

Gospel-Centered Advent Reading Week 1: The Hope Candle

Creation began with hope. In the first verses of the Bible God called hope out of the chaotic darkness.

Genesis 1:2-3 (NIV)

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

At the beginning there was so much hope. Into this hope-filled world God brought the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. They knew God and walked with him in the garden. But a serpent prowled in the darkness. The great tempter introduced fear and mistrust into paradise. He told Adam and Eve that God did not have their best at heart. They accepted what he said and placed their hope in themselves instead of God.

At that moment it seemed like all hope was lost. Yet as Adam and Eve and all humanity tasted sin for the first time God offered hope. God cursed the serpent and condemned him to the dust. Then God promised that one of Adam and Eve’s descendants would come and redeem the beautiful world they had lost. God said this to the serpent.

Genesis 3:15 (NIV)

And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.

Church tradition calls this verse the “proto-gospel” which means “first-gospel.” The word “gospel” means “good news.” This verse tells us the good news that God is going to send a rescuer to crush the serpent and restore our broken relationship with God. The serpent will strike the heel of the rescuer but the rescuer will crush the serpent’s head.

Now as we light the candle of hope we remember how God gave us hope when all seemed lost in the garden. This hope is now fulfilled in Jesus Christ. At Christmas we celebrate the arrival of the baby born to crush the serpent’s head. At the cross Jesus provides hope for any who turn from themselves and to God. Jesus tasted the sting of death but rose in victory over sin and death. He now offers the hope of eternal life for any who believe in his name. Jesus is a hope worth celebrating this Christmas.

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Pastor Jonathan Romig wrote this gospel-centered advent reading to tell the big-story of the Bible. Please feel free to use it in your church to share the gospel. Find more advent readings at CornerstoneWestford.com.