

REFLECTIONS ON THE WRITINGS OF
C. S. LEWIS

Peace
Hope

Light

Creative
Communications
Sample

ADVENT DEVOTIONS
BY DR. JOEL HECK

INTRODUCTION

Writing in 1959 to an Italian priest named Don Luigi Pedrollo, C. S. Lewis stated, “Pray for me that God grant me to say things helpful to salvation.” He was referring to a book he was writing about the New Testament, a book entitled *The Four Loves*. In that book he wanted to explain the three different words that the New Testament uses for “love”—words we might translate as “friendship,” “romance,” and “divine love.” He wanted his words to reach people’s hearts, not just their heads.

Whenever Lewis wrote—whether expositions of New Testament theology like *The Four Loves*, or Christian apologetics, or personal letters—he wanted to offer peace, hope, and the light of the world to others. He never pointed people to himself. As he wrote in a letter to an American woman named Mary McCaslin, “I wanted them to follow Christ.” This devotional booklet is written in the hope that the same thing will occur this Advent season as a result of your reading these pages.

Dr. Joel Heck



FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

And [God] has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 1:22-23

*T*he one really adequate instrument for learning about God is the whole Christian community. (*Mere Christianity, 144*)

Advent calls us to prepare for and await the coming of the Savior. Being patient and discerning in advance of such a joyous occasion is not meant to be done in isolation. A serious contemplation of the body of Christ teaches us to work in concert with others to accomplish the mission of God in our community in every season. The body of Christ also helps me to resist my own selfishness. This positive encouragement toward unity (with a corresponding disincentive to go it alone) amounts to much of the power of community, the Christian community, where God, by his Spirit, works out his will.

Drawn from the Old Testament teaching about the corporate personality of ancient Israel, the New Testament image of the body of Christ includes the teaching that Christ is our head. Just as our physical body has one head, we in the Church, the body of Christ, have one head. That places Christ in the position of leadership and us in the position of followership. The primary question, then, is this: "Toward what goals is Christ leading us?" The primary answer is to be found in Scripture. While that answer won't solve disagreements about the color of the carpet in the sanctuary or the nature and extent of communication between the leadership of the local church and the entire congregation, it will remind us to exercise the fruits of the Spirit in our discussions. And it will drive us to our knees in prayer that "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," or, to paraphrase, "Thy will be done in our church as it is in heaven."

Lord Jesus, the head of the Church, bring my will into submission to yours and our Church into agreement with your leadership. Amen.

MONDAY, FIRST WEEK IN ADVENT

For a child has born for us, a son given to us. *Isaiah 9:6*

*T*he central miracle asserted by Christians is the incarnation. They say that God became Man. Every other miracle prepares for this, or exhibits this, or results from this. (*Miracles, 112*)

Some would say that Christianity stands or falls on the miraculous accounts of the Old and New Testaments. C. S. Lewis would say that Christianity stands or falls on one miracle, what he calls “the central miracle,” the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Elsewhere he calls it “the grand miracle” or “the great miracle.” If it is central, then every other miracle branches out from this one miracle and depends on it. This is true.

Is the infinite capable of the finite? Can deity take on humanity? That question challenged great Christian thinkers of the past, who found it difficult to tell God what he was or was not capable of doing. They decided that even if they couldn't fully understand the Incarnation, they could accept it. That happens more frequently than we care to admit because we don't fully understand most things. That's because God always exceeds our expectations. Lots of stories, lots of teachings, lots of coincidences in Scripture seem unlikely, irrational or almost beyond belief, but that doesn't make them false. Space travel, electrical circuits, the miracle of birth, the amazing complexity of our DNA—we do not fully understand any of these, but we accept them. In fact, if we had a God who was easily understood, we might rightly question his wisdom or his standing as God. Likewise, if we had a Word of God that contained only clear, simple, obvious truths, we would probably question whether they truly came from an infinite, all-knowing deity.

The truth is that our God is an awesome God—awesome in power, holiness, wisdom, grace, faithfulness and every other characteristic we can imagine. That means that he is also awesome because he became one of us in the Incarnation, the central miracle.

Lord, grant that I never doubt the miracle of your glorious Incarnation. Amen.

TUESDAY, FIRST WEEK IN ADVENT

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. *Ephesians 2:8-10*

*T*he Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God.

(Mere Christianity, 154)

While some maintain that being an example is all that Jesus was good for, Scripture maintains that he came to earth for us, to change us, to draw us to himself. Jesus certainly is a great example, but not just an example. He came to this earth, “became a man,” Lewis writes, for two primary purposes. The first was our redemption. By grace we have been saved. The second was “to enable men to become sons of God.” Ephesians 2:10 tells us that, “we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works.” The sons of God do good works in the name of the Son of God.

Before his conversion to Christianity, C. S. Lewis was influenced by an Anglican priest who claimed that Jesus was a man, but only a man. That was the Rev. Dr. Frederick Macran, an atheist priest and Irish parson, a man whom Lewis mentions in his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*, who had lost his faith but retained his clerical living, drawing on the pension he had earned from the Church of England even while denying some of its core beliefs. Macran insisted that Christ was only a man. Had he believed that Christ was God, he would have had no choice but to bow before him. He was influential enough on Lewis to be mentioned, but Lewis later turned his back on that position, in part because the Son of God profoundly changed his life. By his grace, that same Son of God has changed many millions of lives, including ours.

Lord Jesus, the Son of God, make us more and more into your sons and daughters, redeemed, but also sent forth to serve. Amen.

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Peace Hope & Light

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Deepen your Advent experience this season with insights from C. S. Lewis, one of the most prolific and popular Christian apologists of the twentieth century, followed by reflections from C. S. Lewis scholar, Dr. Joel Heck. The daily Scripture, quotes, reflections and prayers will serve as a faithful fellow traveler accompanying you through Advent and enriching your Christmas preparations as you await the Savior who comes offering peace, hope and light for all.



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