

HARVEST ROCK CHURCH

THE GREAT NEWS OF CHRISTMAS THE CHRISTMAS STORY SERIES

Dr. Ché Ahn

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TEXT: Luke 2:8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

INTRO: Before we examine the primary text for today, we have to read the context leading up to our text. Starting in Luke 2:1, we see Luke, the Gentile physician and historian, give the historical context for this passage: **Luke 2:1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.**

A. GOD ORCHESTRATED HIS BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM

1. The steps of a good man/woman are ordered by the Lord (Psalm 37:23).
2. Luke emphasized the political situation to explain why Jesus was born in Bethlehem, then highlighted Bethlehem as the city of David to validate the claim for Jesus' Messiahship.
3. Joseph and Mary were up in Nazareth. All of a sudden, the word came forth of the decree of a census. Joseph had to go to the city of his main forefather, David. During this time, he had a dream from the angel declaring the birth of Jesus as Savior (Matthew 1:20-21). Then they began the 85-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. God moved on the government to set this in motion.
4. There is no political obstacle that God cannot overcome to do His will. You know, sometimes we look at the government or we look at the elections. We think that the Kingdom of God is in the balance of who is in power in Washington or whatever city of the earth. But the truth is, there is a King on a throne at the right hand of the Father who is over everything. He can move all the kings of the earth at will. I share this because I want to emphasize:

B. GOD IS IN CONTROL OVER THIS ELECTION

1. I believe someday or somehow Trump will be our president for the next four years. I am going to believe until January 20, when the president is sworn in. Please continue to pray and contend for righteousness and biblical justice to be established in our nation.

I. FIVE REASONS WHY CHRISTMAS IS GREAT NEWS**A. GREAT NEWS OF GREAT JOY**

1. **Luke 2:10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people”
2. “Gospel” means Good News. But for the purpose of this message, I want to use the adjective *great* because I believe the Good News is Great News! News of God coming to earth to save us and to give us joy is the greatest news in human history!
3. This past year has been a very depressing year: COVID-19, George Floyd, riots, lockdown, unemployment, bankruptcy. 19,000 businesses are closed in CA. But as the dark is getting darker, the Light is going to shine brighter!
4. What God promises is joy from the initial great news, but also joy that comes from the Holy Spirit dwelling within you, which is different from happiness.
5. Romans 14:17 “The kingdom of God is... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (see Galatians 5:22).

B. GREAT NEWS FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

1. **Luke 2:10b** “I bring you good news of great joy which will be for *all the people*.”
2. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world,” and 1 Timothy 2:4 “God desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
3. One of the reasons why God visited the shepherds is that He wants us to know that this Great News is for all people, including people like the shepherds.
4. The shepherds represent the nameless, faceless people of society. The common person. The majority of society. Shepherds were the lowest class of the Jewish society. They smelled like sheep and they were considered socially unclean. They were not allowed in the Temple. They were uneducated and poor, and yet God chose to reveal the Messiah first to shepherds. That is the kind of God we serve. He is for the nameless and faceless. He loves even the rejects of our society.
5. *This Great News is not just for the Jewish people.* “It is for **all people**.” That is the key phrase here. This was new because many of the Jews imagined it would mostly or only be for them, but it is for the whole world. “This Gospel of the Kingdom must be preached to the whole world as a testimony for all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

C. GREAT NEWS THAT A SAVIOR IS BORN

1. **Luke 2:11** “for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”
2. **Luke 1:31** “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.” Jesus is the English version of the Greek word *Iesous*, the Hebrew name Joshua, meaning “Jehovah is Salvation.”
3. The need for a Savior implies that we are lost. That is not a derogatory term. Lost implies value. If I misplace a string, I'm not going to look for it. But if I lost my wedding ring, I'm going to look for it because it has value to me.
4. There are three aspects of salvation: (1) You *are* saved: born again, your sins are forgiven, and you have the gift of eternal life (John 3:16). (2) You *are being* saved. We call this sanctification. You are set free from addictions. Philippians 1:6 “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” (3) You *will be* saved, when Jesus comes back or when you go to be with Him.

D. GREAT NEWS THAT JESUS, THE MESSIAH, IS LORD

1. **Luke 2:11** “for today in the city of David there has been born for you a *Savior*, who is *Christ the Lord*”
2. “Lord” means master, first one, owner of everything that you have including your life.
3. It is not just giving your life to Jesus. It means giving Him your future, your finances, your desires, dreams, talents, and time.
4. When you surrender your life to God — who created you, who knows you best, and knows what is good for you — out of His love for you God will bestow a life full of His blessings. Forrest Gump could figure it out. Life with God’s blessing or life without His blessing.

E. GREAT NEWS THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE PEACE

1. **Luke 2:14** “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

CONCLUSION: I encourage you to make Jesus your Lord and Savior this Christmas!