

"The Hope of Christmas"

Luke 2

Introduction: If ever there was a need for Christmas it would be now. We have faced one of the most trying times to ever sweep through our nation and to really sweep through the world. Life is not quite the same this year as it was last year, and it probably will never return to "normal" again. Today there has been a blanket of fear that has been cast across our nation which has caused much animosity and division even within families over all that is happening.

There is a list of increases that have resulted from COVID lockdowns and all that is connected.

1. Depression has increased.
2. Suicide has taken more lives than COVID has.
3. Drug use has increased.
4. Domestic violence has increased.

In the midst of all that is happening we need hope. The hope that we are looking for is found in the Baby of Christmas. We will see this hope as we consider the Christmas story this morning.

"The Christmas Story"

Notice Luke 2:1-7

There is much to consider within these verses but for now I just want us to consider one point.

a. The faithfulness of God.

At first glance the average reader only sees a poor family and the birth of a child. But to the believer there is so much more. While the birth of Jesus Christ seemed to be normal to the average person, we can see the faithfulness of God on display that night in Bethlehem. Please allow me to explain.

God had foretold of this birth thousands of years earlier.

Genesis 3:14-15

¹⁴ And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Here is the first promise of Jesus Christ. This was shortly after creation. God gave other prophecies of the coming Messiah.

Isaiah 7:14

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

These announcements would start a war between Satan and God as Satan would do his very best to stop the fulfillment of this promise.

- He launched his first attack as Cain killed Abel.
- He launched another attack in Noah's day as he did his best to corrupt the entire population.
- He issued another attack in Egypt when Pharaoh gave orders to kill all baby boys.
- He launched another attack after the birth of Jesus when King Herod ordered all children from 2 years old and younger to be killed.

These are just a few of the attempts to stop the Promise from coming to pass but Satan did not have the power to stop the Promise. God was faithful and on that dark night in Bethlehem we see the faithfulness of our God.

Application:

Let me explain a little of what this means to us. The promises that pertain to us in God's Word cannot be stop or hindered in any way.

John 3:15-18a, 36

¹⁵ That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned:

³⁶ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

If our faith is resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ, then God promises to us eternal life. This promise can in NO WAY ever be taken away from us. This promise, just like the promise of the birth of Jesus Christ is based upon the faithfulness of GOD. We are kept secure by His power.

1 Peter 1:3-5

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

No matter what happens in this world we will one day step into the fullness of our eternal life and nothing can stop that promise from coming to pass'

The next thing we see is:

b. The sovereign control of God.

Notice Luke 2:1-6

This journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem was about a 70-mile journey. This seems strange that God would permit this census to happen at this time because of Mary's condition. But this was the sovereign hand of God moving Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. You see God had foretold where Jesus would be born, and it was not in Nazareth.

Micah 5:2

² But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

The governmental leaders believed they were in control of the masses, but it was God who was working to carry out His promises right down to the very detail of making sure Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Application:

This is a great reminder to all of God's people today. God has a plan and in His sovereign power He will carry out His plan. There is no government that can stand in the way, there are no leaders who can stand in the way. The governments and their leaders serve certain purposes as God works His will in this world. They issue their decrees and their laws, and it all works for God's plan and purpose.

Daniel 2:20-21

²⁰ Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

²¹ And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

Jeremiah 27:5-7

⁵ I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.

⁶ And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.

⁷ And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

All that is happening today is under the control of God just as in the days when Jesus was born. Man does not govern the world or a nation apart from the control of God. Man may think he is sitting in the place of control, but he can only do what God permits to happen.

In our day today we can rest in this Truth.

Next, we see:

c. The love of God.

Notice Luke 2:7-11

You would expect the first announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ the Messiah would be to the religious leaders. But it was not. The first announcement was sent to the lowly shepherds. These shepherds represented all of us. They were the outcasts of society and had reputations that were not so good. We see in these verses that they were "keeping watch over their flocks BY NIGHT". They were in the physical darkness which is a picture of their spiritual condition. They were in spiritual darkness because of their sin.

The announcement by the angels was one for the entire world.

Notice Luke 2:10

The announcement was for "ALL PEOPLE/UNIVERSAL" but it was also "PERSONAL".

Notice Luke 2:11

The message now becomes personal for the angel tells them that it is unto "YOU". A Savior was given to the shepherds and to all the world.

The birth of Jesus Christ was a gift given by God to meet the greatest need of mankind.

1. All of mankind are sinners.
2. All of mankind is separated from God.
3. All of mankind is helpless to save themselves.

Romans 3:10-11

¹⁰ *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

¹¹ *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

Isaiah 64:6

⁶ *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

4. Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from our sin.

Matthew 1:21

²¹ *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Thirty-three years later He would die for our sins.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

³ *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

⁴ *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

God's love is seen at Christmas. He loves us so much that He willingly sacrificed His only begotten Son so that we could have eternal life.

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

¹⁷ *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

d. The hope for us.

Jesus is the greatest **GIFT** that has ever been given. He is the **GIFT** that met our greatest need. But there is much more. Once we come to know Jesus Christ and time continues to move along, we begin to realize there is more to the GIFT than just to know we are saved. As we look into the Word of God we begin to unwrap more of the gift. The more we study the more we see that Jesus Christ is our HOPE in the midst of this dark world. Let us consider some of our hope.

It is because of Him that:

- 1. We have access to the throne of God.**
- 2. We have a High Priest that intervenes for us.**

Hebrews 4:15-16

¹⁵ *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

- 3. We have the promise of a new home.**

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

² *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

³ *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

4. We can rejoice in our trials because each one works together for our good.

Romans 8:28

²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

5. We will not go through the Tribulation.

Revelation 3:10

¹⁰ *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

6. We have the promise of living in the new heaven and the new earth.

Revelation 21:1, 7

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

⁷ *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

Conclusion:

The Baby that was born in Bethlehem and laid in the manger is our HOPE. Because He lives, we have a HOPE that is beyond this world.