




Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand

A festive Christmas scene set against a rustic wooden plank background. In the center, a white, ornate lantern with a warm glow sits on a bed of white snow. To its left is a small, rustic Christmas tree made of sticks, decorated with warm white lights and star ornaments. In the foreground, a gingerbread man cookie stands next to two wrapped gifts, one in red and one in white with red stars. To the right of the lantern, three lit candles in various holders (a gold patterned holder, a red pillar, and a smaller red pillar) provide a warm light. A white silhouette of a Christmas tree is positioned on the far right. The top of the image is decorated with pine branches, gold and white ornaments, and warm white lights. The entire scene is accented with a soft, falling snow effect.

Christmas is the
celebration of the birth of
our Savior and King of the
Kingdom of Heaven.

A festive Christmas scene set against a rustic wooden plank background. In the center is a large, white, distressed lantern with a warm glow. To its left is a small, lit tree made of sticks and branches, adorned with warm white lights and star-shaped ornaments. In the foreground, a gingerbread man cookie stands on a patch of white snow. To the right of the lantern are three lit candles: a tall red one, a shorter red one, and a gold one with a decorative cutout. A white paper tree cutout is on the far right. The scene is decorated with pine branches, gold and white ornaments, and falling snow. The text "The Holiness gets lost in the celebration." is overlaid on the right side of the image.

The Holiness gets lost in
the celebration.

Acts 5:1–4 (NASB95)

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,

2 and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, *“Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?”*

4 “While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.

6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

7 Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

8 And Peter responded to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?” And she said, “Yes, that was the price.”

9 Then Peter said to her, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.”

10 And immediately she fell at his feet and
breathed her last, and the young men came in and
found her dead, and they carried her out and
buried her beside her husband.

11 And great fear came over the whole church, and
over all who heard of these things.

12 At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.

13 But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.

14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number,

15 to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

16 Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

Ananias & Sapphira

They were counted among the believers.

They both lied to the Holy Spirit.

The Lord took their lives.

Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...?

Being:

The Body of Christ

The Royal Priesthood

The Ambassadors of Christ

The Living Temple of God

Is a serious calling.

Psalm 24:1–2 (ESV)

1 The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,

2 for he has founded it upon the seas and
established it upon the rivers.

3 Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.

5 He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah

***They chose the lie instead of the truth
which allowed satan to fill their hearts by
trying to deceive God.***

Galatians 6:7–8 (NASB95)

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

John 13:2 (HCSB)

2 Now by the time of supper, the Devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray Him.

Luke 22:3–4 (HCSB)

3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, who was numbered among the Twelve.

4 He went away and discussed with the chief priests and temple police how he could hand Him over to them.

Judas' unbelief allowed him to be possessed by the Devil.

Matthew 16:21–24 (HCSB)

21 From then on Jesus began to point out to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, “Oh no, Lord! This will never happen to You!”

23 But He turned and told Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me because you’re not thinking about God’s concerns, but man’s.”

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.

Luke 22:31–34 (HCSB)

31 “Simon, Simon, look out! Satan has asked to sift you like wheat.

32 But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

33 “Lord,” he told Him, “I’m ready to go with You both to prison and to death!”

34 “I tell you, Peter,” He said, “the rooster will not crow today until you deny three times that you know Me!”

Peter's ignorance and ego allowed him to be sifted like wheat but Jesus prayed for him because Peter had a repentant heart.

“And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

The story of Ananias & Sapphira remind us that the Lord will not be mocked and He is just.

1 Corinthians 9:25–27 (NASB95)

25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.

26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;

27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Disqualified:

This is not referring to the loss of salvation but a disciplinary act.

Galatians 5:19–21 (NASB95)

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,
20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,
21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Can a believer get temporarily caught up in these sins?

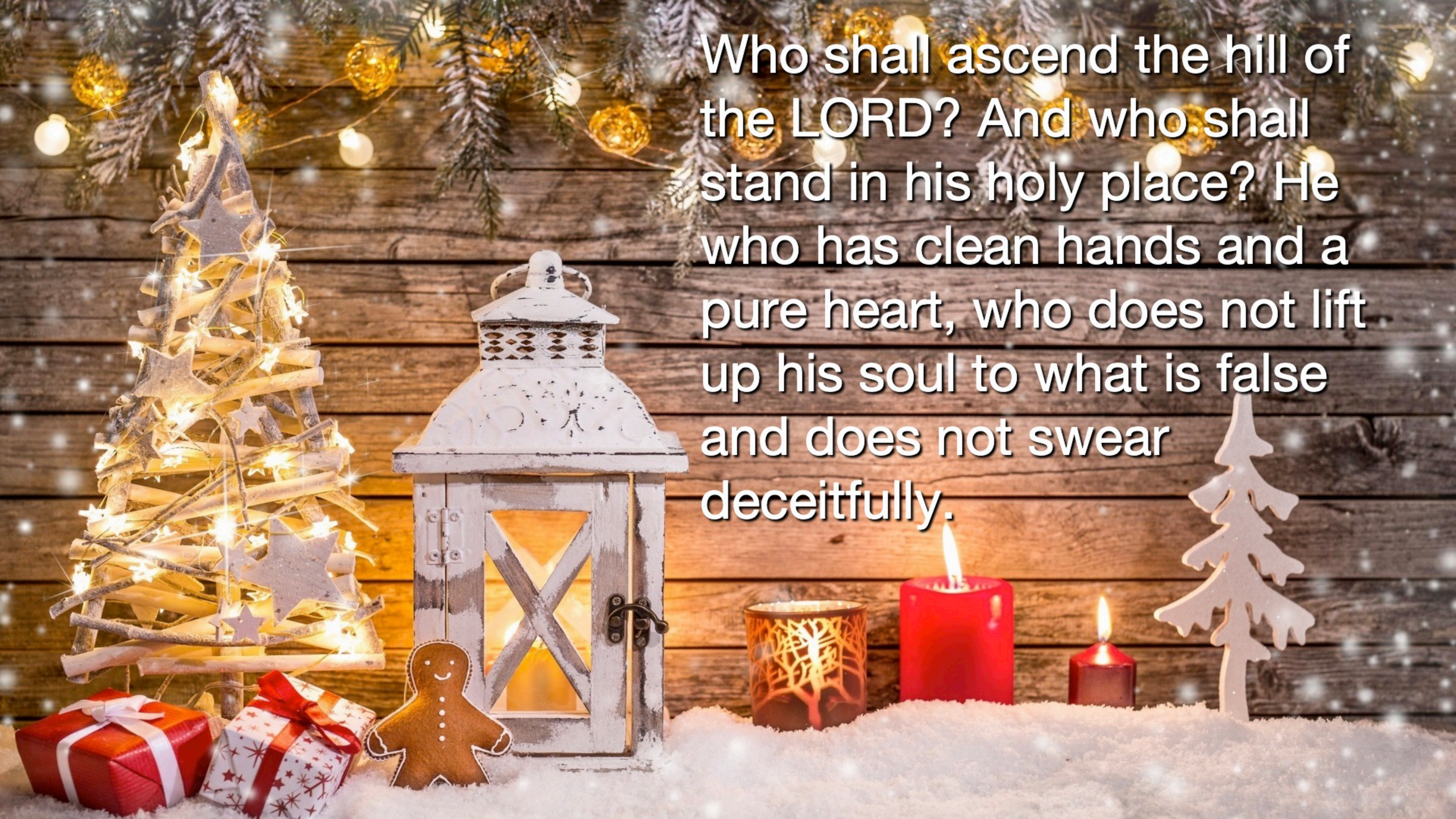
Do not underestimate the Lord's love for His children, His discipline is perfect.

Proverbs 3:11–12 (ESV)

11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or
be weary of his reproof,

12 for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a
father the son in whom he delights.



A festive Christmas scene set against a rustic wooden plank background. In the center is a large, white, ornate lantern with a warm glow. To its left is a small, rustic tree made of sticks and twigs, decorated with warm white lights and silver stars. In the foreground, a gingerbread man cookie stands on a bed of white snow. To the right of the lantern are three lit candles: a tall red one, a shorter red one, and a gold one with a decorative pattern. A small, white, cutout-style Christmas tree is on the far right. The scene is decorated with gold and white lights and ornaments at the top, and two wrapped gifts are visible at the bottom left.

Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.