

TALK IT OVER

Christmas: Past, Present, Future

Week 1: *Unwrapping Christmas Past*

Mark Hardacre

December 3, 2023

Icebreaker: What's is one historical event that impacts your life today?

Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it. George Santayana

Ecclesiastes 1:9 (NLT) History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new.

Big Idea: History repeats itself.

The World Before Jesus

1. Darkness

Isaiah 8:20-22 (NLT) Look to God's instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They will look up to heaven and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair.

2. Hopelessness

Proverbs 13:12 (NLT) Hope deferred makes the heart sick...

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NLT) For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

3. Confusion

Isaiah 8:19 (NLT) Someone may say to you, "Let's ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do." But shouldn't people ask God for guidance? Should the living seek guidance from the dead?

Galatians 4:4-5 (NLT) But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children.

What Jesus Brought to the World

1. Light into the darkness

Isaiah 9:1-2b (NLT) Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever....The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

John 8:12 (NLT) Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

2. Hope to the discouraged

Ephesians 2:12 (NLT) In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.

Proverbs 13:12 (NLT) Hope deferred makes the heart sick... but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life.

3. Truth to those who were searching for answers

John 18:37b-38a (NLT) I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true." "What is truth?" Pilate asked.

John 14:6 (NLT) Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Discussion Questions

1. Share an instance where you have seen history repeat itself.
2. Why do you think the Jewish people were so discouraged prior to Jesus' birth?
3. What are some things you see people putting their hope in today, other than God?
4. Why do you believe that we're seeing an increase in hate, division, and evil in our world today?
5. What are some things that Jesus brings to our lives today that gives us hope?
6. How can we better share the hope of Jesus with a world that is in darkness?