

TEACHING GUIDE
BEHOLD A
SAVIOR IS
BORN
CHRISTMAS

OUTREACH

SERIES OUTLINE

Title: Behold a Savior Is Born

WRITE UP: Christmas is the fulfillment of hundreds of years of prophetic predictions about the coming of the Messiah who would change the world. God's people waited for a Savior who would come to rescue and restore a broken creation. They held onto hope that God would stay true to his promise. With joy, they anticipated Christ's arrival. As a humble servant, Jesus' loved all he encountered from the cradle to the cross. The world would know the peace of God, who had come near. Behold, our Savior is born, the world will never be the same.

Sermon 1: The Promised Hope

Scripture: **Isaiah 7:14** // Isaiah 53:5

Overview: This sermon sets the foundation for the series by exploring the prophecies of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection. We will look at how the anticipation of the coming Messiah had been foreseen centuries before, giving hope to the people of God that salvation would come through Him.

Sermon 2: The Joy of Anticipation

Scripture: **Luke 1:39-56** // Luke 2:8-20

Overview: Just as we experience excitement and joy as Christmas approaches, we will dive into the emotions of Mary, the shepherds, and others involved in the anticipation of Jesus' birth. We will explore how this anticipation parallels the anticipation of the prophecies being fulfilled and how it was a cause for celebration. We still experience the joy of anticipation as we await our Savior's second coming.

Sermon 3: The Servant Love of Jesus

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7 // **Philippians 2:5-11**

Overview: Jesus came into the world in the most humble and unexpected manner. We will focus on the significance of God taking on human form as a vulnerable baby, emphasizing His humility and sacrificial love. This sermon will highlight how Jesus' birth foreshadows His ultimate sacrifice on the cross.

Sermon 4: The Prophetic Peace

Scripture: **Isaiah 9:6-7** // John 14:27

Overview: This sermon will focus on the long awaited outcome of the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ. We will focus on the peace that is offered in Jesus that is different from the peace the world offers. This peace can help us face the troubles of the world without fear. It is all about the prophetic promise of peace that was fulfilled through the birth of our Savior.

Christmas Eve: The Gift Of Waiting

Scripture: Revelation 1:7; **Acts 1:9-11**; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Overview: The final sermon will draw parallels between the anticipation of Jesus' first coming and the anticipation of His second coming. We will explore how the prophecies of His return give us hope and assurance, just as the prophecies of His birth did for the people of old. This sermon will challenge believers to live with an eternal perspective as we wait to behold the King of Kings.

Sample

SERMONWEEK 1

Week 1: The Promised Hope

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14 // Isaiah 53:5

Write Up: This sermon sets the foundation for the series by exploring the prophecies of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. We will look at how the anticipation of the coming Messiah had been foretold centuries before, giving hope to the people of God that salvation would come through Him. This fulfilled promise of Jesus' birth gives us hope today that no matter what we face, Jesus is with us, and has made a way for our forgiveness.

Think: Jesus was the perfect sacrifice to offer me hope and freedom from sin.

Feel: I am not alone. I am loved by God.

Do: Confess my sins to Jesus and receive healing.

Sermon:

Hello, church! It is an honor to be with you today on this first Sunday of Advent. Traditionally within the church, this begins a season of preparation for God's people to fully embrace the birth of Jesus Christ. This is one of my favorite times of year because you can start to sense that Christmas is coming. Houses down the street are strung with lights, stores play festive music, and you can eat all kinds of holiday goodies.

This morning we are beginning a brand-new sermon series called **Behold A Savior Is Born**. To kick things off we'll see that thousands of years ago there were prophets in the Old Testament who wrote about a future day when God would send a savior to His people. He would make a way for all things to be healed from the devastating effects of sin. It is during this season we celebrate that in a dirty stable in Bethlehem long ago, there was born a baby who would change the world by bringing eternal hope.

STORY: To really enjoy Christmas, you must embrace hope. This happens in many ways, but one of them I remember well from when I was a child. Each day, leading up to

December 25, I would look under the Christmas tree and hope that perhaps the thing I had been longing for would be wrapped and waiting to be opened. As a kid, I could not wait to create my wish list and hand it over to my parents to deliver to Santa or even mail it to him myself. That was the beginning of hope being instilled in my young heart. But this hope that every child feels is pointing to something bigger, greater, and more meaningful than any earthly store can offer.

As fun as it was to make lists and wait to open presents during the holidays, the bigger picture behind this holiday is that because of Jesus' birth, we have hope that our greater desires, beyond electronics, toys, and jewelry...things like purpose, meaning, significance, forgiveness, and wholeness are available to us. These are gifts that we don't have to wait to open. When we place our faith in Jesus, they are ours, and that reality fills us with hope no matter what circumstance or situation we find ourselves in.

POINT #1 – THE SIGNS OF GOD GIVE US HOPE

The people of God in the Old Testament were waiting and hoping for God to fulfill his promise to bless them and through them, bless the entire world. They were hoping for a Messiah. The word Messiah means the "anointed one". The Messiah would be sent to rescue and heal all of creation from the destructive effects of sin. The prophet Isaiah wrote about this hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus.

READ Isaiah 7:14

God promised to give his people a sign for when the promised and anointed one would finally arrive. This was meant to give them something to wait for and to watch for, so that when they saw it, their hearts would be filled with hope.

STORY: I remember driving to my grandparents' house as a kid to visit for Christmas. It was a long journey, and so my parents would always give my sister and me landmarks and signs to look for to tell us that we were getting close. It seemed to take forever, but there was one town that we would come to that had a sign with the name of my grandparents' town on it and it would then have a number just to the right - "8". My sister and I would be filled with excitement because that sign would always let us know that it was right around the corner... only 8 miles away!

Hundreds of years before Mary and Joseph ever came to Bethlehem; hundreds of years before there was ever a crowded inn and a dusty old stable, God had spoken hope through

the prophets. God told his people to watch for a virgin who would become pregnant. Now this is an interesting sign. First of all, this does not happen every day. In fact, it would be a miracle. But this miracle would indicate that it was of God and not of man. Also, this pregnant woman would give birth to a son and his name would be Immanuel.

The signs of God working in your life will often be things that you could not produce on your own. They will be things that only God can do. This is where hope is born. If I could do things on my own, then I would have no need for God. The truth is, I need divine power to save my marriage, to fight this diagnosis, to kick this addiction, or to be freed from depression. When a virgin gives birth to a son, that is a work of God and a sign He can do anything! When the angel Gabriel visited Mary He said, *“For nothing will be impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37, ESV)*

POINT #2 – GOD WITH US IS THE HOPE WE NEED

It is the name that is given to this child that is really interesting in this passage.

Immanuel: This is a Hebrew word that means “God with us”. When creation cried out for help, God did not tell it to get its act together and then He would come close. Rather, God saw all that He had made that needed rescue and made the first move to come toward us. While we were yet sinners, God came to us and ultimately died for us. Paul tells us this in the book of Romans.

READ Romans 5:8

God did not come to us because we deserve it. He did not come to us because we earned it. He came to us because He loves us and knew we could not get ourselves out of the mess of sin we were in. It was the knowledge that God would one day return for His people that kept the people of God going. It is what inspired their hope, and today, We are inspired because He has come, just as was foretold.

STORY: One night at dinner a man, who had spent many summers in Maine, fascinated his companions by telling of his experiences in a little town named Flagstaff. The town was to be flooded, as part of a large lake for which a dam was being built. In the months before it was to be flooded, all improvements and repairs in the whole town were stopped. What was the use of painting a house if it were to be covered with water in six months? Why repair anything when the whole village was to be wiped out? So, week by week, the whole town became more and more bedraggled, more gone to seed, more woebegone. Then he added by way of explanation: "Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present." (*Halford E. Luccock, Unfinished Business*)

At Christmas, we have the luxury of looking back over the Old Testament prophecies and then seeing many of them come to fruition in the birth of Jesus. While the Israelites waited on God to come, we look back at a God who came and is presently with us.

Far too many of us have the mentality of this old town. We have stopped believing that God is with us and therefore nothing will ever get better. We have stopped hoping for a change in the wind or a bit of new life. But when we give up hope, it becomes its own self-fulfilling prophecy. When we lose hope, we stop pursuing our spouse, we turn to substance abuse, we lose the will to fight, and our mind becomes a dangerous place.

Here is the good news today. There was a virgin who gave birth. That child was and is Immanuel. God is with us... never lose heart.

POINT #3 – JESUS’ SACRIFICE GIVES US HOPE

The story of Jesus is bookended by two major events. The first is his birth that we read about in Isaiah 7. The second event is what confirms our hope is in the right place. The second event we find prophetically spoken about only a few chapters later in chapter 53 of Isaiah.

READ Isaiah 53:5

Hundreds of years before Jesus grows up to be a man and carries out three years of powerful ministry. Hundreds of years before he will be arrested, crucified, and killed, Isaiah writes about how the manger will lead to the cross. Jesus was pierced in his hands and feet by nails holding him to the cross. He was crushed and beaten by his accusers. He was punished for wrongs he never committed himself. He received wounds on our behalf. It is by the suffering that he went through that we have freedom from our own sin and rebellion. Though you and I are deserving of death and the penalty for all the sinful things we have done, Jesus took it on himself. Your hope of healing, freedom, wholeness, and eternal life is made possible because of Jesus.

I heard someone once say that if Christmas is the promise, then Easter is the proof. That is a good word. We celebrate Christmas because we know that resurrection is coming! We have been given the awesome privilege of offering the hope that we have found in Christ to others. What better season to do this in than Christmas. It may cost us something. It may be a sacrifice, but considering all God has done for me, it is the least I can do.

STORY: David Livingstone was a Scottish missionary and explorer who spent thirty-three years in the heart of Africa. He endured much suffering as he labored to spread the Gospel and open the continent to missionaries. This godly missionary once remarked:

“People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay?...It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger now and then with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to waver, and the soul to sink, but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk, when we remember the great sacrifice which HE made who left his Father’s throne on high to give himself for us.”

This holiday season may our hearts be filled with the hope that is ours in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. May we be so overwhelmed with gratitude that we would be compelled to serve and sacrifice for others as a way of sharing our hope with the world.

Our servant king has been born and he has given us an example to follow. What is one way you can offer hope to someone this week? Perhaps it would be by sacrificially giving to an organization or an individual in need. Perhaps it would be writing a letter or note to encourage someone and share the hope that you have in your life.

Let’s pray together.

Questions:

1. When is a time you have seen signs that God is at work around you? How did it make you feel?
2. Why is it so significant that God came to earth in the form of a baby?
3. How does hope in the future positively affect our present? Why?
4. What is one practical way to sacrifice and serve someone else as a way of sharing hope?

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