

Advent

The Promise of Hope

- **Advent is a four-week season in the Church calendar dedicated to anticipating the arrival, or "advent," of Jesus of Nazareth, the long-awaited Messiah and King.**
- **It's a time to reflect on the unexpected nature of Jesus' humble birth and join in the anticipation of when He will come again to reunite Heaven and Earth once and for all.**

Biblical hope: Hebrew verbs *qāwâ* "to wait" and *yāhal* "to wait". The verb *qāwâ* conveys a sense of waiting with expectation, while *yāhal* may indicate waiting for a period of time with or without expectation. Greek noun *elpis* "hope" and the verb *elpizō*, "to hope".

Hope in the First Promise

- Genesis, the first book of the Bible, records God's perfect creation, humanity's tragic fall into sin, and God's immediate response to sin.

Genesis 3:1-15 (NIV) Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" ²The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" ⁴"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. ⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." ¹¹And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹²The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." ¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." ¹⁴So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

- What we see in Genesis 3:15 is the "Protoevangelium", or the "first Gospel".
- Verse 14 makes it clear that God is speaking to the serpent whom He curses to crawl on his belly and "eat dust" all his days. In verse 15, God switches from condemning the serpent to the one who inhabited it, Satan.
- He curses Satan to be forever at war against mankind, depicted as the seed or offspring of the woman.
- Sin enters humanity at this point, and the ravages of sin and its consequences reverberate down to us today.
- The offspring of the woman refers to Jesus Christ, who was born of a woman. The "enmity" of hostility and hatred spoken of here is between Satan and Christ.
- Through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the price for sin was paid for those that would believe in Christ. Because of what Jesus did on the cross, he "crushed" the devil's head, defeating him forever.
- The protoevangelium shows us that God always had the plan of salvation in mind and informed us of His plan as soon as sin entered the world.

1 John 3:8 (NIV) "...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

Hope in Emmanuel, God with Us

Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV) ¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had 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 home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” ^w (which means “God with us”). ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

- Jesus was born to save us from our sins, to reconcile us to God, and to remind us that we are not alone.
- The God who created the universe stepped into His creation as a vulnerable baby. He didn’t come as a distant observer but as Emmanuel – God with us.
- We can’t confuse our hope with our expectations. Look how Christ came; he came as a humble baby, instead of a conquering military commander.

Hebrews 2:14 (NIV) ¹⁴ Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death.

- This is the foundation of our hope: God didn’t leave us in our brokenness. He came to live among us, to show us the way, and ultimately to die for us so we could have eternal hope.

Hope in God’s Faithfulness

Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV) ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- This passage calls us to live in hope because God is faithful!
- The birth of Jesus proves that God keeps His promises. The cross and the empty tomb demonstrate that God’s love for us is unshakable.

Application: Living in Hope

1. Trust God’s Promises

- God is faithful. No matter what challenges you face, hold tightly to the hope we have in Christ.

2. Share Hope with Others

- Look for ways to share the Gospel, encourage and serve those around you. Show them the love of Christ.

3. Look Forward with Expectation

- Advent reminds us that Jesus is coming again. Let’s live as people ready for His return.