

Christmas, 2021

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Luke 2:1-20

December 23,24,25, 2021

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Christmas is a big deal in the Kingdom of God! It is the beginning of our *great salvation!* In the timeline of the Bible, prior to Jesus being born in Bethlehem, there had been 400 years of silence from God; 400 years since the last Old Testament prophet spoke. During those years of silence, the people waited patiently for the Messiah; they put their trust in God and His promises of a Savior to come. It's like Israel as a nation had a 400 year "Advent season!"

And then it happened;
a flurry of angelic activity!

- ⇒ An Angel tells **Zechariah** that he and his elderly wife **Elizabeth** will have a baby, they are to name him **John**, and he will be the *forerunner of the Messiah* -- just as it was promised in the Old Testament!
- ⇒ Soon afterwards, the Angel Gabriel announces to **Mary** that by the grace of God, she will have the *unique one-of-a-kind* role of being the mother of Jesus! The angel announced that her baby will be *Great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there will be no end."* Luke 1:32-33

- ⇒ The Angel Gabriel then went to **Joseph**, and tells him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for *that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit, and she will bear a son, and you are to call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins!* Matthew 1:20-21
- ⇒ And then Jesus was born in Bethlehem; and as the **Shepherds** were keeping watch over their flock by night, an Angel appeared to them and said, *Fear not! For BEHOLD, I bring you good news of great joy that shall be for all people: for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord! And suddenly there was with the Angel a plethora of other Angels praising God and singing, “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”* Luke 2:10-14

This *flurry of angelic activity* signaled the beginning of the New Testament era; **the Messiah was now on earth**; all the Old Testament prophecies and promises were starting to be fulfilled! The Son of God was **incarnate**, *in flesh*; He became a man, took on a body, to do the work of salvation for us!

That Son born in a manger in Bethlehem, was the very Son of God! He is the One who speaks for God. He is the Heir of all things and by Him God created the universe; He is the radiance of God's glory, being of one substance with the Father, and who sustains all things by His powerful Word. He is God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God. He will make purification for our sins on the cross and sit down at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. And His name is above every name; at His name every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Christ the

Lord, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, to the glory of God the Father!

The reason that *Christmas* is such *good news of great joy* is because we need the Son of God to be our Savior.

WE COULD NEVER SAVE OURSELVES. Our sin is deep and dark, wicked and evil; it leads us to disobey God and His commandments; it leads us to hurt and harm our neighbor with our thoughts, words, and actions. Sin is a poison that destroys you; it is a prison that you cannot escape from; guilt and shame crushes you; and eternal death and final condemnation loom over you. There is absolutely nothing you can do to escape this; nothing you can do to make up for your sin and make things right with God.

So Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world to be your substitute in life and in death. He took your place under the 10 Commandments, and He perfectly fulfilled and obeyed them for you. He was your substitute in death as He hung on a cross and died in the darkness. By His death on the cross, your sins were paid for; by His blood you are forgiven and set free from your sins. He is the perfect sacrifice in both His living and in His dying. In His Resurrection from the Dead on the Third Day, you are declared righteous; the verdict of “not guilty!” is pronounced over you! The Son of God was born in Bethlehem to be your substitute; He took your place in life and in death. You are now forgiven and set free: you have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ! This is what makes Christmas such *good news of great joy for all people!*

Christmas teaches how much God the Father loves you; He gave His Son for you; He sent Jesus to be your Savior; and throughout your life He has sent messengers¹ to tell you this Good News!

Tonight is one of those opportunities. In this service, many people have told you Christmas Gospel in various ways! Tonight hear the Good News about Jesus; hear the Christmas Gospel of eternal salvation, and believe it! Faith is the work of the Holy Spirit within you so that you know that God has provided salvation in Jesus, and that you are included. **Jesus came into this world for you personally!** Because of Jesus, **your sins are forgiven**, *your conscience is cleansed*, **you have peace with God**, and *you are given the gift of eternal life*. Tonight hear this Good News, and believe!

**The Christmas Gospel is true,
and you are included!**

*No wonder,
Christmas is a big deal in the Kingdom of God!*

No wonder there was a flurry of angelic activity!

It is the beginning of our *great salvation* in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

Amen!

¹ The word “angel” means messenger. Just as God sent heavenly “messengers” (angels) to tell people about Jesus in the Biblical account, so too, now He sends human “messengers” (≈ angels) to tell you about Jesus; perhaps parents, pastors, teachers, friends, family, et al. In this sense, you could say that there has been a “flurry of angelic activity” in your own life!