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UPDATED EDITION

366 DAILY DEVOTIONAL READINGS

# twilight

ANDREW KUYVENHOVEN

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

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# Acknowledgments

Most of the wisdom I pass on in these pages comes from the Bible. And if it does not come directly from God's Word, it comes from my parents, children, numerous teachers, and countless others I've met in books, in person, or both.

Three months of meditations—March, June, and September—are a reworking of material originally written for Back to God Ministries International and published in their *Today* magazine.

Scripture references are from the New International Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

When the meditations for a month follow a book of the Bible, I studied commentaries on the text and have probably borrowed many phrases and ideas. However, because my study and writing spanned a long period of time, the authors' ideas found their way into my thinking gradually. I assign no credit to other writers, because I do not recall to whom credit is due. May these authors graciously consider my use of their ideas a form of my admiration for them.

—A.K.



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# Preface

This book of meditations was first published in 1994. There were three reasons I called it *Twilight*: first, it came seventeen years after my book titled *Daylight*; second, I had always been better at meditating at dusk than at dawn; and third, I had just retired from full-time pastor's and preacher's duties. So, I must have felt that for me the sun was setting. I have now been retired for twenty years, and I am gratified that Faith Alive is reissuing the book.

When *Twilight* was first printed I thanked "Ena, who has been my critic, lover, and friend for more than forty years." She died three years ago. Now she knows things I am curious about. Meanwhile, you and I continue to wait and work, hoping for the dawn of the Day of the Lord.

Lord of the far horizons  
Give me the eyes to see  
Over the verge of sundown  
The beauty that is to be.  
(William Bliss Carman)

—Andrew Kuyvenhoven, 2012



## JANUARY

The theme of this month is spiritual war. Jesus won the battle not by might but by obedience. He is the source of salvation for all who obey him. When we have stood the test, we will share Christ's glory.

twilight

## The Watch Ends at Dawn

### LUKE 2:25-35

The letters B.C. and A.D. indicate the main division in human history. B.C. means “before (the birth of) Christ”—but A.D. does not stand for “after (the death of) Christ.” A.D. stands for the Latin expression *anno Domini*, which means “in the year of the Lord.” We are not living after Christ but under Christ. Jesus is Lord; we live in the year of the Lord.

Simeon lived B.C. But the Holy Spirit promised Simeon he would see the Messiah before he died. This promise was fulfilled in the temple. He took the child in his arms and sang his song. “Now dismiss your servant, for my eyes have seen your salvation.” Simeon spoke as a watchman whose watch ended as a new day dawned.

Before Christ, believers waited for the light. Today we live by the light that has appeared. But we are also waiting for the Lord’s return.

Does waiting for the Lord mean we should sit still? Certainly not. We will be obediently busy when he appears.

At his coming we will see what we believe, and others will see what they never could believe. Death will be no more. Pain will disappear. All tears will be wiped away.

And until Jesus comes, we will be loyal to him, helping those who mourn and relieving some of this world’s suffering.

I hope he comes before I die.

*It had been revealed to him . . . that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.*

—Luke 2:26

# Worship the King

## **MATTHEW 2:1-12**

The Magi were astrologers. Astrology is based on the belief that the position of the heavenly bodies determines the course of earthly events.

Israel was opposed to astrology (Isa. 47:13). God's people received and preserved the Word of the Lord. They knew that it is God's Word—not the stars—that makes us who we are and determines what's going to happen.

Astrology is popular in the Western world today. People who are no longer guided by God's Word have foolishly returned to the stars.

Yet God can use the stars to send a message. He did so when Jesus was born. The Magi did not have God's written Word, but they received God's message through the stars. Then they traveled to Jerusalem, where the chief priests and teachers of the law opened the Scriptures. Thus the Magi were led from the Word of God in nature to the Word of God in Scripture. Finally they bowed down before the Word of God in the flesh—Jesus.

Millions more must make that journey.

The Magi fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 72:8-11, which says that people would come from distant lands to bring gifts and bow down in worship before the Son of David, the Prince of Peace. These wise men from Iran or Iraq were the forerunners of all Gentiles. All of us, from many distant lands, join them to honor Jesus.

Let's also follow their example of giving. Christ must be honored not only by words but by deeds that show adoration.

*"We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."  
—Matthew 2:2*

## The Right Man in the Right Place

### MATTHEW 3:13-17

We know next to nothing about the first thirty years of Jesus' life. He was a carpenter from a small village. All carpenters should feel good about that.

The great change came at his baptism. From our perspective, there was no reason for Jesus to be baptized. Baptism symbolizes the washing away of sins, and Jesus never sinned.

That's why John the Baptizer was upset when Jesus asked to be baptized. He thought, as you and I would think, that Jesus was in the wrong place.

However, Jesus said we must do what God requires. So John baptized him in water. There Jesus stood, in the place where the sins of the world are washed away. What on earth was he doing there?

But heaven approved. "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." The Father appointed the Son, and the Spirit equipped him to fulfill a unique assignment.

What kind of assignment? At this point no one knows what Jesus' role will be. But he stands in the place of sinners. This indicates what he came to do. His role will finally take him to a cross, a place for criminals. He will die between a thief and a murderer.

If you and I have faith and an understanding of the mystery of the gospel, we will confess: Jesus is the right Man in the right place.

*A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

*—Matthew 3:17*

## The Spirit Enables Us to Obey

### **MATTHEW 3:16-4:4**

Christians spend much time discussing what the Holy Spirit's anointing enables them to do. With the anointing, some say, they can do things they never did and they can speak languages they never studied.

That may well be true, for God is sovereign and free to give gifts and assignments as he sees fit.

Sometimes we wonder about the Holy Spirit's presence in other people's lives—especially people who are unloving. But nobody can doubt Jesus' anointing. It happened at his baptism. And “then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” The Spirit brings him to the battlefield.

This is the battle for the government of the world. The stakes are “all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.” The servant of God will win the battle, not by might but by obedience. The good world was lost by disobedience; it will be regained by obedience. The kingdom of heaven will have come when the Father's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

This is what the anointing of the Spirit is all about. Certainly the Spirit gives us the power to do unusual things if God wants us to. But ordinarily—and most importantly—we receive the Spirit so we can obey God's will and resist the temptation to do our own.

Only by God's Spirit can we begin to love God above all and others as ourselves.

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

—Matthew 4:1

# The First Temptation

## DEUTERONOMY 8:1-5

Jesus' first temptation is everyone's first temptation. We're all tempted to think we have to provide for ourselves.

God says that *he* takes care of us. Our most basic need is to know that we do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

God took forty years to teach the people of Israel this lesson. Six days a week God gave them "manna" to eat. The word *manna* is not a name but a question: "What's that?" And every morning the people had to answer their own question: This is food provided by God. Moreover, during these forty years the people's clothes did not wear out (Deut. 8:3-4). God was teaching them daily that he takes care of his people. Ordinarily we need the baker and the clothing store. But God is not dependent on them. He is God.

Yet Israel never learned the lesson.

Now Jesus follows the same course. He spends forty days in the desert, representing the new Israel. And when the tempter suggests that he take matters into his own hands—a person has to eat, after all—Jesus trusts his Father, even though he might have to suffer.

We don't have life yet when we have something to put into our mouths. We live when we listen to what comes out of the mouth of the Lord.

*"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."* —Matthew 4:4 (Deuteronomy 8:3)



## Newly updated companion to the bestselling devotional *Daylight!*

Over the past thirty years, thousands of readers have used *Twilight* for their personal devotions. In these newly updated meditations, Andrew Kuyvenhoven shares a depth of biblical knowledge and insight that will strengthen your faith and inspire you to grow each day in your own knowledge and love of God.

This classic devotional leads you through an entire year of meaningful moments with God. Each month's meditations follow a book of the Bible, such as the gospel of John or Psalms; or a biblical theme, such as the meaning of Jesus' resurrection or the coming of God's kingdom.

Though twilight is an excellent time for meditation, as the author suggests, you can use this devotional at any time of day to take a rejuvenating break with God.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is a retired pastor in the Christian Reformed Church. He has served as editor of *The Banner*, director of Faith Alive's education department, and pastor of churches in eastern and western Canada. He lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is a member of Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church. Kuyvenhoven is the author of the bestselling devotional *Daylight* and *The Day of Christ's Return*, both published by Faith Alive.

  
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