

A Thrill of Hope... From A Shepherd-King

Behold Your King, Before Him Bend

Main Idea: As we behold Jesus, our King, we find joy in His Kingdom

As you know, we're using lines from the song O Holy Night to help us with our sermon outlines this year. We've said so far that *A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices...* for people are tired and without hope until they meet Jesus.

Chains shall he break for the slave is our brother.

Two weeks ago, we said that God adopts EVERYONE into His family and makes everyone our brother and sister. Every single person, slave or free, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, black or white, are ALL given the same value.

ALL are invited to join God's family. God the Father has adopted us as sons and daughters! That's the greatest news you could ever hear - in fact, that's why it's called the Good News.

We were lost in our sin, blind without light and without hope until God the Father sent Jesus, the Son. Last week, we read the whole prophecy from Isaiah 9 but I want to reiterate vs 7 today because we're talking about Jesus as King.

Is 9:7 "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." ESV

It's interesting King David is mentioned - we'll come back to that in a minute.

Now, let's look at Isaiah 7, a prophecy, one of many about Jesus' birth, spoken YEARS in advance, announcing the Messiah. Let's see if we can put this puzzle together.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah's words had come to LIFE! Why would the Messiah be called Immanuel? One of the reasons why is because Shepherds spent all their time WITH their sheep.

JESUS truly is the GOOD SHEPHERD.

But isn't he also King? Yes! He is the SHEPHERD-KING

The last two weeks, we read about the Shepherds getting the good news first from a host of angels. We talked about Jesus coming so that the Father could adopt us as His children - that His light would give us a thrill

of hope, the thrill of adoption, we KNOW now WHO we are and WHY we're here! We're here for the joy of our Father - to glorify HIM.

Today, let's read about God choosing to come to us through a humble girl named Mary.

Lk 1:26-55 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Mary goes to visit Elizabeth and as you may know, her baby, John the Baptist leaps in her womb!

Mary begins to sing!

⁵² **he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;**⁵³**he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.** ⁵⁴ **He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,** ⁵⁵ **as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."**

So why bring up Abraham? Wasn't he just a rich shepherd centuries ago?

So who is this Shepherd-King?

Let's Back Up

Graphic - showing a Shepherd.

Abraham - the Shepherd
 14 Generations
 David - the Shepherd-King
 14 Generations
 Babylon- the people without a
 14 Generations
 Jesus - the Shepherd-King

MT 1:17

¹⁷ So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

This isn't coincidence!

Shepherds, like the sheep themselves, learn quickly that the path to success depends on tending to the flock but caring for the individual. Providing clean water, ample forage and shelter to an entire flock is essential to maintaining the health of the flock. But the success of a shepherd or shepherdess is in the compassion they have for each individual. This means being able to identify a sick or injured sheep or lamb within a flock of hundreds or thousands of sheep. Assisting with the birth of a lamb when needed, caring for a lamb orphaned by its mother, providing the expectant mother with enhanced nutrition or weaning a lamb in a compassionate manner are all part of that job. The more concern the shepherd has for the individuals who are in need of health care, supplemental food assistance or individual attention, the healthier the flock and the more profitable the whole operation is. (This lesson applies to more than a flock of sheep.)

In Luke and Mathew, we back up 14 generations to David and another 14 generations to Abraham.

Even Peter made this connection when preaching about Jesus on the day of Pentecost when God poured out His Spirit and Jesus' followers were filled with God's presence - so filled that they were overwhelmed by God Himself! So overwhelmed they were speaking in other languages and some would say "heavenly languages" but all nearby heard the Gospel in their native tongue.

Why?

Acts 2, we find Peter preaching about who Jesus is - The Good Shepherd, the Shepherd-King! God was in that moment, fulfilling all

that had been spoken about Him! He was uniting people that had previously been divided and marginalized. He was creating for himself a FLOCK - a FAMILY - a PEOPLE to call His own, united not by language but by the law of love - the GOSPEL of peace!

Look what Peter says when preaching about Jesus in Acts 2.

Acts 2:21-41

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning him,

" 'I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
my flesh also will dwell in hope.
²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One see corruption.
²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

²⁹ "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

" 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool." '

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." ³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name

of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

In Acts 3 we learn of Peter preaching in the Portico telling them about Abraham and Moses. To heroes of their faith, patriarchs.

Who were they? What did they do? Shepherds.

Who is Jesus?

Let me read the words of Jesus - He describes himself in John chapter 10.

John 10

(Speaking of Himself, Jesus says) 3...The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

In Luke and Mathew, we back up 14 generations to David and another 14 generations to Abraham but the Gospel of John takes a different approach. He tells us that Jesus has always existed and that HE is the WORD of GOD made into flesh and bone. John

tells us that Jesus breathed into existence creation itself. The universe, the galaxies, the stars and moon that light the night, the sun that lights the day - JESUS created the earth in which we live - all the sound of His voice.

He says **JN 1:14-18** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ... For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known!
WOW!

Ephesians 1:4-11 tells us about this plan since the foundation of the world. Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us[b] for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known[c] to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance..."

What is that inheritance? It's becoming the brothers and sisters of Jesus our Shepherd-King! What Jesus won for us on the cross becomes our gift! His victory becomes our victory!

Why? Just because He loves you that much!

Why is He called Shepherd?

Because He cares for you!

He knows your ever need. He comforts you. He is with you when you are feeling anxious and worried. He is with you when you are grieving. Like a good shepherd, He is with you and will carry you when you are weak and losing hope.

Jesus comes to us as Emmanuel, GOD with us, the Messiah long prophesied about. Although He is the King who rules all people and all creation, He is the Shepherd, intimately aware of your fears, your worries, your dreams, your hopes, what keeps you up at night. And He sends His Spirit to speak to you - to comfort you - to remind you of His goodness, His sovereignty - that He works all things for your good and His glory. Jesus is the Shepherd-King. The Humble Lord.

THE INCARNATION IS THE REVELATION OF HIS LOVE.

Love is sacrificing one's own comfort and status to bring someone else comfort, to bring someone else joy and to lift them to a higher position of esteem and honor.

Isn't that what Jesus did when He as the KING OF KINGS left Heaven to come for us!

When we remember WHY we have the incarnation, we're taken full circle. We see in our mind the day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

Phil 2:4-11

⁴ Christ Jesus... was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus' humility really is remarkable. Divinity took on humanity.

This is the KING of HEAVEN - the one to whom ALL ANGLES and ALL CREATURES bow and worship!

This is the ONE who spoke and the seas and mountains formed,

The ONE who put Jupiter in it's place.

The ONE who put Neptune in it's position in the solar system.

The ONE who with HIS HANDS put the galaxies in perfect array - enough for us to see and behold His artistry!

This is THE ONE that John calls the Bread of Life and the LIGHT of all mankind. Jesus is not only the Son of God but He IS God and yet he came as an infant - NEEDING parents and needing help. WOW. Divinity took on humanity.

When we think about our FUTURE with CHRIST - where His glory and power evermore shall be - we become even more thankful for the WAY that He came. It's amazing to think that He will reign in an eternal kingdom where Scripture says that we will rule and reign with Him!

Jesus, the Son of God came in such humility. His humility in how we came teaches us how we are to come to Him - humble.

To use the words of Charles Spurgeon... "The Son of God became a son of man to make the sons of men, sons of God."

He is and WAS the light of the world, breaking through the darkness in the fullness of time. But ONLY the humble would even notice him.

One of the first humble people to realize that God was up to something big was Zachariah, a priest. He and his wife Elizabeth had never been able to have kids and now they're old and have come to term with the fact that maybe they'll never get to see this Messiah they had read about and even recited so many times from the Torah and the Prophets.

We learn in Luke 1:5-25 that an angel named Gabriel surprised Zachariah with a special gift - an announcement! He WOULD IN FACT see the Messiah before he died!

He was so shocked by the message though he didn't believe it. For that unbelief he was made to be mute - unable to speak.

Imagine an articulate priest - a teacher of the word - being unable to say a word. Here he was now struggling to communicate with hand signals.

Like every "bad" situation, God is doing a lot of good in the background. Maybe God was teaching him how to quietly reflect and stand in awe at God's handiwork. Maybe God didn't want any unbelief to spread - we don't know all the reasons why. But we do know this. Months later when he laid eyes on baby Jesus, HE SPOKE! HE SHOUTED! He had seen what he longed to see His entire life! THE MESSIAH!

JESUS! THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD! THE SHEPHERD-KING that was prophesied about!

The Savior of not just the slave but the slave-owner.

The Savior of not just the Jewish people, but the gentile AND the oppressive pharisee. The Savior of every man woman and child would could call upon His name. Like Acts says "All who call upon the name of the Lord (the name of JESUS) shall be saved."

Zachariah knew a joy that you and I can know: If Jesus is your Shepherd-King, He can also be that to someone you know.

Luke 2:25-35

"At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him ²⁶ and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ That day the Spirit led him to the Temple.

So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, ²⁸ Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, now I can die in peace, as you have promised, I have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared for *all* people. ³² He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

³³ Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, but he will be a joy to many others. He has been sent

as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. ³⁵ As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.”

If Jesus is your Shepherd-King, He can also be that to someone you know. The Light of Jesus Christ is for Everyone

The prophet said “I have seen your salvation which you have prepared for *all* people.”

We’ve got to get it deep in our hearts that God’s salvation is for everyone. If we were asked, we’d all probably say “Yes, I believe everyone deserves salvation.” But in reality, many of us deny this truth in our Monday through Saturday.

As teens, some of you may walk by a guy or girl at school and not even consider their need for Christ.

As adults, some of you may have been ignoring the need of your coworker for months on end now. You know they’re down. You know they’ve not been themselves ...

Have you prayed with them yet?

Have you shared Jesus with them yet?

Have you invited them into a home, shared a meal and shared your story?

If not, then I don’t know that you actually believe that Jesus really IS the light for ALL people.

Our greatest joy as humans, God’s special creation, is to behold Jesus, the Son of God. Our second greatest joy is to share that joy with someone else and see them join God’s family and also behold Jesus, our Shepherd-King.

If Jesus is your Shepherd-King, He can also be that to someone you know.

Whoever they are, they need Christ just like you and I did and you can be the one to bring God’s light to them. Jesus, as we said earlier, is the Shepherd-King who lays down His life for His sheep!

What kind of Shepherd loves his sheep that much!?

What kind of King becomes a slave and a criminal to liberate the criminal in His kingdom?

What kind of love must consume a person to do that?

Only JESUS has that kind of love.

God’s word says that Christ came for EVERYONE!

In Isaiah 42:6-7, “.... And you will be a light to guide the nations. ⁷ You will open the eyes of the blind. You will free the captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark dungeons.” *Scrolling down – verse 16 says* “ ¹⁶ I will lead blind Israel down a new path, guiding them along an unfamiliar way. I will brighten the darkness before them and smooth out the road ahead of them.”

DOXOLOGY from iPhone or iMac plays - Jordan’s audio file

SALVATION CALL Do you know Jesus? Have you let the HOPE of the world and the light of mankind into your heart?