

Christmas series: The Arrival

Title – The Prophets' Candle – Promises Kept leads to Hope

Text: Romans 15:4; Matthew 5:17

The Prophets' Candle: Promises Kept leads to Hope

Have you ever hoped for something to happen?

When does wishing on a pipedream become hoping for something that could truly happen take place?

What can transpire that can elevate your hope into true belief?

I hoped for some Christmas gifts when I was a child. And for the most part, my hope was belief that I would receive the gift, because in years past I had received what I hoped for.

I did not realize it at the time, but I had a trust in my parents, who had provided before.....that I could hope for what I desired in a given year.

The series about the first arrival or advent of Jesus I trust, will elevate your trust in God and your hope for not only the needs of today but the promises of tomorrow.

This HOPE that we have is not in vain.

The Jewish people have had a hope for millennia – of a coming Messiah.

The Jewish Messiah

- The Hebrew Bible, known to Christians as the Old Testament, introduces the concept of a messiah, an anointed one of God who will come to usher in an era where all people of earth will live together harmoniously and righteously.

- The Jews believe that this idea is implied in the story of Creation. According to Rabbinical thinking, God wanted us to live with Him in a paradise, so He created the Garden of Eden.
- Human sin required us to be expelled; yet, when Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden,
- God did not destroy Eden. Rather, He maintained it and is awaiting a time when we will be worthy of returning.

According to Judaism, the Messianic Age is the time when the Messiah will bring us back to the kind of world that God originally intended.

- This time is described by a number of the prophets, and further references to the Messiah can also be found in the Psalms.
- A large number of these have to do with the future birth of the Messiah – which Christians recognize to be Christmas!

For the next four weeks we will be looking at Scriptures that point to the coming of the Messiah. The four weeks of Advent are:

The Prophecy Candle - Hope

The first purple, or violet candle, is the Prophecy Candle symbolizes hope and God's forgiveness toward man. It also can symbolize the expectation of the coming of the Messiah.

The Bethlehem Candle – Faith / Love

The second purple or violet candle symbolizes faith and reminds Catholics about the experience of Joseph and Mary in the city of Bethlehem.

The Shepherd's Candle - Joy

The third candle which is pink or rose, represents Gaudate Sunday and the joy that the birth of Christ brought to the world. Traditionally, on Gaudate Sunday one takes a break from Advent fasting to experience the joy of the day. The Shepherd's candle is sometimes white instead of rose or pink.

The Angel's Candle - Peace

The last purple candle is the Angel's Candle and represents the peace and justice that the angels and Christ bring to the world. It also can represent purity.

The Christ Candle / Christmas Eve service

If a white candle in the middle of the wreath is included, this candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day and represents Christ and purity. The Christ Candle is lit every night until the Feast of the Epiphany, which is twelve days from Christmas.

The Arrival is about the coming of Jesus.

This being the first Sunday – we look at the Prophets. It leads us to have Hope in the future because God keeps His Promises.

Romans 15:4

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Matthew 5:17

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.”

If you were involved in the online Bible class today.... You looked at these verses.

The Old Testament is important and significant to the Christian.

Jesus declares that He is the fulfilment of the Law and Prophets.

if you are looking at Jesus... take Him at His word. His declarations are key for your life.

You can't have Him as a prophet or teacher or a good man.... His words force you to accept Him as Lord or reject Him completely!

Imagine

Dr. David Teitelbaum of Christ Chapel Bible Church gives an imaginary exercise to help us appreciate both the astonishing accuracy of these writings and the equally astonishing unlikelihood of them all coming to pass. His story was located around the Fort Worth area. I have changed the locations to align with our region.

- Imagine that in Mukilteo, Washington, ancient scrolls are uncovered which were written 600 to 1,000 years ago.
- Some were written before the discovery of America by Columbus and even before Erikson.
- All were written before the American Revolution.
- The scrolls predict that someone in our generation will be born who is of the direct lineage of George Washington.
- This person would be descended from a long line of important founders of America, all of whom were known to be from Virginia.
- The scrolls further reveal that the person would be born in Snohomish County, Washington in the town of Edmonds.
- Miraculously, his mother would be a virgin.
- At the time of his birth, tradesmen and laborers would arrive and worship him.
- Dignitaries from other countries would mysteriously know about him and would come to worship him and present him with precious gifts, believing he was a special envoy from God.

In addition, our imaginary prophecies would also reveal that as a result of this child being born,

- Local ruling tyrants would make an attempt to murder him.
- This would result in the deaths of many other innocent children born in and around Edmonds and whose mothers would weep over their loss.
- To protect this special child from the tyrants, his father would take him to another country, say Costa Rica.
- Later bringing him back and they would settle in Kent (for does anything good come out of Kent?)

- This future child would grow up to lead a religious revolution.

Now, imagine that all this came to be true in our lifetime, fulfilling the predictions of these centuries-old scrolls.

- As astronomically unlikely as the creation, preservation and fulfillment of these written prophecies might seem, this is a fair parallel to what we have in the ancient Hebrew Scripture prophecies about Jesus!

Let us take a look at the prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus.

His Lineage

Abraham –

Genesis 22:18 -- *“...and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”*

We know Jesus was of Jewish descent and therefore was the seed of Abraham.

We are told that through Abraham’s offspring “all nations on earth will be blessed.”

Christians believe Jesus is the fulfillment of this promise.

Jacob - We also know that He is from the line of Jacob, Abraham’s grandson.

Numbers 24:17 -- *“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.”*

Jesse - From Isaiah 11:1 we know He is from the line of Jesse, the father of King David -- *“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a branch will bear fruit. The spirit of the Lord will rest on him.”*

David - From Jeremiah 23:5-6 we know He is from the line of King David -- *“The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land ... This is the name by which he will be called: the Lord our righteous savior.”*

Samuel about David - Reaffirming that Jesus is from the line of King David, we have this prophecy from 2 Samuel 7:12-13, which was actually spoken by Samuel to King David ==

“When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”

The Location

Tribe, Region and Town -From the prophecy of Micah, 5:2 we know He was born into the tribe of Judah in the region of Ephrathah, in the town of Bethlehem -- *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”*

Egypt - In response to this attempt on the life of Jesus, Joseph is warned in a dream to take Jesus to Egypt, where they stayed until Herod died. This is predicted in Hosea 11:1 == *“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.”*

Nazareth – Multiple prophets had declared that the Messiah would be called a Nazarene - Matthew 2:23 ESV – *“And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.”*

The Lady

Virgin - From Isaiah 7:14 we know that He was born from a virgin -- *“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and you will call him Immanuel.” The name Immanuel means “God with us” and indicates the divinity of Jesus.”*

His Lordship

Shepherds - That Jesus would be worshipped by shepherds from the desert, and that foreign kings would present gifts to Him is revealed in Psalm 72:9 -- *“May the desert tribes bow before him and his enemies lick the dust.”*

Kings - Psalm 72:10 – *“May the Kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the Kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all Kings bow down to him and all nations serve him.”*

The Lament

Children - When Jesus was born, King Herod slaughtered a number of children in an attempt to kill Him. This is predicted in Jeremiah 31:15 -- *“A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and*

great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

The Logos

John 1:1, 14 -- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth”

In just the first two chapters of Matthew,

- we see that God foretold the virginal conception of the Messiah,
- who would be born in Bethlehem,
- Yet in some way would come out of Egypt and be called a Nazarene.
- We also see that bitter agony would grip the mothers in that area.
- In the first chapters of Luke we see the fulfillment of the worship of the shepherds and the Magi

414 passages about the Old testament fulfilled by Jesus

So what do these prophecies tell us about God?

- We conclude our review of these ancient writings by marveling at them collectively.
- These biblical prophecies are astonishing because of their accuracy alone.
- Yet, they become all the more astonishing when we consider the unlikelihood of all of these prophecies being fulfilled ... but they were!

PROPHECIES FULFILLED LEADS TO HOPE

- God fulfills His promises...
- There are countless promises of God for you and me. And they are trustworthy!

Place your Hope in the Lord

- You can trust in the Lord!
- You can trust in His promises

- Place your trust in the Messiah – The anointed one!
- Immanuel – God with us
- Jesus / Yeshua – The Lord God Saves