

# The Advent of God

Honoring the arrival of Christ

Rod Shimabukuro

To my incredible, beautiful, amazing wife Beckie,  
our children Kai and Aja,  
Koa and Sarah and Malia,  
and our awesome grandchildren  
Carter, Amora, Amiya and Charis ~  
thank you for your deep love, friendship,  
prayers, encouragement and support!

To my New Hope Mānoa ‘ohana...  
Oh my! I can go on and on (as you know!).  
A mega thank you for your mānoa (deep, vast, solid)  
love for our Godhead and  
for me and my family!

I pray that I can live in a way that make each  
and all of you feel, like you make me feel...  
unconditionally and fully loved and accepted.

# The Arrival of God

## Honoring the advent of Jesus

Devotional thoughts each day from  
November 27 - December 25

Say this prayer in Psalm 119:18 before  
reading the daily devotional.

*Open my heart and eyes  
that I may see  
wonderful things  
in your word.*

*Psalm 119:18*

## NOVEMBER 27 | BEGINNING

**In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.  
Genesis 1:1**

God, Himself is and was without a beginning. It is He who formed “The beginning” of existence. The advent or arrival of “the beginning” expresses His divine creative ature. “God said and God created” speaking His very splendor into existence.

Let’s be grateful for "the beginning” of God's creation and His forethought of our arrival here on earth. Our lives are nothing without His divine beginnings of creation back then...and right now, in our everyday lives. His mercies are new - at the beginning of every new morning!

**Today, pause and thank Him for every beginning—past, present, and the new one He is forming in you this Advent season.**

## **NOVEMBER 28 | IMAGE**

**Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Genesis 1:26**

Let “US” make man in “OUR” image...!

Before Jesus arrived here on earth over 2000 years ago, He was - He existed - He created. He is the image of the invisible God...by Him, all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible (Col.1). He existed. He arrived.

Many non-believers recognize that a man named Jesus lived long ago. But they don't believe that He is the image of God, the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of God's nature (Heb 1:3).

As Christ's believers and followers - Jesus who the Bible describes as the only begotten Son of God, has been revealed to us. Let's deeply consider this day, that ALL HUMANKIND was made in God's image and likeness. As Christians, we are God's image bearers, representing and reflecting His Person and Image – through our lives. What an honor...!

**Today, remember the honor— you bear His image. Let your life reflect His beautiful image.**

## **NOVEMBER 29 | NOTHING-NESS**

**...then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. Genesis 2:7**

In preparing our hearts to celebrate Christmas, let's keep the DUST FACTOR in mind. We are formed of dust and nothingness. But what's alive "in our nothing-ness," is God's life-giving breath. Because of God's breath of life in us, He turns our nothingness into living beings!

We not only have the gift of our physical being (eating, working, living life, etc), but we are living creatures in whom God breathed life and consciousness. We possess the gift of free will, a conscience, a soul with feelings, and an awareness of good and evil.

God's advent arrival through Jesus as a baby, formed in his mother's womb like the rest of us – reflects the mercy and love of God. For our God, became Emmanuel, God with us – formed in a nothing-ness, temporal earth-suit!

**Let's worship God and give thanks for His life-giving breath today! He fills the void in our hearts where nothing-ness may exist.**

## **NOVEMBER 30 | UNION**

**And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.**

### **Genesis 2:25**

The union covenant between Adam and Eve as husband and wife - naked and unashamed - represents an intimate, unhindered, and secure relationship. This picture of marriage union reflects the union between God and His church - Jesus the Groom and His bride. We are the bride of Christ - in perfect union with Jesus: naked, secure, unashamed, unhindered, fearless and confident, fully loved, fully embraced, fully accepted, fully secured, fully assured!

The Advent of Christmas includes a picture of UNION – the union between the Father and His Son Jesus. And now Jesus is uniting God’s people back to His Father. This union of love extends to all people, all tribes, tongues, and nations – through the arrival of Jesus’ birth – His life, death, resurrection, and ascension!

**Do you realize how secure, perfect, and united you really are in and through Jesus? I believe there’s nothing we can do to break this union love of God – but how can we strengthen our union with Jesus?**

## **DECEMBER 1 | NAKED**

**Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. Genesis 3:7**

Nakedness discloses an awareness of sin, flaws, and a knowing that we are no longer right with our Creator. Not being right with God reveals itself in various ways and forms throughout our lives. Feeling unworthy, insecure, ashamed, guilty, or even proud, being carefree-carelessness and even reckless people living in self-centered ways. As if we are self-made, self-sufficient, and righteous in our own selves.

The advent of Jesus brings healing and wholeness to the naked and shamed disobedient sinner. The clothing of Jesus' love and forgiveness brings acceptance and freedom. The “fig leaf clothes” can represent man’s attempts to hide from God or try to cover up his sinfulness.

Thank you, Lord! My sinful separation from You and nakedness has been clothed with Your perfect love and acceptance!

**Is there an area in your life where you feel ashamed? Were your spiritual eyes opened to see a sinful area in your life? God loves when we are vulnerable, honest, and repentant – when we choose to ask Him for His love and grace!**

## **December 2 | CLOTHED**

**And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them. Genesis 3:21**

Having yielded to the serpent's schemes, the grip and death of sin entered Eve and Adam's lives. Their downward spiral began with the deception of desiring the knowledge of good and evil. The sin of becoming wise (knowing what God knew and becoming like God) was the desire that led them to relational devastation. (Gen.3:6-7). God said they would "die" if they ate from this tree. Their death (not immediate physical death) was spiritual separation and the awareness of their sin. Their eyes were opened to knowing not only the goodness of God but also the evil of sin and being separated from God.

The Lord God Made! He made for Adam and Eve garments of skins (which implies a sacrifice of blood, which was greater than their attempts to clothe themselves with "leaves").

**So the LORD GOD made for us - a way to Him! HE MADE A WAY THROUGH HIS SON'S ADVENT! GOD'S BLOOD AND LIFE ~ HIS PERSONAL SKIN AND GARMENT SACRIFICED FOR US!!!**

The Lord has clothed us with His miraculous grace, forgiveness, and love! HE Made! HE gave! He sacrificed His own life, to clothe us forever into a forever relationship...without sin, shame, and guilt!

**Is there a "sin" you need to confess, to be clothed by His grace? Jesus' arrival is proof that He initiates love, even while we are in sin! He loves us!**

## **December 3 | SPOKEN**

**Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hebrews 1:1-3**

There is so much of the greatness of God captured in these 3 verses! His divine nature and character are revealed through the arrival of Jesus, whose finished work of sacrifice is complete, yet His voice continues to uphold the universe and world of our lives! Jesus is unlike any other human, prophet, messiah, or self-proclaimed god. God spoke. He has spoken to us by Jesus. By the word of Jesus' power, He upholds the universe!!

In the beginning, God created...speaking the universe, heavens, and world into existence! Today, Jesus still speaks to us through His holy, captivating voice...through the Word of God! So because He has spoken to us, we live with great confidence because Jesus, the Living Word, arrived in our hearts and lives!

**Let's speak out, confess and proclaim Jesus as the Living Word in our praise and our prayers – and thank God for His Word, the Scriptures.**

**Meditate on Hebrews 1:1-3. What else do you hear Him saying to your heart?**

## **December 4 | WORD**

**In the beginning**, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything **made that was made. John 1:1-3**

The Word of God is Jesus. He is the Living Word. The Word became flesh and lived among us, through whom we behold the glory of God the Father (John 1:14). As Christians, we await with joyous expectancy and hope for Jesus' second advent. But this hope is only realized through the person of the God-Man Jesus! The Word was God, is God, was in the beginning and nothing was made apart from Him...JESUS!

**How can our response be anything but complete worship, complete surrender**, and complete devotion to the Living Word - who lives in us? Let's ask our hearts, how does that play out in our everyday lives? In our thinking, motives, relationships, finances, work ethic...? Fill us with ongoing **grace to live out Your Word!**

**December 5 | ALL**

**The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, they gave the right to become children of God, John 1:9-12**

The True Light came. Jesus arrived. He, the maker of the world, came to His own family...His own people, but was not received. Then the doors of God's invitation for ALL to come to Him were opened. To ALL who RECEIVED, to ALL who BELIEVED, became children of God!

Rejection or reception? God was mistreated here on earth. Jesus, Emmanuel was rejected, beaten, and crucified. He still is being rejected and mistreated, isn't He?

**Have you been hurt, felt used, mistreated, or overlooked? Our tendency is to reject others. If we are accepted, loved, liked, or befriended - then we are apt to receive people into friendship. Aren't you grateful that no matter "how we act or respond" Jesus always receives us...ALL THE TIME!**

## **December 6 | GRACE**

For from His fullness, we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:16-17

The re-entrance of God's grace through Jesus arrived! God has always been a gracious God, from Moses' day to now. The law revealed sin (Ro 7:7) and Jesus' grace forgives sin. The fullness of God is revealed through Jesus. Not just grace - but grace upon grace...with truth...through Jesus Christ!

Grace upon grace is a lot of grace, which is what we all need. Many of us wrestle with self-worth, being accepted, or dealing with shame or the daily lies attacking our spiritual identity or nature.

So let us receive Jesus' grace ...and truth. Let's be deeply grateful for His grace in our lives. There's something deep, meaningful, and special about receiving grace - and more grace, and the truth that Jesus is our Truth!

**In return for grace (not as if we have to “pay God back”), let us give Him worship, honor, attention...and all our devotion for who He is...as the FULLNESS of God.**

## **December 7 | BEHOLD**

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

What the ”Lamb of God“ meant to the Jews is significant for their worship and identity. As Christians, Jesus is the full expression and representation of the Lamb of God.

Once and for all, there would be no need for ongoing lamb or animal sacrifice for our sins. The message to the Jews and the world is freedom from our efforts and the works of sacrifice. Jesus the Lamb of God would take away every sin!

We all know people who do not accept or recognize Jesus, as the God/Man and Lamb of God. Let’s pray for those in our lives who don’t know Jesus as their Savior. Let’s pray that their spiritual eyes would be opened, as John’s was, to behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of their world!

**Let’s thank God for our growing revelation through the Spirit of God, that our eyes have been open to behold Him!**

## December 8 | FOOD

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. John 4:34

The disciples knew Jesus was weary and hungry after giving much of Himself to minister to others. Yet Jesus speaks another lesson along life’s way about His mission. His food was not something received, to nourish Himself. His appetite led Him to crave obedience to the Father. Jesus said His food was to do God’s will and accomplish His work.

It’s true. In Christ, through Christ - we crave to obey God. Like Jesus, we can say that our food is to be obedient and do His will. And doing His will means fulfilling His will. This is what we must continue to hunger for - accomplishing His work, not ours. Fulfilling God’s purpose, not ours. It’s just like God giving us enough strength to believe when we're tired and fragile.

**”We feed off of fulfilling and accomplishing God’s will in our lives!”**

**What is God asking you to do or fulfill in an area of your life? Is there an incomplete assignment that you are supposed to accomplish? Identify it. Pray - confess - repent - obey His voice - fulfill His will.**

## December 9 | APPEARED

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [Titus 2:11] But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared...[Titus 3:4]

*...He saved us, not because of works are done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. [v5-7].*

Let's just read and re-read these passages! Jesus' appearance reveals and extends to us His grace, and mercy!

A Scripture like the above will enlighten our understanding of who God is, what He's done through Jesus, and who we are! He is Grace and Mercy! These are not merely qualities that He has or gifts that He gives to us. JESUS IS GRACE and MERCY!

Thank you JESUS...for Appearing!

**Are there "old, sinful" thought patterns or habits re-appearing in your life? Read, re-read, meditate on and pray the Scriptures above...!**

## **December 10 | OUTPOURING**

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being, therefore, exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. Acts 2:32-33

Like Jesus, don't you want to receive the promise of the Spirit, to walk in His fulness and be overflowing by the outpouring of His presence? But are we willing to suffer and die, to “experience” His outpouring, overflowing anointing? Yes, by God's grace - we are crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, Christ lives in us...!

We are all faced with daily, moment-by-moment challenges. A big one is to choose to walk in death to ourselves in every manner of heart and life that opposes Biblical Truth. Everything about “the way we want to live our lives, have our way, and fulfill our wants” is trivial, earthly, sinful, and even demonic at times.

**Is there an area in your life that is draining you? Process this area with God. There may be a conflict of interest and God wants to "drain our old way of life" to pour out in our hearts, a new way of living.**

**Let's thank Jesus for being raised to be at the right hand of our Father, receiving His outpouring! And now, let's ask God for the outpouring of the Spirit in our lives!**

## **December 11 | GODHEAD**

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being, therefore, exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. Acts 2:32-33

You're right. This was yesterday's Scripture as well. I was struck by further observation of God – as our Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

These 3 are in a relationship with distinct roles, and purposes and operate as One. They are the Godhead!

The advent of Jesus moves us to recognize the Godhead. They all have arrived at a relationship with Jesus, who is the fullness of God.

**As we read the Word of God, look for who God is in the passage. The Bible is the story of God so let's look for His attributes, personality, ways, will, and works. The Godhead is revealed throughout Scripture.**

## December 12 | BELIEVE

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— John 1:10-12

A key theme of John's gospel is “believing.” Children of God are those who encounter Jesus and believe that He is the Messiah, God’s Son. John contrasts people who recognize, receive, and believe Jesus, and those who don’t. Jesus came to His very own, the Jewish people, and they didn’t recognize nor receive Him.

The invitation is open to all. All who receive Him become children of God. Receiving Christ does not happen by just saying the sinner's prayer. It’s believing in His name.

Can someone be saved, or become a child of God by simply believing that Jesus is God’s Son, the Messiah? Do they need to say “The Sinners Prayer” or do you think they can be saved, by an unseen, unsaid belief in their heart?

The Gospel of John seems to clearly indicate that a believing faith is unseen, even unsaid “in a prayer” format. The believing life equals Jesus' life which means a growing, transformed life.

**Our relationship with God is not based on our behavior, morals, or performance. Do you ever feel like God loves you better based on your performance or how good a Christian you are? Examine why you feel this way.**

## December 13 | HOLY SPIRIT

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:34-35

Why did God choose Mary? God delivered His Son to earth through this ordinary, young, imperfect yet pure-virgin woman. The Lord hand-selected her to be the earthly mother of Jesus, certainly knowing the character and heart of this young woman. Her response recognizing the great goodness of God after the angel’s announcement reveals her trust and faith in God.

Jesus the holy one, who is called the Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

A great lesson is the presence of God’s Holy Spirit involved in the creation of Jesus as a human. The mention of the Holy Spirit displays God’s involvement as the Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is involved in the procreation of Jesus. Interestingly, the promise of the Spirit comes through Jesus, after His ascension.

**While we do not worship Mary, let’s honor Mary by acknowledging her character and faith-trust response to God. Do you believe this same Holy Spirit is alive now – and is working on behalf of the Father in our lives? How so?**

## December 14 | DISTURBED

When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. Matthew 2:3

Several Scholars note that King Herod and all of Jerusalem were likely to be “disturbed” for different reasons. For the King, it was disturbing his pride, sense of control, and supreme dictatorship over all people. Jerusalem, they were likely disturbed by their disbelief, rejection, and conflicts this “new king” would cause for their lives. Nevertheless, the news of the arrival of the new king was disturbing enough for the king to eventually issue an edict to have all boys 2 years and under murdered.

Disturbed? Are people around you disturbed because King Jesus arrived in your life? If people around me aren't disturbed by my faith in Jesus, I wonder if I'm blending in or being too subtle.

We know Christians are persecuted, even murdered by disturbed anti-Christians for their Jesus-seeking faith. Would I dare declare Jesus in a way that would be disturbing to the world around me? Not to be a turn-off or religious nut. But we should be uncompromising in our faith, growing and living boldly for Christ, and being unashamed of His name...Jesus. Jesus is King.

**The next opportunity we have, let's declare Jesus' name to someone!** At the risk of being rejected or feeling like we are disturbing them – let's be bold for Jesus. The world around us is bold for what it stands for, **aren't they?**

## **December 15 | WRITTEN**

Jesus, the wilderness, the devil, the temptation, the victory! Matthew 4:1 – 11

Jesus was really tempted to sin. If not, would it have been “a temptation?” It was real, it was grueling, it was challenging. His humanity was tempted to sin, giving in to the devil. But He didn’t. Yes Jesus had a God strength.

Jesus’, “It is written” response leads me to believe that He was holding on, confessing, believing... the Word of God - the Truth of God through the Torah. Through the grueling 40 days...Jesus was probably weary, worn, and torn emotionally, physically (fasting), and spiritually. Yet He chose these words...”It is written...”

**Is someone questioning your identity? Character? Do you feel threatened or tempted to throw in the towel because of rejection, low self-worth, or bullying?**

**Are you tempted to sin against God? Reject your faith? Or do you know someone like this? \*Reach out to them.**

**Jesus paved the way for us to know God. The Holy Spirit will fill and empower us to grow in God. Let us now dig into God’s Word, God’s voice, and God’s truth...to overcome all temptations!**

**IT IS WRITTEN...!**

## December 16 | COMMUNION

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. Luke 22:14-15

This passage to me, reveals the compassionate, faithful, merciful, pursuing love of Jesus for His disciples. The tone of His words “I have eagerly desired to...” spotlights the gracious unconditional love of Christ, to share in communion, knowing He will suffer greatly, to the death.

EAGER DESIRE.

May we be a people filled with an eager desire to commune with Jesus. The act of sharing in communion – receiving the bread and cup, should be done with an eager desire to remember Jesus’ life, suffering-sacrifice, and death, till He returns.

The conflict for many of us is wrestling with our worldly eager desires. We are all vulnerable to falling into traps of compromising intimate communion with God. We can commune more with other priorities in our lives.

**How is God calling you into stronger intimacy with Him? Are there situations, or people we are more in communion with than God? Ask God for strength to repent and renew your communion with Him. “Lord, fill me with an eager desire to come into union with You!”**

**Communion = Come into Union with...Jesus!**

## December 17 | BETRAYAL

John 13:21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.” 22 His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant.

23 One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. 24 Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.” 25 Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?”

26 Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon.

27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. “What you are about to do, do quickly,” Jesus told him, 28 but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 29 Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast or to give something to the poor.

Jesus’ betrayal by Judas is clearly evident to us through the Scriptures. But it wasn’t clear to His very own disciples. The closest of friends and companions to Jesus, yet in His final days they did not think the betrayal would lead to Jesus’ death. Look at the context, verses 22 & 28. The disciples seem to think betrayal meant denial (considering Peter’s rooster-crowing situation).

Haven't we all inadvertently denied Jesus by clamming up, and being ashamed to speak His name around non-Christians? While we can't betray Jesus to His death...our betrayal would be walking away from, speaking against, and rejecting Him, which would lead to our death.

**Let's respond by thanking God for drawing and keeping us close to His heart. For revealing Himself to us! Let's also pray for those in our lives who are rejecting, betraying, and walking away from Jesus. For their spiritual hearts and eyes to be opened, sensitized, and drawn to commune with Jesus.**

## December 18 | PRAYER

Matthew 26:39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

42 He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Three times... Jesus prayed repetitious, fervent, desperate, excruciating prayers! Can you imagine the emotions, tone, and volume of these prayers? This passage seems to imply the tormenting desire to be saved from this path of death. But Jesus included His passion to fulfill His Father's desire and will. Luke 22:44 reads, “And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.”

The advent of Jesus eventually led to His painful and agonizing prayers.

I wonder if God allows the painful paths to call us to desperate prayers. Our human response automatically leads us to think that God is judging us, or sovereignly paying us back for our bad past. I think this is furthest from the truth.

**Let's recognize the greatness of Jesus' grace to endure such hostility and suffering because of His love for His Father and His creation. May our souls erupt with praise!**

**Let's pray desperate prayers for our loved ones: family and friends, who are on a journey of suffering.**

**Let's thank Him for His merciful heart to overlook our "sleepiness" in times when God is calling on us to love, pray, and stay awake...!**

## December 19 | SUFFERING

Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. - - They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. They spit on him, took the staff, and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put His own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. Matthew 27:26, 28-31

I’ve always wondered why the Gospel writers weren’t led by God to write more details about “how” Jesus suffered. I guess in our human, American mindset and culture, we put much more emphasis on the “how” we suffer or “how much” we suffer... Our self-centered orientation puts more of the focus on “how much we hurt, how we hurt, or who causes the hurt.” In Jesus’ story, obviously, the focus was more on His purpose than on the gory details of Jesus’ emotions or suffering.

The reality is though, that Jesus suffered immensely and definitively. There were gory details and emotions of this excruciating experience. We should not gloss over the fact that God Himself, through the person of Jesus, submitted Himself to the process of pain as Savior of the World!

**Re-read the passages above. Then re-read it again.**

No doctors, nurses, or parents were on site to tend to His wounds. No one came to His rescue or defense. In fact, He had to defend Himself while bleeding toward His death.

**Are you suffering?** Perhaps no one is running to your aid or defense. Worse yet, there may be people around you causing or influencing your suffering.

**How are you responding?** If God gave you a purpose for your suffering – what would that be? Are you praying for those involved in your suffering?

## **December 20 | CRUCIFIXION**

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 1 Corinthians 2:2

Paul contrasts the human and God's ways and wisdom of preaching and living. Having been a leader, commander, and orator among the Jews, Paul is siding with the life of foolishness for Christ. Associating with Jesus will require sacrifice, letting go of our past pursuits of high positions, controlling power, and self-promoting prestige.

Look at Paul's previous words and attitudes:

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Cor. 1:17-18

**If the crucifixion represents us identifying with Jesus and the denial of His will to fulfill His Father's:**

- **Is there an area of your life God is calling you to please Him?**
- **Is there an area of your life He's calling you to disassociate with, to better identify with Him?**
- **Do you need help crucifying (dying to or giving up) a troubled part of your life? Identify this area, ask God for forgiveness, then grace and strength to identify with Him.**

## **December 21 | DEATH**

Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil and free those whose all lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Hebrews 2:14-15

The results of Jesus' humanity and death were the destruction of the devil's power over death, the freedom of God's people from sin, and being enslaved to the fear of death. Verse 17 cites that Jesus became the merciful and faithful High Priest to Serve God & pay for the penalty of our sinfulness.

Everything about Jesus' life including His death was primarily to serve God and God's people.

We should never forget that Jesus' death was not only to free us from our sins but to please and serve God. His mission included our redemption, forgiveness of our sins, and our freedom...but we seem to make salvation, Jesus' birth, life, and death more about us sometimes (many times).

**Do you have a fear of dying or death? Why do you think that is? How does this passage in Hebrews help you – your thinking and faith?**

**Let's choose to make our lives and His life and death, more about Him rather than us.**

## December 22 | WITNESSES

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. Luke 24:45-48

The result of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection is for repentance and forgiveness of sins to be preached. The heart of God is to reconcile His creation to Himself. The restoration of people into perfect relationships with their Creator is a significant purpose. Luke then affirms the disciples as witnesses of these things.

Can you imagine being a witness to Jesus' life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension? God has revealed His eternal purpose and filled our hearts with faith to believe all that is recorded involving Jesus. He has chosen and filled us with faith in Him. Why? A big why is that we would be witnesses for Him because of the witness we have in Him.

**Do you really believe all that Luke records in this passage? If so, are you encouraged to be His witness, because of what you have witnessed by faith? How can you be a witness for Jesus this week? Is God calling you to pray for and talk to someone about their relationship with God?**

## December 23 | RESURRECTION

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell His disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.’ Now I have told you.” Matthew 28:5-7

In verses 2-4, an angel of the Lord supernaturally comes down from heaven, his appearance like lightning amid a violent earthquake. What a scene this is! The guards have a heart attack – not really but - they were so afraid, they shook and became like dead men (v.4). This angel rolls the stone away and sits on it. Would we have loved to be in the area while this happened!!!

Then the angel's conversation with the Marys (v.5-7) occurred. The ladies experienced this firsthand, being the first on-site and first to see the empty tomb! That's interesting. Of all people, God chose 2 Marys to reveal the empty tomb and experience His resurrection...through a supernatural situation with an angel! WOW!

What if you were the first, like the Marys, to experience Jesus' resurrection? While no one saw Him rise, walk, or fly out from the tomb, these ladies undoubtedly experienced one of the most radical events in history. An event on which our Christian faith is built and grounded - The Resurrection!

**What would you feel or do if you were in Mary's shoes? When you think of the events of this story, how does it affect you now? How do you want to live differently considering the reality of the resurrection?**

## **December 24 | LORD | KING**

Revelation 17:14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with Him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”

The war is not over. The victory belongs to the Lamb of God who was slain, crucified, resurrected and has ascended. Jesus is the Lamb who overcame and will continue to overcome evil. We will be with Jesus because of His gracious and sovereign calling and choosing. He calls us faithful followers. So there's still opposition, while we claim and have victory, it may include pain and battle – even in this life, as victorious Christians.

Jesus' advent has brought us eternal and abundant life. But we must not disregard the fact that God has allowed the spiritual enemy to exist – until He says “It's time – It's the end!”

We can be assured and rest in victory, but be ready to live in battle. To fight is to trust our Jesus, who overcame and overcomes – because He is Lord of lords – King of kings.

**Knowing that we are victorious even as we face ongoing battles, what is God teaching you? How are you fighting the opposition? How are you handling the trials in your life?**

**What do you desire God to do in your heart and through your life in this season?**

## **December 25 | ADVENT | A CHRISTMAS DEVOTIONAL**

### **SCRIPTURE**

Luke 24:44 He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” 50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

### **OBSERVATION**

- Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of the Scriptures, thus fulfilling the purpose of His Father God. (v.44, 49)
- Jesus forgives our sins and calls us to repentance and to be witnesses by the Holy Spirit’s power. (v49)
- Jesus blessed His disciples and ascended to heaven.
- The disciples respond with worship and joy.
- *What other observations do you see in this passage?*

## APPLICATION

1. Discuss how God is speaking personally to you through this Scripture.
2. What do you feel God is calling you to do in response to this reading?
3. Are there any changes you can make to prioritize your worship or devotion to Jesus?

## PRAYER

**Spend some time thanking God, worshiping, and asking for forgiveness. Pray for those you desire for God to touch and draw into a relationship with Him.**

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**God bless you and ...**

*...may the Lord favor you and your loved ones with His great love, grace and peace this Christmas season!*

*If you have any questions or need prayer, please email me:  
[rod@newhope.org](mailto:rod@newhope.org)*

*Aloha and Mele Kalikimaka!*

*Rod*

*www.newhopemanoa.tv*