

Hope

A THRILL OF HOPE, THE WEARY WORLD REJOICES

Read the account of the birth of Jesus from **Matthew 1:18-23**.

Have you ever wished and hoped for something really special? Maybe it is a Christmas present you are hoping for this year. Say, a new barbie or remote control car. Maybe you are hoping for your first cell phone. Maybe you are a little bit older and you really hope you will wake up to a shiny new car, with a great big red bow in your driveway. Maybe you are an adult and you really hope you will get the raise or promotion you've been working so hard to receive.

Stop and think for a moment about what you are hoping for. Notice the excitement you feel throughout your body. Do you have butterflies in your stomach? Do you notice a quickening of your pulse? A rapidness in your breathing? As you hope for this special thing and the anticipation builds, maybe your palms get a bit sweaty or your hands tremble. Close your eyes and imagine how you will react if you actually receive what you are hoping for.

It's fun to spend time day dreaming about what we are hoping for, isn't it? Do you know that long, long ago the world waited with great anticipation and hope for someone very special? Someone who is perfect and kind. Someone who is love. Someone who is the light of the world. Someone who would be their savior. Do you know who this person might be? Do you think he might have been a baby, a young boy, a teenager, or an adult? If you said a baby, you would be right. But this baby the world hoped for was not just any baby. It was Jesus. Sweet, precious baby Jesus. The world hoped for a savior and HOPE came in the form of a little baby boy. Can you believe that? Do you think that Jesus is who people hoped or anticipated their savior to be? Or was he different or even better in some way? Have you ever hoped for a gift, but what you received was different, but even better? The people who hoped for a conquering king on earth, received something different, a king whose reign is not limited to this life or this world. Jesus was so much better than they could have ever hoped for.

Jesus' birth fulfilled the prophecies from the Old Testament. **Read Isaiah 7:14**. In **Matthew 1:23**, we read that "they will call him Immanuel." Immanuel means "God with us." Today, so many years later, we still put our hope in Jesus and never forget that He is with us.

SCRIPTURE READINGS OF HOPE:

We wait in **hope** for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our **hope** in you.

Psalm 33:20-22

I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The Lord is good to those whose **hope** is in him, to the one who seeks him.

Lamentations 3:24-25

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good **hope**, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

May the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with **hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

THOUGHTS TO PONDER:

Immanuel: "God with us"

How is God with us today?

Which scripture of hope do you relate to the most?

Take some time to reflect on this scripture. Write it out. Tape it in a place you see often and try to hide this message of hope and love in your heart.

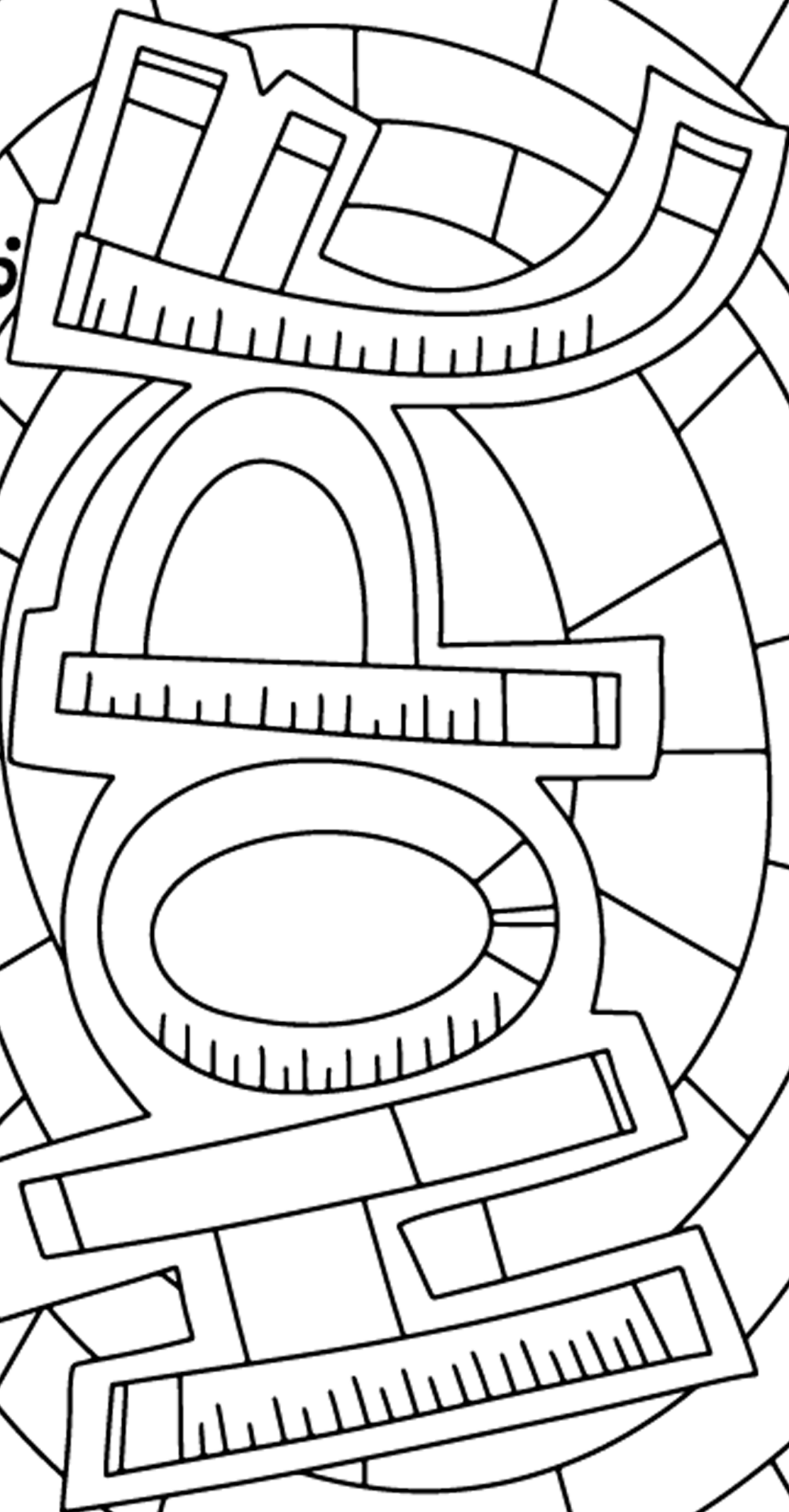
Listen to O Holy Night

Some great versions are by Hillsong Worship, Carrie Underwood, Josh Groban

Take time to **mediate on God's word while coloring the HOPE coloring sheet**, and may this time of reflection give you "A thrill of HOPE."

Assemble a HOPE ornament and hang on your tree or somewhere around your home and thank Jesus for the HOPE he brings.

COME THOULONG EXPECTED JASUS.



Hope Ornament

SUPPLIES:

Scissors

Paint Pen or Sharpie

Wooden tag

Beads

Cord



INSTRUCTIONS:

With paint pen or sharpie, write HOPE on your wooden tag.

Allow to dry.

String the cord through one side of the wooden tag.

Pull the cord through until the cord is even on each side of the tag.

Tie a knot at the base of the wooden tag (by the hole).

String the beads over both cords.

Tie a knot at the top of the beads.

Tie a french knot at the top of the stands of cords, to make a loop to hang the ornament.

***Enjoy your ornament and remember the
HOPE that Jesus brings.***