

This Day!

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

That's good tidings of great joy! To all people. But also to you. The birth of Christ was for all people. But it's hard to unwrap that isn't it? It would be like labeling all the presents under your tree "to all people" and then watch what happens on Christmas morning. Part of the fun for children (and adults!) is to look until we find the presents with your name on it and then to dream about what might be in it and wait until Christmas morning to open it up and discover the treasure that is there. That's exactly what the angel said to the shepherds: There's a gift waiting with your name on it in Bethlehem. Go and find the gift. Here's a hint: you will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger or a feeding trough. And there are three other very important things the angel said about this earth-changing event in history.

1. He is given THIS DAY.

For there is born to you THIS DAY... Our God is God of THIS DAY.

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut. 6:6)

Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. (Deut. 8:1)

²⁶"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: ²⁷the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; ²⁸and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. (Deut. 11:26)

³And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; ⁴for the LORD your God is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.' (Deut. 20)

Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. ¹⁸Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, ¹⁹and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken." (Deut. 26)

- 53 times in the book of Deuteronomy God told the people that He was doing something for them TODAY. God was giving the LAW to His people then, and here in Luke 2, the message of the angel is that TODAY God has fulfilled that law in the coming of the Savior.
- He came, first of all, to reveal God. The prophecy of Isaiah, that a virgin would give birth to a son and call his name Immanuel, meaning “God with us” was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

2. He is the SAVIOR

The second reason He came was to accomplish our salvation. God took on human flesh, left glory, and came through birth to a Jewish woman.

Talk about incredible journeys. A few years ago a woman crossed the Atlantic by herself in a rowboat.

When I was a boy a man named Neil Armstrong took “one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind,” as he became the first human to step foot on the moon.

Hannibal, the Carthaginian General, surprised the Romans when he crossed the Alps in 217 B.C. with 26,000 troops, 6,000 horses and his special weapon, elephants, which were used to shatter enemy lines, like modern day tanks. Incredible!

But there’s no doubt that the greatest journey, the most incredible of all, was the journey that God took in the form of Jesus Christ. He went from heaven to earth. From Spirit to flesh. From eternity to time. From glory to servanthood.

Leith Anderson writes:

Several years ago I was visiting Manila and was taken, of all places, to the Manila garbage dump and saw something beyond belief. Tens of thousands of people make their homes on that dump site. They've constructed shacks out of the things other people have thrown away. And they send their children out early every morning to scavenge for food out of other people's garbage, so they can have family meals. People have been born and grown up there on the garbage dump. They have had their families, their children, their shacks, their garbage to eat, finished out their lives, and died there without ever going anywhere else, even in the city of Manila. It is an astonishing thing.

But Americans also live on the garbage dump. They are missionaries, Christians who have chosen to leave their own country and communicate the love of Jesus Christ to people who otherwise would never hear it. That is amazing to me. People would leave what we have to go and live on a garbage dump. Amazing, but not as amazing as the journey from heaven to earth.

The Son of God made that journey, and he knew what he was doing. He knew where he was going. He knew what the sacrifice would be. He journeyed from heaven to earth on a mission to save the human race.

3. He is Christ the LORD

The third reason Christ came was dominion. As the prophet said, "For Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders." Then the angel said the same to Mary: "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:33) Then to the shepherds, "for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

If I asked you to tell me what the best present you have ever gotten for Christmas, what would you say? Maybe you got it this year or will later today. In 1952, the world was introduced to Mr. Potato Head – the first toy to ever be advertised on TV. Back then, kids stuck plastic eyes, ears and a mouth onto an actual potato and it wasn't until 1964 that a plastic body was included with the toy. That was one of the best presents in the 1950's. This year, the most wanted Christmas "toy" is an Apple iPad, with kids as young as 6 years old putting it on their Christmas list.

The angel announces that for Christmas, God sent us HIMSELF. "Christ the Lord." The word for Lord is kurios, which means Lord, master, owner, superintendent, commander, ruler, almighty!

That pretty much puts Mr. Potato Head and the iPad in perspective, doesn't it? I was reading World magazine this week and the article by Gene Edward Veith said that 200 years ago if a kid got a piece of candy in his stocking he considered himself very fortunate. If there was orange in there as well, he was the luckiest kid in the world. His mother would usually get a handkerchief. And the breadwinner, the father, got nothing. It was not considered good form for him to get a Christmas present.

I don't know what you got your kids for Christmas. Or your wife or husband. If you're like me, it's probably a tad more than a piece of candy AND an orange. And that's OK. But let's not let this Christmas come and go without reminding each other of the most extravagant gift that anybody ever gave anybody at any time. He spared no expense. He did not count the cost. He simply gave. And the angel said it clearly: to everyone who will receive Him, God gave the Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

David Peterson, former pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Spokane, Washington, told about a time when he was preparing his sermon. His little daughter came in and said, "Daddy, can we play?"

He answered, "I'm awfully sorry, Sweetheart, but I'm right in the middle of preparing this sermon. In about an hour I can play."

She said, "Okay, when you're finished, Daddy, I am going to give you a great big hug."

He said, "Thank you very much." She went to the door and then she did a U-turn and came back and gave me a chiropractic, bone-breaking hug."

David said to her, "Darling, you said you were *going* to give me a hug *after* I

finished."

She answered, "Daddy, I just wanted you to know what you
have to look forward to!"

One meaning of Christmas is that God wants us to know, through this First Coming,
how much we have to look forward to in the great Second Coming.