

Isaiah 9:1-7

Nativity: When Hope was Born Part 1 Christmas Series 2020

Today we are beginning our Christmas series- When Hope was Born

A) I think there are a lot of people looking for some Hope right now.

B) I noticed something this year leading up to thanksgiving that I had never seen before.

C) Driving through our neighborhood and other neighborhoods – a week before THX giving

1) people already had Christmas decorations up
Christmas trees in the window

D) Never that early before – Why? People are looking for sense of Hope and Joy

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published a survey on August 14 that found that U.S. adults reported substantially [more symptoms of anxiety disorder and depressive disorder](#) in the single month of June 2020 than in the combined months of April through June 2019.

There has been a noted jump in people feeling hopeless because of the effects of this pandemic

A) And that sense of Hopelessness is growing even more right now.

B) Consider today – the first Christmas – but before we do – I want to consider what Isaiah wrote 700 yrs prior

Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, as when at first He lightly esteemed
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
And afterward more heavily oppressed her,
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.
2 The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land
of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.

6 For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. **And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end,

Isaiah is writing here 700 years before the birth of Christ –

A) IT was a dark time in the land during the reign of King Ahaz the son of Uzziah.

B) Civil war had broken out in Israel – the land and people were divided

1) And Assyrian oppression was hovering over the land as well.

C) But Isaiah was writing looking ahead

1) pointing to a time when Israel would be living under Roman oppression

That is when he prophesies that a Savior and redeemer would come.

A) Child would be born - A Son would be given

B) It is the picture of innocence and vulnerability

1) Nothing more innocent and vulnerable and precious as a new born baby.

C) But the picture of innocence and vulnerability is combined with a picture of strength

1) this would not be a normal baby. – This would be God becoming a man

So Isaiah paints a picture of glory and strength about this Child when he says and the government will be upon His shoulder. **And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

A) The coming of this baby would signal the reality that a Divine light was now shining in the darkness

B) Hope was born during a time when everything looked hopeless in the land

C) That Declaration of Hope in the Coming of Messiah; is just as important for us to focus on today

1) As it was in Isaiah's day and in first century Israel living under Roman oppression

D) Christmas reminds us there is Hope in the midst of what seems Hopeless –

But there is a difference: In Isaiah's day as well as in Israel during the first century

A) Israel looked forward to the Hope that was coming - when this child would be born

B) They looked forward to the coming of Messiah

C) Today we look backward and forward

We look back to the child who was born – we look back because Messiah has come

A) We look back to redemption and Salvation that has been BROUGHT –

B) Because God sent his Son as a gift that would bring Salvation to the world/ ALL WHO BELIEVE

C) But we look forward to the 2nd coming of Messiah Jesus –

1) when he sets all things right in this broken world

In the midst of the Hopelessness we sense in our world today – we need the right perspective

A) When our FOCUS changes - our FEELINGS change as well.

B) In the rest of our time today I want us to consider the FEELINGS of Mary, Joseph/ Shepherds....

C) I want to note how their FEELINGS changed when their FOCUS changed. / Start with Mary

Mary is this godly young girl who is engaged to be Married to Joseph

A) Marriage arranged – Betrothed – legally binding

B) Married no ceremony – marriage has not been consummated – Mary is a Virgin

C) She gets a visit one night from an Angel named Gabriel

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. ²⁸ Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" ²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean" Luke 1:26-29 NLT

³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a

Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give 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." ³⁴ Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" Luke 1:30-34

How did Mary React ?

A) Mary was confused and disturbed .

B) This doesn't make sense to her – She is pure she is a virgin – she has never been with a man.

C) What is Joseph going to think? - What will her parents think and say?

1) How will her friends and those in the community react

D) She knows that in that day in that culture a woman could be stoned to death for breaking her marriage vows.

E) Mary rightly so in confused and disturbed

What about Joseph - how did he initially react to the news?

A) Mary tells him that she is pregnant and the father is God. –

B) Let that sink in a minute.

1) Your fiancé - comes to you with that message

C) Parents your 16 year old daughter –

1) Take this out of the Bible story

Joseph's reaction was completely normal

A) Joseph was hurt and brokenhearted

B) Joseph felt betrayed – he felt like a fool –

1) Cheated on and embarrassed

C) He no doubt was wondering – what will my parents think - community think

1) He loved Mary –

D) He is deeply hurt – deeply disappointed – he wants to be done with Mary

E) He makes decision to be done with Mary quickly and quietly

¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. Matthew 1:19 NKJV

So Mary is confused and troubled –
Joseph is hurt and brokenhearted

What about the Shepherds – how did they initially react to this news?

A) When the Angel appeared to them to announce to them that the Messiah had been born

B) The Bible says in Luke 2:9 They were terrified

C) They were scared to death -they were filled with fear – looking for a place to hide.

D) So Mary is confused and troubled
Joseph is hurt and brokenhearted
The shepherds are filled with fear

Is that not a good picture of so many in our culture right now.

A) People who are confused, troubled, frustrated
People who are hurt and brokenhearted

B) And people who's hearts are filled with fear

C) There is a sense of Hopelessness that has filled the hearts of so many.

Another national survey found that 27.8% of the U.S. adult population reported symptoms of depression in 2020 compared to only 8.5% in the previous 3 years.

D) Ever heard of Death of Despair?

Deaths of despair:

- Deaths of despair include people who have died from Alcohol consumption, drug abuse or suicide.
- Back in May, researchers estimated there could be 75,000 "deaths of despair" directly related to the pandemic. One researcher from the study now tells Business Insider that number could double, up to 150,000, due to the slow economic recovery and lack of investment in mental healthcare.

➤ A whopping 13 million people have remained jobless since mid-March, per the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

E) People are feeling Hopeless/Our world needs Hope

2,000 years ago when the sentiment of the world was very much the same for different reasons

A) God spoke loud and clear – I AM NOT DONE!
Just getting started

B) Hope was born when God sent his Son Jesus into the world.

C) We need to follow the examples of Mary, Joseph and the Shepherds

1) See how their feelings changed when their Focus changed

D) When they got their focus off of their surroundings and circumstances and on to God

E) If we do that this will be the result

- Less confusion and more clarity
- Less stress more peace
- Less fear – replaced by confidence
- Less hurt more healing

F) This Christmas we need to not Give up – we need to LOOK UP.

What happened when Mary Looked up?

A) At first Mary was focused on her unplanned pregnancy –

B) She was focused on the impossible situation this put her in – rumors, the gossip –

C) The rejection from Joseph her family and friends

1) Her wedding plan was destroyed -suddenly thrown in the garbage

But Mary's whole perspective would change when she changed her focus –

A) She took her eyes off of all the potential problems and focused on God's promise and plan

³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that

Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. ³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible.” Luke 1:35-37

B) That last word by Gabriel is so powerful – for with God nothing will be impossible

C) I love the way the New American Standard Bible captures that phrase nothing is impossible
1) NO WORD IS WITHOUT POWER

D) There is power connected to God’s word
1) Behind the commandment – there is enablement – divine power to carry out the command

E) 1 Peter 1:23 referred to God’s word as the Seed – the Greek word – Spermatoa - sperm

The idea is when we embrace God’s word – it has the power to produce life - where there was barrenness

A) So need to learn to do what Mary did - when she was given this word.

B) She declared in V.38 - Let it be according to your word.

C) Mary Said – let it be so I surrender my heart and my body to God’s plan.

D) She realized that this wasn’t the end of her story but just the beginning
1) She was beginning to see that God had a bigger plan for her life

What about Joseph?

A) Everything changed for him when he looked up as well.

B) When he stopped focusing on his pain and started focusing on God’s plan.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said “Joseph, son of David,” “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.....

C) Joseph there is a bigger plan at work here

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus. “Matthew 1:20-25 NLT

A) HOW did Joseph respond once he looked up and saw the plan of God

B) Joseph responded by saying How can I help

C) Joseph was stopped focusing on his pain and started focusing on God’s plan
1) That made all the difference for him

D) So Mary responded by saying – here is my Body
1) Joseph responded – by saying – how can I help

What about the shepherds?

A) These guys are out in the field protecting their sheep.

B) Interesting – The shepherds of Bethlehem were known for taking care of the sheep for the temple

1) They were actually taking care of the sheep that would be sacrificed for atonement of Israel’s sins

C) When the Angel appeared at first they were terrified – rightly so –

1) Not everyday that you see an Angel

D) But the Angel said to them –

“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!

¹⁵ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, **“Let us now go** to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ **And they came with haste** and

found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ Now when they had seen *Him*, **they made widely known the saying** which was told them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.” Luke 2:10-18

I love this about the Shepherds – they responded by going in Haste – right away-

A) Too often we miss out on the blessing of God by our procrastination –

B) God tells us to do something and we procrastinate and he asks someone else

C) God calls us to take a step in obedience or in faith and we procrastinate –

1) we miss out on the opportunity or that moment

We can learn from the shepherds – respond in haste – God calls -respond right away.

A) Remembering - His commandments are his enablements

B) With God nothing is impossible - No word is without power.

Now it is interesting that the Angel said in v.12 and this will be a sign to you “You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

A) Why would that be sign?

B) Swaddling cloth's is what they wrapped dead people in. Grave clothes

C) Because Mary and Joseph were poor and because they of where they were –

1) Clean grave clothes were all they had to wrap their baby in.

D) How appropriate that would be though – this baby would be born to die –

1) Jesus was born to die on the cross and pay the Price for the sins of the world

E) In order to bring true and lasting Peace and goodwill toward men

1) Peace with God - sins forgiven

2) Peace within - Guilt removed

This is the Hope that came into the World when Jesus was Born

A) Freedom was available – not from Roman oppression -

B) Freedom From sin – guilt- shame –

1) Freedom from the fear of death

Mary looks up and responds -let it be – here is my body surrendered to you Lord

A) Joseph looked up and said -How can I help carry out the plan of God

B) The Shepherds responded – by saying – Who can we tell!

1) Great news -Hope has been born Who can we tell.

²⁰ Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. Luke 2:20

C) The Shepherd's response:

➤ The shepherds said: Who can we tell?

➤ They gave glory to God.

D) THEIR feelings changed when their focus changed

Now I know some of you listening right now are thinking – well all of them saw an Angel

A) If I saw an Angel – I would react in that way too.

B) I would say that you and I have something better than an Angel - EMPTY TOMB

God has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:3

C) Jesus was born to die - but he also Rose – lives