

# TTT 390. Explore Fresh Angles

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## Teaching Tip 390 | “How to Prepare Christmas Lessons. Part 2 - Explore Fresh Angles.” | Malcolm Cox

The story of the birth of Jesus is well-known. How do we keep it fresh when we preach and teach about it? That's what this series is all about. Last week, we discussed our starting point. We begin by finding our personal conviction and inspiration through reflection on scripture and prayer. Once we have done that, we are ready to consider our approach to what we want to say.

Let me offer you three ideas.

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## Explore Fresh Angles

### 1. Character Focus

Highlight lesser-discussed figures, like Simeon, Anna, or Joseph. For inspiration, use articles like this one about Anna from [Biblical Archaeology](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

### 2. Themes

Explore themes like hope, humility, joy, or the faithfulness of God. Taking the theme of hope as an example, a passage like Romans 15.12-13 could be illuminated by Isaiah 11.10-11. The 'root of Jesse' has come, born into our world so that we abound in hope.

### 3. Connections

Show how the Christmas story fulfils Old Testament prophecies. See a suggested list below. One of the most inspiring things about the nativity is seeing the bigger picture. Help your congregation pull back from the details of the story to be awed by God's long-term plan.

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## Conclusion

The nativity story offers an abundance of opportunities to explore fresh angles that deepen our understanding and appreciation of this pivotal moment in history. Experiment, take a bit of a risk, and bring some freshness to the events of 2000 years ago.

What is your best tip for helping speakers prepare inspiring lessons around the Christmas story? Please let me know.

Next time, we will explore the significance of engaging the imagination.

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Please add your comments on this week's topic. We learn best when we learn in community.

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<https://aim.moodlecloud.com/>.

Do you have a question about teaching the Bible? Is it theological, technical, or practical? Please send me your questions or suggestions. Here's the email: [malcolm@malcolmcox.org](mailto:malcolm@malcolmcox.org).

If you'd like a copy of my free eBook on spiritual disciplines, "How God grows His people", sign up at my website: <http://www.malcolmcox.org>.

Please pass the link on, subscribe, and leave a review.

Keep calm and carry on teaching.

God bless, Malcolm

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## Classic OT nativity prophecies

The Old Testament contains several passages that Christians have traditionally regarded as prophecies of the Nativity, pointing to the birth of Jesus as the Messiah. Here are some of the key passages:

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### 1. Isaiah 7:14

*"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."*

- This prophecy is often associated with the virgin birth of Jesus and His title as "God with us."
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### 2. Isaiah 9:6-7

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever."*

- This passage describes the birth of a divine ruler who will establish an everlasting kingdom.
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### 3. Micah 5:2

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."*

- Micah predicts that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, connecting directly to the Nativity story in the Gospels.
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### 4. Genesis 3:15

*"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."*

- Known as the "Protoevangelium" (the first gospel), this verse hints at the coming of a Saviour born of a woman to defeat evil.
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### 5. Genesis 22:18

*"Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."*

- God's promise to Abraham finds its fulfilment in Jesus, whose birth brings blessings to all nations.
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### 6. Numbers 24:17

*"I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."*

- This verse has been linked to the Star of Bethlehem and the coming of a king from Israel.
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## 7. Jeremiah 23:5-6

*"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour."*

- This prophecy points to a future King from David's line, fulfilled in Jesus.
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## 8. 2 Samuel 7:12-13

*"When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever."*

- God's covenant with David anticipates the eternal kingdom established through Jesus.
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## 9. Hosea 11:1

*"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."*

- While this refers to Israel in its original context, the Gospel of Matthew applies it to Jesus' return from Egypt as a child.
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## 10. Psalm 72:10-11

*"May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to him. May the kings of Sheba and Seba present him gifts. May all kings bow down to him and all nations serve him."*

- This is often seen as foreshadowing the visit of the Magi to honour Jesus with gifts.
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These passages provide a prophetic framework for the Nativity and are seen as fulfilled in the birth of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. They connect the Old Testament promises to their New Testament realisation in Christ.

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1. <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/anna-in-the-bible/> ↩