Are we worshipping an unbaptized and unanointed Jesus. Heaven forbid! Jesus is the CHRIST!



*If we live by the Spirit,
let us also
walk by the Spirit.*

– Galatians 5:25

Angels We Have Heard On High

Old French Carol

C *G* *C* *G* *C*
 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains:
 G *C* *G* *C*
 And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

CHORUS

C *G F G C FG* *C G C F C G*
 Glo - o - o - o - ria in excelsis Deo
C *G F G C FG* *C G C F CGC*
 Glo - o - o - o - ria in excelsis Deo

C *G* *C* *G* *C*
 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
 G *C* *G* *C*
 Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song?

(CHORUS)

C *G* *C* *G* *C*
 Come to Bethlehem and see, Him whose birth the angels sing.
 G *C* *G* *C*
 Come adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord the newborn King.

(CHORUS)



in excelsis deo!

O Come Let Us Adore Him

*“Come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” – Psalm 95:6*

WHAN is not worthy to receive worship (Acts 10:25-26, 14:11-14) nor are angels (Rev. 19:10, 22:8-9), but “*worthy* is the Lamb” (Rev. 5:12), God’s anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, of our most passionate praises! See how the magi worshiped CHRIST at His birth: “And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell down and *worshiped* Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh” (Mt. 2:11). These oriental astrologers, called “magi” (magicians), travelled *far* to present their expensive gifts and worship CHRIST. How far are you willing to go, Christian? *True worship is sacrificial*. If they, steeped in astrology and mysticism, made such sacrifices, how much more ought God’s own people? And look at their gifts: not trifles, but a costly offering. If CHRIST is worth anything He is worth everything. Is your worship one of convenience or is it costing you something? *True worship is costly*. David said, “I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing” (2 Sam. 24:24). Let us be like the woman who emptied the alabaster vial of very costly perfume upon Jesus’ head (Mt. 26:7-13), and give unto CHRIST not the last, but the first, our best and not the worst. And look at the posture of the magi before the Lord: “they fell down and worshiped Him.” O that God’s people would prostrate themselves before the Lord today. “Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord” (Jam. 4:10). They bowed down to worship. *True worship requires humility, submission, and a contrite heart* (Psa. 51:17). “Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker” (Psa. 95:6). Dear Christian, worship the Lord this Christmas as He has prescribed: “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5).

Kids PROJECT



Have your children draw and then color a picture of the three magi bowing before Jesus in the manger. Using their picture, review the above principles of worship.

O Come All Ye Faithful

Latin Words & Music by John F. Wade, 1751;
Translated by Frederick Oakely, 1841
© 1976, Fred Bock Music Company. All rights reserved.

C G C G C F C G
O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.
Am G D G D C G D G

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
C F C F C G C F D G

Come and behold Him, born the King of angels.

CHORUS

C G C G C G C F C G
O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,
C F C G C G C F C G C

O come let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.

C G C G C F C G
Sing choirs of angels; sing in exultation.
Am G D G D C G D G

O sing all ye citizens of heaven above.
C F C F C G C F D G

Glory to God, all glory in the highest.

(CHORUS)

C G C G C F C G
Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning.
Am G D G D C G D G

O Jesus, to Thee be all glory given.
C F C F C G C F D G

Word of the Father now in flesh appearing.

(CHORUS)



“But as for you,
Bethlehem...
From you One
will go forth for
Me to be Ruler...
His goings forth
are from
eternity.”

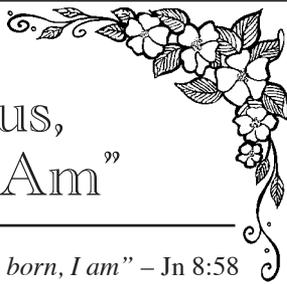


ADVENT WEEK 3

Candle: *Gold.* Symbol: *Deity.*



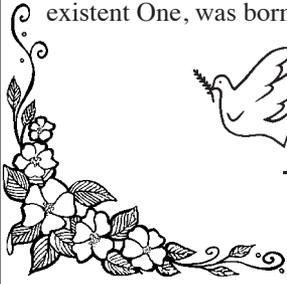
Jesus is
LORD

Jehovah Jesus, The Great “I Am”

“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am” – Jn 8:58

AND God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’; and He said, Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (Ex. 3:14). Of all of God’s names, this is revered by many as the most holy. Formed by the four Hebrew letters YHWH, called the Tetragrammaton, the name is probably pronounced “Yahweh” (colloquial form: “Jehovah”), which translated means “I AM,” referring to God’s eternal Self-existence. God eternally is, without need of anything external to Himself. Jesus said, “Unless you believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins” (Jn. 8:24 – Greek, *ego eimi*, literally: “I I AM”) and again He said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM” (Jn. 8:58). What then is the incarnation, but the birth of Yahweh in human flesh! During the intertestamental period (i.e. between OT & NT), the Jews began the practice of saying, “LORD” (Heb: *Adonai*) in place of the Hebrew name, Yahweh, because they believed the latter too holy to speak. Hence, to the Jews, LORD meant God. The New Testament writers, being of Hebrew extraction, intended the same meaning by the Greek word, *kurios* (LORD). “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as LORD [i.e. Yahweh], and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved (Rom. 10:9) and four verses later, “Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved” (Rom. 10:13), quoted from Joel 2:32: “And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD [Heb: *Yahweh*] will be delivered.” Preceding Christ’s birth, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name *Jesus* [which means “Yahweh saves”], for it is He [i.e. Yahweh Jesus] who will save His people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21). Here then is a profound mystery: In Bethlehem, Yahweh, the eternally Self-existent One, was born!




*3rd Sunday
in Advent*

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

Words and Music by Martin Luther, 1483-1546; Translated by Frederick H. Hedge.
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C G Am G Am C Dm C
A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never fail – ing;
G Am G Am C Dm C
Our Helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevail – ing.
D G Am
For still our ancient foe, doth seek to work us woe.
F G F E
His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate.
Am C Dm C
On earth is not his e – qual.

C G Am G Am C Dm C
Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be los – ing,
G Am G Am C Dm C
Were not the right man on our side, the man of God’s own choos – ing.
D G Am
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He.
F G F E
Lord Sabaoth His name, from age to age the same,
Am C Dm C
And He must win the bat – tle.

C G Am G Am C Dm C
And though this world with devils filled, should threaten to undo – us,
G Am G Am C Dm C
We will not fear, for God hath willed, His truth to triumph through – us.
D G Am
The prince of darkness grim. We tremble not at him.
F G F E
His rage we can endure, for lo his doom is sure.
Am C Dm C
One little word shall fell – him.

C G Am G Am C Dm C
That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them abid – eth.
G Am G Am C Dm C
The Spirit and the gifts are ours, through Him who with us sid – eth.
D G Am
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also.
F G F E
The body they may kill; God’s truth abideth still.
Am C Dm C
His kingdom is forev – er.



The Promise & Power Of Christ



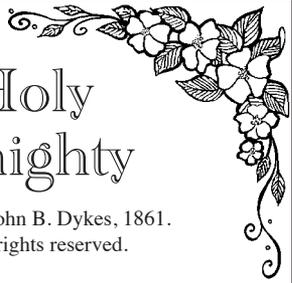
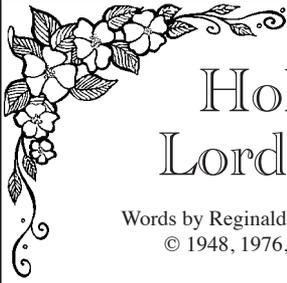
*“For as many as may be the promises of God,
they are ‘Yes’ in Christ” – 2 Cor 1:20*

WE celebrate Christmas *not* just because “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,” *nor* only because Christ has given us His promise “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16). Indeed, our celebration of such promises would all be for nought, if Christ has not the *power* to carry them out. “How vain would be the eternal counsels, if *power* did not step in to execute them. Without *power* His mercy would be but feeble pity, His promises an empty sound, His threatenings a mere scarecrow. God’s *power* is like Himself: infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; it can neither be checked, restrained, nor frustrated by the creature” (Stephen Charnock). We celebrate Christmas because the LORD is not only *willing* to save (2 Pet. 3:9), but He is also *able* to do it. Scripture contrasts the LORD, who is infinitely able (Dan. 3:17-18; Rom. 4:21; 2 Cor. 9:8; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 2:18, 7:25; Jude 1:24-25), with man-made idols unable to save or assist those who worship them (Psa. 115:3-8; Jer. 2:27-28, 10:3-16, 14:22, 44:11-20; Hab. 2:18). Let us remember then that this little Child, born in a manger, is the LORD, “very God of very God” (Westminster Confession), who makes good on His promise of salvation, for He has the power to do it, “and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom. 4:21), “for I am watching over My word to perform it,” says the Lord (Jer. 1:12). “And this is the *promise* which He Himself made to us: eternal life” (1 Jn. 2:25). Therefore, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for *He who promised is faithful*” (Heb 10:23). Remember, “*power* belongs to God” (Psa. 62:11), therefore “Not one word of all the good words which the Lord your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you” (Josh. 23:14; cf. 1 Kgs. 8:56). Herein lies our celebration of Christmas: God sent His Son armed with these two: the *promise* of eternal life (Jn. 11:25-26) and the *power* to bring it to pass (Jn. 5:21).

2 PETER 1:4

*“He has granted to us His precious
and magnificent promises”*



Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty

Words by Reginald Heber, 1783-1826; Music by John B. Dykes, 1861.
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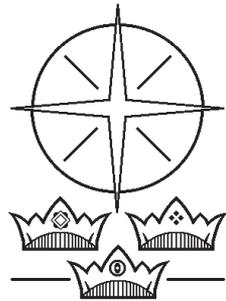
C Am G F C
Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty,
Em F Em G D G
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee.

C Am G F C
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty,
Am F Em F G C
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.

C Am G F C
Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore Thee,
Em F Em G D G
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
C Am G F C
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Am F Em F G C
Who wert and art and evermore shalt be.

C Am G F C
Holy, Holy, Holy! Though the darkness hide Thee,
Em F Em G D G
Though the eye of sinful men, Thy glory may not see.
C Am G F C
Only Thou art Holy! There is none beside Thee,
Am F Em F G C
Perfect in power, love, and purity.

C Am G F C
Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty,
Em F Em
All thy works shall praise Thy name,
G D G
In earth and sky and sea.
C Am G F C
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty,
Am F Em F G C
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.



Crown Him Lord of All!

“...for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him” – Romans 10:12

BABIES are adored because they are cute, and yet we do not adore Jesus at His birth because He was cute. Indeed, “He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him” (Isa. 53:2). What then has inspired so many songs of His birth? And what causes men and angels to look with profound adoration and great awe at the incarnation? It is the same thing, I pray, that you will see this Christmas as you think upon the tiny occupant of that manger: That little Baby was LORD of all! See how the Scriptures extol Christ’s Lordship: He is called “the LORD of peace” (2 Thess. 3:16), “the LORD of glory” (1 Cor. 2:6-8), “LORD of the Sabbath” (Mt. 12:8), “the LORD of lords” (Rev. 17:14), and “LORD of all” (Rom. 10:12). Someone has said, Jesus is LORD *of* all, or He is not LORD *at* all.” So then, His Lordship in *your* life hangs on one of those two prepositions. Charles Spurgeon, pastor and teacher in the late 1800’s, wrote:

“I cannot conceive it possible for anyone to receive Christ as Savior and yet not to receive Him as Lord. A man who is really saved by grace does not need to be told that he is under solemn obligations to serve Christ. The new life within him tells him that. Instead of regarding it as a burden, he gladly surrenders himself – body, soul, and spirit – to the Lord who has redeemed him, reckoning this to be his reasonable service.”

True conversion is marked by submission and yieldedness to Christ’s Lordship, though learning the full implications of His Lordship in every area of life is a lifelong process. So then, amidst all of the many preparations that go into Christmas, by far the *most important* preparation this season must be in your heart. “Sanctify Christ as *Lord* in your hearts” (1 Pet. 3:15)

Kids PROJECT



Have your children draw and then color a picture of a heart and write the word “JESUS” inside. Outside of the heart have them write seven ways Jesus in their heart has changed their life.

All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name!

Words by Edward Perronet, 1779; Music by William Shrubsole, 1779

C *G* *C*
All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall.

G C F G G7
Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all!

C G C F G C
Bring forth the royal diadem and crown Him Lord of all!

C G C
Ye chosen seed of Israel's race, Ye ransomed from the fall,
G C F G G7

Hail Him who saves you by His grace, and crown Him Lord of all!
C G C F G C

Hail Him who saves you by His grace, and crown Him Lord of all!

C G C
Let every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball,
G C F G G7

To Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all!
C G C F G C

To Him all majesty ascribe, and crown Him Lord of all!

C G C
O that with yonder sacred throng, we at His feet may fall!
G C F G G7

We'll join the everlasting song, and crown Him Lord of all!
C G C F

We'll join the everlasting song, and crown Him
G C

Lord of All!



God Love

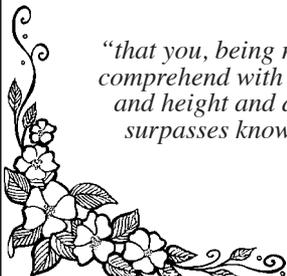
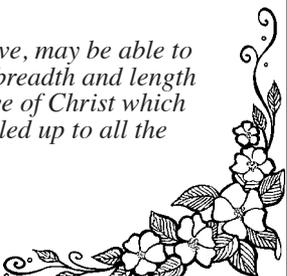


*“The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love”
~ 1 John 4:8 ~*

AS we have seen in our previous studies, to say, “Jesus is LORD,” is a declaration of Christ’s *deity*. So then, to understand the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we must study the attributes of God. Scripture declares, “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8,16) upon which the reader should pause and meditate: Consider the infinite, eternal, and unchanging character of God, who is love of no lesser degree than His character. Now consider Christ, incarnate God – the embodiment of love, love incarnate, alien love – foreign, incomprehensible (Jn. 1:5). Christ’s *birth* was an act of love (Jn. 3:16); His *life* was poured out in love (Phil. 2:3-5); and His *death* was love’s crowning achievement: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13). “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). “Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou my God would die for me” (Hymn). The Lord says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness” (Jer. 31:3). The comprehension of such love elicits the psalmist’s highest praises: “Thy *lovingkindness*, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Thy faithfulness reaches to the skies” (Psa. 36:5). “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His *lovingkindness* toward those who fear Him” (Psa. 103:11). “All the paths of the LORD are *lovingkindness* and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies” (Psa. 25:10). “The *lovingkindness* of God endures all day long” (Psa. 52:1). “His *lovingkindness* is everlasting” (41x). Therefore, “goodness and *lovingkindness* will follow me all the days of my life” (Psa. 23:6). “It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High; to declare Thy *lovingkindness* in the morning, and Thy faithfulness by night” (Psa. 92:1-2). Christmas is about the Father’s redeeming love (Jn. 3:16), Christ’s sacrificial love (Jn. 15:13; Eph. 5:25), and the Spirit’s indwelling love (Gal. 5:22-23). Make this Christmas a celebration of this great Trinitarian love.

EPHESIANS 3:17-19

“that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God.”



Come, Thou Almighty King



Anonymous, c. 1757; Music by Felice de Giardini, 1716-1796
© 1942, 1976, Lorenz Publishing Company

^C Come, Thou ^G Almighty ^C King; ^F Help us Thy ^G name to sing,
^C Help us to praise: ^G Father, all ^C glorious,
^G O'er all ^C victorious; ^C Come, and reign over us,
^F ^C Ancient of ^G ^C Days.

^C Come, Thou ^G Incarnate ^C Word; ^F Gird on Thy ^G mighty ^G sword,
^C Our prayer attend: ^G Come, and Thy ^C people bless,
^G And give the ^C Word success; ^C Spirit of holiness,
^F ^C ^G ^C On us descend.

^C Come, Holy ^G Comforter; ^C Thy sacred ^F witness ^G bear.
^C In this glad hour: ^G Thou who ^C almighty art,
^G Now rule in every ^C heart; ^C Never from us depart,
^F ^C ^G ^C Spirit of power.

^C To Thee, great ^G One in ^C Three; ^F The highest ^G praise be,
^C Hence evermore! ^G Thy sovereign ^C majesty,
^G May we in ^C glory see; ^C And to eternity,
^F ^C ^G ^C Love and adore.






The Incarnate Love Of God



“Who shall separate us from the LOVE of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the LOVE of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” – Romans 8:35, 38-39.

We have in the verses above, Jesus’ love on display. Christ, “the Hound of Heaven,” relentlessly pursues the object of His affection, namely *His people*. Do you belong to Christ? Once that has been established, O what joy brightens the heart upon discovering Jesus is the omnipotent “Lover of my soul,” to coin Wesley’s phrase. The incarnation, which we celebrate at Christmas, let the Hound out of the cage, so to speak, and who can stop Him now! Look again at the obstacles listed in our passage which Christ’s love overcomes: Various kinds of tribulation are listed first. Yes, “In this world *you will have* tribulation,” but neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword can separate us from His love, for He has “overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33). Nor shall life nor death keep us from Him, for He is the Prince of life (Acts 3:125) and the Conqueror of death (Rom. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:54-57; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14). And has He not told us He will go *with us* through the valley of the shadow of death? (Psa. 23:4). Can angels or principalities withhold Him? No, He has “triumphed over them” (Col. 2:15; Jn. 12:31; 1 Jn. 3:8). Shall anything past, present, or future restrain His love? Never, for He loves us “with an *everlasting* love” (Jer. 31:3). Height cannot separate us from Him, for His lovingkindness *extends* to the heavens, His faithfulness *reaches* to the skies (Psa. 36:5). Depth cannot undermine His love, for He has humbled Himself (Phil. 2:3-8), to the lowest depth (Psa. 139:9-10), to the “uttermost” (Heb. 7:25, KJV). Neither shall any created thing stand between us, for He is the Creator of all things (Jn. 1:3; Col 1:16), who upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3; cf. Col. 1:17).

Dear Christian, this Christmas revel in the unstoppable, unquenchable, unfathomable love of Christ!

1 JOHN 3:1

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath given unto us, that we should be called the sons of God”

O The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

Words by Samuel T. Francis, 1834-1925; Music by Thomas J. Williams, 1890
© Gwenlyn Evans Ltd.

Am E7 Am G E7 Am
 O the deep, deep love of Jesus! Vast, unmeasured, boundless free;
 Am E7 Am E7 Am E7 C E7
 Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me.
 Am E7 Am E7 Am E7 C E7
 Underneath me, all around me, is the current of Thy love.
 Am E7 Am G E7 Am
 Leading onward, leading homeward, to Thy glorious rest above.

Am E7 Am G E7 Am
 O the deep, deep love of Jesus! Spread His praise from shore to
 shore;
 Am E7 Am E7 Am E7 C E7
 How He loveth, ever loveth, changeth never, never-more;
 Am E7 Am E7 Am E7 C E7
 How He watches o'er His loved ones, died to call them all His own;
 Am E7 Am G E7 Am
 How for them He intercedeth, watcheth o'er them from the throne.

Am E7 Am G E7 Am
 O the deep, deep love of Jesus! Love of every love the best:
 Am E7 Am E7 Am E7 C E7
 'Tis an ocean vast of blessing, 'Tis a haven sweet of rest.
 Am E7 Am E7 Am E7 C E7
 O the deep, deep love of Jesus! 'Tis a heaven of heavens to me;
 Am E7 Am G E7 Am
 And it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to Thee.

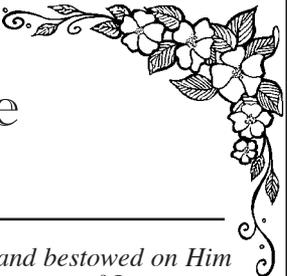
JOHN 13:1

*"Jesus ... having loved His own which were in the world,
He loved them unto the end."*





Every Knee Shall Bow



“Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” - Philipians 2:9-11

NOTICE again the posture of the magi at Christ’s nativity: “They came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother; and *they fell down and worshiped Him*; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh” (Mt. 2:11). What a picture – grown men bowing down before a newborn baby! Of course we know this was no ordinary Child, but the LORD of all Creation! Out of all the multitudes of mankind, these magi bowed down and worshiped, and yet there is coming a day in which the multitudes too will bow down before Him. Then every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD! Christ’s own people will do so willingly, reverently, joyfully: They “will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy art Thou, our LORD and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.’” (Rev. 4:10-11). Not so for Christ’s enemies: Face to face with the One they have rejected, they will finally admit the one thing they could never before bring themselves to say, “Jesus Christ is LORD!” Our confession of Christ will break into spontaneous worship; theirs into mourning (Rev. 1:7; Mt. 13:41-42). Christ’s people humble themselves under the mighty hand of God (1 Pet. 5:6); Christ’s enemies are brought to their knees, humbled under His mighty hand. Satan himself will be there kneeling, trembling, confessing Christ as LORD – his last words before he is thrown into the lake of fire. “But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word,” says the Lord (Isa. 66:2). Worship Christ the LORD!

PSALM 95:6

*“Come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker”*




His Name Is Wonderful

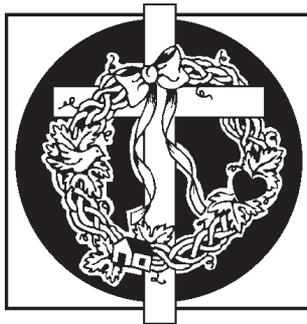
Words and Music by Audrey Meir
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C *F* *G*
His name is Wonderful, His name is Wonderful,
C *G*
His name is Wonderful, Jesus, my Lord;

C *F* *G*
He is the mighty King, Master of everything,
C *F* *C* *G* *C*
His name is Wonderful, Jesus, my Lord.

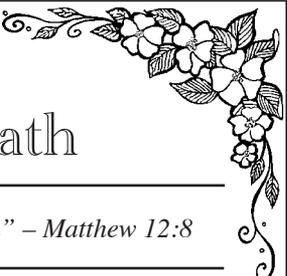
G *C*
He's the great Shepherd, the Rock of all ages,
D *D7* *G* *G7*
Almighty God is He;

C *F* *G*
Bow down before Him, Love and adore Him,
C *F* *C* *G* *C*
His name is Wonderful, Jesus my Lord.





Lord Of The Sabbath



“For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” – Matthew 12:8

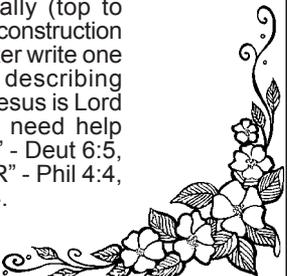
THE Pharisees had reduced the worship of God to hundreds of “do’s” and “don’ts”, but Jesus came to reform worship. They rebuked Jesus for doing works of mercy and necessity on the Sabbath (Mt. 12:1-12), but Jesus said, “the Son of Man is LORD of the Sabbath” (Mt. 12:8). Some take that to mean that there is no longer any Sabbath principle whatsoever, but Jesus did not say that. The Pharisees were worshipping the *rules* of the Sabbath and not the LORD of the Sabbath, who stood in the flesh before them! Tomorrow is the Lord’s Day, our day of corporate worship under the New Covenant (Acts 2:1, 20:7; Rev. 1:10). “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, *not forsaking our own assembling together*, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24-25). Do you wish to truly honor Christ this Christmas? Then honor Him for who He is – LORD, yes, even LORD of the Sabbath. And if He is Lord of the Sabbath, then let us “call the Sabbath a delight” (Isa. 58:14). Token worship, once a year, will satisfy stone idols and man-made gods, but not the Living God! Honor Him on His Day, “the Lord’s Day,” when His people congregate to worship the Lord of the Sabbath, for “God takes His stand in His own congregation” (Psa. 82:1). “Praise the LORD! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise *in the congregation of the godly ones*. (Psa. 149:1, cf. Psa. 35:18). The Lord promises, “If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure, and speaking your own word, then you will take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth...” (Isa. 58:13-14).



Kids PROJECT



Have your child write the word “LORD” vertically (top to bottom) on a piece of construction paper. From each letter write one verb (action word) describing how they can show Jesus is Lord of their lives. If you need help use these verses: “L” - Deut 6:5, “O” - 1 Sam 15:22, “R” - Phil 4:4, and “D” - Psalm 37:4.





O Little Town Of Bethlehem

Words by Phillips Brooks, 1868; Music by Lewis H. Redner, 1868

C F C G C
O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
A Dm7 C G C
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Am Em F C
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light:
A Dm7 C G C
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight.

C F C G C
For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
A Dm7 C G C
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
Am Em F C
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
A Dm7 C G C
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

C F C G C
How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
A Dm7 C G C
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven.
Am Em F C
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
A Dm7 C G C
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

C F C G C
O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;
A Dm7 C G C
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
Am Em F C
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
A Dm7 C G C
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, God with us.”

– Matthew 1:23

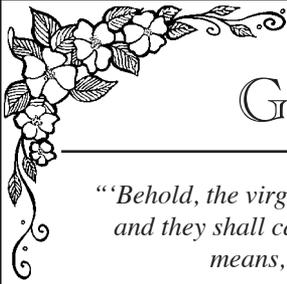


ADVENT WEEK 4

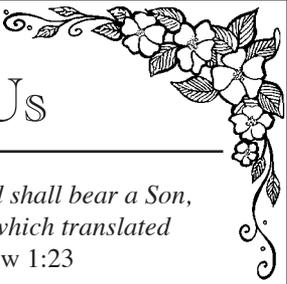
Candle: *Green.* Symbol: *Humanity.*



Jesus is
IMMANUEL



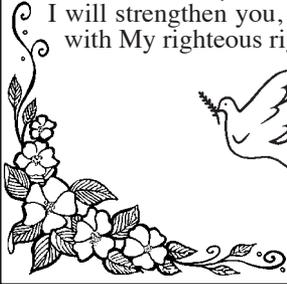
God With Us



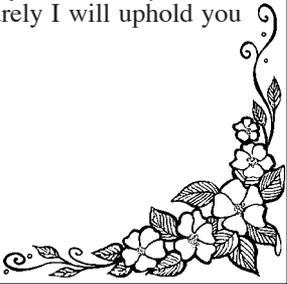
“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which translated means, ‘God with us.’” – Matthew 1:23

GOD is transcendent, “wholly other,” as theologians use to say; “separated from sinners” (Heb. 7:26), who alone “dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16). But God’s *separateness* and *unapproachableness* only enriches the great wonder surrounding the incarnation; that this wholly other God is at the same time in vital union with His people, joined with them in their humanity. What a mysteriously wonderful word is “IMMANUEL” – the transcendent God, immediately immanent, God with us, in Christ. Christmas, then, is a celebration of God’s solidarity with His people. For “since the children share in *flesh and blood*, He Himself likewise also partook of the same” (Heb. 2:14). “The Word *became flesh*, and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14), “taking the form of a bond-servant, and being *made in the likeness of men*” (Phil. 2:6-8). For “He had to be *made like His brethren* in all things ... to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17), that He Himself might bear our sins *in His body* on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24). Christian, this week meditate on that name, “IMMANUEL,” and consider again who it is that is with us – *God* with us! The name is derived from the Hebrew “im” meaning *with*, and “el” meaning *God*, emphasizing Yahweh’s majesty and power: “God [Heb: *el*] is exalted in power” (Job 36:22). So then, this majestic, all-powerful God is *with us*, in Christ – IMMANUEL. Let your meditations upon Him melt away your worries and fears, for “God [in Christ] is our refuge and strength, a *very present help* in trouble ... the Lord of hosts is *with us*” (Psa. 46:1,7). “Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil” (Psa. 23:4). Why? – Because “Thou art *with me*,” in Christ, IMMANUEL. Yes, God’s people are distinguished by God’s presence: “For what great nation is there that has a god so *near* to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him?” (Deut. 4:7). “The Lord is *near* to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth” (Psa. 145:18). Christmas is a reminder that God is with His people. “Do not fear, for *I am with you*; do not anxiously look about you, for *I am your God*.

I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isa. 41:10).



 4th Sunday
in Advent



O Come, O Come Immanuel

Translated by John M. Neale & Henry S. Coffin, 1851;
Music by Thomas Helmore, 1856
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Em Am Em Amaj7 D Em
O come, O come Immanuel; And ransom captive Israel;
Amaj7 Em D Em Amaj7 Em
That mourns in lonely exile here; Until the Son of God appear.

Chorus

D Em Am Em
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel!
Amaj7 D Em
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

Em Am Em Amaj7 D Em
O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer; Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Amaj7 Em D Em Amaj7 Em
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night; And death's dark shadows put to flight.

(CHORUS)

Em Am Em Amaj7 D Em
O come, Thou Wisdom from on high; And order all things, far and nigh,
Amaj7 Em D Em Amaj7 Em
To us the path of knowledge show; And cause us in her ways to go.

(CHORUS)

Em Am Em Amaj7 D Em
O come, Desire of nations, bind; In one the hearts of all mankind;
Amaj7 Em D Em Amaj7 Em
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease; And be Thyself our King of peace.

(CHORUS)



Akin To The Lowly

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger” – Luke 2:7

CHRIST is the King of kings, and yet, at His birth, they laid Him not in a palace, but a manger – an animal’s food trough! O, how low He stooped to save you and I! The infinite, became an infant. The One who upholds the universe (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17), Himself was carried in a woman’s arms. There He was, Jehovah Jireh, nursing at a woman’s breast! From earth’s standpoint, Jesus was born, but from heaven’s vantage point, *“He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself...”* (Phil. 2:7-8). Notice also the announcement of His birth was made, not to kings and priests, but to common shepherds in the field. “And the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be *for all the people*; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord’” (Lk. 2:10). Yes, such news is “for all the people”; that is to say, for all classes of men, “for there is no partiality with God” (Rom. 2:11), “For though the Lord is exalted, yet He regards the lowly” (Psa. 138:6). Yes, He even chooses “the foolish things of the world to shame the wise” and “the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong...” (1 Cor. 1:27). Consider too, Christ’s genealogy according to the flesh. In Jesus’ ancestry, we read of Judah’s incest with Tamar (Gen. 38:6-30) and David’s adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11), etc. In Christ’s ancestral line flowed the blood of Rahab, the Canaanite harlot (Josh. 2) and Ruth, the Moabite (Ruth 1:4), whose people were accursed (Deut. 23:3-5). Yes, Jesus is akin to the lowly and the fallen and He will show His love to the poorest and most ignoble that turn away from their sin to Him (cf. Mt. 21:31). “For thus says the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, ‘I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (Isa. 57:15).

Kids PROJECT



Have your child think of five ways heaven is better than earth and then use these to talk about what Christ gave up to be born on earth.

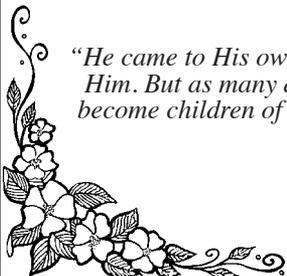
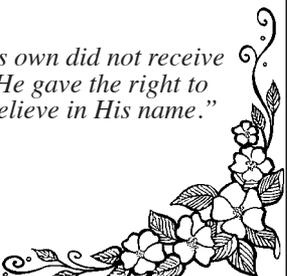



Is There Room In Your Heart?

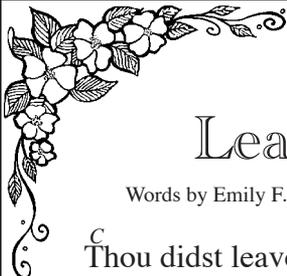
“And she gave birth to her first-born Son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” – Luke 2:7

THE photographs of presidents, kings, queens, millionaires, and world leaders grace the lobbies of some of the world’s grandest hotels, boasting of their distinguished clientele. But in Bethlehem, in an unknown little inn, no sign ever read, “Jesus once slept here.” Our text tells us that they “laid Him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.” Had Caesar, or Herod, or the High Priest paid a visit, you can be sure a room would have been made available, but when the King of kings came, there was “no room”! That pretty much summarizes the world’s reception of Christ – no room. “Give us a conquering hero, or a great athlete, or a self-made millionaire that we may admire, but not a Savior. For only sinners need a Savior,” is the world’s attitude. But certainly we Christians are not so inhospitable are we? Jesus said, “Behold I stand at the door and knock” (Rev. 3:20); let us hurry then to not keep Him waiting! Yes, I know many have used Revelation 3:20 to witness to unbelievers, but it was actually spoken, by Christ, *to the Church!* It speaks more of fellowship than salvation. Dear Christian, each day Christ stands at the door of your heart and knocks. He seeks to have fellowship with you. And each day we either open the door, or hang out the “Do not disturb” sign. Which are you doing amidst all of the preparations and festivities that surround this holiday? Is there room for Christ in your thoughts today? “I have no time,” says one. Then make time. “But I can’t do everything!” Then do one thing – spend time with Christ. “My schedule is full.” Then clear your schedule. “But other work and preparations will go undone!” Let them go undone then (Lk. 10:38-42). “But they are very important!” He is more important. Do you have room! That is the one great question you must answer today – and you cannot answer it with just words, but with a schedule that gives Him first place in your life (Col. 1:18).

JOHN 1:11-12

“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”



Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne



Words by Emily F. S. Elliott, 1864; Music by Timothy R. Matthews, 1876.

Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown,
When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home there was found no room,
For Thy holy nativity.

CHORUS

O come to my heart Lord Jesus:
There is room in my heart for Thee! (REPEAT)

Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
Proclaiming Thy royal degree;
But in lowly birth didst Thou come to earth,
And in great humility. (CHORUS)

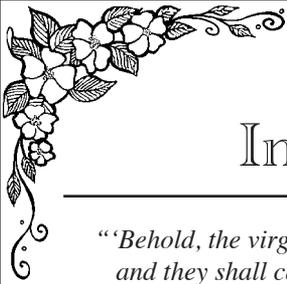
Thou camest, O Lord, with the living word,
That should set Thy people free,
But with mocking scorn and with crown of thorn,
They bore Thee to Calvary. (CHORUS)

When the heavens shall ring and the angels sing,
At Thy coming to victory,

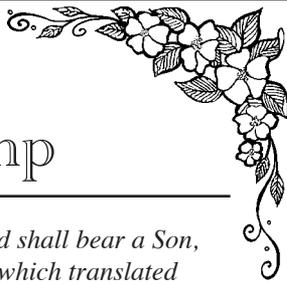
Let Thy voice call me home, saying, "Yet there is room,
There is room at My side for thee."

And my heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus,
When Thou comest and callest me. } (REPEAT)



Christ In The Camp

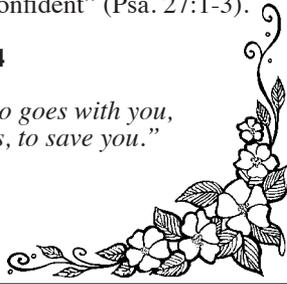


“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, ‘God with us.’” – Matthew 1:23

IN the Old Testament, David exclaims, “The Lord is *for* me; I will not fear; What can man do to me?” (Psa. 118:6). Paul echoes this theme in the New Testament when he says, “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect?” (Rom. 8:33). If God is *for* us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31). What could be more comforting to God’s people than the knowledge that God is *for* us? Just this: This same God is also *with* us. To have someone that is for your cause is one thing, but to have one who is with you in that cause is quite another. And when that One is God the implications are tremendous. God contends *for* His people (Isa. 51:22); He fights *for* His people (Neh. 4:20); He is a refuge *for* His people (Joel 3:16); yes, “The Lord has done great things *for* us” (Psa. 126:3). But beyond all of that, He is *with* us in our struggle. He is not only *for* our side, He is also *on* our side. Luther’s *Mighty Fortress* says, “Were not the right man *on our side*, Our striving would be losing ... Christ Jesus, it is He!” The Philistines’ hope and security was in their champion Goliath, albeit a false hope (1 Sam. 17:4ff); how much more secure are God’s people with IMMANUEL in our camp – for “the Lord is *with* me like a dread champion; therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail” (Jer. 20:11). “One puts to flight a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight” (Deut. 32:30; cf. Josh. 23:10), for one *with* God is a majority! Therefore, “I will fear no evil, for Thou art *with* me” (Psa. 23:4). God is with us now, not just in spirit, but in flesh – IMMANUEL, God with us, forever joined with us in our humanity. Are you compassed by worries or fears? Turn your eyes upon Jesus, IMMANUEL, God with us, and sing with the psalmist, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread? When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell. Though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war arise against me, in spite of this I shall be confident” (Psa. 27:1-3).

DEUTERONOMY 20:4

“...for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”

Silent Night, Holy Night

Words by Joseph Mohr, 1818; Music by Franz Gruber, 1818

G *D* *G*
 Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright,
C *G*
 Round yon virgin mother and child.
C *G*
 Holy infant so tender and mild,
D *G* *D* *G*
 Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.

G *D* *G*
 Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight.
C *G*
 Glories stream from heaven afar,
C *G*
 Heavenly hosts sing al - le - lu - ia;
D *G* *D* *G*
 Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

G *D* *G*
 Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light.
C *G*
 Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
C *G*
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
D *G* *D* *G*
 Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.



Good News Of a Great Joy



“And the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a GREAT JOY which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’” – Luke 2:10-11

HERE are two thoughts that ought to be closely connected in our minds: [1] In God’s *presence* is fulness of *joy* (Psa. 16:11), and [2] Jesus is IMMANUEL, God with us, the fullest possible expression of God’s presence with His people. The implications are clear: Since God’s presence brings “fulness of joy” and “all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form” in Christ (Col. 2:9), then the fullest possible expression of joy, true joy, can only be experienced in Christ, IMMANUEL. Joy, then, is one of the chief birth effects of the incarnation. Jesus’ birth is “good news of a *great joy*”! Family gatherings and exchanging gifts can be the source of much happiness at Christmas, but the true joy of Christmas and every other day of the year is Christ Himself. He is both the object and source of our joy. God’s people “rejoice *in the Lord*” (Psa. 35:9); *He* is our “exceeding joy” (Psa. 43:4), declares the psalmist. Christ has been “anointed with the oil of joy” above His fellows (Psa. 45:7) – He is the epitome of joy! We cannot experience joy apart from Christ, but rather we *enter into His joy* (Mt. 25:21,23). That is, joy increases proportional to our nearness to Him. Happiness, on the other hand, is dependent upon circumstances (*happenstance*), people, and possessions. The word *happiness* stems from the Middle English word “hap”. If *perhaps* things are going my way, then I am *happy*, but if not, then I am *unhappy*. While happiness often takes us on a great rollercoaster ride of emotions, joy is based upon the Lord who never changes (Heb. 13:8). Christian, is your mood this Christmas based upon the expectation of gifts and the way other people treat you, or is it based upon Christ? Remember “the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh. 8:10).



Rejoice **IN THE**
LORD!



Good Christian Men, Rejoice!

Latin carol translated by John M. Neale.

^C
 Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;
^{G C}
 Give ye heed to what we say: News! News! Jesus Christ is born today!
^C
 Ox and ass before Him bow, and He is in the manger now.
^{F G C G C}
 Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

^C
 Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;
^{G C}
 Now ye hear of endless bliss: Joy! Joy! Jesus Christ was born for this!
^C
 He has opened heaven's door, and man is blessed evermore.
^{F G C G C}
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

^C
 Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart and soul and voice;
^{G C}
 Now ye need not fear the grave: Peace! Peace! Jesus Christ was born to
 save!
^C
 Calls you one and calls you all, to gain His everlasting hall.
^{F G C G C}
 Christ is born save! Christ is born save!



Our Savior
is Born



Peace on Earth

“And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.’” – Luke 2:12-14

EVEN hundred years before His birth, that little baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah! “For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, *Prince of Peace*. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of *peace*” (Isa. 9:6-7). Jesus is **IMMANUEL**, *God with us*, or as Isaiah notes, “Mighty God” with us! Furthermore, this Mighty God, **IMMANUEL**, is the *Prince of Peace* and it was of *peace* that the angels sang at His birth: “And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth *peace* among men with whom He is pleased” (Lk. 2:12-14). Jesus “is our *peace*” (Eph. 2:14): “Having been justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Jesus said, “*Peace* I leave with you; My *peace* I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (Jn. 14:27). Christmas will come and go but Christ’s *peace* lingers on in the hearts of those whose mind is stayed on Him (Isa. 26:3). “Now may the Lord of *peace* Himself continually grant you *peace* in every circumstance” (2 Thess. 3:16), and “let the *peace* of Christ rule in your hearts” (Col. 3:15). The “*peace* that passes all understanding” (Phil. 4:7) is borne out of a deep belief in Jesus’ statement, “I am *with you* always, even to the end of the age” (Mt. 28:20) – **IMMANUEL**, God with us, bears the fruit of *peace* in the lives of His people.

ISAIAH 26:3

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.”

Hark The Herald Angels Sing

Words by Charles Wesley, 1739; Music by Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847
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C G C G C
 Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King.
 C G D G
 Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
 C F C G C F C G
 Joyful all ye nations rise; join the triumph of the skies;
 F C F C F G7 C G C
 With angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
 F C F C F G7 C G C
 Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

C G C G C
 Christ by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord!
 C G D G
 Late in time behold Him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.
 C F C G C F C G
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail incarnate deity.
 F C F C F G7 C G C
 Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
 F C F C F G7 C G C
 Hark the herald angles sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

C G C G C
 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness!
 C G D G
 Light and life to all He brings; risen with healing in His wings.
 C F C G C F C G
 Mild He lays His glory by; born that man no more may die;
 F C F C F G7 C G C
 Born to raise the sons of earth; born to give them second birth.
 F C F C F G7 C G C
 Hark the herald angles sing, "Glory to the newborn King."



Forever The God-Man

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.” – Revelation 21:3

AT His birth, they hailed Him as “IMMANUEL”, which translated means “God with us” (Matt. 1:23) -- the name that perhaps best describes Jesus’ incarnation. Yet God has always been *with* His people (Deut.. 31:6, 8; Psa. 23:4; Isa. 43:2). The profound difference of course is that, at Christ’s birth, God “became flesh” (Jn. 1:14). His deity remained undiminished, His divine attributes undisturbed, nevertheless He became a Man! – And that, not for a time, or an age, but forever! Christ is forever the God-Man. He was born *bodily*, He died and was raised *bodily*, and He lives and reigns forevermore in a glorified *human body*! His solidarity with us was no passing thing. He did not secure our redemption and then disassociate Himself from mankind. Herein lies our future: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is *among* men, and He shall dwell *among* them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be *among* them” (Rev. 21:3). Throughout all eternity God shall dwell *among* us spiritually and, in Christ, *bodily*, as in Eden (Gen. 3:8). Paradise shall be restored and Eden (which means “delight”) reclaimed. By far, Eden’s greatest delight shall be Christ’s personal presence, for “we shall see Him just as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2). This Christmas, as you ponder the ineffable truths of the incarnation, remember that God joined Himself with our humanity, specifically with you, Christian – forever – so that nothing, no, nothing can separate us! (Rom. 8:39). He is ours and we are His. Jesus was, and is, and forever shall be, IMMANUEL, God *with* us!



O Holy Night

Words by Chapeau de Roquetaure
 Translated by John S. Dwight;
 Music By Adolphe-Charles Adam 1840

C C7 F C Am G C
 O holy night, the stars are brightly shining; it is the night of the dear Savior's birth!
 C C7 F C Am Em B7 Em
 Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
 G G7 C G G7 C
 A thrill of hope, the weary soul rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Refrain

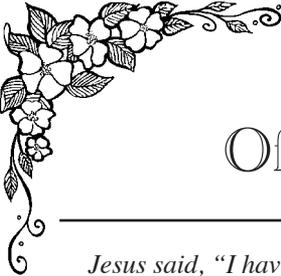
Am Em Dm7 Am
 Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices!
 C G Am C G C
 O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
 G C G C
 O night divine, O night, O night divine!

C C7 F C Am G C
 Led by the light of faith serenely beaming, with glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.
 C C7 F C Am Em B7 Em
 So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, here came the wise men from Orient land.
 G G7 C G G7 C
 The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger, in all our trials born to be our friend!

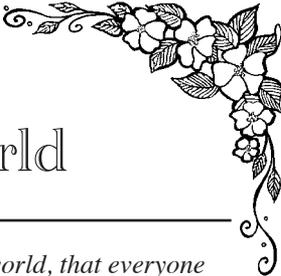
(Refrain)

C C7 F C Am G C
 Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His Gospel is peace.
 C C7 F C Am Em B7 Em
 Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother, and in His Name all oppression shall cease.
 G G7 C G G7 C
 Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, let all within us praise His holy Name!

(Refrain)



Light Of The World



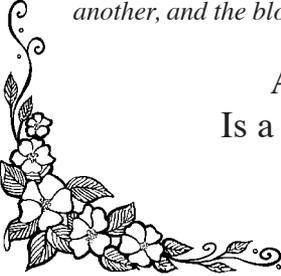
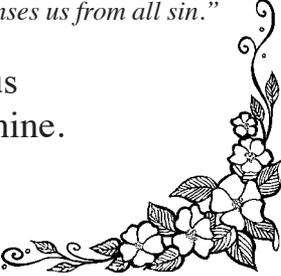
Jesus said, "I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness" – John 12:46

IN a cold, dark night 2000 years ago, a great light appeared in the heavens, leading wise men and shepherds to Bethlehem. And there they beheld something greater still – a brighter, purer, holy light, before whom stars pale in glory. Wrapped in cloths, lying in a manger, was “the light of the world” (Jn. 8:12), “the radiance of God’s glory” (Heb. 1:3), “the Sunrise from on high” (Lk. 1:78). Yet, these titles, ascribed to Christ, escape our understanding unless we personalize their meaning. To know that Jesus is the light of the world is one thing, but to say, “The Lord is *my* light and *my* salvation” (Psa. 27:1) is quite another. Yes, Jesus is the light of the world, but is He *your* light? Have you let His piercing rays penetrate the darkness that is in your own heart and expose the hidden motives and impure attitudes that lurk there? (Psa. 90:8). Is He a lamp to *your* feet, and a light to *your* path? (Psa. 119:105). And can the world see His brightness in your joyful demeanor? – This is true Christmas cheer, dear friend. The lights and glitter of Christmas are no substitute; Christ is the light of Christmas! So then, as we commemorate His birth, may our countenance be brightened, not by packages and bows, bells and lights, but by Christ Himself.

JOHN 1:5-7

“And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

A day without Jesus
Is a day without Sunshine.

Shine Jesus Shine

Words & Music by Graham Kendrick,
© 1987 Make Way Music.

A D A E A D A E
 Lord the light of Your love is shining, in the midst of the darkness shining.
 D E C#m F#m D E C#m F#m
 Jesus Light of the World shine upon us. Set us free by the truth You now bring us.
 G E G E
 Shine on me! Shine on me!

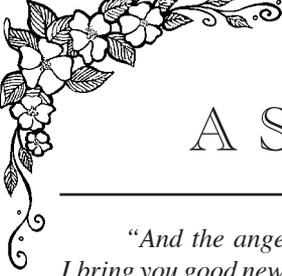
Chorus

A E D Bm E E7
 Shine Jesus shine, fill this land with the Father's glory.
 A E D Bm E E7
 Blaze Spirit blaze, set our hearts on fire.
 A E D Bm E E7
 Flow river flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy.
 A E D Bm E7 A
 Send forth Your Word, Lord and let there be light.

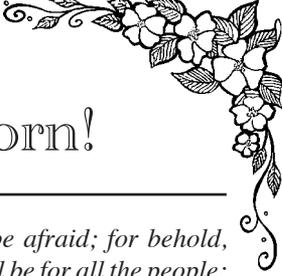
A D A E A D A E
 Lord, I come to Your awesome presence, from the shadows into Your radiance.
 D E C#m F#m
 By the blood I may enter Your brightness.
 D E C#m F#m
 Search me, try me consume all my darkness.
 G E G E
 Shine on me! Shine on me! (Chorus)

A D A E A D A E
 As we gaze on Your kingly brightness, so our faces display Your likeness.
 D E C#m F#m D E C#m F#m
 Ever changing from glory to glory. Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story.
 G E G E
 Shine on me! Shine on me! (Chorus)

Rejoice **IN THE**
LORD!



“Today”
A Savior is Born!



“And the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord’” – Luke 2:10-11

HERRY Christmas! Today we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ – the single most important event in all of human history, next to His death on the cross. When we commemorate Christ’s birth, we look *back* upon the same event the Old Testament people of God looked *forward* to. Christ is the pivot around which the Old and New Testaments, yes, all of human history revolves. History truly is His-story. For millennia, the prophets foretold Christ’s coming: “‘Behold, *the days are coming*,’ declares the Lord, ‘When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as King and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land’” (Jer. 23:5). “Then it will come about *in that day* that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a Signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious” (Isa. 11:10). Then, after thousands of years, came the joyful announcement, “Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for *today* in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Lk. 2:10-11). No longer would it be said, “the days are coming” or “in that day,” but rather, “today!” But even though the Old and New Testaments revolve equally around Christ, we stand in the preferred position, looking back upon His birth rather than forward – “For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Mt. 13:17). “All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance...” (Heb. 11:13; cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-11). Prophecy has become history and we are privileged to say in the *past tense*: “God so loved the world, that He *gave* His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn. 3:16).

GALATIANS 4:4

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons”

Joy to the World

Words by Isaac Watts, 1674-1748; Music by Frederick Handel, 1685-1759
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C G C F C G C
Joy to the world the Lord is come.

F G C
Let earth receive her King.

C
Let every heart prepare Him room,

C G
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,

C F C G C
And heaven and heaven and nature sing.

C G C F C G C
No more let sins and sorrows grow,

F G C
Nor thorns infest the ground.

C
He comes to make His blessings flow,

C G
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,

C F C G C
Far as, far a - s the curse is found.

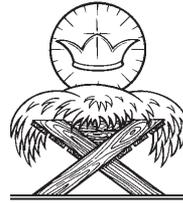
C G C F C G C
He rules the world with truth and grace,

F G C
And makes the nations prove,

C
The glories of His righteousness,

C G
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love,

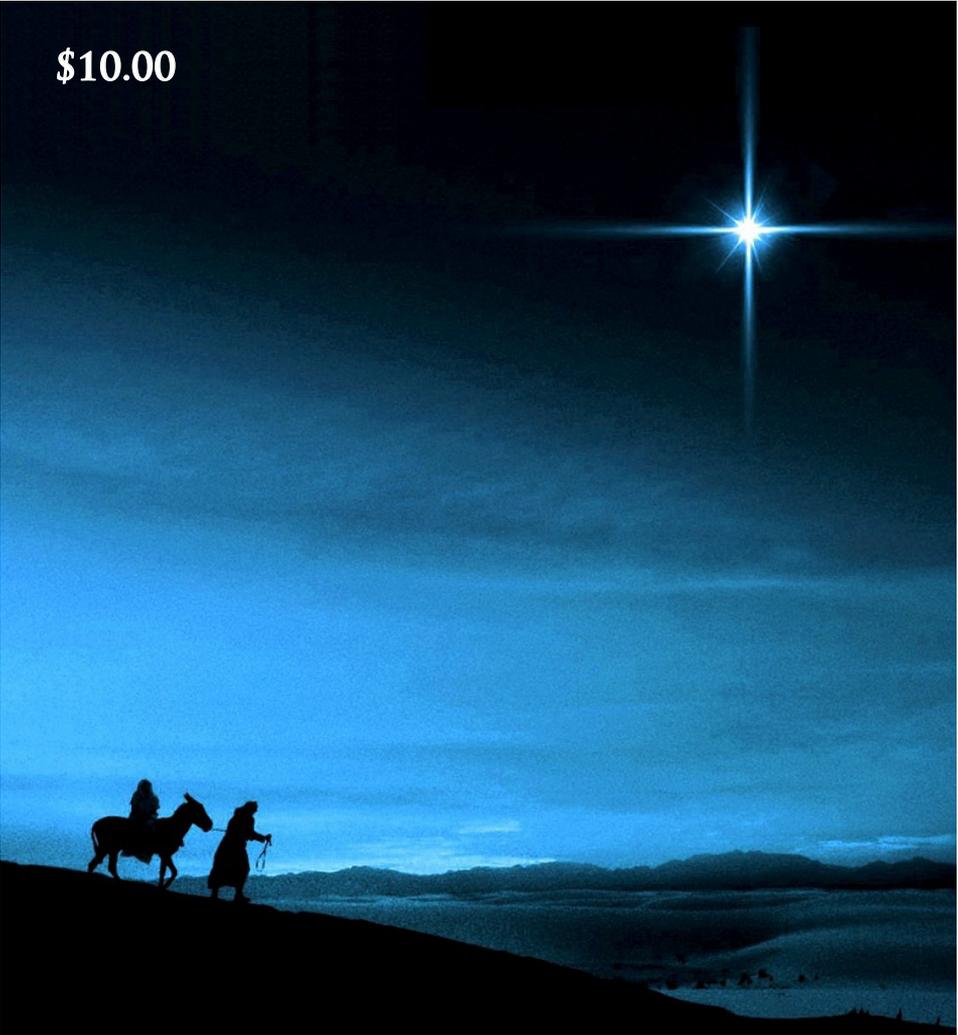
C F C G C
And wonders, wonders of His love.



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\$10.00



The four weeks leading up to Christmas can be an especially rich time of reflection and meditation upon the birth of our Lord. These Advent Devotions are designed to focus the Christian's attention upon Christ and off of the materialism and commercialism surrounding the American celebration of Christmas.