

“Hope Has A Name: Jesus”

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024 -MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Hope Has A Name: Jesus”

Christmas is full of preparation, but it is also full of waiting to open a present, waiting for family to come into town, waiting - and for some, waiting until the season is over because it is difficult for many reasons. Our wait for Christmas each year is only a few weeks. When we look at scripture, we see that people have been waiting for the arrival of Jesus Christ for hundreds of years, waiting for God to move. In scripture, the Israelites, who traveled the Exodus that we studied for three months, were God’s chosen people. God had made promises in Genesis 12 to the patriarch of Israel, Abraham. (This was several thousand years before Jesus would be born). The Old Testament, in large part, is a collection of historical moments taking place to the Hebrew people, miraculous moments, moments of splendor, moments of shame, moments of preparation, but a lot of waiting. Waiting, hoping, on a Messiah; waiting because it appeared that the people of God, who had been promised to be the children of God, had been abandoned. During their waiting for God to move on their behalf, prophets came on the scene at various times to pass down a message to the people of Israel about a coming Messiah. The book of Isaiah is a collection of prophetic, looking-ahead statements from the prophet Isaiah who tells of the Messiah to come hundreds of years before Jesus comes on the scene in the New Testament. Even when all hope seems lost, Jesus is the Messiah who proves God fulfills His promises. We no longer have to wait for something hundreds of years in the future, as did the people of Israel. We only have to seek the one who has already come, displayed His power, grace, and forgiveness, and is waiting for us to follow. Hope has a name. Jesus?

Scripture - Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7, 11:1-5; 40:3-5

Something, rather someone, is coming. And it will change everything. It will shake the religious systems and bring clarity to confusion. A change is on the horizon. It is incredible to me to read these statements from a prophet who lived 700 years before the birth of Christ, making statements that were so precise about the coming Messiah that would bring hope to the Israelites. This would have been the equivalent of someone predicting a 2024 election, but doing so in 1324, before our country was even founded. As you study the verses from this week, do so knowing that Jesus Christ did not just suddenly appear one night, but rather is the Messiah that had been prophesied about for centuries. He is the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace that Isaiah speaks of.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7, 11:1-5; 40:3-5; 2 Samuel 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 4:13-16; Colossians 1:15-20

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

Preparation raises expectations. When we come to Christmas and peer into the story of the birth of Jesus, we do so to gain a deeper understanding of this birth and allow it to refresh us in our daily walk with Christ. We must grasp the significance of preparing and waiting because that is what the people of Israel had been doing for hundreds of years.

While they were waiting, things were difficult; they were tragic at times. (Isaiah 9:1-7). God would come first to the people who had suffered the most. Light would be born into the darkest of nights.

Isaiah is telling the people of Israel to wait, but while they wait, they should know that the coming child will be more than a child. Isaiah says Jesus will be a...

- Wonderful Counselor - (pele' yoetz) - (Isaiah 11:1-2) The word wonderful here almost says, "Wonder of wonders." Wonderful/Miraculous. A wonderful counselor. Jesus, the prophesied Messiah, would not be the same as an earthly king that Israel had followed, and he would not consult with anyone for wisdom. Jesus would be wonderful in counsel. What does this mean for them, for us? It means we can earnestly and diligently pray to God for counsel and wisdom. We can pour out of dilemmas and turmoil; in return, he will impart wisdom as our counselor. He will surround us with other believers who carry this wisdom in them so that we can seek guidance, but Jesus is the wonderful counselor. Many of the most profound moments in Jesus's life were when he was questioned, doubted, and confronted by others, yet He responded with wonder of wonder counsel.
- Mighty God - ('el gibbor) - In Hebrew - God-like warrior, God the mighty one, God the hero and eternal. Irresistible in battle. Undeniable battle champion. The word 'el is always a reference and name for God in the book of Isaiah.
- Everlasting Father - (abi ad) - At this time, a king was commissioned to care for his people as a father. It can also be translated that Jesus, the child who became a saving king, was the father of eternity, and Colossians 1:15-20 reflects that reality from before there was a beginning and without end. (In this passage, HE is Jesus.)
- Prince of Peace - (sar shalom) - Prince of Peace - (sar shalom) - It is essential when Isaiah foretold of a coming Messiah that he would be a prince. A prince was considered a warrior, and this warrior would not bring more wars, religious division, and hatred; this prince would deliver peace.

As Warren Wiersbe puts it in Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament, "The prophet looks down the years to when Israel would rejoice, when burdens would be lifted when the weapons of warfare would be burned as fuel—when Jesus Christ would reign as Prince of Peace. See here the humanity of Christ ("a Child is born") and the deity of Christ ("a Son is given"). Then the prophet jumps from His humble birth to His glorious reign when He shall rule from Jerusalem, and there shall be perfect peace."

Key Thoughts

Again, preparation raises expectations. We must be reminded daily of the conquering King that now lives in us; preparation raises expectations of what the King can and will do in each of us if we open our eyes to the greatest gift ever given, Jesus Christ, God with us. This is why we celebrate Christmas!

This child, Jesus, came to earth and began fulfilling all that the prophets promised He would bring to the people. Over a thousand years later, Jesus was born, and hope was alive. As Jesus began His ministry, immediately following His temptation, we see that He is already fulfilling prophecy in Matthew 4:13-16. The prophecy, the child, the fulfillment - brings hope. The waiting was over; the Messiah had come. Hope has a name. Jesus!!!

No other religious figure fulfills thousand-year-old prophecies by walking in the regions and lands. This helps us to prepare for the Christmas season and beyond. There is no better foundation for our lives than the promises of God. Jesus, the descendant of David, perfectly fulfills God's promises as Messiah.

- Descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:14)
- Born in the city of David (Mic. 5:2)
- Born to a virgin (Isa. 7:14)

They were waiting for what was to come, and it would bring hope. While many of us aimlessly only look forward to hope, we must look back over our shoulders and recognize that the waiting is over. Counselor, peace, hope, God-King. Now we must look forward.

Prepare your hearts, not for December 25th, but for every day with the reality that Christ has come, God in flesh, and the same scriptures that came true 2,000 years ago, tell us that Christ will come again.

If we are not careful, this season and our lives put us on a waiting list for the emptiness this world offers.

- Waiting for politicians to solve social problems.
- Waiting for wars to end forever simply with the stroke of a pen.
- Waiting for our spouses to bring us complete fulfillment, which they are incapable of doing (as I am incapable of doing as well).
- We are waiting for the next best thing to come out and revolutionize our function.
- Waiting for the newest, fastest, most expensive or cheapest.
- Waiting...

We don't have to stand on our tiptoes, peering into next year, wondering if hope will come. It already has. We don't have to despair over the evil in our world. Yes, we must be broken and saddened by it, but we can speak of it with a glimpse of hope in Jesus Christ. He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, The Resurrection and the life, Light of the world, The Truth, Lion of Judah, The Holy One, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, The True Vine, Bread of Life, The Good Shepherd, Immanuel - God with Us, Lamb of God, Hope - and Hope has a name. Jesus!

Reflect & Respond

As you think about Christmas and growing up, what did you most hope for? What brought you the greatest excitement during this season?

As you study through the prophecies of Isaiah this week, how does this change or build upon your view regarding the story of Mary and Joseph, the coming Messiah, and the birth of Jesus Christ and how you have typically understood this story?

Isaiah speaks at times what some call the prophetic perfect tense. Simply put, he believes in God's promises so much that he speaks in the past tense as if they were already accomplished, but he is casting a vision of hope for the future. Do you believe like this? Do you live in the hope and joy of fulfilled prophecies and in the promises of Jesus Christ as you celebrate Christmas? Do you live in these promises the other 364 days of the year?

We, like the Israelites we just finished studying about in Exodus, are capable of placing our hope in all kinds of various idols from time to time. What is your hope in as you walk through this dark, sinful, and at times painful and chaotic world? Do you find that your hope is truly in Christ and the promises that we see in His word, or are you placing your hope in something else...something that will fail you in the long run?

Take some time this week, using Blue Letter Bible, Bible Hub, Bible Gateway, or even a dictionary or thesaurus, to dive into the names "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" found in Isaiah 9:6. As you better grasp these descriptions of Jesus, how does this impact your walk with Him? How does this strengthen your faith? How do these truths create a deeper relationship between you and God? How can you apply these truths to your life today?

What do we see that God's Kingdom stands on in Isaiah 9:7 and 11:5? How does this differ from what we see in our own world and even our own governments? What hope does this give you for eternity?

Read Colossians 1:15-23. How can you and your family live in these truths this Christmas as you celebrate the Hope that is Jesus Christ? How can you share this hope with others, not only at Christmas, but throughout the year?

For many people, this time of year is filled with joy and expectation; however, we also know and understand that this season can be filled with great sadness, regret, pain, and loss. If this is indeed a hard season for you, please know that you are not alone. The pastors and staff here at Rich Fork are here for you any time that you need to talk, pray, talk through things, or even just cry. Please do not hesitate to reach out if this season is hard and you need someone process things with. You can call our church office at 336-476-6258 or you can reach any of our staff at that staff member's firstname@richfork.com.

