



The Night Before Christmas

The true significance of Christmas is certainly not Santa and his pack, it is Jesus Christ and His Cross. The following are certain characteristics of the biblical night before Christmas for your thinking pleasure.

It is not X-mas! X-mas is receiving gifts without having received the only gift, Jesus Christ. X-mas is putting lights on a Christmas tree without having within you the light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. X-mas is commercial, but Christmas is biblical. It is then with the person of Christ in view that we share this message with you.

At the time of the birth of our Lord, a census had been ordered for the entire Roman Empire. This involved compulsory registration. They had no choice short of a terrific penalty. It would result ultimately in more taxation as they were feeling a money pinch at that time in history. Luke 2:1.

"Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth." (Luke 2:1, NASB)

The chronology of the registration was discredited by historians for years, but it has since been proven true by archeology in recent years. Luke 2:2.

"This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria." (Luke 2:2, NASB)

The character of the registration involved all Jews having to go to the place of their lineage. Both Mary and Joseph went to the same place as David who was their common ancestor. Joseph was the legal (not biological) father of Christ descended from David and Bathsheba through Solomon. Mary was the mother of the humanity of Christ and descended from David and Bathsheba through Nathan. Luke 2:3-5.

"And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 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, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child." (Luke 2:3-5, NASB)

Life and Death

A new unique life began. Jesus Christ was virgin born and thus born without an old sin nature. He is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever. Luke 2:6-7.

"While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 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." (Luke 2:6-7, NASB)

"First born son" the right of the first born. First born was the sovereign of the family. First born was the priest. First born had the double portion. In the case of Christ, there will be two advents and two deaths on the Cross – spiritual followed by physical. Isaiah 53:9.

"His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth." (Isaiah 53:9, NASB)

In Romans 1:4, "death" is the genitive masculine plural of νεκρός (nekros) and is the plural of death - deaths.

"who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit



of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord," (Romans 1:4, NASB)

Death is also represented by the cloths that He was wrapped in. The cloths were used of bandages to wrap up a mortally wounded man. These were death garments, probably left from someone who had previously died.

What was unique about this baby? If you were going into an area to pick out a certain baby, how would you do it? The shepherds were bachelors for the most part. They needed a sign to identify this unique baby, a baby wrapped in death clothes, a unique baby who would die a unique death. Luke 2:12.

""This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."" (Luke 2:12, NASB)

The application? You are alive, but you will die someday. Do you have spiritual life, eternal life, or is it spiritual death for you? Prepare for death while you are alive by believing in Christ as your Savior. Remember, Christmas is the birthday of His humanity, not His deity. His deity is ageless. His humanity provided for our salvation, His deity for our eternal life.

The Good News

The term “gospel” means good news in the Greek. The shepherds were under a ban. They were regarded by the Pharisees as being too low to come to the synagogues or worship centers. The shepherds, however were watching sacrificial “sheep” which would be used as animal sacrifices in the temple. Every time a shepherd looked at a sheep, he was looking in shadow at the Lamb of God who would die for the sins of mankind. A lamb was a visual for an illiterate believer to picture the supreme sacrifice of all time. The shepherds were startled when an angel stepped up to them suddenly in the same area where David was called by God. Luke 2:8-11.

“In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 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; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:8-11, NASB)

“Good news of great joy which will be for all the people” is good tidings. The shepherds were given divine guidance in finding Christ. John 3:16; Luke 2:12.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16, NASB)

“This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:12, NASB)

In Luke 2:8, “In the same region” means around Bethlehem. These shepherds were under a religious ban. The Scribes and Pharisees had banned them from coming into the temple. They could not attend the synagogues. They were the scum of the earth to the proud Pharisees. Nothing is more self-righteous, hypocritical and horrible than religion, man trying to save himself. But religion turned right around and took their sheep. Religion is always inconsistent. We learn from the Mishnah and the Migdal, two Jewish sources, that the sheep the shepherds were watching were used sacrificially in the temple. And the sheep when sacrificed would depict the lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. It is significant that the angels appeared to the shepherds who were watching the sheep, used in the Old Testament to portray the Gospel. The angels didn’t appear to the Pharisees.



"In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night." (Luke 2:8, NASB)

In Luke 2:9, "And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them" actually says they stepped by their side suddenly. They were probably sitting around a fire warming themselves on a cold night in the hill country. The angel was much brighter than the fire, "and the glory of the Lord shone around them."

"And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened." (Luke 2:9, NASB)

In Luke 2:10, "good news" means this is a night of good news. The Gospel is the good news. But you say, "I don't want anything to do with religion." But religion is not Christianity. Religion leaps only as high as the old sin nature. The Gospel is what God does for man, not what man tries to do for God. Well, you say, "I'm living a moral life and God will allow a moral man to enter heaven." The answer is definitely no. Never. Morality or immorality have nothing to do with salvation.

"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;" (Luke 2:10, NASB)

In fact, as a believer a Christian morality makes no impact for Christ. That doesn't mean Christians are to be immoral, but morality makes no impact. Why? Because many unsaved people can match the believer in morality. That's why good, moral, Christian people are often so spiritually dead because they lack one thing. They lack Bible doctrine in their souls. They lack the enabling power of the Holy Spirit which is how the Lord produces His character and fruit in the believer's spiritual life. It isn't some wild-eyed experience, it is the Holy Spirit giving your life inner attractiveness and inner dynamics.

The Gospel produces "great joy." That is inner happiness, inner joy. One really hasn't had a merry Christmas until they have this inner happiness. It comes from having realized Christ as personal Savior and occupation with Christ. This occupation with Christ is what strengthens the believer. Phil. 4:13.

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13, NASB)

In Luke 2:11, "there has been born for you a Savior" refers to the unique God-Man, Jesus Christ. A member of the Godhead had to take on the form of a real human being, becoming a member of the human race. "Savior" refers to the humanity of Christ. "Lord" refers to the deity of Christ.

"for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11, NASB)

Heavenly Worship

This is angelic worship of the hero of the Angelic Conflict – Jesus Christ. These are elect angels who are confirmed in their holiness and direct their esteem toward God. For believers, their worship should involve a grace mental attitude, concentration on the object of who is Jesus Christ and continue to function under the grace apparatus for perception. Luke 2:13.

"And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying," (Luke 2:13, NASB)

"Heavenly host" were a number of elect angels and they had come to serenade the shepherds. The reason? The Angelic Conflict would soon be permanently resolved by Jesus Christ coming into the world, going to the Cross, and being our substitute by being judged by God the Father for the sins of all mankind. There was worship and praise.



What is worship? Some may say, “It’s spooky stuff that religious people go through to show they’re better than others.” No. In John 4:24, true and false worship is exposed. “In spirit” means to be in fellowship with God the Holy Spirit. “In truth” means to assemble together to hear the Word taught.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:24, NASB)

Potential Salvation

Peace is based on a maximum number of believers taking in doctrine daily, maximum security through a very strong military force, and maximum adherence to the four Divine Institutions, volition, marriage, family, and nationalism, which champion freedom. Luke 2:14.

“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” (Luke 2:14, NASB)

Only saved individuals have the true peace of the Lord in their hearts. “Glory to God” refers to God the Father as the author of the plan, God the Son who executed the plan by dying on the Cross, and God the Holy Spirit who reveals it to us so we may act upon it.

Reverent Seeking

The shepherds believed the angelic message. They were positive. They started their journey on the basis of the message, “they came in a hurry.” They found what they were seeking. Here are people who had never darkened the door of a synagogue or temple and this information was given to them. Why? There were around that fire that night a group of shepherds who were seeking. They had positive volition. As you gather around the teaching of the Word of God, there is genuine seeking. Luke 2:15-16.

“When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, ‘Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.” (Luke 2:15-16, NASB)

The shepherds found very easily and very quickly the right baby because He was dressed in death clothes (swaddling).

Effective Witnessing

The definition: good news. The boundaries: death, burial, and resurrection. The confidence comes from knowing doctrine in the right lobe of the soul. The application is no problem with Bible doctrine. It is harder to give biblically than witness biblically.

When they had seen the Lord Jesus Christ, they went out and told others. Have you told others? Have you earned the right to tell others? Not the haphazard knocking on houses, going door to door, but there is a legitimate witness and one of the greatest things that can happen at Christmas time is for someone to tell you in appreciation, “I found Christ as Savior through your witness, through your testimony.” Luke 2:17-18.

“When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.” (Luke 2:17-18, NASB)

In Luke 2:18, “all who heard it wondered at the things” means the genuine Gospel (good news) rightly presented should have this effect. But what muddies up the water is when you go to someone else and you think witnessing is making an issue out of their bad habits, or tell them they must give up certain



things to be saved, or observe some taboos, the filthy five or something, and start going to church, and turn respectable, be baptized, or make a fool out of themselves in some church auditorium.

None of these things are the issue. The only issue is the Gospel, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. After salvation the issue is to learn the Word and apply it to experience. For the first time, they heard the true story not the phony legalism and pandering of the Pharisees, but the true issue of the Gospel, salvation in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Quiet Meditation

In Luke 2:19, “Mary treasured” is the imperfect active indicative intensive of συντηρέω (suntēreō) and means to preserve, keep safe, keep close. Mary “pondered” is the present active participle of συμβάλλω (sumballō) and means to keep throwing things together. She was dovetailing Bible doctrine in her frame of reference. She knew what was going on and was not wondering about them. She knew! She was thinking divine viewpoint. She had her edification complex of the soul. She was a strong Christian.

"But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart." (Luke 2:19, NASB)

This is a lost art - the art of thinking divine viewpoint. She kept on thinking, meditating, and reflecting on these things.

The principles above should be a part of your frame of reference for a doctrinal Christmas! The principles of life and death, the good news of salvation, heavenly worship, peace, positive volition, effective witnessing, and frame of reference.