

Advent: Living Hope

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to have hope amid trying times? Hope is more than a feeling; it isn't simply being perpetually optimistic or having a "hopeful" attitude. Scripture offers us an understanding of hope that is much more robust. Christian hope has heft, endurance, and purpose—and God is its source.

God, "in his great mercy . . . has given us new birth into a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). And it is our "God of hope" who enables us to "overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). This reality isn't true only in good times; in fact, it is in dark and difficult times when hope truly shows its mettle.

As Jay Y. Kim writes in "Hope Is an Expectant Leap,"

This is what Christian hope looks like. It doesn't ignore fear, anxiety, and doubt; it confronts them. It holds steady, clinging to peace in the midst of chaos. Through life's many treacherous storms . . . Christian hope is buoyed by something greater that *has happened* and something greater that *is going to happen again*.

CT's 2020 Advent project explores the theme of hope as it weaves throughout the biblical story. In these daily devotional readings, we reflect on the hope of God's people in the Old Testament as they relied fully upon God in difficulty and hardship. We look at prophecies and promises of hope that pointed toward the First Advent: the coming of the Messiah. We contemplate the miracle of hope breaking through in the Incarnation, when "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" as a human baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger (John 1:14; Luke 2:12). And we reflect on our hope in Christ's future coming—the Second Advent we await—that gives us endurance, confidence, and joy in our daily lives, no matter what difficulties we might face.

This is our "living hope" or, as the New Living Translation puts it, our "great expectation." Our hope is animated by our confident expectation that the child who was born *will* one day come again in glory to put all wrong things right, and his kingdom will have no end.

KELLI B. TRUJILLO

Editor

**PRAISE BE TO THE
GOD AND FATHER
OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST! IN HIS GREAT
MERCY HE HAS GIVEN
US NEW BIRTH INTO
A LIVING HOPE
. . . AND INTO AN
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SPOIL OR FADE. THIS
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. . . UNTIL THE
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SALVATION THAT
IS READY TO BE
REVEALED IN
THE LAST TIME.**

1 Peter 1:3-5

How to Use This Resource

- Begin by reading “Hope Is an Expectant Leap” by Jay Y. Kim.
- Each day, read the assigned Scripture and short article, then prayerfully reflect on the prompt at the end. If you’d like, take notes in the space provided.
- For deeper engagement, use the weekly Bible study sessions on your own or with a small group.
- To use this resource with your family, check out our ideas for families. They highlight suggestions for hands-on projects and fun experiences that will help kids and teens explore key ideas from each week.
- The Bible reading guide highlights the main assigned Scripture passages for each day’s reading. This guide can be printed out and used as an easy reference; it can also serve as a resource for sermon planning.
- You can use the images provided in this download to promote this series within your church, to visually accompany sermons, or to serve other uses that fit your church’s needs.

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