

JOURNEY OF LOVE DEVOTIONALS
WEEK #7 – JOURNEY OF LIGHT IN REVELATION
January 3rd – Monday – 10th Day of Christmas

Centering Breath Prayer: Child of light...recreate me into your image.

Opening Prayer:

Child of hope, who brings God's plan, I worship and adore you. Thank you for the hope you bring with your birth. As we spend these brief moments in quiet companionship, renew my spirit and fill me with the joy of your presence as we approach the end of our Advent/Christmas journey of love. In hopeful expectations of the promises you have for me and in your precious name, I pray. Amen.

Scripture: Ephesians 3:1-12

Key Verses: Ephesians 3:5-6: (5) “God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now he has revealed it by the Holy Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets. (6) And this is the secret plan: The Gentiles have an equal share with the Jews in all the riches inherited by God’s children. Both groups have believed the Good News, and both are part of the same body and enjoy together the promise of blessings through Christ Jesus” (NLT).

Are you a law-abiding citizen? Most of us would probably answer, “Yes” to that question. But think about it. Can you honestly say you have never exceeded a speed limit, crossed the street in the middle of the block, hit someone in anger, driven without a seatbelt, entered someone’s home without their knowledge, taken something which did not belong to you...shall I go on? There are probably laws we break that we don’t even know are laws! And, what about God’s laws, you know, the ones embodied in the Ten Commandments, ever brake one of those? Most of us haven’t killed anyone, unless you count military service or accidents. But, have we ever told a lie, wanted something that belonged to someone else, disobeyed or ridiculed a parent, or placed anything or anyone before God in our hearts? Could we possibly keep every one of God’s laws and man’s laws? Before the Christ Child was born, keeping the law was the only hope (?) that anyone had for acceptance from God. And, that was only available for the Jews! The rest of us didn’t have a prayer! Because it was impossible to keep all the law, sacrifices for appeasement needed to be made constantly.

Enter the Christ Child. Hope has been born in the presence of a little child! On this, the 10th Day of Christmas, we celebrate hope, not just for the Jews, who could not fulfill their law, but for the Gentiles who had no law to fulfill. Of course, that hope would not have lasted if the Child had not become a man. The man taught us what it would really mean to follow the law of God – to love unconditionally. He showed us that the essence of the law was far more important than the letter of the law. He brought healing, for our bodies, for our minds and for our spirits. He showed us by example how to live in harmony with God and our fellow humans. Then he gave us the ultimate example and died that we might have life! But, don’t leave him in the Tomb! Christ arose and now lives with the Father interceding for us daily!

The secret is out! Hope has been given, not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles as well. And, in case there is any misunderstanding, anyone who is not a Jew is a Gentile. But, the Jewish Christians struggled to understand how the Gentiles were to be included in the family of God. God had shown Peter that the Gentiles were to be included and that they would be accorded all the privileges which the Jewish Christians had. Yet, their understanding was incomplete and they thought that the Gentiles should first become Jews and then be treated the same as the Jewish Christians. They still didn't understand that converting to Judaism would make them subject to the law of the Jews which Christ came to replace. It was unnecessary! As Paul explained plainly in Galatians 6:15 that, "*Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation*" (NIV). Jew or Gentile, we who have believed in the Christ Child and the hope that he brings share equally in all the promises of God.

There is a wonderful symbol of both the resurrection and the new creation which God is fashioning out of our old, sinful selves. The butterfly is a totally new creature from the caterpillar from which it came. Just like the butterfly, we are made into a completely new creation by the resurrection of Jesus. When we are in Christ, we are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Becoming a new creation is a process. A butterfly does not change from a caterpillar in an instant, but goes through a process. Christ is "in us" via the Holy Spirit. Through the working of the Holy Spirit in us, we become a new creation. That creative process is progressive and ongoing. Thus the journey of love which we are taking. This brings us hope that each day will bring us closer to the image of Christ and oneness with God. Such a journey brings us glorious hope!

Additional Scriptures: Galatians 6:12-16; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Questions for reflection and/or journaling:

1. How thankful am I to have been included in God's grace?
2. Do I see evidence of the new creation God is shaping in me?
3. What hope do I see for my life in Christ, my Savior and Lord?

Suggestions for action:

1. Phrase for your tree: **RE-CREATE ME.**
2. Place a butterfly where it will remind you of the new creation you are becoming.
3. As you go about your tasks today stop to thank God for including you in his plan.

Closing Prayer:

Holy Child, Hope Incarnate, fill my life today. Thank you for the hope you have brought for people everywhere including me and my family. As we near the end of the Christmas season for another year, prepare my heart to grow further into the new creation which you are shaping out of my life. As I go about my varied tasks this day, be my guide and my hope. In the name of the one who brings this hope, I pray. Amen.