

Advent - A Certain Hope

Isaiah 7, 9, 11, 53 – We now have only 10 shopping days until Christmas.

--It's straight to Christmas as soon as Halloween is over. Thanksgiving has turned into two weeks of black Fridays.

--All the more reason for a season like Advent. Because **"You can never start too early getting ready for something big!"**

--Do you know what Advent means? As a Baptist, I never heard the word—when I did I thought it was the past tense for "invent"!

--Advent just means "coming"—traditionally it was a focus on the coming of Jesus, the second coming that is, leveraging the fact of His first coming.

--The most well documented and irrefutable fact of human history is that Jesus did come once and did live and did die and did rise again.

--This first coming tells us a lot of things: we can be **forgiven**, we can have **hope**, we can have **peace** with God—we can be sure He's **coming back**.

After church, where she had been taught about the Second Coming, a little girl was quizzing her mother.

"Mommy, do you believe Jesus will come back?" "Yes."

"Could He come this week?" "Yes."

"Today?" "Yes."

"Could He come in the next hour?" "Yes."

"In a few minutes?" "Yes, dear."

"Mommy, would you comb my hair?"

"You can never start too early getting ready for something big!"

1. Isaiah is going to be our starting point because he holds both advents in tension throughout his entire book.

--Isaiah was written more than 700 years before Jesus' first advent. You think 2 weeks-worth of black Fridays is something? Try 700 years of getting ready for Good Friday!

"You can never start too early getting ready for something big!"

1. It starts with Isaiah's name – it means "Jehovah Saves"

--Almost identical to the meaning of Jesus' name "God Saves"

--Their pronunciations in Hebrew are also almost identical.

2. Ends with Isaiah making the ultimate Advent statement: **Isaiah 64:1** He's longing for the Lord to come back and fix this mess. ***That is the purpose of Advent!***

2. We are going to move through 4 passages in Isaiah that give us a good picture of what the first Advent was all about.

Isaiah 7 -- A Sign

--**V. 2** –If you don't know God when trouble comes—an accurate word picture.

--**V. 9**– Ahaz was considering alliances with Assyria instead of trusting the Lord—So God is going to give him a great opportunity to believe.

--**VV. 10-12** –what a big dummy!

--**VV. 13-14** – "you" is plural—a sign to all of us.

--"Virgin" has been debated by liberal scholars because it just simply means young woman—they fail to consider the context of culture in which a young, unmarried woman was synonymous to virgin or *she'd be put to death*.

--They fail also to see the plain text—what sign is it that a young woman conceives? Isn't that how most of us got here? But when a virgin conceives, that's a sign!

--God doesn't do this because He can. He does this because it is necessary. **Matthew 1:22-23** -

-For God to be with us a virgin had to conceive.

--**V. 1** – This describes the area of the Galilee—a rough place to live because they were first to get hit by invading armies from the north.

--Never forget that Christmas was birthed in midst of extreme darkness and pain—while the angels are singing peace on earth, Herod is plotting the death of every infant boy in that region.

--**VV.2, 6** – Notice the carefully the blending of the two advents “**a son is born, and the government shall be on his shoulders.**”

--Notice how certain His return is—one runs right into the other with a comma separating them—we live right now in that comma!!

--It’s the same in the New Testament: **Luke 1:32-33**

--This is an earthly throne, an Israeli throne, a Jerusalem throne—the advents run together.

--**His first advent was just an introduction.**

“You can never start too early getting ready for something big!”

Isaiah 11 – A Shoot

--**VV. 1-2** – The word for Branch here is an important word both in the Old and New Testaments.

--Jesus is called the Branch all the time in the New Testament but our ears don’t hear it that way.

--**Matt. 2:23** – Joseph makes the decision to move his family back to Nazareth and that fulfills the Old Testament prophecy that Jesus would be called a Nazarene, but where do you see Him called that in the Old Testament? Where do you even hear of the town of Nazareth mentioned there?

--Nazarene is the word “Branch” in Hebrew: Netzr; Netzereth is Nazareth; Netzerene in Jesus’s title—the words are almost interchangeable.

--The demons and angels were keen on calling Him this: **Mark 1:24; Mark 16:6**

--The apostles were pretty keen on it as well: **Acts 3:6; 4:10**

--Jesus introduces Himself to Paul this way: **Acts 22:7-8** – Not Jesus the King, Son of God, Messiah, Lamb, Immanuel, Prince of Peace.

Why this title over those? Because it was a symbol that was seen all over Israel—it’s a symbol seen all over Gillespie County, actually.

--Those shoots coming out of the roots of a lot of trees around here are the way those trees rescue themselves because the tops are dying or are stressed heavily.

--How does God rescue humanity from its inevitable death? A shoot/Netzr from our root--from back at our beginning.

--**I Pet. 1:20**

“You can never start too early getting ready for something big!”

Isaiah 53 – A Suffering Savior

The ex-head of Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, **Masao Yoshida**, 58, died at a Tokyo hospital of esophageal cancer on **July 9, 2013**.

When the tsunami devastated Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant on **March 11, 2011**, Masao Yoshida worked to control the damage caused by the failing reactors. He disobeyed a company order and secretly continued using seawater, a decision that experts say almost certainly prevented a more serious meltdown and has made him an unlikely hero. He chose to place himself in danger, exposing himself to extreme radiation. And his story is just one of many at the plant.

He knew what would happen if he didn’t intervene and saved many lives as well as lessening the scope of the environmental disaster.

How do you impose peace among rebels? You have to kill them.

--God knew that peace on earth would mean the death of the people He loved, so He bought our salvation with His life.

--All our souls were on sale because of sin—the original and literal Black Friday—He bought us all back so that now we have Good Friday!

Isaiah 53:3-5

A lady was at the mall doing her Christmas shopping and was stressed out trying to find the perfect present for everyone on her list. Knowing that her credit cards were almost maxed out, she couldn't wait for Christmas to be over. Her arms were full of gifts as she tried to get on crowded elevator. She squeezed in with other weary shoppers, "Whoever came up with Christmas out to be strung up and killed." Several chuckled and shook their heads in agreement. Somewhere from the back of the elevator a voice spoke up and said, "Don't worry, they already did that to Him."

Jesus didn't die for what we have turned Christmas into, but He did die so our hope today could be certain—2000 years ago.

"You can never start too early getting ready for something big!"