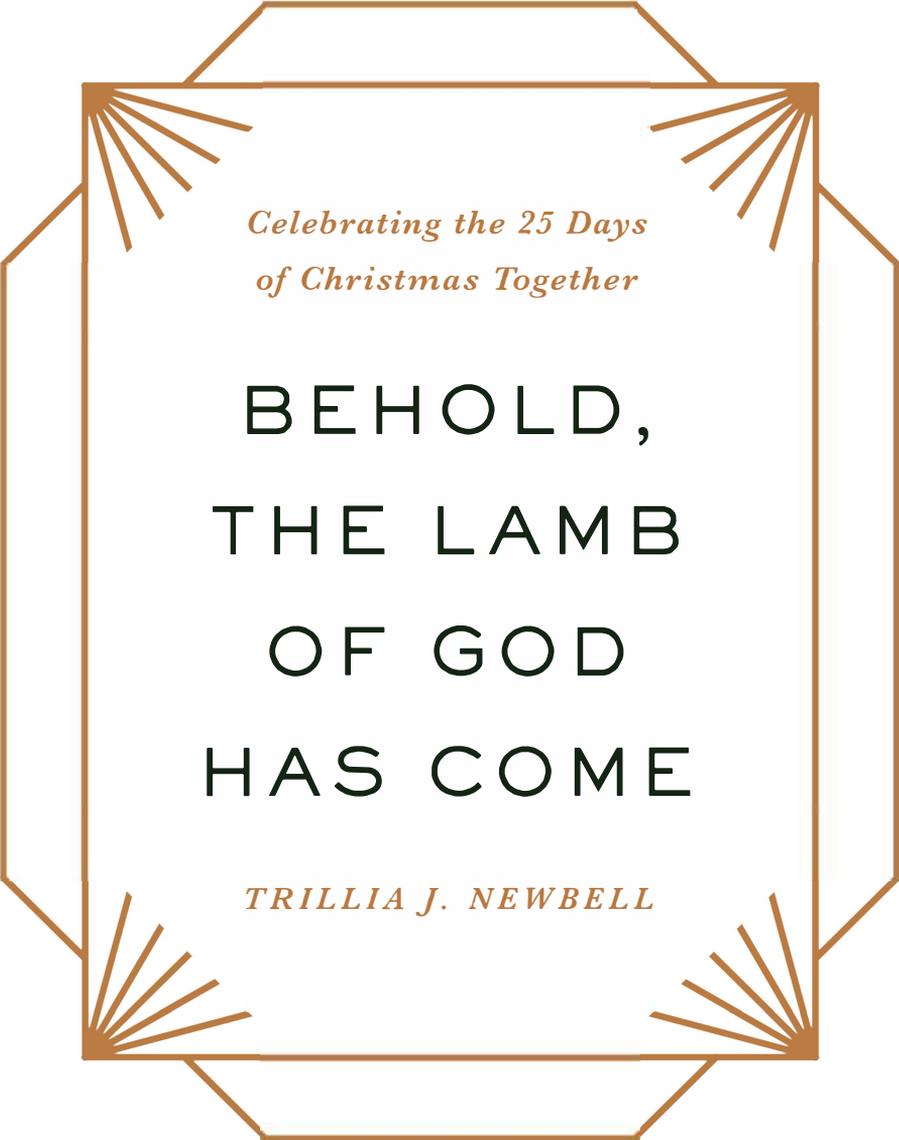


*Celebrating the 25 Days
of Christmas Together*

BEHOLD,
THE LAMB
OF GOD
HAS COME

TRILLIA J. NEWBELL



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CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF JESUS

“Hark! the herald angels sing, ‘Glory to the newborn King!’”

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!”

“God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay, remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day.”

I love Christmas hymns. Simply typing those lyrics warmed my heart. But even with all the festive singing during the Christmas season, I can still forget to rest and enjoy the One who came to take away the sins of the world (1 John 3:5). I know I’m not alone in fighting to remember Jesus during the holidays. Yes, we sing, but do we savor? Yes, we read, but do we fully understand? Understanding the character of Jesus while celebrating His birth will bring that much more joy and wonder and praise to our holiday season. And although this is for Christmas, understanding Jesus is what will sustain us every day of every year.

My hope is that in reading this, you might be encouraged during this time. You may be experiencing trials this season, or you might be overwhelmed by the busyness of it all, or you might simply lack joy. Regardless of where you are, there’s one thing we all need regardless of our circumstances: We need Jesus, and He has given Himself fully to us. *Behold, the Lamb of God Has Come* will help us reset our minds and hearts this month on the Giver of all good things.

How to Use the Book

The 25 daily readings in this book will help you and your family focus on Jesus by reading and considering the themes of hymns, praying through and reflecting on psalms, dwelling on the character of Jesus, and pausing to enjoy simple holiday recipes. Jesus has already come, so unlike many advent devotionals, for these next 25 days, we will do less anticipating His arrival and more celebrating and reflecting on what we know to be true.

There are two ways you can use *Behold, the Lamb of God Has Come*:

1. Start on December 1 and read through it to December 25.
2. Break the readings down into five weeks, with a hymn starting each week (beginning the week before December 1 and ending on December 25).

Treasures for Each Day

The same key elements are repeated in five-day cycles throughout the book so you can develop a rhythm of worship, prayer, devotion or reflection, and fun.

Here's what to expect:

1. Hymns: Traditional Christmas hymns are treasure troves of truth. They are immensely rich with theology. In the first devotion for each five-day cycle, you'll have the opportunity to read or sing the hymns and then reflect on each stanza. Each hymn is followed by questions to help prompt you to reflect and engage your heart and mind as you worship the Lord. The theme of the hymn or truth reflected in it will guide the four daily readings after it.
2. Psalms: Theologian Timothy Keller called the Psalms "Jesus's songbook."¹ The Psalms help give us words to say, but they are also filled with wisdom. Each psalm featured in this book points us to Jesus. In the second devotion for each five-day cycle, we will reflect on these psalms and use them as guides for prayer.

3. Character and nature of Jesus: The next three daily readings reflect on Jesus and on themes found in the hymn for that section or week. Jesus is eternal. At Christmastime, we often think of Him as a weak, helpless baby in a manger and we forget that although He was fully human, He also came as the almighty God. These devotions may also focus on other characters in the Bible who help us to understand Jesus and apply the Word to our lives.
4. Recipes: Pause for a fun Christmas-themed sweet treat to enjoy with family or friends, or for yourself.

Tips for Going Through This Book with Your Family

I should start by confessing that it has been tough for my family to do family devotionals. We've had to get creative to spend time together, and it typically happens around the dinner table. If you look at this and think, *There's no way I will be able to wrangle the troops for 25 days straight*, you are not alone. This is why, when it comes to engaging with the Lord, I prefer not to prescribe activities or readings. This is a *guide*, not a rule book. It can be used to assist and inspire you in your efforts. And although it's meant to be done during the 25 days leading up to Christmas, there's nothing about the content that prevents you from reading or singing past December 25.

Here are a few ways you can get creative using the book:

1. Sing the hymns as a family.
2. Use dinnertime to go through the readings and discuss them together.
3. Cook the dessert recipe together as a family.
4. Create a fun calendar to mark off each day—making the 25 days a fun activity to anticipate and participate in for all.

Get creative and make *Behold, the Lamb of God Has Come* your own.

May God encourage you this season as you delight in our Savior, redeemer, and friend!



Day 1

HYMN: “O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL”

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
who ordered all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show
and teach us in its ways to go.

O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times did give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, O Branch of Jesse's stem,
unto your own and rescue them!
From depths of hell your people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.

O come, O Key of David, come
and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe for us the heavenward road
and bar the way to death's abode.

O come, O Bright and Morning Star,
and bring us comfort from afar!
Dispel the shadows of the night
and turn our darkness into light.

O come, O King of nations, bind
in one the hearts of all mankind.
Bid all our sad divisions cease
and be yourself our King of Peace.²

Theme

The hymn is rooted in Old Testament history and the fulfillment of prophecies through Christ. We see this in the mention of Israel, the branch of Jesse—David, and more. The theme of salvation runs through this hymn. Jesus will come and save people. And we see that Emmanuel is King over all, and will bring peace to our world.

Reflection Questions and Discussion Prompts

Discuss or write out how each stanza addresses an aspect of the character of Jesus.

What is the theme or central message of the hymn?

Can you find a Scripture verse that corresponds with any stanza (or biblical or scriptural references)?

In what ways does the hymn inspire faith and hope?

How can you apply the message of this hymn to your daily life?



Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel
shall come to you,
O Israel.



Day 2

JESUS REIGNS: PSALM 2



Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,
“Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”
He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
“As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”
I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

PSALM 2



When we look at the world around us, it isn't hard to understand the first two verses in Psalm 2. Nations are in a constant state of rage. War and conflict are nothing new, making the idea of peace on earth unimaginable. But we also live in a world and culture that is increasingly against God—the true ruler of all things.

The psalmist reminds us that Jesus reigns, and He reigns mightily. God is not anxious about the world (verse 4). He is also not sitting by idly. The Lord has sent His

Son to rule and break the power of darkness—both sin and death. Because He reigns with power, we have hope.

Today, we can take refuge in Jesus. We know that the baby in the manger fulfilled the prophetic words in these verses. The world may feel uneasy, but we can rest knowing that Jesus will finish what He started. Jesus will return, and when He does, there will be peace—true peace—on earth. He will wipe away all rage and division and persecution against each other and against God. It will all cease.

If we want to rest assured of the Lord's mercy and grace, we must learn to fear and worship Him above all else. As one commentary noted about Psalm 2, "There is no refuge from him: only in him."³ And we know that "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). It is God's love that sent His Son for us, and it is His love that keeps us. This season, while the earth rages, if we know Jesus, we can (and should) have peace. Let's ask Him for it today.

PRAY

Lord, it can be discouraging to look at the world and believe that true peace really is available to us. Give us the gift of hope. This Christmas season, help us to remember that You reign, and because You reign, we can trust You. May we worship You and take refuge in Your mighty arms. Thank You, Jesus, for coming as a baby and reigning as a King. Amen.

*To Elizabeth and everyone who has ever invested in my walk with Jesus.
Your investment has made this investment into others possible.*

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