

Living With Hope



Getting Started

It is easy to use the word “hope” incorrectly. Hope is to wish for something, and to believe that wish will come true. But sometimes when we say we hope for something, deep down we don’t believe that wish will come true. We might say, “I hope it doesn’t rain,” or “I hope I find a job,” or “I hope I don’t get sick,” without really having any faith these desires can come true. Jesus offers us real hope. His birth fulfilled a promise God made to his people a long time ago. We can have true hope in him because he always keeps his promises.

Improving Your Vocabulary

fulfill (v) - to keep a promise; to satisfy

engaged (adj) - promised to be married

disgrace (v) - to cause someone to feel very ashamed

conceive (v) - become pregnant

census (n) - a count of the population of a certain area or country

stable (n) - a barn or place where animals live

shepherd (n) - a person whose job is to watch and protect sheep

manger (n) - an open box that holds food for a horse, cow, or other animal

pasture (n) - a big field for animals to eat grass

Reading God's Word

Matthew 1:18-21 and 24-25

18 This was how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit. **19** Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately. **20** While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. **21** She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins.” **24** So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him to. **25** But he had no sexual relations with her before she gave birth to her son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

At that time, everyone had to go to their hometown to register for a census. Joseph and Mary traveled to Joseph's hometown, Bethlehem. The town was very crowded, so they had to live in a stable while they were there. At that time, Jesus was born.

Luke 2:1-20

8 There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, **10** but the angel said to them, “Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. **11** This very day in David's town your Savior was born—Christ the Lord! **12** And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” **13** Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: **14** “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!”

15 When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us.” **16** So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. **17** When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. **18** All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. **19** Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. **20** The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.

John 10:9-11

9 I am the gate. Those who come in by me will be saved; they will come in and go out and find pasture. **10** The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness. **11** I am the good shepherd, who is willing to die for the sheep.

For further study, see Psalm 42; Romans 15:13, and Hebrews 6:13-20

Taking a Closer Look

1. How did Mary become pregnant? (Matthew 1:18)

2. What did Joseph first plan to do when he found out Mary was pregnant? (Matthew 1:19) What changed his mind? (Matthew 1:20)

3. Why did the angel say to name the baby Jesus? (Matthew 1:21)

4. What kind of conditions was Jesus born in?

5. What good news did the angels bring to the shepherds? (Luke 2:10-11)

6. What did the army of angels sing? (Luke 2:13-14)

7. Who came to see Jesus at his birth? (Luke 2:16) Why do you think God chose such a poor place for the birth of his son? Why do you think he chose poor, dirty shepherds to come worship him?

8. What did Jesus come to do? (John 10:10-11) What hope does this give us?

Taking Action

1. Sometimes, even if we know God is there, it is hard to feel close to him. This makes it hard to have hope. How can we feel closer to God in our day-to-day lives?
3. If you believe in God's promises, you can have new hope in your life. If you want to believe, say a prayer and ask him into your heart. His promises are for everyone!

Memory Verse: Hebrews 10:23

Let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise.

Review the Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks with the correct vocabulary words. Then discuss your answers to the questions with a classmate.

1. Have you ever _____ a promise you made to someone?
2. What is a good age to become _____?
3. Why does Jesus call himself a _____? Who are the "sheep"? What did Jesus do for them?
4. Do you think a _____ would be a comfortable place to spend the night?



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