

Worth Our Trust

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[0 : 00] What a blessing. If you have your Bibles and want to turn to Luke chapter 1, Luke chapter 1, 700 years ago before the birth of, excuse me, 700 years before, longer than ago, 700 years before the birth of Christ, there was a prophecy spoken that told of his coming.

It's a popular passage. You've probably heard it before. It's in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6 and 7. It says, For us a child is born, to us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of his peace, there will be no end on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. The truth is that Christ coming to earth was not some change of heart in the plan of God.

He was not surprised at our sinfulness or our need for a Savior. He knew that before he even created us. He planned it from the beginning. And God was at work before the earth was formed, and he is still at work in our midst.

[1 : 24] And nowhere is that seen any greater than this time of year when we look at the virgin birth of Christ and the incarnation of God into the flesh of human form.

This is as great an event as you could ever imagine. Not only is it a key part of God's plan for the redemption of the world, but it's also the strongest sign that God is at work around us in our midst. The events around his birth are evidence of God preparing us, for instance, preparing us for what is going to happen before it happens. He did it then.

He does it now. John prepared us for Jesus. He paved the way for Jesus. And Jesus prepared the way for the Holy Spirit and told us it was coming.

And the Holy Spirit prepares us for the coming of Christ. God prepares us. But not only does he prepare us, but he provides for us. And the evidence of that is again seen in the prophecies about Christ.

[2 : 33] The first one I mentioned was hundreds of years before. However, I want to focus this morning on, most of the morning, on the prophecy the angel gave to Mary when he announced to her that although she was a virgin and had known no man, she was pregnant with the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

It's in Luke chapter 1, beginning in verse 30, and it says this. And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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. And he'll reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of his kingdom there will be no end.

Of all things, to me, as I read that today, it screams of an announcement of the provision of God. God will provide.

[3 : 41] And this angelic message that is given focuses on three areas of God's provision that I want to focus on this morning. And I hope it will give you comfort, encouragement, possibly conviction, if needed, this morning.

First thing is, he is the one who rules. That is the theme of this passage. There are five descriptions given to this point. He says in verse 32, he will be great.

That may not sound like much, but when you realize it was spoken in contrast to the rest of humanity, it just begins to get the ball rolling of sorts. He goes on to say, and will be called the Son

of the Most High, which means he will be the offspring of God himself.

It speaks of the throne of God. He will reign over the house of Jacob. In other words, he is the Messiah. He is the Savior. He is the one that the Jews were looking for.

The greatest king in the history of Israel up to this time was David. David grew the kingdom like nobody else ever did. He was a warrior and also quite a rider.

[4 : 51] And he messed up, and God don't hide those things from us. He shows us the mess ups of folks. That's why I love the biographies in scripture of people, because it gives us the whole truth.

God used David in a mighty way. And so when people anticipated a coming Messiah, they would always think of what David was and how great David was.

And he was a great king. But as great as King David was, what he did came through King David and came through the lineage of David.

But in reality, it would be much greater than David in Christ. He'll be the leader of God's people. Forever, his kingdom will never end.

Not only would he lead God's people, but it would never stop. Now, have no doubt. I want to clarify something.

[5 : 48] Even in the state of our world today, with all the wickedness in our world, I want you to understand something. God is on the throne. He never left the throne.

He never will leave the throne. He rules. And Israel has looked for a savior. They had looked for him. They were chosen by God.

And God wanted to work in them and to allow them to do a work in the world to reach the world. He was to use them to spread his good news to the world.

And they were failing at the job. And now Christ is coming. Now God's people, those who have faith in God, have a much more defined opportunity at understanding the ruler that will lead them forever.

So what does all that mean? Well, it speaks of the sovereignty of God, for one. And the sovereignty of God says that what God says he'll do, he will do.

[6 : 49] You can rest in that. It also speaks of the eternity of God, that God's not here for a portion of time. He will never stop.

He will never fail. When people have no leader, they crumble. Without a vision, people perish.

But when God is on the throne of your life, you have nothing to fear. He rules. Thank God.

I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I know who holds tomorrow. And I rest in the fact that he rules. The prophet said it. The angel said it. You ought to believe it. Not only that, but it also says that he is the one who brings peace and counsel.

If this reign never ends and the kingdom is forever, then it speaks of a strong, steady, peaceful consistence. Again, that is the backup.

[7 : 52] That is backed up by the words of Isaiah chapter 9, verses 6 and 7, when it speaks of the prince of peace and the wonderful counselor. Literally in the Hebrew, it speaks of a wonder of a counselor.

Now, I want you to think about something with me, if you will. Who is a counselor? It is one that listens.

It's one that lets you find guidance. It's one that brings stability in unstable times. Now, I want you to imagine, if you would.

Can you imagine going to a counselor that knew all about you and knew your situation, every part of it, more than you knew about it, much more than you knew about it, before you even spoke?

A counselor you could go to, and there would be no need for you to explain your circumstances. A counselor you could go to, there would be no need for you to protect what you don't want them to know.

[9 : 08] No need to hide things. You could just share. My friend, that's God. That, that's the Lord. God puts a few people in our path along the way that can give good counsel, and I'm thankful for them.

But no one ever gives it like God. And he is to be second to no one. He's called the prince of peace. What does that mean for us?

Well, Paul puts it really well for us to understand. He says in Philippians chapter 4, verse 4 through 7, he says, Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I'll say, rejoice.

If you're rejoicing this morning, inform your face, okay? If you know the Lord Jesus, you have an eternal security that you can rest in. And no matter what your circumstances may be, you know that God's on top of it.

And you, well, we ought to rejoice in that. So he says, Rejoice in the Lord always. And he knew some people didn't get it the first time. So he said, Again, I'll say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.

[10:18] That hits a little closer to home, doesn't it? The Lord is at hand. Do not be anxious about anything.

But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God.

Supplication is asking. It's putting out before the Lord. It surpasses all understanding, and I love this. And it will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

When do you know that you've received good counsel? When you're led by the still waters of peace in the midst of the storm that you face. That's when you know.

And sometimes good counsel brings peace by ushering in the prince. And sometimes there's a shaking of the foundations of sorts that come with counsel. That's called conviction.

[11:25] I often say God throws curveballs. You got issues with somebody or you got a burden for somebody and you begin to pray for that person. Lord, straighten them out.

Make them right. They don't act right toward me. Do something to them, Lord. You know. Inevitably, I don't pray stuff like that about y'all.

But inevitably, I'm praying with those kind of sense of feeling. I always see God begin to work in me. He always speaks to me.

I'm not saying he don't speak to the person that I pray for. But I notice that he always deals with me. You know why?

Because he's a wonder of a counselor. He knows what we need. I'm thankful this Christmas that I don't have to do much to get good counsel.

[12:30] If I'll just kneel and at least in my heart kneel and confess my sins and bear my heart, that babe in a manger that we talk about will intercede on our behalf and God's wisdom will come.

And I'm glad that the storm can be settled. Wise counsel is waiting and there is one that is already in our tomorrows. So he rules.

He brings peace. He gives counsel. But he also, he is the one who redeems.

He is the one who redeems. And I save the best for last. Because without this, due to the sovereignty of God and due to the holiness of God, we would be separate from him for all of eternity in hell.

Without that, without this, without his redemption, the peace that we speak of would be short-lived. However, he is one who redeems.

[13:45] It echoes again and again in the Nativity story. In Luke chapters 2, verse 36 through 38, a lady named Anna is brought up.

She is a godly lady and her life is characterized by prayer and fasting. And upon the presentation of Jesus in the temple, she thanked God for Jesus and proclaimed that he would be the redeemer.

In Luke chapter 2, verse 38, it says, And coming up at that very hour, that hour they're talking about, is the hour in which they presented Christ in the temple.

She began to give thanks to God and speak to him to all who were waiting for the redemption. And to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. What a testimony.

Did she know that 33 years later he'd go to the cross? That he'd give his life? That he would rise again? That he would give hope and resurrected life to all who would receive him?

[14:58] Did she understand all that? Right there? At such an early age in that child? I don't know. But she told what she knew.

She knew that somehow he would redeem God's people. And it wasn't only that. There was another man there named Simeon. A man who was waiting on the redeemer.

God had told him that he would see the Messiah before his death. And he had highly anticipated that since he had been told that. And when Joseph and Mary got to the temple, they didn't walk up and say, we want to present to you the redeemer of the world.

They didn't say that at all. But Simeon, a man of God, knew when he saw the child it was Christ. He took the 40-day-old child and he spoke and said in chapter, excuse me, Luke tells us in chapter 2,

verse 29 through 32.

Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word. My eyes have seen your salvation that you prepared in the presence of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to the people Israel.

[16:23] And then notice what he said to Mary in verses 34 and 35. It says, Holding that baby, he spoke to Mary.

Because she had given birth to Jesus and she would be there when the Lord died. The sword that would pierce her soul that he talked about would be the death of Christ.

Like a sword through a heart would be the pain of that mother. And he is saying that Christ will cause falling and rising.

What in the world does that mean? Or 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 7 and 8 tells us about that. It says, The cornerstone.

The cornerstone. The cornerstone. The cornerstone. The cornerstone. Literally, cornerstone is the head of the corner. And that is translated as a cornerstone. That can also be translated as a capstone.

[18:22] Now, the cornerstone is the start of the construction. And that day, they had to get the right angle at a corner to get the rest of the building straight.

And they called that first stone to set that the cornerstone. It's where the cornerstone. It's where the corner is set for the foundation.

And how important that is. I was in a building project one time with a church. And they dug the foundations for the building. It was a regular, somewhat square building, honestly.

But they dug the foundations for that. And I noticed that there were a couple of changes to it that I didn't recognize. And I got to Prince.

And I walked out there and said, Why is this door over here? And they said, Oh, we've got the building turned 90 degrees.

[19:24] I said, Well, thanks a lot. That's great. If they hadn't got the foundation right, they never would have got the building right. So you had to get the cornerstone correct.

But not only that, but it was also, he's also the capstone. The capstone is the finale. It's the last piece. If you've got a brick wall and you put a stone across the top of it that's decorative, that's the capstone.

That closes it off. That finishes the project. Now, when it's speaking of the Lord Jesus, what that means is Jesus Christ is the cornerstone.

He's the starting place. And he's the capstone. He's the ending place. Scripture also says he's the alpha and the omega. Which means he's the A and the Z.

He is the author and the finisher of our faith. He's what the church is made of. He's what the church is made for.

[20:33] But I want to be clear about something. But to those who do not believe, he is a stumbling block. And the point is this.

You have to do something with Christ. Once you are presented the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that Christ came, virgin birth, to this world, and lived a sinless life, and died a death only fit for sinners, so that we would have the opportunity to have our sins forgiven and to be made right with the Lord and once again be reunited with God the way it ought to be and to spend eternity with him. If you've been presented that and acknowledged that, you've got to do something with it. You have to do something with Christ. You have to decide.

It's a make or a break. Listen, if you're here this morning and there's never been a time in your life when you surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ and given him control of your life, and you say, you know what?

I'm just not quite ready for that yet. I don't want to make a decision about that. And you walk out the door, let me be clear about something. You made a decision. You made a decision.

[21:58] If I go to a car lot tomorrow and look at a car and say I want to ponder on this a little more, I want to leave. I'll tell you what, the sales staff will tell you that you've made a decision because they don't expect you to come back.

And the reality is when you deal, when God speaks to your heart, when God convicts your heart and you realize that there needs to be a change upon your life and you walk away from that, you've made a decision.

You've got to do something with Jesus. You have to do something with him. Without Jesus, you are destined, that's what scripture says, you are destined to stumble.

You either surrender to him or you fail, you stumble at the most crucial time of your life. You'll lose for eternity if you miss Christ.

As scripture says, you're destined to lose without him. Now I want to be clear about something.

There's a lot of talk about faith today, spirituality, religion, even God.

[23 : 02] And some peacemakers that mean well have tried to bridge and bond several faiths and religions together as if they were common.

Do you want to know what the stumbling block and all that is? Jesus. Jesus. You have to do something with Jesus.

And people don't like it when you say the only way that you can come to God is to surrender your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. They don't like that. There's an ex, S-X.

Whoa. I'm not going to say that word today. Jesus is exclusive. You have to do something with him.

He said himself. People like to emphasize the red letters of Jesus more than the rest of scripture.

Well, I got news for you.

[24 : 03] It's all inspired by the same Holy Spirit. But let's go to the red letters. Why don't we? You know what Jesus said in John 14, 6? I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me. He's the corner and he's the cap. He holds it all together.

You can't ignore the necessity of Jesus. He is what identifies you or he is what makes you stumble. He is the one who redeems.

So do you need a king who's sovereign and holy? Try Jesus. How about counsel today? Do you need counsel that will provide peace for you?

Try Jesus. You want to celebrate the real meaning of Christmas? Celebrate the Redeemer.

because he came to this earth. They prophesied that he would.

[25 : 08] Even when he was a child they prophesied of him. In later days the magi would come and bring gold. A gift fit for a king.

They would bring frankincense. A gift fit for a priest. They would bring myrrh. Prophesying that our Redeemer would be a suffering servant as part of a mixture they put upon the dead.

All of those gifts were prophecies of Christ as Savior and they were right. So what do you want for Christmas this year? Do you want something to come into your life that will forever change you?

How about Jesus? He is worth trusting. He is worth giving all your life to. And there's no greater way to celebrate Christmas.

Man, wasn't the baptism fabulous? Wasn't that wonderful? And I told them before they baptized I said listen when somebody asks you when you gave your life to Christ when you got saved don't tell them about your baptism.

[26 : 27] Because before we ever baptize you there's come a point in your life when you've surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ and give Him control. And all we did today was obediently follow His leadership and let other people know the difference Christ has made in us personally and privately but make that known publicly.

publicly. Have you ever given your heart and life to the Lord? I want you to know the invitation for you to come to Him is open. You can come to Christ today.

He'll accept you the way you are and He'll make you to be what He'd have you to be. He'll change your life. Meet you right where you are. I gotta clean up some things.

No, no, you can't clean it up. Only by Him can you be clean. Have you done that privately but never made it public? I told these baptism candidates, I said, you're gonna influence somebody by your willingness to be bold in your faith.

Have you made a private decision but never made it public, biblically public? That'd be the case you come. Maybe God's drawing you to be a part of this fellowship. You know that God would have you to be in this place to join us in the journey.

[27 : 43] God's doing great things here. I thank God for what He's doing. May we go in His speed and jump on board if God's leading you to do that. Maybe there's burdens that you have, things you need to get right.

These steps can make for a makeshift altar for you today. You can just come and bring that before the Lord. I'll be happy to pray with you if you'd like. I have no idea what God's telling you but I know

you'll never be satisfied until you follow His will and His way.
Lord Jesus, I love you and I thank you Lord for the opportunity you give us to celebrate Christmas not only on December the 25th but throughout our lives because our Redeemer came.
Help us, oh God, to celebrate that today with commitment, Father, I pray. In Jesus' precious name,
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.