



Christmas Day Devotional

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Scripture

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

(Luke 2:10-14, NIV)

Hymn

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.*

*"Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"
by Charles Wesley*

Devotional

In Luke 2, the angels don't merely announce the birth of Jesus. They trumpet it! The Book of Psalms shows us how (similarly to the angels here) people expressed themselves musically in Old Testament times. They sang worship songs to God. They played instruments and danced in worship. In Psalm 98:1 (NIV), the Psalmist says, "Sing to the LORD a new song."

Participation is not limited to professional musicians; everyone is invited to praise God through music. With the invitation to "Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!" (Psalm 150:3, ESV), you can imagine a dynamic variety of musical expressions: the horn's blast pierced the air, calling others far and wide to join a chorus of worship; the soothing lullabies of the harp touched the tender places of the human heart, and cradled in the arm of an amateur, the lyre provided a casual tune for friends, family, and neighbors. The Psalms also mention drums, tambourines, and dancing, which reveals that rhythm is just as valuable as melody and, more importantly, that God designed people — in His image — to express their worship audibly, creatively, and joyfully. As the angel declared to the shepherds, Jesus' arrival is good news!

After years of waiting for the Messiah to come, God fulfilled His promise, and it was "good news that will cause great joy for all the people." You are part of "all the people." When the angels announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds, they were announcing it to you as well. What joy! This is what you've been waiting for — Jesus, God with us, the longing of every human heart.

Reflect & Respond

As you contemplate the lyrics to today's hymn, uncurl your hands, and unclench your jaw. Exhale any worries. Ask God to reveal where you are striving -- where and how can you rely on His strength instead? Release yourself and your endeavors to God, and allow His love to envelop you.

Consider

Try dusting off an old instrument. Press your fingers into keys or strings, and let the sound wash over you.

Warm up your vocal cords, and feel the reverberations in your chest as you sing.

Dance! Smile! Clap!

Waking up your human expression can revive the way God designed you to worship Him. With a genuine heart, praise God for His faithfulness to keep His promises. Thank Him that the longings of your heart can be satisfied in Jesus.