

# GOD *With Us*



**GOD**  
*With Us*

# Hope

**Romans 15:13** I pray that **God**, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

# GOD With Us

- **Hope Defined:**
- Confident expectancy. **In the Bible, the word hope stands for both the act of hoping** (Rom 4:18; 1 Cor 9:10) **and the thing hoped for** (Col 1:5; 1 Peter 1:3).
- Hope does not arise from the individual's desires or wishes but from God, who is Himself the believer's hope: "My hope is in You" (Ps 39:7).
- Genuine hope is not wishful thinking, but a firm assurance about things that are unseen and still in the future (Rom 8:24-25; Heb 11:1,7).

Hope distinguishes the Christian from the unbeliever, who has no hope (Eph 2:12; 1 Thess 4:13). **Indeed, a Christian is one in whom hope resides** (1 Peter 3:15; 1 John 3:3). In contrast to Old Testament hope, the Christian hope is superior (Heb 7:19). Christian hope comes from God (Rom 15:13) and especially His calling (Eph 1:18; 4:4), His grace (2 Thess 2:16), His Word (Rom 15:4) and His gospel (Col 1:23).

Hope is directed toward God (Acts 24:15; 1 Peter 1:21) and Christ (1 Thess 1:3; 1 Tim 1:1). Its appropriate objects are eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7), salvation (1 Thess 5:8), righteousness (Gal 5:5), the glory of God (Rom 5:2; Col 1:27), the appearing of Christ (Titus 2:13) and the resurrection from the dead (Acts 23:6; 26:6-7). NBD

- **HOPE**, *noun* [Latin cupio.]
- **1.** A desire of some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable. *hope* differs from wish and desire in this, that it implies some expectation of obtaining the good desired, or the possibility of possessing it. ***hope* therefore always gives pleasure or joy; whereas wish and desire may produce or be accompanied with pain and anxiety.**
- **2.** Confidence in a future event; the highest degree of well founded expectation of good; as a *hope* founded on God's gracious promises; a scriptural sense.
- **3.** That which gives hope; he or that which furnishes ground of expectation, or promises desired good. The *hope* of Israel is the Messiah.
- **4.** An opinion or belief not amounting to certainty, but grounded on substantial evidence. The christian indulges a *hope* that his sins are pardoned.

- **Entering Advent**

- Advent is actually a season of hope. The word *advent* means “coming” or “arrival,” and the season is marked by expectation, waiting, anticipation, and longing. Advent is not just an extension of Christmas—it is a season that links the past, present, and future. Advent offers us the opportunity to share in the ancient longing for the coming of the Messiah, to celebrate His birth, and to be alert for His second coming. Advent looks back in celebration at the hope fulfilled in Jesus Christ’s coming, while at the same time looking forward in hopeful and eager anticipation to the coming of Christ’s kingdom when He returns for His people. During Advent we wait for both—it’s an active, assured, and hopeful waiting.
- Advent is not a celebration that God comes to fix things—from broken computers to broken families to broken and hurting lives. Rather, simply, **Advent is a celebration that God comes. God comes to be with us. He is the God with Us. In the darkness, in the pain, in the chaos, He comes. And He makes a way.**

# The Long Journey of Hope:

- **From the Beginning**

- “All peoples on earth will be blessed through you,” God promised in Genesis 12:3.
  - When God encountered Jacob at Bethel, He renewed that covenant and reinforced the hope rooted in His faithfulness: “I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Genesis 28:15).
  - “How long, O God?” was the cry of the ancient Israelite people
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- But you might say Isaiah is the poster prophet for Advent, this season of longing, expecting, and hoping for God to be with us. Through Isaiah, God gave Israel and us many prophecies and promises about the Messiah He would send. And in that way, Isaiah was a voice of hope.
  - Isaiah lived seven hundred years before Jesus, but he gave us beautiful words that ring with hope for the coming Messiah. Listen to some of these:

- “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).
- “Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned” (Isaiah 9:1–2).
- A little later in the same chapter, Isaiah wrote:
- “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this” (Isaiah 9:6–7).

Luke 1:11-17 While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. 12 Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. 13 But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. 14 You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. 16 **And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. 17 He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.**"

**NLT**

- Can you imagine the hope that sprang up within this couple and the people around them when they heard this news? The old prophecies are about to be fulfilled! The one prophesied to come in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for the Messiah is coming! God is moving to restore hope that He is still here—that the human expression of God with Us is still coming. That God is about to stir things up and change eternity forever!
- **Hope in Israel was alive again! Hope on earth at its deepest levels was alive again!**

No matter what kind of problems and struggles you are facing right now, no matter what kind of season of darkness and pain you are in, let me encourage you not to abandon hope. **Hope is still alive, even in our deepest pain and most hopeless circumstances. Hope is alive because God is with us.**

## **Hope Based on God's Word**

- The first is hope based on God's Word. Part of God with Us is the written word that He has left us. These are His promises to His people—both long ago and today. They are a piece of Him. They are beacons of hope. They are reminders that can penetrate our hearts and spirits and assure us that no matter what we are facing, no matter how bleak tomorrow looks, no matter how bad the pain, God will never leave us or forsake us. And nothing can separate us from Him.

- Consider these words from Psalm 139: “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you” (Psalm 139:7–12). **NIV**
- **Can you feel the hope in those words? You are not alone. God with Us means that He always will be with us, and nothing—nothing—can take that away.**

Scripture is filled with stories and words and promises that can rekindle a supernatural hope within us. As we move through Advent, let me encourage you to dig into the words of the Bible expectantly. Because God is with us, we can take hope that we are never alone, that He is always working in and among us, and that He is not done yet with His greatest and final work of healing.

# Hope Based on God's Character

- The second way we can rekindle hope is to put our focus on God's character—on who He is and promises to be.
  - Mark 5:25-34
  - It was a bold hope she held. It may seem like a small action to us, but she did what she could just to get close enough to Jesus and reach out. When she did, it made all the difference in the world.
  - And Jesus connected with her deeply and directly, as God with Us. And the healing, peace, and freedom He gave her changed her life.
  - This is our God. This is His character. Jesus is worthy. He was and still is God with Us. He fulfilled Israel's hope for the Messiah when He arrived that first Christmas. He fulfilled humanity's hopes for victory over death when He resurrected that first Easter. And one day He will ultimately fulfill all hope and complete God's work of restoration for all creation.
  - **Matthew 28:20** And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

# Hope Based on God's Faithfulness

- The third way we can find and choose hope is by focusing on God's faithfulness.
  - How has God worked in your life?
  - What are those moments and memories when you have experienced God's work in your life?
  - You know those times when you had no doubt He was there and He was working. Maybe it's been recently.
  - Maybe it's been a long time ago. **But in those circumstances swirling around you, the presence of God's Spirit was with you.**

What does that have to do with hope? What do those memories have to do with your here and now?

- Gratitude breeds hope.
- Thankfulness fosters hope.
- Acknowledgment and appreciation bring hope.
- *“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD” (Lamentations 3:21–26).*

- **He knew that hope sparks like a fire.**
  - It flows like water.
  - It grows like a seed.
  - Hope grows and spreads like a living thing.
  - It can dwindle and wane and, yes, even die. But with nurture and care, it can revive and flourish and multiply.
- Focusing on gratitude can renew and grow our hope. Recognizing and appreciating the good that God has shown us in the past can increase our hope for all He will do in the future.
- Sharing this gratitude and hope with those who love and support us can multiply its effects. As we nurture this living hope, it can sustain us through our darkest days as we wait for God to move.

