

W E E K F O U R

Hope



DAY TWENTY TWO: DECEMBER 21

*O holy night
The stars are brightly shining
It is the night
Of our dear saviors birth*

(“O Holy Night,” lyrics by Placide Cappeau, music by Adolphe Adam, 1847)

O holy night. That line alone is a prayer. When we honestly and humbly declare the holiness of God something powerful happens. The ongoing song of heaven is revealed in Revelations 4:

*Day and night they never stop saying:
“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.”
(Revelations 4:8b)*

Because they are continuously in God’s presence, heaven’s inhabitants can’t stop proclaiming Him as holy. When Jesus is born, heaven bursts through declaring,

“Glory to God in the highest!”

When you honor Jesus as holy, you join in the everlasting song of heaven taking place in the throne room right now, and your pure-hearted cries of “holy” here on earth attach you to eternal hope.



DAY TWENTY TWO: DECEMBER 21

READ: Read: Luke 19:37-40

REFLECT: Jesus says that “the stones will cry out” in worship even if people don’t. If God’s creation in nature cannot deny His glory, how much more should we — made in His own image — “rejoice and praise God with a loud voice?”

PRAY: God, I ask You to give me a fresh revelation of Your glory and holiness.

I want my daily worship to match that of heaven: joyful, honoring, and free.

Amen.



DAY TWENTY-THREE: DECEMBER 22

*Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
till He appeared and the soul felt its worth*

The “O Holy Night” we sing today is based on a poem by French poet called “Minuit, Chrétiens.” (Its literal translation isn’t exact to the lyrics we know, but a pretty close interpretation.)

A few years after the song was first performed at Christmas Eve service, it was banned because Cappéau and the song’s composer, Adolphe Adam, were thought to have political and religious beliefs that were misaligned with traditional Christian beliefs—some was fact, some was rumor.

Fortunately for you and me, the song was revived by John Sullivan Dwight, a minister and music critic, in 1855. Dwight likely saw and felt in the song what you and I feel when we hear it or sing it: pure hope that reflects the true heart of God.



Hope

DAY TWENTY-THREE:
DECEMBER 22

READ: Romans 8:38-39 and Psalm 8:3-5

REFLECT: This treasured, artful declaration of the gospel was nearly lost forever. Why is that if we think a person has been incorrect, unrighteous, or immoral in one area at one time or sometimes, we tend to reject the areas where they are correct or virtuous?

PRAY: God, help me to live in the hope that nothing can separate me from Your love. Help me to think, speak, and act in honor towards You and towards others always.

Help me be quick to forgive and encourage —and slow to judge and criticize. Amen.

Amen



DAY TWENTY-FOUR: DECEMBER 23

*A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!*

We tend need to see to believe—or if not see, feel. Yet, Hebrews 11 begins with this mind-bending statement:

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Faith is being certain about what you can't be certain of, and hope beckons you to remain expectant for what is to come.

The thrill of hope God invites you to experience isn't wishful thinking but true confidence and blessed assurance that He is a faithful promise keeper. Your hope in Christ isn't a gamble, it's a sure thing—even when you can't touch, see, or feel it.

God sent His Son not only to give you hope, but to show you hope by dwelling on earth, arriving like you and I do through the miracle of birth. God knows that new life is the very essence of hope—and His promise to us is new life in Him.



Hope

*DAY TWENTY-FOUR:
DECEMBER 23*

READ: Romans 8:24 & 2 Corinthians 5:17

REFLECT: Hope declares that whatever is presently broken or unfinished in this moment is under God's righteous authority. What do you need to lay down today so that you can confidently carry hope and faith?

PRAY: Lord, I declare that You are a faithful promise keeper. My hope for the future is secured in the assurance of who You are and what You speak through Your Word.

Help me grow in confidence so that I can show others the "thrill of hope" found in You.

Amen.



DAY TWENTY-FIVE: DECEMBER 24

*Sweet hymns of joy
in grateful chorus raise we,
let all within us praise His holy name.*

Christ is the Lord!

*O praise His name forever!
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!*

Hope depends on acknowledging God for everything He is.

We learn something important from the angels, shepherds, and wise men—they were invited to come witness and worship God incarnate and they accepted.

Maybe you'll be attending a Christmas Eve service today and maybe you'll even sing this song. What if you decided right now to view it, not just as nostalgia of something that happened 2,000 years ago, but a personal invitation to witness and worship?



DAY TWENTY-FIVE:
DECEMBER 24

READ: *Mark 12:30-31*

REFLECT: How does this passage ask us to love? Take a moment to reflect on passage and then on the lyrics in the devotional. Can you relate to offering your worship in this manner? If not, what gets in the way?

PRAY: Lord, today I acknowledge you as Mighty God, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. You are my Everlasting Father. You are the Prince of Peace! You guide me as my Wonderful Counselor! You are the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Today and every day, I want all that is within in me to praise Your holy name!

Amen.



CHRISTMAS DAY

*Joy to the world,
The Lord has come!
Let earth receive her King!*

We end this devotional where we began: proclaiming the arrival of love incarnate to teach us how to love—and to redeem us back to perfect love.

Whatever plans and places lie ahead for you on this Christmas Day, keep this in your thoughts and in your heart:

Let every heart prepare Him room.

It's a prayer we could pray every day, and it should always include this humble plea:

Start with my heart, Lord.

Merry Christmas! May you “rest merry” in the comfort and joy of your beloved belonging in Jesus and help others to do the same!