

The Christmas Story

Luke 2:1-20

Introduction

It's a busy time of the year. Each year at this time, there are countless Christmas programs. There have been many who have played the parts of Mary and Joseph, angels, and shepherds.

But you really can't improve much on the original cast of characters who played themselves one night some 2000 years ago. It's so easy to lose the Christmas message in the Christmas mayhem! Let the real story of Christmas fill your heart with God's joy and gladness.

That first Christmas wasn't much different from our present-day Christmases when you think about it. The emphasis of the day was also on spending money! You know people had to be stressed about that! Only in their case, everyone was going to be taxed. And of course, since they had to travel to get to the taxing polls, they were probably spending money they didn't have and having to buy things they didn't need. You get the picture.

The Roman invoked pilgrimages completely eclipsed that first Christmas. The commercialized shopping push does the same thing in our Country. It happens, again and again, every year like clockwork. Many people today don't even associate Christ with Christmas! Many people today have no idea who Jesus is!

Let's pause for a moment this morning and listen to the real reason for the Christmas celebration. Luke gives us the account of the very first Christmas in Chapter 2 of his gospel.

Luke 2 starts with God's perfect plan. (v. 1-3)

I. The Perfect Plan

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city." (Luke 2:1-3 KJV)

Even Joseph had to pay taxes.

"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for

them in the inn.” (Luke 2:4-7 KJV)

While the government focused on taxes and taking money from the people, God focused on helping the people by giving them the greatest gift of all – eternal life!

II. The Perfect Announcement

The angels rejoice with a proclamation of praise.

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:8-11 KJV)

Fear is the natural response of our fallen nature to the unknown. Faith is the spiritual response to God’s good tidings of great joy! How many times, in the Book of Life, do we hear the words from God, “Fear not!”

“And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:12-14 KJV)

We don’t always recognize the signs God gives us because they don’t come in a way that we expect them. Often while we’re still scratching our heads trying to figure things out, the heavenly hosts are rejoicing, saying, “Glory to God in the highest!”

III. The Perfect Response

The Shepherds give an enthusiastic response.

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. (Luke 2:15-18 KJV)”

There’s a great evangelistic sermon in those verses:

1. **They heard. (10-11)**
2. **They believed (15-16)**

3. They told others. (17-18)
4. They rejoiced (v 20)

"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart."
(Luke 2:19 KJV)

There are volumes that could be written about that single verse!

Conclusion

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." (Luke 2:20 KJV)

When you face your fears and respond with faith, you will experience the depths of God's good news and great joy. But you must stop and listen, and believe if you hope to overcome!

Romans 10:9-10 says, "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:9-10 NKJV)

Don't keep silent about the true meaning and message of Christmas! Let it ring out from your heart with joy to everyone in your world. Join with the heavenly hosts and praise God for being with you. And when you go to bed at night, let your thoughts remind you to give thanks to God, and then sleep in heavenly peace!

If you do this, you will definitely have a very Merry Christmas!