

# JOY TO THE WORLD



**This devotional is written to be used in the 25 days leading to Christmas. Commonly referred to as “Advent”, meaning “coming”, these readings look at the arrival of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ and also anticipate his coming again.**

## **Dec 1:**

### ***Luke 1:5-7***

God always sees our heart and even though things don't always appear as we want, we can still trust in God's faithfulness. Are you able to surrender the incomplete things in your life to God's care? Lord, I give those things to you. Help us to live upright lives in this season.

## **Dec 2:**

### ***Luke 1:8-10***

Ultimately, all things are subject to God, even the insignificant things. God is present in the routines of life and the spectacular. Sometimes they overlap. Where have you seen God's activity in your routine this week? Lord, increase our desire to pray and worship as we wait for you.

## **Dec 3:**

### ***Luke 1:11-13***

Prayer can be a mystery. Perhaps it's best that some prayers are not answered as we hoped. We can be assured that every prayer offered in faith is heard by our Father in heaven. Can you recall a recent answer to prayer? Lord, let us never be afraid of your answers or your silence.

## **Dec 4:**

### ***Luke 1:14-17***

At this time of year we can be filled with many things that fail to bless others: deadlines, plans, purchases, lists. Advent is about people. Who is on your list that you're hoping will feel loved this Christmas? Lord, fill us with your Spirit so we can bring joy to others.

## **Dec 5:**

### ***Luke 1:18-20***

You may have many doubts or questions about faith that want to quench the joy of this season. Our disappointments don't need to predict the future. Is there a disappointment that you need to tell God about? Help us to believe and share your Word this Christmas.

## **Dec 6:**

### ***Luke 1:21-22***

Waiting is not a favourite activity at this time of year, but there is usually a reasonable explanation. Breakdowns in communication are even more common in this digital age and we often get it wrong. Is there someone you need to communicate with more clearly? God, give us both faith and patience as we wait for your promises.

## **Dec 7:**

### ***Luke 1:23-25***

Some personal situations are hard to bear and we think our problems are obvious to everyone else. When God acts on our behalf, there is such a sense of God's special care. Through Jesus, we have received great blessing. Lord, help us share the favour you have given us with those who feel ashamed.

## **Dec 8:**

### ***Luke 1:26-28***

Miracles do happen. With eternal wisdom God took great care to entrust His Son into the hands of a human couple. What has God entrusted to you that causes you to respond with holy fear? Lord God, help us rejoice in the grace you have shown.

## **Dec 9:**

### ***Luke 1:29-33***

Sometimes we think we would like to know the future. In most cases, knowing the future would ruin us. You may not become the parent of the Messiah but God does have an assignment for you. Does such a thought make you afraid, excited or both? Lord, help us maintain a holy wonder.

## **Dec 10:**

### ***Luke 1:34-38***

Mary's response is at first a question and concludes with consecration. It is separated by a divine explanation. At the heart of God's answer is His truthfulness and power. What are you facing that is also subject to God's truthfulness and power? Help us to understand the greatness of your power.

## **Dec 11:**

### ***Luke 1:39-45***

The Bible is filled with promises that are suited to the many obstacles we face. Promises are the specific tokens of God's faithfulness towards us. There is a joy experienced by those who exercise faith in God's promises. What promises of God give you particular joy? God, remind us of the promises you have made.

## **Dec 12:**

### ***Luke 1:46-50***

Our circumstances don't necessarily disqualify us from being used by God. Whatever we are called to do for Christ is a great and undeserved privilege. Gratitude to God is the best safeguard against pride and self-pity. Lord, take us to a place of deep gratitude.

## **Dec 13:**

### ***Luke 1:51-53***

God loves justice and righteousness. He actively works "behind the scenes" to thwart the proud and lift up the humble and establish equity. He also calls His children to imitate those attributes. In what ways could you seek justice and righteousness for others? Oh God of justice, help us overflow with your goodness to others.

## **Dec 14:**

### ***Luke 1:54-56***

We easily fall into the trap of thinking that our personal circumstances are at the centre of the universe. But God is working at levels that we know little about and keeping His promises across generations. God remembers His promises and chooses not to remember our sins! Lord, strengthen our faith by helping us to remember your promises.

## **Dec 15:**

### ***Luke 1:57-58***

If the events of Elizabeth's life happened today she would be the subject of endless social media posts. The joy of her experience was shared by those who knew her well. It had been a long, often lonely road, but God's timing was wonderful. Are you struggling with God's timing? Dear God, grant us an awareness of your time, how to wait and when to act.

## **Dec 16:**

### ***Luke 1:59-60***

When there is silence, other voices jostle to fill the space but many times the situation cries out for a voice of truth to speak. Do you feel intimidated, silenced or reluctant to speak the truth? Holy Spirit - empower us to speak with confidence.

## **Dec 17:**

### ***Luke 1:61-62***

Misunderstandings occur whenever age-old traditions are changed. Many seek the latest data or trends, some will appeal to the “rules”, but above all these things, God’s word is the lamp to our feet and the light to our path. Are opinions driving your actions more than God leading you? God thank you we have more than signs, we have your word.

## **Dec 18:**

### ***Luke 1:63-64***

It is never too late to act in faith on what God has revealed. There is great impact when we act in unity and obedience and Zechariah and Elizabeth did. When have you seen the benefits of acting in unified obedience? Help us to believe, and act more immediately when you speak.

Matthew 1:18-25

## **Dec 19:**

### ***Luke 1:65-66***

Anticipation is synonymous with Christmas. It was embedded in the events leading to Jesus’ birth long before consumer culture tried to adopt it for its own ends. What made the people think the “Lord’s hand” was with John? Holy Spirit, fill us with holy awe and keep us aware of your work.

## **Dec 20:**

### ***Luke 1:67-68***

There are times in our Christian life when through the Holy Spirit’s help, we see more clearly what God is doing. When that happens, we can live more confidently. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being clueless about what’s happening and, 5 being certain of unseen things, how confident are you? Lord, fill us with the Holy Spirit so we live out our calling.

## **Dec 21:**

### ***Luke 1:69-71***

Very few people would choose to live in a hostile place. Jesus entered our war zone and was raised up in crucifixion and raised again in resurrection, defeating the powers of sin and death. How often do you consider this aspect of Jesus' coming? God our Father, as you raised Jesus, please raise us so we can lead others to Jesus.

## **Dec 22:**

### ***Luke 1:72-75***

Although our eternal hope is to serve God without fear as a kingdom of priests, our temporal experience involves opposition. What trials did you face this week as you tried to live for Christ? Lord, help us live out of your faithfulness, a faithfulness that transcends human arrangements.

## **Dec 23:**

### ***Luke 1:76-80***

Every Christian who has gone before us and pointed to Jesus has been a sign of God's faithful love. We walk in the same footsteps, preparing the way for another generation to find the Lord. Is there a young person you are praying for? Lord, help us to live in your freedom and peace.

## **Dec 24:**

### ***Luke 2:1-7 and Matthew 1:18-25***

The coming of Jesus was an event of cosmic significance. The rulers of the age didn't have a clue what was happening. Something so huge began so small. What small act may have big results today? Jesus, we thank you for your birth. Help us to find our purpose within yours.

## **Dec 25:**

### ***Luke 2:8-20***

God is used to doing the unexpected. Outsiders become insiders, the lowly get the best seats, and the Saviour of the world is born in a manger! Have you paused to ponder the wonder of Christmas this week? Today, fill our hearts with thankfulness – Jesus is our Saviour, Lord and King.