

The Hope of Christmas

1 Peter 1:10-12 speaks of God revealing the circumstances of the birth of the Messiah to His

_____.

As Christians, followers of Christ, we are _____ of all the prophets hoped and prayed for. It is this hope of the ages, the _____ of the Messiah, which we celebrate at Christmas.

Prophecy

Prophecy isn't predicting the future, it's simply telling the _____ exactly as God has revealed it. The purpose of prophecy is so that when the prophecy comes to pass and is fulfilled exactly as God said, we _____ that God planned out these events.

Through a specific family

Jesus was being offered as a gift of God. **Isaiah 9:6 told them For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**

This was not a new promise to Isaiah. Back in Genesis 22:18 God had promised Abraham ¹⁸ **In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.** This happened about 2,000 BC, so they knew that the scriptures said that the Messiah had to be a descendant of Abraham. They also knew that He had to be descended from Isaac, Jacob, Judah and King David because, In 1Chronicles 17:11-15 God says to David through the prophet Nathan:¹¹ **When your days are fulfilled that you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up one of your [6] descendants after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom.** ¹² **He shall build for Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever.** Again in Jeremiah 23:5: **"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."** Matthew starts out with this genealogy of Jesus, precisely to prove that Jesus was a descendant of David, and had the right of Kingship.

In a specific place

And of course, the Messiah had to be born in a specific place; in Bethlehem of Ephraim near Jerusalem: **Micah 5:2 2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."** **Prophecy written:** This prophecy eliminates all other cities and towns throughout the world as a place in which the Messiah could be born. Bethlehem means house of _____. Bethlehem is where the _____ lambs were born. Bethlehem was full of livestock, and was a smelly place. The _____ was a feeding trough for animals.

At just the right time

Gal 4:4-5 tells us **But when the fullness of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons and daughters.** In other words, it was just at the right _____ according to God's plan that Jesus came to complete redemption for us, and allow us to be adopted sons and daughters of God.

Hope

Hope is an expectation or belief in the fulfillment of something desired. Present hurts and uncertainty over what the _____ holds create the need for hope. The patriarch Abraham is a model of faith and _____. In spite of the fact that it was physically _____ for him to have a son with Sarah his wife, Rom 4:20-21 tells us **20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.** Our faith and hope, like Abraham's, are based on the _____ of God. That is why we remember how God has _____ His promises through His prophets in the past—so that we will have faith in God that He will faithfully complete those _____ yet to be fulfilled. And it is by remembering God's faithfulness

during the trials of our own life that we _____ ourselves that God can be trusted to get us through whatever He allows to come our way (1 Cor 1:9-10).

Christian hope is a living hope

At the heart of Christian hope is the _____ of Jesus. Paul discussed the nature, certainty, and importance of the resurrection in 1 Cor 15: 17-19, **17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. (1 Cor 15:19).** The significance of Christ's resurrection is not only that it points to Christ's victory over death, but that it also _____ that victory to those who are his (see 1 Cor 20-23). Peter echoes this in 1 Peter 1 3: **3 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,** Peter lets us know that our hope is in the resurrection of Jesus.

Christian hope is a Hope for the Future

Peter points to God's future blessing upon those who belong to Christ (see 1 Peter 1:4-9). That future hope _____ the Christian to live without despair through the struggle and suffering of the present Rom 8:18 **18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.** We fix our _____ on Jesus, trusting in Him. 1 Cor 4:16-18 **16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

Our hope in Christ is what gets us through. Paul said in Rom 12:9-12 Showing the relevance of hope to ministry he wrote, **12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.** Jesus' finished work of Salvation on the Cross _____ us hope. The Holy Spirit's continuing work in our hearts of salvation working itself out in our sanctification gives us hope. And our future hope of Jesus' return and our eternity with God gives us hope. And this _____ of our hearts in love is only possible because of the love that Jesus showed on the cross, and our faith in what He has done.

Prayer

Rom 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.