



LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

TEXT: Luke 1:30–34

MAIN IDEA: The hope that God gives us is that he will establish Jesus as our good king to reign over us forever.

LEADERS:

- Winter Sessions, ya'll! We'll be exploring the topic, "I've Got Questions." The questions covered will be, "Do I need evidence to believe?", "Why should I think God exists?", "Are the Gospels reliable accounts of Jesus' life?", "How can I know that Jesus rose from the dead?", "What about evolution?", and "Is Christianity bigoted?" These will be held on Monday nights from December 13–January 17 at 7 pm. You are invited to join us in person at the Totowa campus, or from home via our Facebook and YouTube channels.
- We've got a Christmas movie night coming up on Friday, December 10, in Totowa. This is a great opportunity to invite your kids' friends out for a fun time, where we will watch the movie "The Star" on our giant screen. Popcorn for everyone!
- Come celebrate Jesus' birth with us at our Christmas Eve Eve service. We'll be gathering in Totowa at 4:30, 6:00, and 7:30, and in Ringwood at 4:30 and 6:00. If math isn't your strong suit, Christmas Eve Eve is December 23 ;-). Invite a friend!
- Please remember to pray for all the teens who signed up to go on our Winter Retreat from January 14–16. Be sure to pray for the spiritual growth of everyone God is bringing there, and the leaders who will be there for them.

GETTING STARTED:

- Watch this week's Community Extras Video.
 - **Icebreaker:** Who is someone you would love to invite out for Christmas Eve Eve?
 - **Opener:** What did you take away from the sermon this week?
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A TRUE HOPE

Read: 1 Peter 1:3–5

💡 How do these verses describe the Christian's hope, and how does this differ from other things that people hope in?

💡 What does Peter mean by saying that we are "guarded by God's power"?

💡 Twice in the sermon, Ryan said that our hope is only as valuable as it is true. Why is it important for hope to be true?


💡 What false hope are you the most tempted towards, and why are they false?



A GOD-SIZED HOPE


In the sermon, Ryan surveyed the main points of the biblical storyline that bring us to the hope of Christ. In it, we saw that the hope for a king to rule over God's people really starts to get fleshed out when David's royal dynasty is established in Israel.


Read 2 Samuel 7:9–16

 In verses 12–16, God promises to raise up David's "offspring," whose throne will be established forever. Who is this? Based on what this text says, how do you know this?

  What are the key elements of the promise that God is making to David's royal offspring?



Read Isaiah 9:6–7


  What is the significance of the fact that God gave this prophecy while there was a king from the line of David already reigning in Jerusalem (Ahaz, 735–716 BC)?

 How would you compare the hope held out in this passage to false hopes that people fall for?



Read Ezekiel 34:22–24



Ezekiel gave this prophecy during the final years of the Jerusalem kingdom, before it was destroyed by the Babylonian armies. In this chapter, God renounces the false "shepherds" of Israel and promises to replace them with himself and his "servant David."

  What does it mean for God's servant David to *shepherd* God's people?



 Jesus claims to be the fulfillment of this prophecy in John 10:1–30 ("I am the good shepherd"). How does it comfort and strengthen you personally to know that Jesus is your shepherd?

Read Luke 1:30–33

  How do the angel's words relate to the promise that God made to David in 2 Samuel 7 (see above)?

  Does this passage only apply to Jewish people ("he will reign over the *house of Jacob*")? Why or why not?

Read Revelation 22:1–5

  This vision depicts the final Christian hope, in which God's people dwell with him in the new heavens and the new earth, depicted as a new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9–14; cf. Hebrews 12:22–24). Why is Jesus still called a "Lamb"?



💡 What is the significance of the tree of life in verse 2?

💡 For this first week of Advent, we have traced some of the unique ways the Bible develops the concept of hope. What is the value of this, as opposed to thinking in terms of short, consolidated concepts? For example, “My hope is to go to heaven,” or, “My hope is that Jesus has saved me.”

PRAYER TIME

Pray that God would renew your sense of hope during this season of Advent.

Pray that God will help you to seize the opportunities he gives you to share your hope with others.