

**Jesus: A Forever King**  
Luke 1:30-33; Isaiah 9:1-7

*“And the Lord God will give him the throne of His Father David...and of His Kingdom there will be no end.”*

**Introduction:** Christmas is a time of *anticipation*, looking forward with fond affections and hopefulness of being with family, friends, and a time of exchanging gifts. Most people you would ask would quote “Christmas” as not only their favorite holiday, but the time of year they look forward to the most. But there is a real sense where all of that build up will inevitably letdown. Lights come down, trees and décor are put away, and life goes back to normal. Though we enjoyed the day, and maybe even the focus on Christ, His life, death, and resurrection, we cannot help but feel a bit deflated from the change from anticipation to reality.

For some, the letdown goes much deeper than that. In fact, there is some reality to the **Post Holiday Blues**. There are reasons *why this exists*. We are thrown off in the time adjustment and out of routine. Some over indulge on alcohol and eating, leading to a feeling of lethargy. Busyness is at an all time high in the weeks heading into Christmas, which is combined with a lack of sleep. Some have not budgeted well and live within a **financial strain**, all the while trying to give good gifts to our kids. Christmas is a time of grief for many as they remember a loved one passing away, with old wounds made fresh, buried feelings brought to the surface. Some feel a deep sense of loneliness, or the pain of past trauma, or estranged relationships at a heightened pitch. Add on top of all this *illness and unrealistic expectations*, and we can see where a letdown, even some forms of depression, can be sourced.

Current issues make things seem all the more hopeless. Immoral actions that used to be done in the dark because of the common knowledge that they actually WERE immoral are now flaunted in the open. A government founded on the knowledge and acknowledgement of God now has replaced God as the moral barometer for a nation, declaring what God has called “sin” now is called good and acceptable. Schools that are supposed to nurture learning and foster care are now trending toward a godless indoctrination, training young people to reject God without them even realizing it. Equality of opportunity with the attempt to give everyone equal outcomes, something God never did with finances (1 Sam. 2:7) or gifts (1 Cor. 12:4).

So at Christmastime we ask the deep and longing question: ***where do we find hope, and how does that change us in the present?*** What are we anticipating? What are we yearning for? If the answer is something better now, in our lifetime, we are not only going to be sadly disappointed, we will actually miss out on present blessings God has for us in the midst of this present darkness. **Hope and Faith** are intimately tied together. **Faith** is active dependence on and trust in God (Heb. 11:1 - *Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, and conviction of things not seen*). **Hope** is the confident expectation of future blessings to be received from God Himself. Faith actively yields our will in trust, fear, and reliance on God, while hope places that same trust for all things future.

The problem with hope is the future part. We love the anticipation of opening presents at Christmas because we know we WILL open them on the 25<sup>th</sup> (if not earlier!). We may be told there is something **better coming**, but we do not know when, and we may not be sure it will ACTUALLY BE BETTER. This is because we would **rather fix things in life instead of ENDURING**, which is exactly what we are called to do (1 Pet. 2:20; Heb. 10:36). We would rather **do something** than **wait on the Lord**, even though there is great strength in waiting on

the Lord (Isa. 40:30-31). We would rather avoid a trial than learn the lessons God has for us, producing maturity and faith (James 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-9). We want things NOW, a temporal solution for an eternal and spiritual problem, and anything less leaves us sorrowful and depressed. Yet a proper understanding of hope is essential for a vibrant and joyful life now:

*Psalm 78:5-7 He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, <sup>6</sup> that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, <sup>7</sup> so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;*

*Romans 15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

*Hebrews 11:39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup> since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*

Notice three important principles of hope in these passages: 1) Hopelessness comes when we FORGET the works of God in the past and fail to obey; 2) We find the motivation to endure and the source of encouragement in hope **from the Scripture itself**, which means the path of hopelessness is simply to neglect the Bible; 3) Hope means we may never see all the promises of God in our lifetime, but we live our life in light of them, which changes everything.

This morning we will look at a few classic Christmas passages that fill us with hope, because we have a **GREAT SAVIOR who WILL establish a better kingdom someday**. Scripture has always shined a hopeful promise in the midst of darkness, sadness, and seeming hopelessness. Today we buoy up our hearts to remember that this world is not final, that there is a time coming where justice, righteousness, and peace will reign and rule because Jesus Christ, the one who condescended at Christmas will take His rightful place and rule the world with His glorious, mighty hand.

#### HOPE SOURCED IN JESUS' GREATNESS (Luke 1:26-32a)

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High*

God's promise has always burst onto the scene in the midst of darkness. Even in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden and the presence of God they were told there would be a future promise coming from Eve, one that they would NOT experience in their lifetime but was no less true or sure. When Gabriel informed Mary, we are reminded that it was a dark time in the history of the Jewish remnant and in the Promised Land itself. Rome had taken control of the world, and though they did introduce the *Pax Romana* and a common language, which helped the gospel spread in decades to come, it also was a time of deep *polytheism and Hellenistic* practice, meaning any and all religious practice was common. This led to gross and extravagant immorality. Though the Pharisees tried to keep the purity of the Law, and Temple worship was conducted, it was full of wicked priests, extortion, and those who took advantage of the people. Rome held all the cards. Hope of a restoration of

Israel was small. Yet this was the exact, perfect, and predetermined time that Jesus came on the scene.

Luke frames this announcement through a comparison of contrasts. Gabriel first came to a **priest, in Jerusalem to announce the coming of John the Baptist**, one who would be “great before the Lord” (1:14). You’ll remember that Zechariah did not believe Gabriel and had to live as a mute until John was circumcised in the Temple (1:64). When Gabriel made the announcement about Jesus, He came to a nothing of a town called Nazareth (think Rosamond in relation to L.A.), to a **peasant woman**. This confounds our typical sensibilities. Jesus the King born in the lowliest of ways to reach the lowliest of humanity. When we understand His willingness to humble Himself in order to offer a sacrifice to the Father on our behalf, it only enhances His greatness.

*“The Ancient of Days had become the Infant of Days, What deep descent from the heights of glory to the depths of shame; from the wonders of heaven to the wickedness of earth; from exaltation to humiliation; from the throne to the tree; from dignity to debasement; from worship to wrath; from the halls of heaven to the nails of earth; from the coronation to the curse; from the glory place to the gory place! In Bethlehem, humility and glory in their extremes were joined. Born in a stable! Cradled in a cattle trough! Wrapped swaddling clothes of poverty! Oh deep humiliation of the Creator --- born of the creature, woman! But in His descent was the dawn of mercy. Because we cannot ascend to Him, He descends to us.”*

R.G Lee

Jesus was called Great (1:32) because He was greater than John the Baptist (John 1:30) since He ranked over and before him. John came in the power of Elijah to fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6. John was filled with the Holy Spirit before birth, and his birth was miraculous. John came as an OT prophet to prepare the way to Jesus, chosen to do so before he was even born (Jer. 1:5). John was great, but he did not compare to Jesus.

Jesus was called the **Son of the Most High**, with his miraculous birth being greater than John’s since He was born of a virgin. John’s greatness was qualified as being in God’s sight (1:15), where Jesus’ was unqualified. Jesus’ greatness was inherent to His very nature as God, and was not derived from any source outside of Himself. He shares and possess the nature of God, which means He shares God’s glory, of which He gives to no other (Isa. 42:8). He was and is the same essence as God. *“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word for His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs* (Hebrews 1:3-4).

Hope comes when we rest in and take hold of our Savior. His greatness does not only come by His nature, but by the fact He was willing to condescend and humble Himself as a human to save us. No other god would ever do that!!! He veiled His glory the first time, coming in the meekest of ways. But that is not the end of the story, nor is that the only anticipated Jesus we long for, because Mary was also given a prophecy that had been given hundreds of years before. We long for Jesus to come and reign on a throne as the physical King of the world, making all things right. That is what we are waiting for, and it is worth the wait.

**HOPE SECURED IN JESUS’ FOREVER KINGDOM** (Luke 1:32b-33; Isaiah 9:1-7)

*And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”*

David was a man after God’s own heart, the greatest king of Israel during the height of its international power and influence of the United Monarchy. God fulfilled for David’s time what He had always planned and desired for His people: to be given rest from all surrounding

enemies (2 Sam. 7:1) to be able to worship the LORD with their whole heart. David desired to build a permanent dwelling for God in the land, what would become the Temple, but God told David that he would not be the one to do it. Instead, He prophesied that David's name would be great (7:9), that permanent rest would come (7:11), but that it would come in the future in 2 Samuel 7:12-17:

*When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up **your offspring after you**, who shall come from your body, and I will **establish his kingdom**. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will **establish the throne of his kingdom forever**.*

*14 I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15 but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.*

*16 **And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.**' "* 17 *In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.*

When Jesus was born with the legal claim to the throne as a "Son of David", it signaled that God had made good on His promise, that a King would come and rule on the earth, putting enemies at bay, bringing peace and rest, and doing what no government can ever do, reign and rule forever! But the problem we have with this fulfillment in Luke 1 is that fact that it is not filled full. There is an aspect of "*already but not yet*" in its outcome, since at present Jesus is NOT ruling on the earth physically but rather in the hearts of man. This is where we want to consider one other cherished Christmas passage that was recited in our elementary Christmas program as well as Handel's *Messiah* sung every year, which helps us unlock the reality of the hope of Jesus' eternal rule.

Isaiah 9:1-7 reads like this:

*But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.*

<sup>2</sup> ***The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;**  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*

<sup>3</sup> *You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.*

<sup>4</sup> *For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.*

<sup>5</sup> *For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire.*

<sup>6</sup> ***For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;**  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called  
**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***

<sup>7</sup> ***Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.***

*The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

We have read this passage every year, but not too often do we consider the context. The scene in Judah (the Southern Tribes of the Divided Kingdom of Israel) was **bleak**. In 735 B.C., a young man by the name of Ahaz, all of 20 years old, took the throne from his father Jotham and reigned for 16 years. A once proud and powerful nation under David and Jonathan was now **weak, faithless, and wicked**, seeking to be more like the culture around them than pure

to the Lord (2 Kings 16; 2 Chron. 28). He adopted the metal images of Baal to worship, even to the point that he **burned his sons as an offering to these gods**. When the Northern tribes of Israel united with Syria to put Judah under their thumb, Ahaz did according to his nature. Instead of crying out to the LORD of his fathers for wisdom, he turned to Assyria and their king, **Tiglath-pileser for aid**. *“In the time of his distress he became yet more faithless to the LORD --- this same King Ahaz”* (2 Chron. 28:22). This was the beginning of judgment on the North, as Assyria wiped out that kingdom 12 years later in 722 B.C, but also signaled the continued demise of the Southern Kingdom (ultimately in 586 B.C.). The best thing Ahaz did was produce his son **Hezekiah**, who brought about a revival for much of his 29 year rule.

It was during the reign of Ahaz that we received two of the most cherished and blessed Messianic prophecies celebrated at Christmas. We looked at **Isaiah 7:14** a couple of weeks ago, which was not believed or welcomed by Ahaz, especially as it signaled something still to come. Assyria proved not to be teammates but oppressors, and God allowed them to plunder Damascus and the spoil of Samaria, having Isaiah write on a large tablet **“Maher-shalal-hash-baz”**, which means *‘the spoil speeds, the prey hastens’*. In other words, come and get it, Assyria. Judah had digressed so far, not only in **idol worship, but had devolved into demonic worship and seeking necromancers** (speaking to the dead), and mediums for counsel (Isaiah 8:19). After rejecting God and the counsel of His prophet over and over, Ahaz and the people did what everyone does when life does not turn out according to their plan: **they shook their fist at God and blamed Him for their plight** (8:21). Their condition was one of distress, darkness, gloom, and anguish (8:22). If you think today’s culture is rough, it doesn’t hold a candle to Judah’s in the 700’s B.C!

*Why is this context important?* In the midst of this **pathetic scene, God brought reassurance of hope to the faithful and light to the ungodly.**

**Isaiah 9:1** starts with a recount of Assyria wiping out the North of Israel, represented by Zebulun and Naphtali, which were in Galilee. He then says that in the “latter time” there would be made glorious the way of the sea, the Galilee of nations. We know that Jesus was born in Jerusalem, but He grew up in Nazareth, in Galilee, and began His public ministry there. Jesus intentionally moved to Capernaum by the sea after John the Baptist was arrested, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, in order to fulfill this prophecy and bring the light of salvation to a place darkened by sin and hopelessness. This was the promise of salvation that He announced the first time (Luke 4:14-19), and was rejected by those He came to save.

Isaiah 9:3-5 speaks to the coming of the kingdom when Messiah would come the second time to establish a kingdom on the earth, which brings us to the familiar passage of 9:6-7. Notice the main points of this prophecy:

- **A child is born** - Speaks to His humanity, the fact that God had to become man in order to save mankind
- **A son is given** - Not only is the Messiah born, but He is given. In His eternal Sonship, it speaks to His deity, the fact that only God could satisfy the requirements of God.
- **Government will be upon His shoulders, and there will be no end to His government or peace** - We have come to realize that governments are set up by God (Rom. 13:1-6) and are supposed to play their God-given role to punish evil and uphold righteousness. But we have also seen what governments CANNOT do: they cannot change hearts, bring perfect justice, act sacrificially and humbly, keep ultimate peace, or last forever. Of course we always say we should function according to principle and conviction within any government we find ourselves, but ultimately, all government will fall short until Jesus establishes a perfect one, bringing TRUE righteousness, justice, peace, and rest. **And He absolutely will! We can bank on it. We can hope in it. We can anticipate it. Will it happen in our lifetime? Maybe.**

But this promise was given 700+ years before part of it was fulfilled, and its been 2000 years of the church waiting for its final fulfillment. And it is worth the wait.

- **Today we have access to our King who we will see one day** - Note the fourfold Title's of Jesus: 1) **He is our Wonderful Counselor** - When Ahaz sought wisdom, he went after demonic sources. Today, people seek after supposed "experts" who have been validated in ignorance through their own systems. Jesus is our Counselor who knows us, sympathizes with us, never leaves us, has mercy and grace for us, and loves us eternally. Far too often we seek wisdom in the absolute wrong places, dismissing our Wonderful Counselor for weak and deceiving sources. 2) **Mighty God** - Not only can Jesus give us wisdom in what to do, but actually give us the energy/power to do it. He is mighty in His nature, rather than reigned power of our enemy. **Everlasting Father** - He is the Father of eternal life, one who presents as King but also Father, and eternal life is the fact that we can **know Him** (John 17:3). He is not distant but a tender, compassionate, and caring father; **Prince of Peace** - He brought peace between mankind and God (Rom. 5); Peace in our heart which surpasses all understanding and guarding our hearts and minds (Phil. 4:7), and He will ultimately bring a **Kingdom of Peace** on this earth, vanquishing sin, death, and every enemy.

This Kingdom will be a forever kingdom, one without end or competitor. Each time these promises were given, they were in the midst of dark times that seemed hopeless. And the reality is, most will never see the culmination of these things in their lifetime. But this is the answer to the **longing of our hearts, the longing for things to be right, for justice to finally be done, for evil to be vanquished, for the groaning of our hearts to be made whole, for the groaning of the earth itself to be satisfied.** We'll open presents that we've anticipated in a few days, but let's be honest, we'll be left a bit unsatisfied. We have a true, real, and secure kingdom that is coming that will never let us down and will satisfy completely. Until then, we **endure, wait, and hope.** This is how Peter ended his letter after explaining how the world will be burned up and made new in the future in **2 Peter 3:14-18:**

*Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. <sup>15</sup> And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, <sup>16</sup> as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. <sup>17</sup> You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. <sup>18</sup> But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*