



# HOPE

EASTER AT FONDREN

**An Easter Devotional**

# The Fall: Is There Hope After It All Went Wrong?

**BY CHRIS MIXON**

**READ | Genesis 3:6-7 & Genesis 3:15**

Genesis 3 records one of the most tragic scenes in the entire Bible. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and sin entered the world. Mankind fell. From the moment they disobeyed, Adam and Eve were marked by guilt, shame and fear. In their desire to be like God, they believed the serpent's lies, disregarded what God had told them and ultimately found themselves cut off and separated from Him. At its core, sin causes us to question God's Word and also to doubt His love for us, just like Adam and Eve did. Because of sin, we all have turned from God's ways to our own ways. We have all disobeyed God, rebelled against Him, and rightly deserve His judgment. The consequence of sin leads to separation between God and man and eternal death without hope. Every effect of sin in the world comes from that one day in the Garden. Yet, even in the middle of this sad scene, God gives a promise. In Genesis 3:15, we find the first Gospel promise that One will come from Eve's offspring Who will bruise the head of the serpent. He will defeat sin and restore the relationship between God and man.

The promise of Jesus at the very beginning of the Bible gives us hope that God will not abandon us. He will not forsake us in the battle with sin. Jesus came and He lived a perfect life, never doubting the Father's love and never choosing His own way. He never once gave in to the temptations of sin and even though He had no sin of His own for which to pay. He died the death that we deserve. As He prepared to face death to pay for our sin, He prayed, "Not My will but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). But His death was not the end. He rose from the grave and now we have hope. Sin has been defeated and the victory has been won! Galatians 3:13 says that He became, "a curse for us." He took our penalty upon himself on the cross so that we can be forgiven of all our sin against God. We can now be free from sin and its power over us. We have hope.

## **REFLECT**

- 1. How does sin affect your relationship with God?**
- 2. What is the promise of hope in Genesis 3?**
- 3. What are some ways that you can build your hope in God?**
- 4. How does this hope affect the way you live?**

**LISTEN | His Mercy is More - Shane & Shane**

# Our Hope in the Foreshadowing: Abraham and Isaac

BY JON WOOD

READ | Genesis 22:6-8

When Abraham was an old man, God promised him that He would give him a son and that by that son, not only would his offspring be as many as the stars in the sky, but all the nations would be blessed. Imagine then, Abraham's surprise when God told him to take his son Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice. The child of The Promise was to be taken away. If Abraham went through with this, how would God fulfill His promise? Would there be any hope? There must have been many questions and emotions racing through Abraham's mind. But Abraham obeyed God. He took Isaac, led him out, laid the wood for the burnt offering on his shoulders and they began their way up the mountain. Isaac accepted the burden laid on him and the journey to his death as he followed the will of his father. As we read later in this account, at the very moment Abraham was about to kill his son, God provided a ram for the sacrifice. God preserved not only Isaac's life but also the Promise of hope that would come through him to every nation, tribe and tongue on planet earth.

Nearly 1000 years later, a similar scene would play out. Once again there would be a sacrifice. Just as Abraham was prepared to offer his own son, God the Father would offer His Own Son for the sins of all who would be saved. Wood was laid on Jesus' shoulders as He carried His cross and walked willingly up a mountain to the place of His death. But this time there would be no ram. There would be no last minute reprieve. This sacrifice could only be made by the One Who was perfect in every way. The One Who perfectly pleased the Father and would not only atone for sin but also provide the final justification that the holiness of God demands. The Righteous would die for the unrighteous, thereby reconciling them to God by His Own blood. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was foreshadowed in Abraham's readiness to sacrifice Isaac and in Isaac's willingness to submit to the will of his father. But Jesus is our true and better Isaac, for His blood takes away the sins of the world and offers us hope.

*Additional Reading | John 3:16, 2 Corinthians 5:21 & 1 John 4:10*

## REFLECT

- 1. In the account of Abraham and Isaac, how do you see the death of Jesus foreshadowed?**
- 2. How is Jesus our true and better Isaac?**
- 3. How does Jesus' death bring righteousness to those who put their faith in Him?**

LISTEN | Living Hope - Phil Wickham

# Our Hope in the Commandments: Moses and The Law

BY JON WOOD

READ | **Leviticus 16:15-16**

While the Israelites wandered in the desert, God gave the Law and the Commandments to Moses. We rightly think of the Ten Commandments as the summary of the entire Moral Law. But God also gave Moses the Ceremonial Law and Commandments which would serve as a guardian for when the Messiah would come to fulfill them (Galatians 3:24-26). In Leviticus 16, we have God telling Moses what to do on the Day of Atonement, the day each year when the High Priest would enter the holiest part of the Temple and offer an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people. The priest was to offer a sacrifice for his own sin, then offer one for the sins of the people. The blood of those sacrifices would be sprinkled on the altar, symbolically covering over the sin of the people before God. This is known as atonement, which is a covering over or a making right of wrongs. Closely related to the idea of atonement is propitiation, which is the satisfaction of God's wrath toward sin. On the Day of Atonement, the sacrifices of the High Priest symbolically offered atonement and propitiation for the sins of the people. But there was more. In addition to the sacrifices, the priest would also lay his hands on a goat and confess the people's sins over it before sending it away into the wilderness. This is what theologians call, "expiation." It's a taking away of sin, a removal. It's also where we get the term "scapegoat." So, in this sacred ceremony that Moses was commanded to implement, sin was covered over, God's wrath was satisfied, sin was removed and the process had to be repeated every year as the blood of bulls and goats was insufficient to finally atone for sin.

When Jesus went to the cross, He made the ultimate and final sacrifice for sin. In His death, He atoned for the sins of His people by covering them with His blood. The sins of believers have been charged to His account and counted against Him so that we may have His righteousness. Jesus was also our propitiation, experiencing the full wrath of God against sin as the Father forsook His Son, cutting Him off and pouring out the full measure of His justice against Him for the sins of His people. And Jesus was also our scapegoat, bearing our sin on His head and taking them away from us, as far as the East is from the West. Unlike the sacrifices Moses was commanded to implement, Jesus' sacrifice was final and there is no need to repeat it every year. The blood of the perfect, spotless, Lamb of God has taken away the sins of the world.

*Additional Reading | John 1:29, Romans 8:3-4 & Hebrews 10:1-18*

## REFLECT

1. How do the Law and Commandments point to our hope in Christ?
2. What is propitiation? What is expiation? Why are both part of atonement?
3. What did Jesus accomplish on the cross that the other sacrifices could not do?

LISTEN | **Lamb of God - Vertical Worship**

# Our Hope in the Prophecies: The Suffering Servant

BY JON WOOD

READ | Isaiah 53:10-11

Around 700 years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah foretold of the Messiah Who would come, suffer and die in order to reconcile God's people back to Him. In chapter 53, Isaiah writes one of the most famous passages about the Suffering Servant Who would save His people. We read of the One who was despised and rejected, the One who has borne our griefs and sorrows, Who was pierced for our transgressions and by Whose stripes we are healed. Isaiah said the Suffering Servant would be silent as He endured, as a sheep is silent before its shearers. Jesus would willingly lay down His life for the sheep and for the joy set before Him go to the cross on His own accord. No one took Jesus' life from Him, but he offered Himself willingly to be killed in order that we might live. But in Isaiah 53:10-11, we read something shocking. "It was the will of the LORD to crush Him; He shall put Him to grief." While Jesus laid down His life willingly, does this also mean that God the Father purposed for Jesus to die? Was it the will of the Father for Jesus to be killed to save His people? Yes. Isaiah is saying that both the Father and the Son worked to redeem people from the curse of sin and death. The Father sent Jesus to the cross and Jesus willingly went. In doing so, Jesus made many righteous and bore their iniquities.

The reason we call one of the darkest days in world history "Good Friday" is because the Son of God willingly bore the weight of sin and death that the Father laid on Him. God the Father, laid on Jesus, our iniquity, our sin, our failure. Jesus took all of that, paid the penalty, bore all of God's wrath and bought our forgiveness with His own blood. And in doing so He shows the immense love that God has toward sinners. We did not have to clean ourselves up first in order to come to God. We did not have to strive to be better so that God would love us. Instead, while we were still sinners, while we were dead in our trespasses, while we were His enemies and in our hearts we hated God, Christ died for us. In an ancient prophecy, we find hope. And that hope remains, for Jesus stands ready to save all those who put their faith in Him.

## REFLECT

- 1. How did God the Father and God the Son work together in Jesus' death on the cross?**
- 2. Why do we call Good Friday "good?"**
- 3. Read Ephesians 2:4-5. What is the "great love" that God loved His people with? What makes that kind of love so great?**

LISTEN | Man of Sorrows - Hillsong Worship

# Our Hope in the Call: Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand

**BY CHRIS MIXON**

**READ | Matthew 4:17**

The call to repent is the central message of Jesus' teaching. Jesus preaches all throughout the Gospels calling people to repent and turn to Him for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. In other words, the King has come. Jesus is God in flesh Who tells us, "Turn from your sin and from yourself. Trust in Me and be reconciled to God. Be saved from your sin and come into the kingdom." Repentance is absolutely essential to surrendering our lives to Christ. It goes hand in hand with faith. Repentance is turning away from our sin and turning to Christ, by grace through faith.

The beginning of the Christian life is when you realize, "I must turn from my sin and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord of my life." In Acts 2, Peter preaches the first Christian sermon and the crowd responds, "What shall we do?" Peter told them to repent and receive forgiveness in the name of Jesus. And that call is the same for us today. From the Gospels to the Epistles, the message of Jesus is clear. Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. In repentance, we find hope.

## **REFLECT**

- 1. Read Romans 2:4. What leads to repentance? How does this affect how you make disciples?**
- 2. Read Acts 26:20 and Revelation 2:5. How is true repentance connected to transformation of your life and behavior?**
- 3. What do you find most difficult to turn from and surrender to Christ?**
- 4. Read Psalm 37:5. In what ways can you commit yourself to God each day?**
- 5. Read and pray though 1 John 1:9. We don't have to fear confessing our sins before God, because He is faithful and just. Spend some time confessing your sin to God knowing that He is faithful and just to forgive you.**

**LISTEN | The Lord's Prayer - Hillsong Worship**

# Our Hope in the Cross: Jesus Our Passover Lamb

*BY JON WOOD*

**READ | John 19:17-18 & 1 Corinthians 5:7**

The Feast of Passover celebrates God saving His people in Egypt before they were led out of slavery. As God gave the commands to Moses as to how the feast should be observed, He said that a spotless lamb should be sacrificed, one without blemish or defect and that its blood should be sprinkled on the doorposts of the people's houses. The blood symbolized God covering and protecting His people while those who were not covered by the blood were destroyed. When God brought His people out of Egypt, each generation passed down the tradition of the Passover to the next as they looked back on all the Lord had done for them as a people, celebrated His faithfulness and looked forward to the Messiah, Who would finally deliver them from their sins.

The first time John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world." This Lamb was different than all the other Passover lambs throughout the centuries. Every other lamb, pointed to this One who would make the final sacrifice for sin, cover His people with His blood and finally save them from being destroyed by sin. Jesus was led out and crucified during the Feast of the Passover as our ultimate and final Passover Lamb. In this there is hope. His blood saves His people. His sacrifice pays our penalty. It is finished, once and for all. Jesus, our Passover Lamb has completed His work and secured eternal hope for all who believe.

As we look back on what Jesus did on the cross for us, we remember and proclaim His power to save us. We rejoice that He did not remain in the grave after paying the penalty for our sin, but rose again to secure our justification before the Father. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for those who are His. He is our advocate, our righteousness, our true Passover Lamb Who has covered us and taken away our sin forever. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

## **REFLECT**

- 1. Read Exodus chapter 12 out loud. How do you see Jesus being the fulfillment of what is written there?**
- 2. What hope did Jesus secure for His people at the cross?**
- 3. Spend some time before Easter Sunday reflecting on what Jesus did on the cross. Take time in prayerful reverence to thank Him and celebrate what His death and resurrection means for you.**

**LISTEN | Behold the Lamb - Passion**

**Good Friday**

Friday, April 15

6:30 PM

**Easter at Fondren**

Sunday, April 17

9:30 and 11

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