



TOPIC There is Hope!

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THEME Hope In Hopeless Times

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

ACT I: THERE IS HURT

More than 2,000 years ago, at the time of the first Christmas, the nation of Israel was living under the oppression of the powerful and brutal Roman empire. The people of Israel felt despair and hopelessness, as they lived in a country they could not call their own, their places of worship overtaken by merchants, their priests power-hungry, and they had to bow their knees to rulers and idols. They were a hurting people.

In the mist of Israel's oppression, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and informed her of the impossible – that Mary, a virgin, would conceive through the help of the Holy Spirit and birth the Son of God, Jesus (Luke 1:30-37). Jesus would be the Saviour of the world, as prophesied multiple times in God's word across of thousands of years.

The virgin birth of Jesus demonstrates to us that nothing is impossible with God – He who can call forth new life out of nothing. The birth of Jesus represented the birth of hope – to the weary nation of Israel and to a world living in darkness.

ACT II: THERE IS HATE

The world is dark and messy, and it is easy to be filled with hate and hurt as we live in it – whether at the time of Israel 2,000 years ago, or in our present time where COVID-19 is causing much hardship. To God, we ask, "Why won't you do something about the mess the world is in?"

To answer this question, we can break it down into 3 other questions:

Question 1: "Is it God's fault that the world is in such a mess?" – No.

The world as it is now was not how God had intended when He created it. His blueprint for the world was for Man to be born into perfection, where everything was beautiful and Man had everything he needed. This was the Garden of Eden.

Question 2: “If it wasn’t God, then what caused the mess?” – Man did.

God created the world to be paradise, but Man in his own free will ravaged earth’s resources and polluted it. Man also introduced a moral and spiritual pollution into life on earth, with dirty thoughts, jealousy, anger, crime – things which prick Man’s conscience and which the Bible calls sin.

Question 3: “Even if God didn’t cause it, why doesn’t He do something about it?” – He did.

Technically speaking, since Man had caused the mess in the world and the resulting sufferings, God should have gotten rid of Man first. Man is wretched and deserves punishment for his sin. However, God chose not to execute justice on Man, but acted in mercy and love. He sees His wayward children and know they cannot bear the full weight of justice/punishment for their sin. He says – “I have another son, my firstborn, Jesus. I will send Him to take your punishment in your place.”

ACT III: THERE IS HOPE

Jesus is God’s Christmas present to us – the son of God, born in flesh, so He could live on this earth and one day take our place on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Through Jesus, we are completely forgiven, are reconciled to our Father God, and our souls have a place in Heaven for all eternity when our physical bodies die.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the birth of Jesus mean personally to you? How has your life transformed over the years, after receiving Jesus into your life?

2. How do you usually celebrate Christmas? What is one way you could celebrate Christmas differently to bring the hope of Jesus to the people around you?

3. Is there anyone you know who is hurting, hating or fearing? How might you encourage this person in practical ways and point him/her gently to Christ by showing them love?