



A WEARY WORLD REJOICES

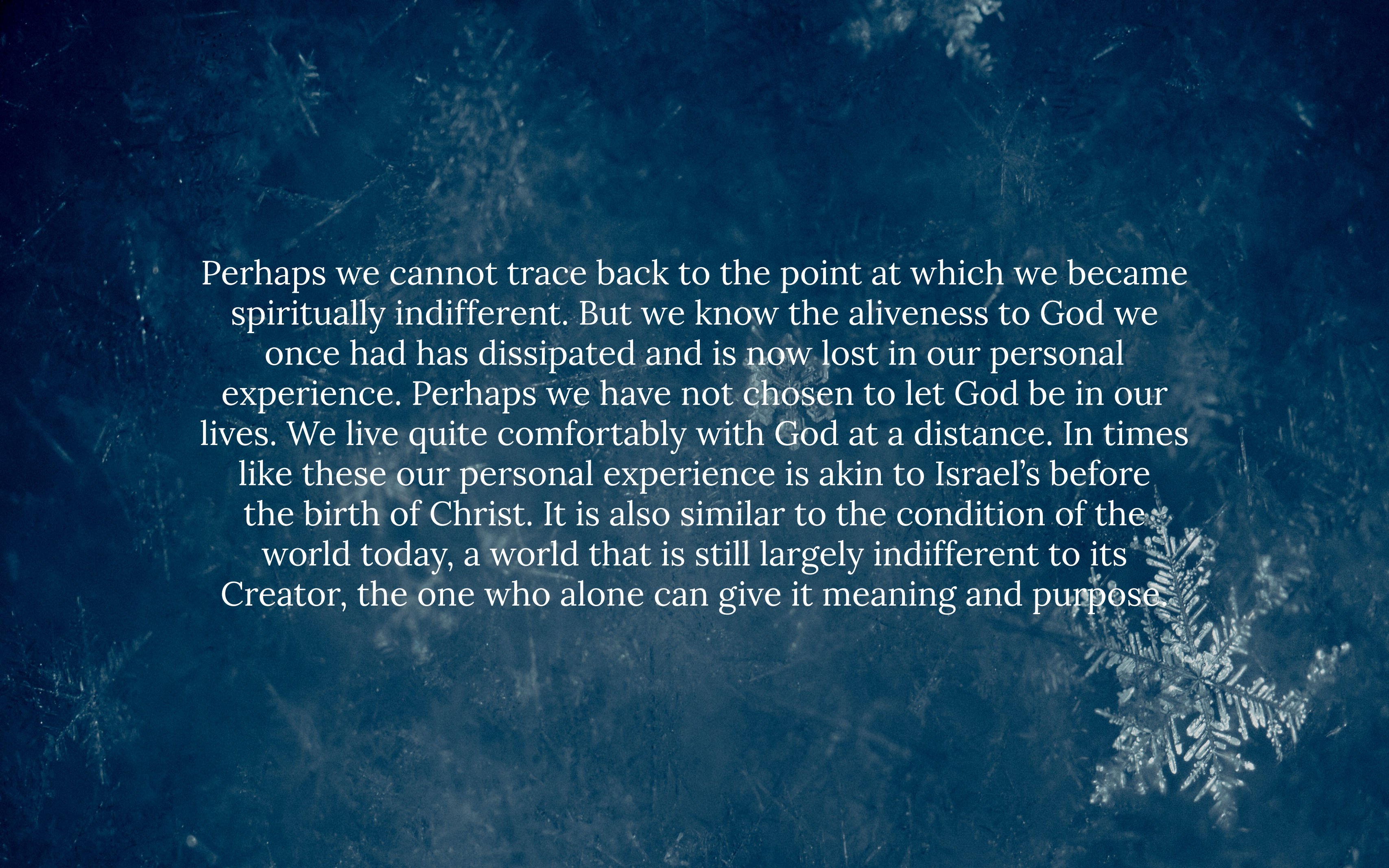
AN ADVENT SERIES

“The danger we all face as we prepare for the future is the tendency to be indifferent to the presence of God in our plans.

We participate in that humanistic spirit prevalent in our Western world, a spirit that often expresses itself in the way we plan for the future. When we think we can do things on our own, we act as though we have little or no need of God. Then we become self-confident, begin to believe in ourselves, and think ourselves to be invincible. When this happens God becomes remote and even absent from our lives.

We may go for days without concern to hear God speak to us through his Word. At the same time the religious practices in which we engage – prayer before meals and attendance at Sunday worship – take on a ritualistic and somewhat meaningless character. We do them as one might run a machine in a mindless job, and they mean little to us. They have no power, and God does not reach us through them. They have become dead forms, lifeless and without meaning. To say we did not mean for this to happen would be an understatement.

None of us wants God to become remote and removed from our lives. Nevertheless God sometimes becomes distant.



Perhaps we cannot trace back to the point at which we became spiritually indifferent. But we know the aliveness to God we once had has dissipated and is now lost in our personal experience. Perhaps we have not chosen to let God be in our lives. We live quite comfortably with God at a distance. In times like these our personal experience is akin to Israel's before the birth of Christ. It is also similar to the condition of the world today, a world that is still largely indifferent to its Creator, the one who alone can give it meaning and purpose.

Our lives as well as those of Israel, the church, and the world pass through rhythms of cold indifference, and then God breaks into our lives and we become open and receptive. In the twists and turns of these alterations we are called to a new awareness of life, to new commitments, to a new conversion of the soul. Whenever this happens an Advent has occurred, for Advent is the time when God breaks in on us with new surprises and touches us with a renewing and restoring power.”

– Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Time*



HOPE
PEACE
JOY
LOVE
FAITH

HOPE

– Luke 2:25-38 –

God saved us
and called us to
a holy calling,
not because of
our works but
because of his
own purpose
and grace,
which he gave
us in Christ
Jesus before the
ages began

– 2 Timothy 1:9

All who dwell on earth will worship it,
everyone whose name has not been written
before the foundation of the world in the
book of life of the Lamb that was slain.

– Revelation 13:8

The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

– Genesis 3:15

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his people
and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David,
as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

– Luke 1:68-70

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

– Luke 2:25-26

And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

– Luke 2:27-32

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

– Luke 2:36-38

“The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity
– hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory
– because at the Father's will Jesus became poor, and was born in
a stable so that thirty years later He might hang on a cross.”

– J.I. Packer

the already-and-not-yet
time in between

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ

– Titus 2:11-13

And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

– Luke 2:38



A WEARY WORLD REJOICES

AN ADVENT SERIES