

### 1) Christmas Window, First Baptist Greenville

### 2) Handel's Messiah: Bringing Scripture to Life Week 2 of 7, John Kincaid, Summer, 2013

### 3) Our God Seeks Us

- Messiah continues to inspire us, 250 years later, with a message: God is reaching out to us
- What separates Christianity from other religions?
- The unique characteristic: our God seeks us
- We can come to God because Christ came to us
- I have some pictures in mind when I listen

### 4) Creation of Adam, Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel

### 5) Michelangelo's Adam, Sistine Chapel, 1511

- The hand of God reaches out for Adam's hand

### 6) The Light of the World

- Painting by Holman Hunt
- Christ standing at the door, knocking. Rev.3:20

### 7) Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

- God gives all good gifts. James 1:17; Acts 17:25
- He gifted every composer, musician, sculptor, artist
- Spiritual gifts to believers 1 Cor.12; Eph.4
- Be thankful. 1 Cor.4:7. Use your gifts for His glory

### 8) Christ in Majesty (art from Chartres, Rome)

### 9) Christ Pantocrator (icon from Mount Sinai)

- Parallel to "Christ in Majesty"
- Pantocrator = all-powerful
- Hebrew names of God: Lord of Hosts, God Almighty
- 2 Cor.6:18; Rev.1:8,4:8
- Rev.11:17,15:3,16:7,16:14, 19:6,19:15,21:22

### 10) Christ Pantocrator (mosaic in Istanbul, Turkey)

- Hagia Sophia Church built 355 AD
- World's largest cathedral for 1000 years
- Mosque from 1453-1931, now a museum

### 11) Handel's Youth

- George Frideric Handel was born in 1685, the same year as Johann Sebastian Bach.
- They both grew up in Germany but never met
- Handel showed extraordinary musical talent but his father would not allow him to take lessons
- At age 9, Handel played the organ after worship
- A duke heard this, and persuaded Handel's father
- At age 12, Handel composed his first work
- He began playing the organ professionally

### 12) Travel to Italy, then England

- Handel worked to master a variety of instruments
- By age 25, he traveled to Rome, Italy
- He wrote his 1st religious work, The Resurrection
- 2 years later, Handel moved to England
- There, he would spend the rest of his life and write his greatest music

### 13) Bach vs. Handel

- Key differences between the 2 great composers:

- Both wrote sacred music to the glory of God
- Bach was sung in German during Lutheran worship
- Handel was sung in English, inside & outside church
- Bach was focused on exalting God
- Handel also focused on our response to God

### 14) Christians in England (Canterbury)

### 15) A New Form of Music

- The Italian opera was losing popularity
- Handel created a new musical form: sacred opera
- He used actors in costumes with a biblical theme
- The lavish scenery made these the ancestors of movies such as The Ten Commandments

### 16) Blessing in the Midst of Adversity

- Handel suffered numerous financial setbacks
- Yet he didn't lose faith during the hard times
- At one low point he visited a small country church
- He offered to play the postlude after worship
- Everyone was rushing out to lunch; they stopped
- They returned to their pews and refused to leave
- Who received the greater blessing from God? The worshippers, who had never heard such music? Or Handel, who needed to share his gift of joy?

### 17) Handel's Critics

- The Church of England criticized Handel
- His dramas were performed in secular theaters
- Church members would have been supporters
- But they were forbidden to attend
- Handel experienced one failure after another
- He pushed himself until his health failed

### 18) The Darkest Hour

- By 1741, Handel was deep in debt, facing prison
- On April 8, he gave his farewell concert
- Then, two events came together to change his life
- God was reaching out to Handel in his darkest hour
- God was not finished with Handel - The Messiah had not yet been written
- That's where we'll pick up his story next week

### 19) Bringing Scripture to Life

- God's Word is eternally true and never changes
- Our understanding of His Word is always growing
- Think of the Scripture text as a finished painting
- We can place the text in various settings: What did it mean to Isaiah? To Handel? To us?
- Different frame styles or colored mats can bring out different features of the same painting
- Each frame uniquely enhances our appreciation

### 20) The Bible Speaks To You

- Christians can see Isaiah's original context
- We can also see the prophecy of Christ fulfilled
- We need to apply the context to our own lives
- The Bible speaks to you; it requires a response
- You'll never be able to listen to the Messiah again without feeling that you are a part of it.

- “For unto us a child is born”
- “Emmanuel - God with us”
- God’s Word is intended for each one of you.

### **21) God’s Prophet and Judah’s King**

- Isaiah 7 was written before the exile in Babylon
- Judah had not yet been captured
- Yet Isaiah wrote that the exile was finished
- 2700 years ago in Jerusalem, Isaiah met Ahaz
- Ahaz was the faithless king of Judah
- Israel and Syria had joined forces against Assyria
- They wanted Judah to join their alliance

### **22) Dead, but God - Eph.2:1-5**

- Ahaz refused; Israel wouldn’t take no for an answer
- The army of northern Israel surrounded Jerusalem
- Ahaz faced a no-win situation (see Isaiah 7:1-17): if he gave in and joined the alliance, Judah would be destroyed by Assyria;
- but if he didn’t give in, his city (Jerusalem) would soon starve to death
- The southern kingdom’s future was at stake
- God sent Isaiah as an advisor to King Ahaz

### **23) Be Still and Know**

- Ahaz felt great pressure to do something
- But God said, “Be calm.” Psalm 46:10
- The kings of Syria and Israel are no match for God
- Isaiah advised Ahaz to trust God with the future
- God knew this was hard for Ahaz
- So God offered a sign, to reassure Ahaz
- The sign would show that God was still in control
- The king refused God’s grace and generosity

### **24) God Will Give the Sign**

- Isaiah told Ahaz that God will give the sign
- It didn’t matter whether Ahaz wanted it or not!
- The sign is the child and the child’s name: Immanuel (meaning God with us)
- In the end, Ahaz refused to trust God
- He rushed to make an alliance with Assyria
- He chose a world power instead of God’s power
- Isaiah left and waited for God’s Word to be fulfilled

### **25) God’s Words Are Trustworthy – 2 Sam.7:28**

- Now flash forward: Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled after the 70 years of exile in Babylon
- The people of Judah are going home to Jerusalem
- Isaiah 40:6-9, 60:1 announce the great news:
- God is victorious. Powerful nations will pass away but God’s Word is trustworthy and everlasting
- God had proven to Judah: His word is reliable

### **26) Behold, a Virgin Shall Conceive - Isaiah 7:14**

Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel: GOD WITH US.

### **27) O Thou, That Tellest – Isaiah 40:9, 60:1**

O thou, that tellest good tidings to Zion, Get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to

Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah: Behold your God! Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

### **28) He That Walketh in Darkness – John 12:35**

- Listen to the violins in the solo “Behold, darkness”
- It is in the key of B minor, associated with sadness
- The notes seem to wander around aimlessly
- You can imagine people searching without direction

### **29) Shepherds of Bethlehem**

- Notice “the shadow of death” in Isaiah 8:19-9:7
- We have peace and comfort in the midst of sorrow
- This reminds us of Psalm 23, written by the shepherd David, 1000 years before Christ
- David worked in fields at Bethlehem, where angels announced the 1st Christmas to later shepherds
- The same language sets the stage in Luke 1:78-79
- Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, used the same words as Isaiah. Then we read Luke 2.

### **30) The Wonderful Counselor**

- Christ will be the judge, the ultimate authority
- Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) mean “anointed one”, the designation of the king
- Ahaz could not even take advice from others to be a wise leader, much less give advice
- God’s King is called the Wonderful Counselor

### **31) Adoration of the Shepherds, Gerard van Honthorst**

### **32) The Light of the World**

- The birth of the Messiah brought joy and comfort
- He is the light shining in the darkness. John 1:5
- The song “For unto us” is like a sunburst
- Have you ever seen the sunrise out of the ocean?
- Christ is the light of the world. John 8:12
- He came to be our beacon when we were lost
- He came to end our hopeless darkness

### **33) For Behold, Darkness – Isaiah 60:2-3**

For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising

### **34) The People That Walked - Isaiah 9:2**

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined

### **35) For Unto Us – Isaiah 9:6**

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.