

Christmas Series
“GOD CAME NEAR”
Part 2: Hope
Sunday, December 13th, 2020

LUKE 2:1-20 (NIV)
The Birth of Jesus

2 In those days Caesar Augustus(A) issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.(B) **2** (This was the first census that took place while[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.)(C) **3** And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem(D) the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. **5** He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him(E) and was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, **7** and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.**9** An angel(F) of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid.(G) I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. **11** Today in the town of David a Savior(H) has been born to you; he is the Messiah,(I) the Lord.(J) **12** This will be a sign(K)to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace(L) to those on whom his favor rests.”

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.(M)**17** When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, **18** and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. **19** But Mary

treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.(N) **20** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God(O) for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

HOPE: crucial for healthy human existence, and a really important concept in the Bible.

In the Old Testament, there are two main Hebrew words translated as “hope.” The first is *yakhal*, which means simply “to wait for.”

GENESIS 8:10-12

“He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.”

The other Hebrew word for hope is *qavah*, which also means “to wait.”

Living in the tension requires us to live in hope!

HOPE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

ISAIAH 8:17 (NIV)

“I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the descendants of Jacob. I will put my trust in him.”

Biblical hope is based on a person, which makes it different from optimism. Biblical hope isn't focused on circumstances.

“Choose hope anyway.”

HOSEA 2:14-15 (NLT)

“*But then I will win her back once again. I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her there. I will return her vineyards to her and transform the Valley of Trouble into a gateway of hope. She will give herself to me there, as she did long ago when she was young, when I freed her from her captivity in Egypt.*”

God transforms our valleys of trouble into gateways of hope!

It's God's past faithfulness that motivates hope for the future. We look forward by looking backward, trusting in nothing other than God's character.

JESUS AS LIVING HOPE

Habit of Hope

Door of Hope

In the New Testament, the Greek word *elpis* is used to describe this anticipation.

Living Hope

1 PETER 1:3 (NIV)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

Our *elpis*, or, HOPE, is based on a person, the risen Jesus, who has overcome death!

Biblical hope isn't optimism based on odds; it's a choice to wait for God to bring about a future that's as surprising as a crucified man rising from the dead.