

Expectations Of Hope

Long Beach Alliance Church • December 20, 2015 • Advent Week Four • Pastor Chris Lankford

The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

~Psalm 146:9 (NIV)

1) What Can Be Expected From Hope In God?

- A) This season of Christmas, despite all the distractions, is one of wonder and hope of the realization of ‘peace on earth;’ where “Silent Night, Holy Night” is not just a peaceful song, but an actual hope in peace which Messiah has promised (Isaiah 35:1-10).

- B) Everlasting joy! Imagine it; this is the promise of the return of Messiah! We live in a world where it is increasingly easy to hope in a sophisticated and mighty military, or politically powerful individuals, which only leads to disappointments. But the advent, the longing, the waiting with anticipation for Messiah brings satisfying Hallelujah’s (Psalm 146)!

- C) These passages are not the flowery assurances of a better tomorrow through technology, or earnest political promises seldom measured or realized. Rather, they serve as a testimony of God’s trustworthiness, the basis of our trust and hope in God (Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11). This is what we can expect from God, His resumé of hope and trust. These passages should not be read lightly, but rather, studied with hope and expectation of deliverance, with advent eyes!

2) Hope Is Measured And Realized In Christmas

- A) When Jesus Christ stands in the synagogue in which he grew up and makes bold Messianic claims (Luke 4:16-21), or when Jesus answers the identity questions of his relative John the Baptist (Matthew 11:4-5) -- His statements can seem obscure and seemingly strange to our ears. However, Jesus' statements couldn't be more biblically clear! Jesus Christ is the true fulfillment of hope and expectation for salvation (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9, 11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:5)!
- E) This is the substance of Christmas, that Jesus Christ is Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14, God with us); the baby in the feeding trough is God in the flesh (John 1:1, 14) who has come to seek and save people hopelessly steeped in the power structures of our culture and bring them hope and healing, sight and eternal salvation (Luke 19:1-10).
- F) The birth of Christ is good news that God's Kingdom has begun in the midst of the kingdom of this world (Matthew 9:35). The basis of our trust and hope for peace with God is the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who brings everlasting joy (Romans 5:1-2). This is the burden which hope can bear! Even for all the wickedness of this world, we have hope that God is at work (Philippians 1:6). We patiently wait with advent eyes; with hope in Christ (Romans 8:24-26).