



# SERMON NOTES

# SENT

DELIVERING  
THE GIFT OF HOPE  
AT CHRISTMAS

Week 4 (December 20): "Jesus Brings New Life"  
*Ezekiel 37:1-14; Luke 2:8-20*

## I. Ezekiel's Prophecy

- A. The Old Testament Prophet Ezekiel wanders the valley of \_\_\_\_\_ feeling, which is a metaphor for lifelessness and hopelessness.
- B. God asks Ezekiel the question, "Can these bones \_\_\_\_\_?"
- C. In 586, the city of \_\_\_\_\_ had been destroyed, and survivors, who had dispersed throughout Babylon and Egypt believed all hope was gone.

## II. Israel's Remnant

- A. God tells Ezekiel to \_\_\_\_\_ to the breath.
- B. The Hebrew word for Ruach means \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. Ezekiel's prophecy for the remnant of Israel meant that they too could have hope for new life in their own \_\_\_\_\_.

## III. The Shepherds

- A. The angel told the shepherds that a \_\_\_\_\_ has been born to you!
- B. Jesus' arrival meant that divinity had come among \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. At Christmas, if we allow ourselves to be full of \_\_\_\_\_ at the new life Christ brings, our heart will be moved to worship.

***Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message***

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# ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE

## INTRODUCTION

Through the lens of the prophecy of Ezekiel, we know that no circumstance is so dry, so despairing and so hopeless, that God cannot bring new life. As Christians, we live in the reality of Jesus's resurrection from the dead and his promise of new life, and Christmas provides an opportunity for us to reflect on how that promise first came to us in the form of a tiny baby.

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### Monday: Romans 16:25-27

The Apostle Paul is speaking words of praise in the form of a hymn, or what we might call a doxology "in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past." A message from the ancient prophets came from the "eternal God," "the only wise God," the one "able to establish" or strengthen you. In what ways has the this wise and eternal God strengthened you over the last year? How might holding fast to the message of the ancient prophets give you hope for the year ahead?

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### Tuesday: Luke 1:26-38

Today, we "listen in" on the conversation between the angel Gabriel and Mary. Imagine the scene, is it indoors or outdoors? What is the time of day? What is Mary wearing? Are their voices loud or soft? The angel is announcing that the fulfillment of God's plan is taking place, and Mary accepts her place as God's servant and the one to bring the Savior into the world. As you witness the unfolding of this divine plan, what are your longings from the Savior? Pray about those longings now.

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### Wednesday: Luke 1:57-66

Elizabeth had been hoping for a child for a very long time, and it would have been easy to give up on her longing. This year, many dreams were put on hold. What unrealized hope do you have at this time, for yourself, your family, your work or for Asbury church? When you read about all the different reactions to John's birth, what do you think yours would be? As you pray, tell God, with all the detail you can, about your hopes and dreams.

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### Thursday: Luke 1:67-79

It's Christmas Eve. As you read Zechariah's prophecy, reflect on what it means for you and your family this year. What does it mean for our world? Zechariah says we have been enabled "to serve him without fear." This had been a year of fears, full of isolation, financial struggle, illness and death. What fears would you like to be released from this year? Share your fears and hopes with the God who fulfilled the prophecies of Christ's birth.

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### Friday: Luke 2:15-20

Christmas Day! As you read the passage for today, imagine yourself running to the scene with the shepherds, full of excitement. What do you see? Hear? What does it smell like? Take it all in. Can you, for a moment share in their joy and wonder? We are told that Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." What do you treasure in your heart today? Bring your treasures before God.

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## MOVING FORWARD

In the coming days, as you think about leaving behind the year 2020, what events of this year will you treasure? What events will you be glad to leave in the rearview mirror? Reflect on the wonder of Jesus arriving on the scene to be our "God with us" in the year behind us and the year ahead.

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*Answers to the sermon notes: IA) dry bones, B) live, C) Jerusalem; IIA) prophecy, B) wind, breath and spirit, C) land; IIIA) Savior, B) humanity, C) wonder*