

ADVENT  
HOPE

Special

Weekly  
**Manna**  
28 Nov 2021 Issue

66

## Watch Yourself

34 “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Luke 21:34-36 ESV



## Today's Question

What speaks  
loudest to you  
in this reflection? Why?.

# Reflection

Scripture readings: Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thess. 3:9-13 Gospel: Luke 21:25-36

## ACTIVE WAITING

—Henri Nouwen,  
<https://henrinouwen.org/meditation/active-waiting/>

## PRAYER *of the week*

**Lord Jesus,  
please grant  
me the grace  
and teach me  
to wait upon  
You joyfully.  
Amen**



Waiting is essential to the spiritual life. But waiting as a disciple of Jesus is not an empty waiting. It is a waiting with a promise in our hearts that makes already present what we are waiting for. We wait during Advent for the birth of Jesus. We wait after Easter for the coming of the Spirit, and after the ascension of Jesus we wait for his coming again in glory. We are always waiting, but it is a waiting in the conviction that we have already seen God's footsteps.

Waiting for God is an active, alert – yes, joyful – waiting. As we wait we remember him for whom we are waiting, and as we remember him we create a community ready to welcome him when he comes.



Hope



Watch later




Share

Advent Word Study

# Yakhal: “Hope”



Watch on  YouTube

## ADVENT: HOPE

The Bible Project

<https://bibleproject.com/>

In the Bible people who have hope are very different from optimists! In this video, we'll explore how biblical hope looks to God's character alone as a basis for trusting that the future will be better than the present. Click on the picture to watch the video, or read on.

*#Advent #Hope*

*#BibleProject*

### Introduction

So let's say you want to describe the feeling of anticipating a future that's better than the present. You might be giddy or excited or maybe unsure, but most of us know that experience. We call it hope. It's a state of anticipation, and it's crucial for healthy human existence, and it's a really important concept in the Bible. In fact, there are many words for hope in the ancient languages of the Bible, and they're all fascinating.

In the Old Testament, there are two main Hebrew words translated as hope. The first is yakhal, which means simply “to wait for.” Like in the story of Noah and the ark, as the flood waters recede, Noah had to yakhal for weeks (Genesis 8:6-12).

The other Hebrew word is qavah, which also means to wait. It's related to the Hebrew word qav, which means cord.





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When you pull a qav tight, you produce a state of tension until there's release. That's qavah, the feeling of tension and expectation while you wait for something to happen. The prophet Isaiah depicts God as a farmer who plants vines and qavahs for good grapes (Isaiah 28:24-29).

Or the prophet Micah talks about farmers who both qavah and yakhal for morning dew to give moisture to the land (Micah 5:7).

**Hope in the Old Testament**

So in biblical Hebrew, hope is about waiting or expectation, but waiting for what? In the period of Israel's prophets, as the nation was sinking into selfdestruction, Isaiah said, "At this moment, the Lord's hiding his face from Israel, so I will qavah for him." Isaiah 8:17.

The only hope Isaiah had in those dark days was the hope for God himself. You find this same notion of hope all over the book of Psalms where these words appear over forty times. In almost every case, what people are waiting for is God. Like in Psalm 130, the poet cries out from a pit of despair, "I qavah for the Lord ... Let Israel yakhal for the Lord, because he's loyal and will redeem Israel from its sins." Psalm 130:5-8.

**Biblical Hope**

Biblical hope is based on a person, which makes it different from optimism. Optimism is about choosing to see, in any situation, how circumstances could work out for the best. But biblical hope isn't focused on circumstances. In fact, hopeful people in the Bible often recognize there's no evidence things will get better, but you choose hope anyway.



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GOD’S  
CHARACTER..”**

Like the prophet Hosea, he lived in a dark time when Israel was being oppressed by foreign empires. And he chose hope when he said God could turn this “valley of trouble into a door of hope,” like the day when Israel came up from the land of Egypt (Hosea 2:15). God had surprised his people with redemption back in the days of the Exodus, and he could do so again.

So it’s God’s past faithfulness that motivates hope for the future. You look forward by looking backward, trusting in nothing other than God’s character. It’s like the poet of Psalm 39 who says, “And now O Lord, what else can I qavah for? You are my yakhal.” Psalm 39:7

### **Jesus as Living Hope**

In the New Testament, the earliest followers of Jesus cultivated this similar habit of hope. They believed that Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection was God’s surprising response to our slavery to evil and death. The empty tomb opened up a new door of hope, and they used the Greek word *elpis* to describe this anticipation. The apostle Peter said that Jesus’ resurrection opened up a “living hope” that people can be reborn to become new and different kinds of humans (1 Peter 1:3).

More than once, the apostle Paul says the good news about Jesus announces “the *elpis* of glory.” (Romans 5:2; Colossians 1:27).

In both cases, this *elpis* is based on a person, the risen Jesus, who has overcome death. And this hope wasn’t just for humans. The apostles believed that what happened to Jesus in the resurrection was a foretaste of what God had planned for the whole universe. In Paul’s words, it’s a “hope that creation itself will be liberated from slavery to corruption into freedom when God’s children are glorified.” Romans. 8:21

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### **Conclusion**

So Christian hope is bold, waiting for humanity and the whole universe to be rescued from evil and death. And some would say it's crazy, and maybe it is. But biblical hope isn't optimism based on the odds. It's a choice to wait for God to bring about a future that's as surprising as a crucified man rising from the dead. Christian hope looks back to the risen Jesus in order to look forward, and so we wait. And that's what the biblical words for hope are all about.

## *Advent Prayer*

Henri Nouwen

Lord Jesus,  
Master of both the light and the darkness,  
send your Holy Spirit upon our preparation for  
Christmas.

We who have so much to do  
seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things  
look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for  
the complete joy of your Kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy  
seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people,  
walking in darkness yet seeking the light.

To you we say  
"Come, Lord Jesus".

Amen.



*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.<sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.*

*Isaiah 11: 1-5*



Photo by Dari III, Unsplash

## **FUN FAMILY CHRISTMAS CRAFT: JOURNEYING THROUGH ADVENT WITH THE JESSE TREE**

This year, the BLC Children Ministry would like to invite our community and families to celebrate Advent by crafting a Jesse Tree.

The Jesse Tree is a way of journeying through Advent that traces the lineage of Jesus. It refers to an image in Isaiah 11, in which Jesus is compared to a shoot sprouting from the stump of the tree of his ancestor Jesse. It reminds us that the coming of Jesus was long prophesied, and that in the stories of his ancestors, we can hear echoes of his own life, death, and resurrection.

### **Make your Jesse Tree**

Each day of Advent, read a Bible story about someone on Jesus's family tree. Then hang the Jesse Tree ornament that symbolizes the story on your Jesse Tree. You can also read daily family devotions or personal devotions that reflect on these stories.





**There are a variety of ways to make your Jesse Tree. Here are a few ideas.**

## **MAKING THE JESSE TREE.**

**DOWNLOAD THE  
COLORING PAGES AND  
RELATED MATERIALS  
IN THE JESSE TREE  
TOOLKIT**

**[HTTPS://WWW.FAITHWARD.ORG/JESSE-TREE/](https://www.faithward.org/jesse-tree/)**

**1**

Choose a tree branch without leaves that has a main branch with lots of smaller branches attached to it. The tree branch should be about two to three feet long. Place the branch in a bucket of dirt or rocks and cover the bucket with green fabric, felt, or paper.

**2**

Cut a tree with branches from brown felt. Glue it to a piece of green felt, 24" x 36". Glue on small wooden pegs to hang the ornaments. Or attach Velcro® to the backs of the ornaments for attaching to the felt Jesse Tree.

**3**

Make a mobile using a tree branch. Use fishing line to hang the branch from the ceiling. You'll need to make sure the symbols are balanced when you hang them on the branch so that the branch will remain level.

**4**

Just use a Christmas tree. A small tabletop or standing tree can make for a great Jesse Tree. You may even have one in your storage room already!

Check out the beautiful devotions for families, individuals and printable ornaments at the links below.

**TAP ICONS TO GO TO DOWNLOAD LINKS:**



**Jesse Tree  
Family & Personal  
Devotions**



**Jesse Tree  
Ornaments**

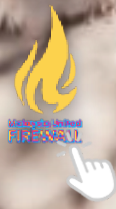


Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."  
- John 8:12 ESV

EXTERNAL  
PRAYER LINK



Lectio 365



## The Church (Body of Christ)

Pray that we will continually seek God's kingdom first and all His righteousness, caring for what's on the Father's heart. In our relationships with each other, that love will be our priority, and we will be our brother's or sister's keeper. In unity of faith and Your righteousness, that we will contend as one man and one Body in Your plans and purposes. Your voice we will hear and not the voice of another. At all times, we will walk in agreement with You, serving You will a clear conscience to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Your kingdom come, Your will be done. Amen

## Nation

We pray for God to raise up wise, faithful and righteous leaders to steward the care for the nation and its people in these times.

We pray for economic stability, improving financial situations and work opportunities.

## Justice & Freedom

For the love of truth, justice, mercy, righteousness and humility to be the foundations of our nation and its inhabitants. For the protection of freedom of personal choices and rights of the people; minority or at large - to be respected and honored. For all children to have access to proper education channels and medical assistance.

## The People

Lord, teach us to be intentional in making ourselves available to others, to help those who have emptiness in their hearts, or pains they cannot openly speak about. Teach us to be caring, compassionate, conscientious and emphatic.

## BLC Community

Pray for the protection and safety of our Pastors and leaders, BLC community and loved ones; that we will grow continually in sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wisdom, discernment, resilience, quick to adjust themselves and respond well to changes beyond our control. May we be the salt and light of the Lord to those around us.

## LCM

For the coming Biennial General Assembly on 3-4th Dec. For the logistics and tech team as they prep for a hybrid meeting. For the election of a new EXCO and God's plans for us to move forward post-pandemic.

## Prayer Support

SUPPORTING YOU IN PRAYER.

Send in your requests via WhatsApp to Rev. Thomas, Adeline or our Council.



UPCOMING ON 24TH, 25TH & 26TH DECEMBER

24 December, 8.30 pm  
Candlelight Service (Zoom)

25 December, 10.00 am  
Christmas Service @ Bug's Paradise (Livestream to Zoom)  
For more details, speak with Sheh-Ren & Christmas Committee.

26 December, 10.00 am  
Sunday Online Service (Zoom)

# BLC CELEBRATES

• "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). Matthew 1:23 ESV •



# Announcements

Book Club (Sundays)  
Dec 19, 2:00 pm

Tuesday Bible Study  
8:30 pm  
(Break for Dec)

MEM (Wednesdays)  
Dec 15th, 8:30 pm

Giving Tree (Fridays)  
Dec 10, 8:15 pm  
Friday Bible Study  
8:30 pm (Break for Dec)

# Tithes & Offerings

## Account Details

BANGSAR LUTHERAN CHURCH  
RHB BANK Acc No.

2142 77 0000 6185

Please specify area of giving in the e-transfer, e.g. Tithe, General Offering, Mission\* or Agape Fund.

\*The BLC Missions Collections supports the following:

- Batu 20, Orang Asli (OA) Congregation
- United Voice – Moh Foong
- Bible Translation Researchers
- Alongsiders (<http://alongsiders.org>)

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# THE FATHER'S HOUSE WELCOMES YOU

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