

Hope Incarnate

Once
a chosen star
on a chosen night,
a holy light of unfathomable brilliance,
was appointed by God
to announce

The Light of the World:

an inextinguishable Light,
a Light that would pierce earth's shroud of darkness
and become mankind's only hope.

Jesus came once to save the world,
but Jesus is coming again to judge the world,
announced this time by the eerie blast of a shofar.

This Christmas may we truly embrace the reality
of who Jesus is and why He came.
Our eternal hope resides in Him alone.
Jesus is indeed our *Hope Incarnate*.

To understand our need of a Savior, we must go back to Genesis and mankind's beginning
when Paradise was lost, and God and man became irreparably separated by sin.

The most costly mistake ever made
began with one disobedient bite of forbidden fruit,
with one irreversible moment in time,
with one despicable lie –
that an intimate, personal relationship with God Almighty Himself
was simply not enough.
And Adam and Eve hid.
The snake laughed.
God wept.

And mankind fell into the dark oblivion of confusion, sin and death.
But the wickedness of the crafty liar was no match for the glory of Divine Love.
In Genesis 3:15, God said that an offspring would come from Eve
Who would crush the head of the serpent.
And with this spoken promise,
the Seed of Redemption was planted in the Garden of Eden.

Centuries came and went.
The deeds of God's chosen people, Israel, became recorded history.
And in the fullness of God's good pleasure, His Promise came.
The season of Advent, that time of waiting, and aching and preparing,
is a proclamation of hope to a disenchanting, despairing world.
It's an announcement that we serve a trustworthy God Who kept His promise:
A Messiah will come to redeem you. He alone is the **Hope of the World**.

And came He did, in a most remarkable way:
The Joy of heaven came down to earth as a visitor.

The Light of the World entered the domain of our darkness.
The Perfect One wrapped Himself in human flesh and became a baby.
The long-expected Messiah came in an unexpected way – Immanuel, our God is with us.

Advent helps us focus solely on that remarkable moment in history when the world came face-to-face with
the *Son of God*,
the *Savior of the World*
our *Hope Incarnate*.

To celebrate this glorious truth, we must fully grasp the meaning of the word, “Incarnation.”

Amazingly, the essence of Christmas and its gifts – Hope, Love, Joy and Peace –
can be condensed into only three, but powerful, words:

“*God with us.*”

Simple to say.

Complex in their profundity.

God with us is the complete truth of Christmas.

God with us is the second person of the Godhead condescending to become flesh and blood.

God with us is Jesus coming to dwell in a broken, sinful world among broken, sinful people.

We make much of the infancy of Christ at Christmas, but the greater reality is His deity.

More staggering than a baby lying on a bed of prickly straw in a cattle trough, Whose birth was brutal and crude,
is the fact that this promised baby was the omnipotent Creator of the heavens and the earth,
the eternal Word Who spoke and creation burst forth in perfect, majestic splendor.

Jesus, Who was fully God, became fully man, both facets critical to His identity.

The virgin birth, the miracle healings, the atonement, and the resurrection are only made possible
by the incarnation. It is the incarnation that gives credence to the gospel and enlivens our hope.

But what exactly is hope?

“**Hope**,” Hebrews tells us, is “an anchor for the soul.”

Hope is a strong, confident expectation that what God has promised in His Word is true.

Hope is aligning our minds and our hearts in the certain reliability of a desirable future,
and as C. S. Lewis tells us, “We can only hope for what we desire.”

For those who have believed and accepted the gospel message, hope is a Person.

Jesus, our **Hope Incarnate**, comes and enters into our confusion, plaguing doubts,
crippling fear of failure and death, fractured relationships, loneliness, debilitating disease, unceasing war
and reminds us that He will walk with us through the mire until we reach what we desire –
a perfect, recreated world where all things will be renewed, including ourselves.

Israel had to wander and wait to enter what she desired, God’s promised land of Canaan.

And even though we must also wander and wait to enter our promised land of heaven,
our **Hope Incarnate** is wandering and waiting with us.

As we embark on our Advent journey, may we acknowledge that the “real” Christmas happened only once,
2,020 years ago. And even though the church has relegated its celebration to a liturgical season,
its import is birthed in our lives every single day.

We could, therefore, say, “Merry Christmas” every morning and state with expectant hope,
“Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, we await Your return,” a return that will usher in a new, glorious
heaven and earth – Eden regained and our expectant hope realized.

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During this first week of Advent, let us open the gift of Hope as stated in Colossians 1:27:

“Christ in you the hope of glory”

and absorb its truth into the depths of our souls.

For a Hope built on Jesus alone is His indestructible promise.