

Someone's Coming

Various Texts

Introduction

I have an ambitious plan for this morning's message. I'm going to attempt to cram the whole story of the OT into one sermon. We'll survey the OT through the lense of "someone's coming."

This is one way to summarize :

- The whole OT - "someone's coming."
- The whole NT "He came...and He's coming again!"

And here's the goal of this morning's study: To bring us to awe, wonder, worship of the birth of Jesus.

- For you see that response several times in Luke 2 - ponder, treasure, awe, wonder, worship
- I want those that have never pondered Christ, treasured him, and responded with faith and wonder, and worship...to do those very things today.
- and for believing Christians to do that afresh - in fact, to increase in faith, awe, wonder, worship.

But how do we get there?

- we have to try to feel the drama of the story (like we do with Passion week)
- anticipation > realization > awe/wonder/worship
- part of the problem is that for us hasn't been this generational, building anticipation of His coming

Uniqueness of Jesus' birth--When Jesus was born several handfuls of people knew that this was special right from the very beginning. We're not interested in the birth of Christ only because he later went on to do famous miracles and die an infamous death.....at least we shouldn't be (that's the case with almost every other biography - but not this one). The people mentioned in Matt 1 and Lk 2 see the glory, wonder, and fulfillment of Jesus' birth right from the very beginning. They didn't know all that would later come of this Jesus, but they knew - from angels, from a star, and from all kinds of hints in the OT - that the long-awaited hope of the world had come. Because they knew the OT.

I. A Beginning of Promises and People

God created. Man sinned...

PROMISE: Gen 3:15 - a promised son who will crush Satan and sin

Gen 3:15 [God said to the serpent] I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.

Is it *Cain*? Maybe God had fulfilled his promise with the very first son? No, he kills his brother.

Is it *Noah*? A savior--God's beginning a new creation with him.
But not long after getting off the ark -- moral failure...

PROMISE: Gen 12, 15, 17 promises to Abraham

1) that his offspring would be many, 2) land, and 3) eventually bless the whole world

Is it *Abraham*?

No children for 100+ years (father of a multitude)

Eventually he does bless him with a child named Isaac. Is this the One?

Is it *Isaac*?

Not much is mentioned about Isaac. Same chapter - Abraham dies and the story picks up with Isaac's kids.

Is it *Esau*, Isaac's first-born son?

No, he sold his birthright for a plate of food

Is it *Jacob*?

- Looks promising. God repeats the Abraham promises to him. He enters the land.
- God changes his name from Jacob to Israel - he's birthing a nation.
- But he's really a scoundrel all the way through. He's often a wimp.
- Oh, he wrestles with the angel of the Lord and prevails. But Hos 12 tells us how he prevailed

Hosea 12:4 He wrestled with the angel and prevailed; he wept and begged for his favor.

- Jacob needs a Savior too. He only prevailed when he recognized that he could not.

Is it *Joseph*? (Jacob had 12 sons)

Joseph knew from the beginning that God had chosen to bless him (fancy coat)
In God's providence, his brothers' betrayal/lies lead to Joseph's prominence...and to the family's salvation.

The line of blessing (promises to Abraham) has been preserved.

- But no land. Not many people.
- And then the book of Genesis ends.
- The next book picks up a few hundred yrs later by telling us that ...they are many people now, but they're slaves in Egypt.

II. The Need for Righteous Rule

PROMISE: Gen 49:10 – a lion-like ruler from Judah...and the people will obey him.

Is it *Moses*?

A lot of good could be said about Moses (strong, courageous, leads the people), but he's often griping. Ironically he's often complaining to God about how much the people complain! Moses is angry (hits the rock twice). God will not let him enter the Promised Land.

PROMISE: Deut 18:18-19 – a prophet like Moses “and he shall speak my words”

Is it *Joshua*?

Josh begins very hopefully--A mighty warrior, great leader, a lot of military success. They move into the land God had promised. They settle down. They set up shop. All seems very well. The book ends with a farewell speech from Joshua in his dying days. He pleads with the people to be faithful to God, to obey Him; he offers several warnings. Then the book ends. Joshua dies.

Lingering question: Will God's people remain faithful, obedient, pure, holy, and steadfast with Yahweh?

How about the *Judges*?

Will judges work? No. They're needed. Some of them were good and godly. But the people are at an all time low. It's just a depressing book. The change from Joshua to Judges is staggering.

Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

PROMISE: 1 Samuel 2:35 I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house...

Is it *Samuel*?

He's a faithful Priest. No, the people reject him. “We need a king! Give us a king!” At first Samuel is disappointed, but eventually he agrees, because his own kids are wayward. What good is it if he's the boss and he turns things over to his wicked kids? So God gave them a king.

Is it *Saul*?

No, God's favor was never on Saul. He was a good warrior but he wasn't godly.

Is it *David*?

A promising start: (David and Goliath) God's favor is clearly upon Him
A man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14), but then there's the snowballing
sin with Bathsheba (adultery, murder). Eventually there is repentance and
God forgives.

PROMISE: 2 Sam 7

2 Samuel 7:16 your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

2 Samuel 7:5 Would you build me a house to dwell in?

- Eventually it's clear that David won't do this, but his son will

Is it *Solomon*?

- builds the beautiful and glorious temple--according to God's direction.
- famous for his wisdom
- infamous for his pursuit of pleasure

III. But There Are Some Great People Here!

Many of us view the OT as a collection of people stories – short biographies

- On one hand, that's wrong because the Bible is a whole big story not a collection of vignettes
- On the other hand, the one big story is indeed made up of basically that – people. Characters--Snapshots of lives--Stories within the stories.

The individual stories about most of these people give us a repeated principle for the grand story: *In His timing; in His way.* He must do it. He must bring it to pass. Do not trust in princes or kings. No one has been able to get us where God says this is all going.

So many OT figures are good. They advance God's plan/blessing in a unique way....but are not The One. Best case scenario is that there isn't disappointment until they die -- hope goes out the window because their godly rule can't continue...and their son is almost never as good. At worst, they are severely flawed people in the midst of their God given victories, wisdom, godly conviction, etc.

Example of *Sampson*: Strong; great warrior--took out whole armies by himself. He has the right enemies in a sense; he fights on the right side, you could say.

What was his downfall? A woman and a haircut was his downfall.

- God made him so strong (supernaturally strong)
-but he was in himself pathetically weak

Almost every OT story has a glimmer of hope that makes you wonder “could this be Him?” Then it eventually leads to some sort of major disappointment. It all speaks so loudly and clearly: “I guess we keep waiting.”

All the while the promises of “One to come” don’t fade off in the distance of the past--they keep getting repeated. In fact, they’re often getting enlarged.

IV. The Prophets Expand the Promises

He’ll be born of a virgin

Isaiah 7:14 *the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the **virgin** shall conceive and bear a son...*

Maybe God himself will come?!

Isaiah 7:14 *[the virgin] shall call his name **Immanuel**.*

Isaiah 9:6-7 *For to 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. 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.*

Ezek 34:11 *For thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep ... I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them ... I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,” declares the Lord GOD. “I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick;*

Ezek 34:23 *Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd.*

Or is it “Jesse’s son” with *unparalleled righteousness, authority, and peace* (Isa 11:1ff)

“Messiah” – an all encompassing title for this one who keeps being promised (Dan 9)

A ruler from Bethlehem – One who is “from old”

Micah 5:2 *But you, O Bethlehem..., too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is **from of old**, from **ancient days**.*

But wait, is he supposed to come in suffering and lowliness?

Isaiah 53:5 *He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.*

Isaiah 52:13-14 *Behold, My **servant will prosper**, He will be high and **lifted up and greatly exalted**.¹⁴ Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His **appearance was marred** more than any man...*

Zechariah 12:10 *...so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him...*

V. Isn't Anyone Coming?

There's no good candidate to consider during this time – there isn't any good prospect who could be The One and fulfill God's plans – like there was before with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon.

Two big things are getting further and further away like a fork in the road – two roads which start close together but then get further and further apart.

- The *promises* are getting bigger and the *people* are getting smaller (less promising).
- It's becoming clearer and clearer that we can't do it.
- The human race (and even Judah as a nation) is painfully seeing (and feeling) their hopelessness and helplessnessapart from God intervening.

- The prophets' ongoing warnings regarding sin
- Captivity – out of the land, away from his presence, under ungodly rule
- Restoration to the land > disappointment
- More prophets, more sin, more hardness –
- More prophecy about one to come
- New promises of a certain age to come
- And then things go silent – for 400 years God stops speaking
 - What an eerie judgment this is. No more warnings. No more threats. It's silent.
- Has God given up and walked away? Some certainly thought that.

VI. And Then...

Galatians 4:4 *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman...*

Now we can see why Matt's account begins with a genealogy--it matters!

Matt 1:1 *the genealogy of Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham*

Matt 1:20-21 – he'll be born "of the Holy Spirit; you shall call his name Jesus"

Simeon (Lk 2) – he had long been "waiting for the consolation of Israel." And when Jesus is brought to the temple only 8 days old, he said "I can die now, for my eyes have seen your salvation; a light to the gentiles has come."

Jn 1:41 – we have found the Messiah

Jn 4:25 – I know when Messiah comes, he will tell us all things.

Only Jesus could have fulfilled the intricate recipe for saving hope that was given in the OT

The OT is a story of:

- a few mighty warriors - who at best could defeat the Assyrians
- a few good rulers - who at best had a generation or two of a modicum of peace
- a few wiseman - many of which did some of the most foolish things
- a few real godly, principled men, but they had their flaws...and their sons often took a downward spiral.

The OT is a story of *sons* (and the repeated promise of a better Son--God's own Son). A son who would:

- defeat sin and Satan
- begin a new creation
- be the blessing to the whole world
- the pathway of perfect peace, to rule forever and ever
- The ruler from Judah who demands obedience
- A prophet better than Moses who gives us God's Words
- An eternal ruler; forever on his throne
- The true and faithful Shepherd
- be the embodiment of God with us (God himself came to us - *Immanuel*)
- come to be "our *peace*" (Eph 2:14)
- *be* salvation

Now, hopefully we've moved closer to the faith and feeling of those in Luke 2: *ponder, treasure, awe, wonder, worship*

In fact, we know more than they did in a sense. We know the rest of the story.

Gospel specifics

Gospel appeal

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Discussion 1: Promises Made & Promises Kept--Worship the Promise Keeper with Awe & Wonder

Review the list of promises from the sermon. For each:

- *How was man's need for God revealed/demonstrated?*
- *Discuss how is Jesus Christ the fulfillment of that promise? And how these should inspire awe and wonder!*

1. Promise: Gen 3:15 - a promised son who will crush Satan and sin
2. Promise: Gen 12, 15, 17 promises to Abraham's seed to bless the whole world
3. Promise: Gen 49:10 - a lion-like ruler from Judah
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6. Promise: 2 Sam 7
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Discussion 2: Promises Kept & Predictions Fulfilled --Strengthening Your Testimony *(leave time for discussion 3!)*

We are commissioned by God to be witnesses and ambassadors for Christ. It is not a question of if we are to be witnesses and ambassadors--we already are. The question is: what kind of witness or ambassador are you?

When you think of your "testimony," many of us have been taught to think of this only as our "conversion story" and the benefits and blessings we have received

from Christ, but if we look at the testimonies of the newly commissioned Church in Acts, we see that the testimonies are primarily about Christ's identity and mission. A few examples among many:

^{ESV} **Acts 10:42** And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

^{ESV} **Acts 23:11** The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."

^{ESV} **Acts 26:22** To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³ that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."

The strength of your testimony is not determined by what God brought you out of, but by your knowledge of the Gospel of Christ and your ability to communicate it.

- *Court is in session. What can you tell the court (your neighbor) about the promises/predictions and fulfillments mentioned in the sermon?*

[Can you put it in your own words and have it make sense? Can you do it without slipping into Christian lingo? Have people in your group describe some of the specific promises. We quote God's Word and we explain it...]

Promises listed in previous question.

Predictions¹:

1. *Born of the seed of woman (Gen 3:15/Gal 4:4;Matt 1:20)*
2. *Born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14/Matt 1:18-25/Luke 1:26-35)*
3. *Son of God (Psa 2:7/Matt 3:17)*
4. *Seed of Abraham (Gen 22:18/Matt 1:1;Gal 3:16)*
5. *Son of Isaac (Gen 21:12/Luke 3:23,34;Matt 1:2)*
6. *Son of Jacob (Numbers 24:17/Luke 3:23,34;Matt 1:2)*

¹ This is only the list dealing with Jesus' birth. There are more than 300 Old Testament predictions fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

7. *Tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10/Luke 3:23,32;Matt 1:6)*
8. *Family line of Jesse (Isa 11:1/Luke 3:23,32)*
9. *House of David (Jer 23:5/Luke 3:23,31;Matt 1:1)*
10. *Born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2/Matt 2:1;Luke 2:4-7)*
11. *Presented with gifts (Psa 72:10/Matt 2:1,11)*
12. *Herod kills children (Jer 31:15/Matt 2:16)*

Discussion 3: Christmas Season--Opportunity for Mission

- *This is clearly a time when people are more open to invitation to a church service. Who will you invite?*

[Don't be shy about phrasing this as an expectation. We need to do this!]
- *Pray together for wisdom and courage to invite people, for those who are invited to come, and for God's Word & Spirit to bring repentance and faith. What an awesome privilege we have!*

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