

# THE WHOLE STORY

THE NEED. THE PROMISE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT. THE PLAN. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT

# Advent 2013



MISSIO DEI CHURCH  
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# Introduction:

This devotional is to be used in conjunction with our Advent series "[The Whole Story](#)." It is our hope that through this short devotional you will see the drama of Scripture unfold and the person and work of Jesus Christ will continue to transform your life to His glory.

This devotional is meant to get you thinking about the upcoming sermon. In other words, after Sunday morning's gathered worship, you can begin your reading for the next Sunday. This booklet was not designed to plummet the depths of incarnational theology, triperspectivalism, or dive into the nuances of certain Greek words (if you happen to know of a book that covers such topics, please feel free to let us know). Instead, this booklet has been designed to get you thinking about and noticing how God has been working throughout history and the story of the coming Messiah. E

Each week there will be a short reading that will introduce the Scripture for the up coming week that talks briefly about what we will be learning the following Sunday. After the brief reading, there are some personal reflection questions for you to ponder and discuss throughout the week. If you have a family, we have included a night of family devotions for your family. Feel free to use this devotional when it works best for you and your family.

We have also included some [additional resources for families](#) during the Advent season taken from the [Village Church](#) down in Texas. These resources do not directly tie into what we will be learning throughout Advent. Rather, this resource is to help your family have some great quality time together honoring and exalting Christ during this season.

Again, we pray that this booklet will help you see the Gospel story more clearly and that you would continue to put to death all that is not of God and that you would walk with the Spirit of Christ to the glory of God the Father.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| <b>The Need.....</b>                |    |
| Scripture Reference .....           | 6  |
| Weekly Devotional .....             | 7  |
| Personal Reflection Questions ..... | 8  |
| Family Devotions .....              | 9  |
| <b>The Promise .....</b>            |    |
| Scripture Reference .....           | 11 |
| Weekly Devotional .....             | 12 |
| Personal Reflection Questions ..... | 13 |
| Family Devotions .....              | 14 |
| <b>The Announcement.....</b>        |    |
| Scripture Reference .....           | 16 |
| Weekly Devotional .....             | 17 |
| Personal Reflection Questions ..... | 18 |
| Family Devotions .....              | 19 |
| <b>The Plan .....</b>               |    |
| Scripture Reference .....           | 21 |
| Weekly Devotional .....             | 22 |
| Personal Reflection Questions ..... | 23 |
| Family Devotions .....              | 24 |
| <b>Appendix A.....</b>              | 26 |

*O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appears*



## December 1 - 7

*When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. <sup>3</sup> Then the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." <sup>4</sup> The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.*

*<sup>5</sup> The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup> **And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.** <sup>7</sup> So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." <sup>8</sup> But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord*

**Genesis 6: 1-8 (ESV)**



**W**e all have our family issues. Some families are extremely dysfunctional in how they act around one another, love each other, and celebrate holidays, birthdays, and other special events. Some families have long standing unspoken expectations such as having to celebrate Christmas...well of course *on Christmas*. Families can *only* have roast beef (or whatever the staple meat of choice is for your family), and presents are *always* opened in a particular order. Yet other families are very simple and casual when it comes to big events.

The family of God is no exception to the above lists of dysfunctions. Our Scripture text for this week shows us how men and women fall away from their first love – the love of God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Matthew 22: 37-38). Since the fall, we are all like sheep who have gone astray (Isaiah 53:6). Since the fall, we have struggled to love God more than ourselves (2 Corinthians 5:15).

*And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.* These are harsh words for us to hear. We often think of God as a fun, loving, graceful, float on the clouds kind of Santa Claus. Yet Genesis tells us that the Lord *regretted* that he made man on the earth. God regretted the creation of man so much, that it *grieved* him all the way to his heart. Imagine hearing these words come from your own father. Can you imagine saying these words to your own children?

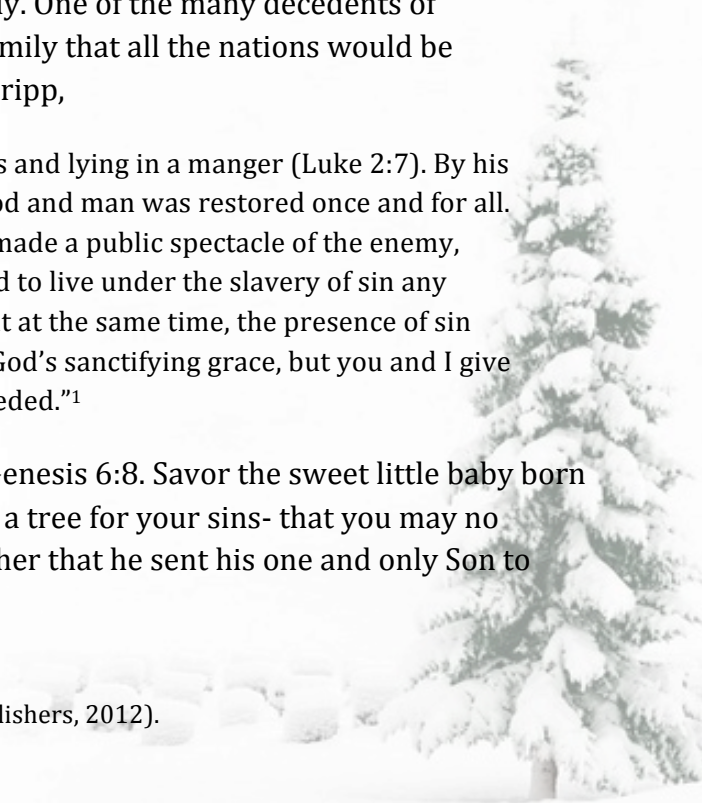
But there is good news! God did not give up on his people. Through his sovereign grace, the Lord found favor upon Noah (Genesis 6:8) and his family. One of the many decedents of Noah was Abraham. It was through Abraham and his family that all the nations would be blessed (Genesis 22:18). Hear these words from Paul Tripp,

“That blessing was Christ, wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger (Luke 2:7). By his work on the cross, the broken relationship between God and man was restored once and for all. And on the cross, the power of sin was broken. Christ made a public spectacle of the enemy, Satan, triumphing over him by the cross. We don’t need to live under the slavery of sin any longer. We don’t need to be in bondage to our flesh. But at the same time, the presence of sin still remains. Sin is being progressively eradicated by God’s sanctifying grace, but you and I give empirical evidence each day that more grace is still needed.”<sup>1</sup>

During this Advent season, consider the good news of Genesis 6:8. Savor the sweet little baby born in a barn who grew up to be the man who would die on a tree for your sins- that you may no longer suffer the wrath of Genesis 6:5. Praise to the Father that he sent his one and only Son to come and ransom Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Tripp, *Advent: The Whole Story* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2012).



**Personal Discussion Questions:**

**1. What are some things that grieve your heart?**

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**2. Do these same things that grieve the heart of the Lord bring your heart sadness?**

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**3. In what ways this week did you allow love of self to replace love for God? What was the outcome?**

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**4. In what ways this week did you live out 2 Corinthians 5:15? What was the outcome?**

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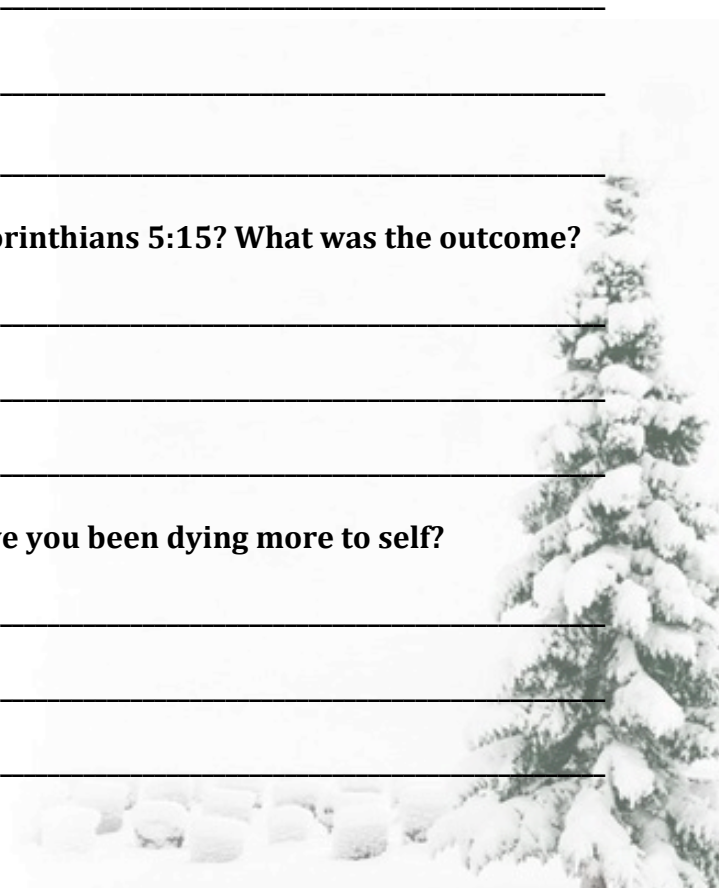
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**5. Reflect on some areas of growth. Where have you been dying more to self?**

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## Family Devotions

Read Genesis 6: 1-8 aloud together as a family.

1. What are some words that were difficult for you to understand or sounded confusing?  
*Answer questions as they come up, or look them up if needed at an appropriate time.*
2. What was happening in this story?
3. Why was the lord sorry that he made man?
4. Why did this grieve his heart?
5. The Bible says that God found favor in Noah. What does this mean?
  - a. What do you know about Noah?

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Read the following question and answer from the Westminster Catechism...

**Question:** Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?<sup>2</sup>

**Answer:** No man is able, either of himself<sup>3</sup>, or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God<sup>4</sup>; but doth daily break them, in thought<sup>5</sup>, word, and deed<sup>6</sup>.

1. **Have someone read the Scriptures verses found in the footnotes at the bottom of the page.** *If you have multiple children, divide the verses up among each child and let them read. This would be a great way to teach kids where books are at in the Bible and to let them work on reading God's word!*
2. Who was able to perfectly keep all of God's commandments? Why was this important?
3. What is one thing we are going to do this week to love God more?

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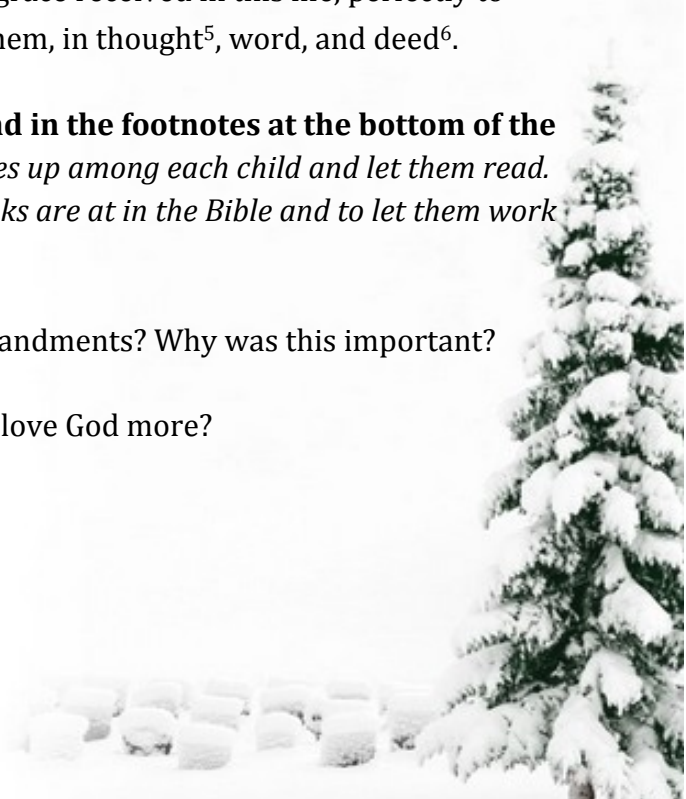
<sup>2</sup> Westminster Larger Catechism Question/Answer 149

<sup>3</sup> John 15:5; Romans 8:3; James 3:2

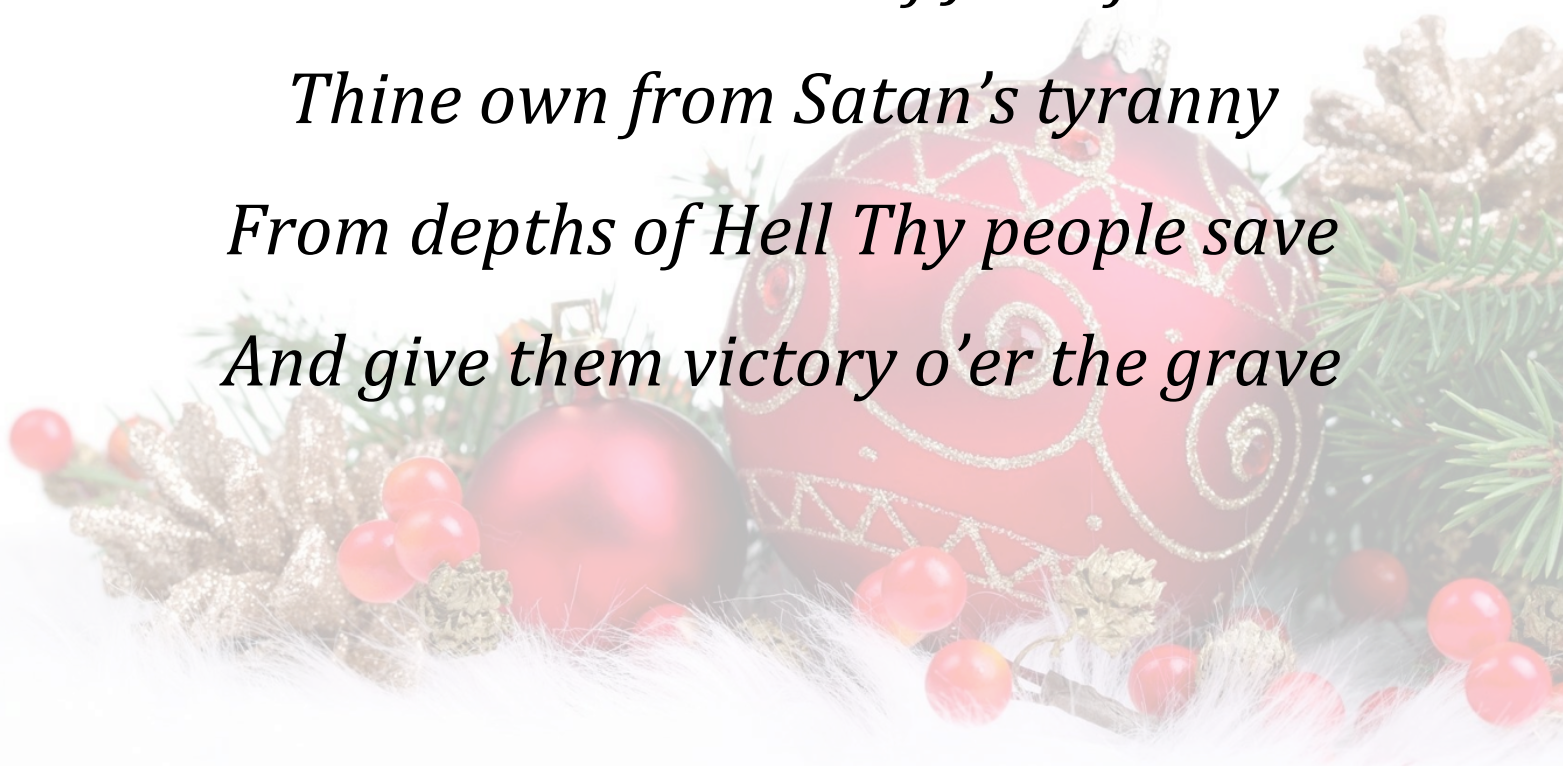
<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 7:18-19; Galatians 5:17; 1 John 1:8

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 6:5, 8:21

<sup>6</sup> Romans 3: 9-19; James 3: 2-13



*O come Thou Rod of Jesse free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny  
From depths of Hell Thy people save  
And give them victory o'er the grave*



## December 8-14

*<sup>1</sup> Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; <sup>2</sup> but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. <sup>3</sup> For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. <sup>4</sup> No one enters suit justly; no one goes to law honestly; they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies, they conceive mischief and give birth to iniquity. <sup>5</sup> They hatch adders' eggs; they weave the spider's web; he who eats their eggs dies, and from one that is crushed a viper is hatched.*

*<sup>6</sup> Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make. Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. <sup>7</sup> Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways. <sup>8</sup> The way of peace they do not know, and there is no justice in their paths; they have made their roads crooked; no one who treads on them knows peace.*

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us; we hope for light, and behold, darkness, and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.*

*<sup>10</sup> We grope for the wall like the blind; we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight, among those in full vigor we are like dead men. <sup>11</sup> We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves; we hope for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us. <sup>12</sup> For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our*

*transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities: <sup>13</sup> transgressing, and denying the Lord, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words. <sup>14</sup> Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. <sup>15</sup> Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. <sup>16</sup> He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him.*

*<sup>17</sup> He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak. <sup>18</sup> According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, repayment to his enemies; to the coastlands he will render repayment. <sup>19</sup> So they shall fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun; for he will come like a rushing stream, which the wind of the Lord drives. <sup>20</sup> **"And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression," declares the Lord.***

*<sup>21</sup> "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the Lord: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the Lord, "from this time forth and forevermore."*

**T**his time of year is when we often hear the word “hope” thrown around like the word is candy.

“What do you *hope* to get for Christmas”? “Man I really *hope* we have another turkey for Christmas dinner”. “I *hope* I don’t have to wear grandma’s itchy Christmas sweater again this year”. We are all guilty of using this word in our common North American vernacular. However, let’s consider how Scripture uses the word hope:

- **Psalm 33:18** – “Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who **hope** in his steadfast love.”
- **Romans 5:2** – “Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in **hope** of the glory of God.”
- **Romans 12:12** – “Rejoice in **hope**, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer”.
- **1 Peter 1:13** – “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your **hope** fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Seems as though the Bible uses hope in a completely different context. Paul Tripp defines hope this way, “**hope is always an object and an expectation**”<sup>7</sup>. We are people who are always putting our hope in something and asking that source of hope to deliver something to us.

As we read through Isaiah 59, we see a passage that is saturated with hope. This chapter was written in a dark time in Israel’s history. God’s people have been released from captivity in Babylon and they have returned to a disheveled and broken Jerusalem. At this time in the story, there are no city walls, no temple, and no government. Poverty, violence, and injustice are widespread. Israel is in a time of hopelessness.

When we encounter times like these in our lives, our true character is revealed and people see you for who you really are (similar to camping). People see us for who really are because they see where your hope lies. This affects us so much because we rely on/cling to our comfortable horizontal hopes (people, places, things, ideas) instead of the vertical hope. We often sing the old hymn *On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand* where we sing in verse 1, “My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus blood and righteousness.”

“That’s the Christmas story. The Christmas story is about hope coming. That’s why the angels sing the glorious song we’ll focus on next week. That’s why the wise men came to worship. That’s why the shepherds were blown away. Hope had invaded the earth in the person of the Lord Jesus. Hope had come.”<sup>8</sup> This hope is still present today and is only found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Through his death and resurrection, which paid our eternal debt of sin, we too can become children of the one True King.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Tripp, *Advent: The Whole Story*. Pg. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Pg. 10

**Personal Discussion Questions:**

- 1. Name the situations, locations, and relationships that our culture defines as sources of hope?**

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- 2. Reflect on times when you searched for hope in the wrong places. What was the outcome?**

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- 3. Reflect on times when you relied on Christ as your only source of hope. What was the outcome?**

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- 4. How can you personally and corporately celebrate Hope this season?**

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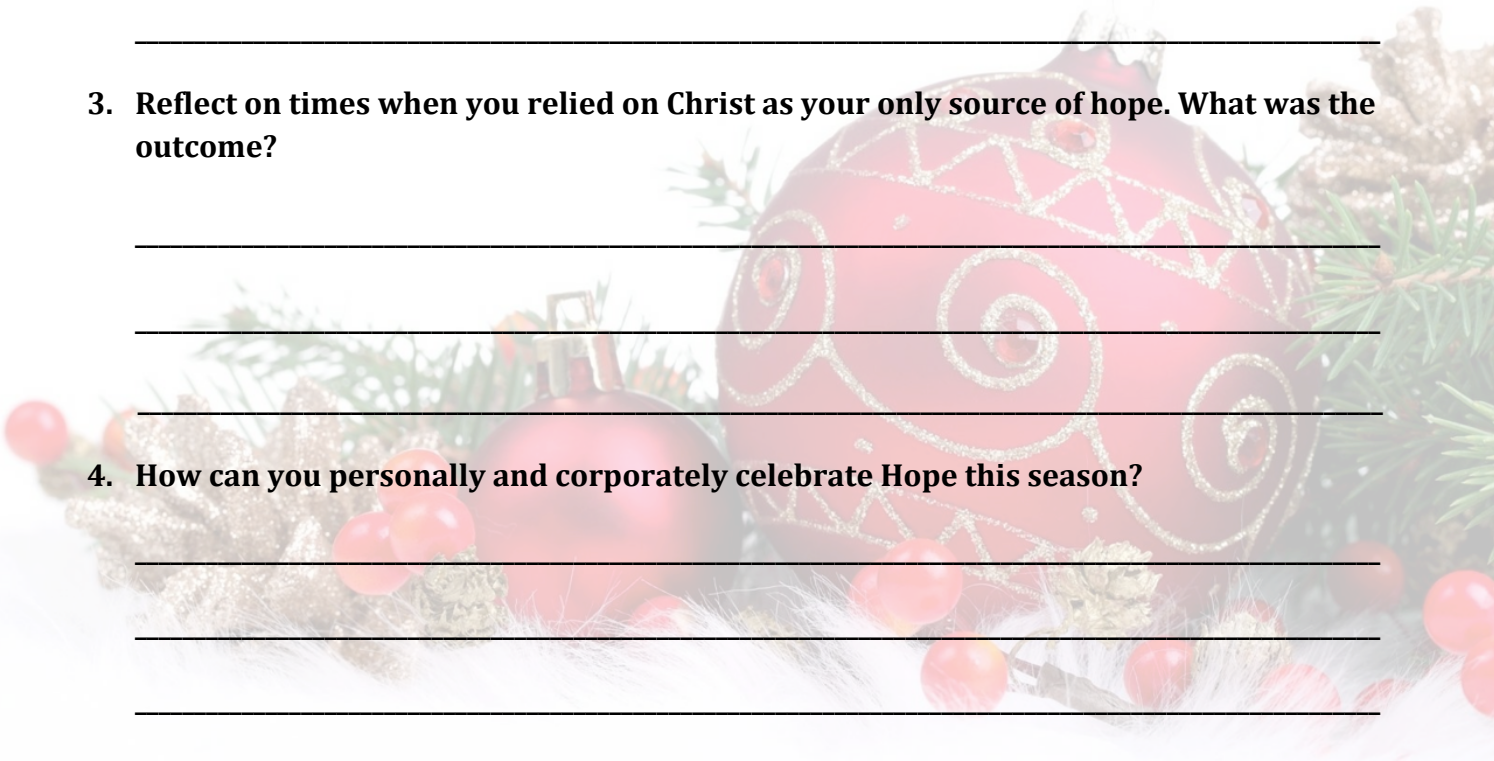
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- 5. Who in your life is in need of Hope? How can you use the Advent season to share Hope with others?**

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## Family Devotions

Discuss the following questions with your children:

**1. What are some things you hope for in life?**

- a. This can be a tricky question, so you may need to get them started
  - i. i.e. Do you hope that everyone will have clean drinking water some day?

**2. Do you know what it means for Jesus to be our only hope?**

- a. Jesus is the only one that can 100% come through on his promises.
- b. He is the one who has given us the greatest gift – salvation.

*\*Use the following questions from the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) to help explain these two questions.*

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**Parents read the question, children read the answer:**

**Q. 20. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?**

A. God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life<sup>9</sup>, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

**Q. 21. Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?**

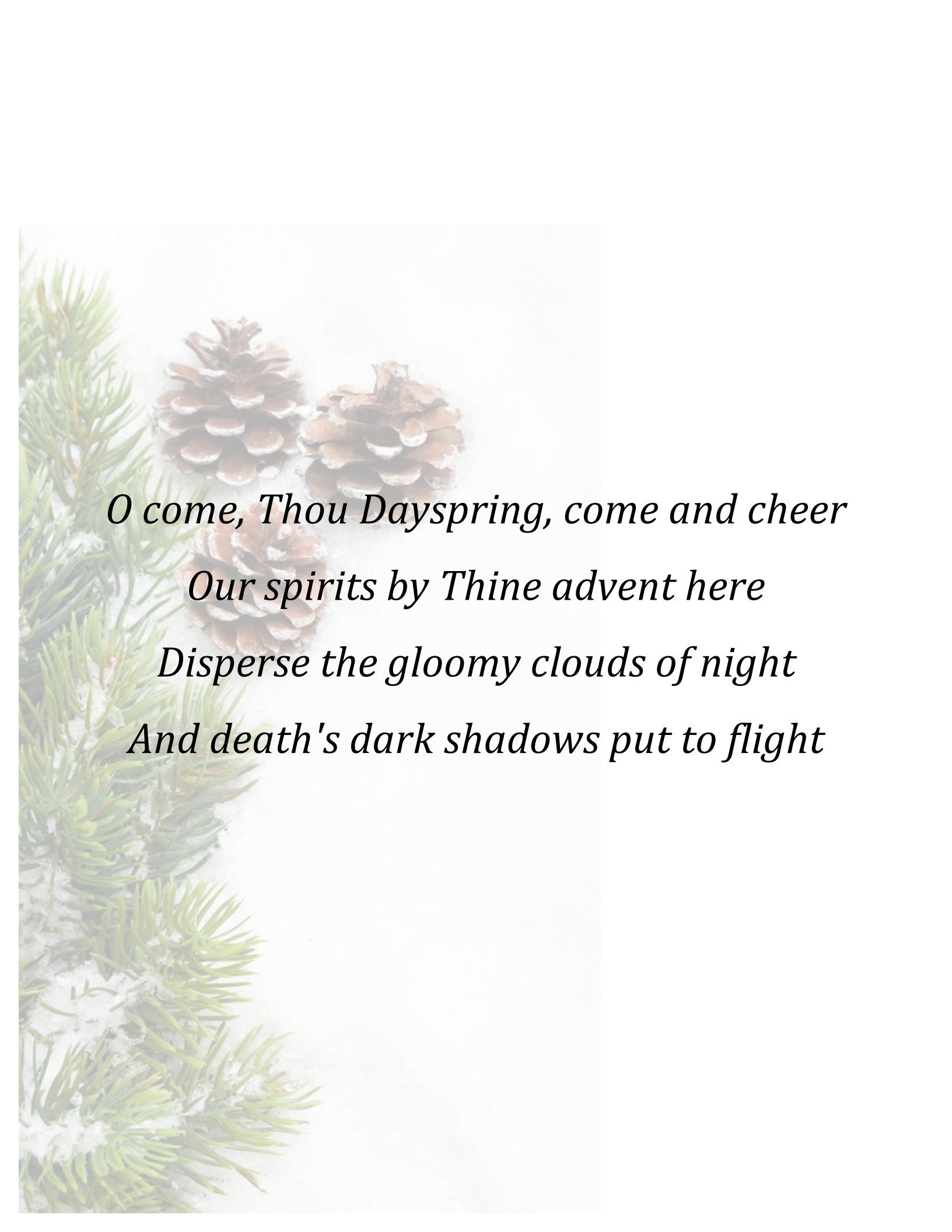
A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever.

**Q. 22. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?**

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

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<sup>9</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:9



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

## **December 15 - 21**

*In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

*<sup>8</sup> And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

***<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"***

*<sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. <sup>21</sup> And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.*

**Luke 2: 1-21 (ESV)**



**T**he word announcement means *to make known publically; proclaim*. As we think back to grade school, we can all probably remember the morning announcements that were read every day over the intercom. We have all been to one sporting event or another in which we have the announcer come over the speaker system to let us know what was happening during the game. We now have Facebook and Twitter, which bombard us with announcements (most of them with little to no real weight or meaning). As we hear these announcements, we may or not give much thought to them or they may not have the greatest effect on your life.

However, as we read Luke 2, we hear the greatest announcement ever. The Messiah is here! The one whom Israel has been waiting for is finally here to rescue them! However, they have no clue the type of king the Lord has delivered to them. I cannot think of a more elaborate announcement for a more precious Savior than what we read in Luke 2.

The Father sent thousands and thousands angels to come and proclaim to some three lowly shepherds, out in the middle of a field in the middle of the night, that Jesus Christ had been born in a manger and was wrapped in swaddling cloths. The angels come and announce two very important words – glory and peace.

### **[Glory]**

Glory tends to be one of those “church words” that we use without stopping to really ponder what the word means. The word *glory* is synonymous with splendor, brightness, amazing might, praise, honor, and greatness. We were created to give God glory because He created us worshipping. Adam and Eve were glorifying God in the Garden of Eden. Since the fall, we have struggled to give God glory and worship Him completely.

### **[Peace]**

The next word that is significant in the announcement that the angels gave is the word *peace*. Peace means *to be freed from worry*. As Adam and Eve gave glory to God in the Garden, they also had peace. What did they have to worry about, except walking closely with God and with each other day in and day out? However, the fall brought Israel, and us, anything but peace. Ever since then, we have struggled with unrest and being peaceful. However, in his coming, the wait was over, and peace was coming to God’s people. God’s children would soon find peace in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was here to fulfill what the prophet Ezekiel proclaimed, “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.<sup>10</sup>” Since we all have a glory problem and a peace problem, someone needed to come and fix these problems – that person is Jesus. Paul Tripp further explains how Jesus came to fix these problems:

*“The only hope of restoring glory and peace is by grace, and the vehicle of grace was the Cross. Christ was born, and from day one, all His thoughts and actions and responses and reactions were perfectly lived to the glory of God. He suffered the ultimate rejection of the Father, so that we could know His acceptance and live at peace with Him.*

*The announcement in Luke 2:14 foreshadows the Cross. On the Cross, Jesus created upward peace with the Father that leads to inward peace and gives us the ability to have outward peace with others. And on the Cross, Christ gave us life - not just eternally, but right here, right now - so that we can be increasingly captivated by the glory of God.”<sup>11</sup>*

<sup>10</sup> Ezekiel 36:26

<sup>11</sup> Paul Tripp, *Advent: The Whole Story*. Pg. 14.

**Personal Discussion Questions:**

**1. What has caused you to glorify and worship other people/things more than God?**

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**2. Reflect on times of inward peace. What allowed you to have peace within?**

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**3. How can you be increasingly captivated by the glory of God?**

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**4. Reflect on areas in your life where you see your heart of stone replaced with a heart of flesh.**

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**5. What does the announcement in Luke 2:14 mean for your life?**

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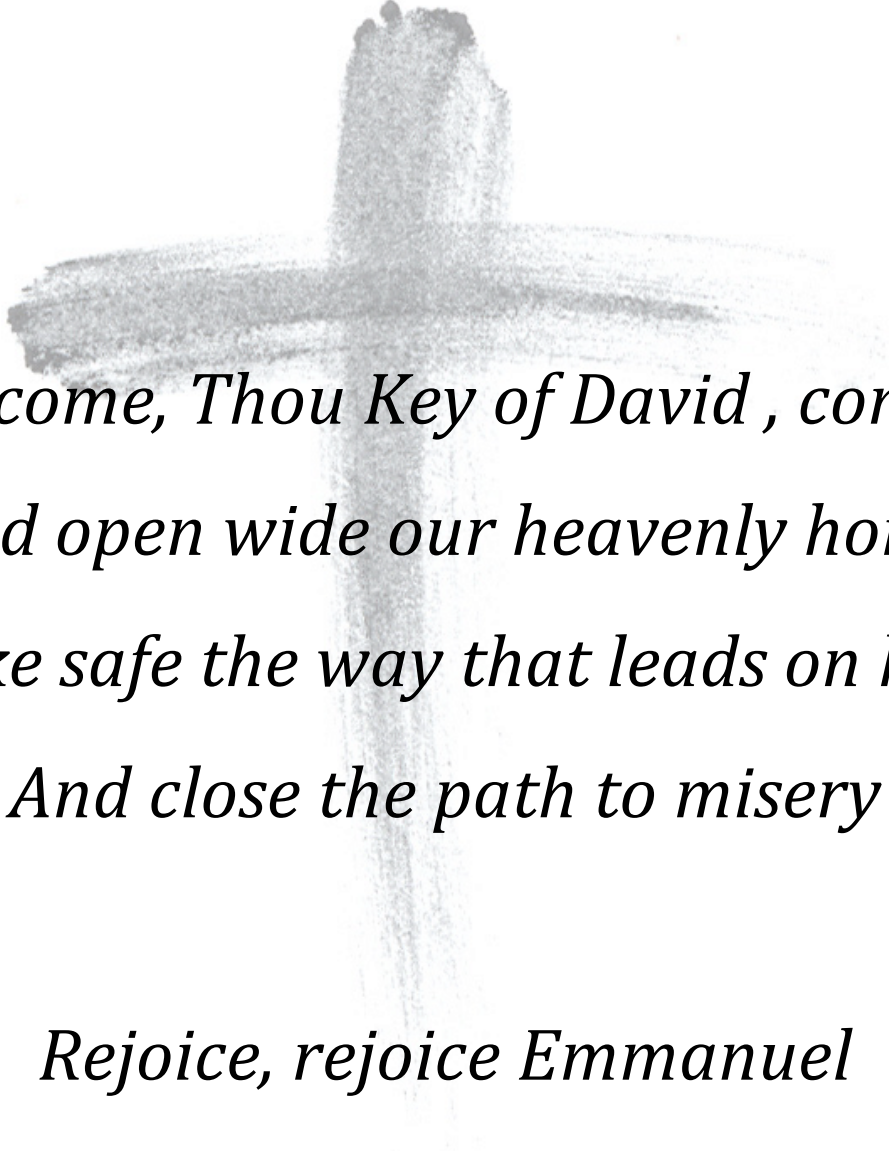
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## Family Devotions

Read **Luke 2: 1-21** together as a family. Talk about the following questions together:

1. What are some words that were difficult for you to understand or sounded confusing?  
*Answer questions as they come up, or look them up if needed at an appropriate time.*
2. What brings you peace? Or another way to say the word peace would be what calms you when your nervous, scared, or worried?
3. What has been the most exciting news you have ever heard?
4. What was happening in this story?
5. What do you know about shepherds? What was their job? Do you think that they were richer or poorer back in Jesus time?
6. Why do you think that the angels coming to some lowly shepherds in the middle of a field is important? What was God doing in His announcement in the birth of his son?
  - a. *God was letting the poor people know that the Savior had come. God didn't go right to the religious, rich, or important people right away. He went to the common everyday person like you and me.*
7. Why did God send his one and only son into the world?



*O come, Thou Key of David , come  
And open wide our heavenly home  
Make safe the way that leads on high  
And close the path to misery*

*Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee O Israel*

## December 22 - 28

Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>2</sup> For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? <sup>9</sup> And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

<sup>10</sup> **Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him;** he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

**Isaiah 53: 1-12 (ESV)**

**L**ast week we dove into Luke 2 and pondered the announcement that God made. We learned that there were thousands and thousands of angels coming down from heaven to announce that the Messiah had been born to three lowly shepherds. With this announcement came great excitement and lots of emotions. The idea of Jesus lying in a manger, surrounded by lots of people, all warm in his swaddling cloths just gives us tremendous amounts of warm fuzzies.

Yet this week you may feel a bit different after reading our text for the week. This week we learn that the announcement from Luke 2 also came with a plan. The plan had been announced long ago, it would fulfill the long awaited promise, and satisfy the biggest need. People were separated from God and therefore unable to be one with Him without a Mediator. Someone had to come and take the sins of the world away. The plan was to send Jesus, God's one and only son, into this world.

*"Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him"* is a troubling piece for many of us, especially at this time of year. As we think of baby Jesus in the manger, we often hug our little ones tighter and tighter this time of year. We want to communicate how much we love them, so we buy more and more presents to show much we care for kids. Does this convey the meaning of true love? According to the Bible, the answer is no. John 15:13 says *"Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends."* This is how Jesus would demonstrate his love for us: he would come to die for those who were not worthy of life.

This was all in the Father's plan. This does not make God the Father a bad parent because it was his will to crush Jesus. Rather, this makes a dad like none other. He would rather have a way to look at us as holy instead of sinful. The Father needed blood to be shed to fulfill his plan. The Father needed a painful death of someone very precious in order to pay for our sins. The Father needed a spotless and blameless lamb to atone for sins. The only player that could fulfill this plan was Jesus Christ.

The Father sending this Son to die for us so what we would no longer be objects of wrath, but rather His children, is the absolute greatest gift you will ever receive. Remember that this year as we are quickly approaching the "big day". As you anticipate what gifts you will get and what you will not get, remember the Plan and how much that cost Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus' generosity and love towards us lowly, sinful, stain-ridden people. Jesus gave us the gift of grace through his life, death, and resurrection.

**Personal Discussion Questions:**

1. Write a "Top-Ten" list of things that give your heart pleasure.

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2. How closely do the things on your list match what the Bible says about the pleasure of God?

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3. What is on your Christmas list that is a "must have" for you?

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4. How are you doing at guarding your heart against making that your idol and robbing God of your worship to him in response to His grace?

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5. What sort of response would be appropriate to this grace during this time of year?

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## Family Devotions

**Read the following story from the Jesus Storybook Bible:**

"DO YOU KNOW what your name means? Well, there was once a man called Isaiah, and his name meant "God to the rescue!" That might sound like a bit of a funny name to you, but it was just the right name for Isaiah because God had a special job for Isaiah. You see, Isaiah's job was to listen to God and then tell people what he heard. Now, God let Isaiah know a secret. God showed Isaiah his Secret Rescue Plan: Operation "No More Tears!" This is the message God gave Isaiah (it was like a letter God wrote to his children)...

*Dear Little Flock,*

*You're all wandering away from me, like sheep in an open field. You have always been running away from me. And now you're lost. You can't find your way back. But I can't stop loving you. I will come to find you. So I am sending you a Shepherd to look after you and love you. To carry you home to me.*

*You've been stumbling around, like people in a dark room. But into the darkness, a bright Light will shine! It will chase away all the shadows, like sunshine. A little baby will be born. A Royal Son. His mommy will be a young girl who doesn't have a husband. His name will be Emmanuel, which means "God has come to live with us." He is one of King Davids' children's children's children. The Prince of Peace.*

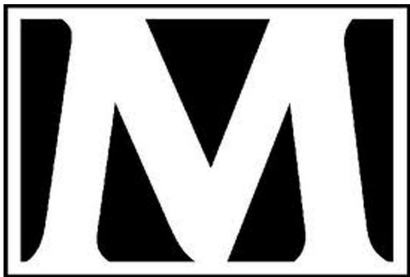
*Yes, Someone is going to come and rescue you! But he won't be who anyone expects. He will be a King! But he won't live in a palace. And he won't have lots of money. He will be poor. And he will be a Servant. But this King will heal the whole world.*

*He will be a Hero! He will fight for his people, and rescue them from their enemies. But he won't have big armies, and he won't fight with swords. He will make the blind see, he will make the lame leap like deer! He will make everything the way it was always meant to be. But people will hate him, and they won't listen to him. He will be like a Lamb- he will suffer and die. It's the Secret Rescue Plan we made- from before the beginning of the world! It's the only way to get you back. But he won't stay dead- I will make him alive again!*

*And, one day, when he comes back to rule forever, the mountains and trees will dance and sing for joy! The earth will shout out loud! His fame will fill the whole earth- as the waters cover the sea! Everything sad will come untrue. Even death is going to die! And he will wipe away every tear from every eye. Yes, the Rescuer will come. Look for him. Watch for him. Wait for him. He will come! I promise. Love, God*

**Questions and thoughts to ask:**

1. If you don't know what your child's name means, look it up and tell them.
2. Ask them to explain the story back to you.
3. Explain to them how Jesus was this plan.
4. Have fun being a parent and fielding all the questions!



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# Additional Resources<sup>12</sup>

## RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Below you will find a list of ideas for activities your family can do together during Advent. Most of them have been grouped together based on the week of the Advent Guide that they might best reinforce or complement. Really, they can be done at any time. This list may seem overwhelming. They are just suggestions. Feel the freedom to read through them and pick the ones that will work best for your family.

### WEEK 1: PROMISES AND PATIENCE

- Make a promise to your child(ren) but do not keep it immediately. Use their waiting as a reminder that many waited for the promised Savior.
- Over dinner, talk about promises that you have made to people and promises people have made to you. Talk about the promises God has made to His children and why we can trust Him.

### WEEK 2: AWAITING AN ADVENT

- Fulfill the promise that you made during week 1 and talk about God's faithfulness to keep His promise and send a Savior.
- Decorate your Christmas tree with lights. Talk about how Jesus is the light that God promised in Isaiah 9:2. Turn off all the lights. Talk about how it must have felt to wait for the promised Savior. Turn the Christmas lights on and thank God for Jesus.

God made a promise that one day Jesus would come to seek, serve and save sinners. This promise was talked about in Isaiah 9:6, which was hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Over dessert, read the verse together and talk about what it must have been like to wait for God to fulfill His promise.

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<sup>12</sup> These ideas come from The Village Church in Texas. To view the original document, please visit <http://www.thevillagechurch.net/the-village-blog/the-season-of-advent/>

## WEEK 3: INCARNATION AND IMPLICATIONS

- Visit your local fire station and meet the men and women who help save people from danger. Afterward, talk about how God delivers and saves His children from His wrath.
- Bake cookies together. As you wait, talk about what it means to wait for Jesus' return. What does it look like to wait with eagerness and diligence?
- Play hide and seek and talk about how Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Spend time in prayer thanking God for sending Jesus.
- Act out the Christmas narrative.
  - 1st night: Read and act out Luke 2:1-7
  - 2nd night: Read and act out Luke 2:8-20
  - 3rd night: Read and act out Matthew 2:1-12

## WEEK 4: RESURRECTION AND RETURN

- Give your child(ren) the task of cleaning their room. Before you do, read John 14:1-3 together. What do you think the rooms being prepared by Jesus will be like?
- Art time! Together, read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 and draw what you think it will look like when Jesus comes back.

## WEEK 5: WATCHING AND WAITING

- Over dinner talk about the best day you have ever had. What made it so great? Talk about a better day and the day that Jesus will return. Talk about why this day is the best day for believers. How does the Bible tell us to prepare for that day?
- As you prepare to travel for the holidays, talk about how you are diligently preparing for your Christmas vacation with your family. Talk about how we can diligently prepare for Christ's coming.
- Go on a grocery store scavenger hunt for all the ingredients for dinner. Give each child a list of things to look for in the store. As you prepare dinner together, talk about the fact that many people throughout your community and the world will go without food that day. How can we love and care for them while we await Jesus' return?

## **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- Make place mats for your Christmas meals. On one side, write or draw something that reminds you of God's faithfulness to His promise of sending a Savior. On the other side, write or draw something that reminds you of God's promise that Jesus will return.





