

“For Unto Us is Born ... A Savior, Christ the Lord”

Luke 2: 1-20 NLT At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2(This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. 4 And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. 5 He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. 7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.” 13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

15 When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

16 They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. 17 After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. 18 All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, 19 but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. 20 The Shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Luke 2:11 The NIV “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.”

TEV “This very day in David’s town your Savior is born—Christ the Lord!”

NRSV “To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

KJV “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”

What are the main points of commonality between the different translations? The first thing that pops out is that the baby was born their Savior, the one that the prophets foretold. The second thing that all of the translations have in common is that this Savior, this baby, was born for them. He is “The Christ”, “The Messiah,” “The Anointed One,” The Savior, the Lord!

My three main points for tonight are 1: that Jesus was born for you and 2: How important that is (what this announcement meant to the shepherds and us), and 3: What could it look like to live like the Christ is born in us, not just for us.

[NOTE 1] In almost every translation of Luke chapter two and verse eleven it is clear that This Savior, this baby, was born for You, for You! It is hard to really understand what an amazing thing that this was to the shepherds. Most of the Jewish people thought of the Christ as coming as a political figure or King. So this is the beginning of what took Jesus three years to get through to the disciples. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He ate with tax collectors, He talked with sinners, and let sinners touch Him. What is the reason that Jesus came? He came to pay the debt that we owed; to pave the way for a new covenant so we could pray to God, so there wouldn't be any barriers between us and God. Jesus came for You! The Savior, The Messiah was born for YOU! That's why God sent His son into the world, to seek and save the lost and that's just what you are without Christ. **[NOTE 2]**

If you take Christ out of the word Christian you get I-A-N and that stands for I Am Nothing! To you, and to you, and to you is born this day in the city of David, Christ the Lord. I have had several different people over the past couple years tell me something that they assumed I hadn't heard before ... “You know, Christmas or December 25th is not really Jesus' birthday. Some scholars say it was actually January 6th. Others say that if the shepherds were out at night then it couldn't have been winter so Christians don't even have the season right. You know what? I don't care! It doesn't make a difference to me! What matters is that Jesus Christ was sent to earth by God and He lived among us, knows what it is like to be human, frail, and hurting. He lived a sinless life, died on a cross, paid the debt that I owed for my sins and wrongs, and then rose from the grave and sits at the right hand of God the Father. He did that for me! He did that for You!

If you know that, it doesn't matter what the exact day is that Jesus was born. The important thing is that we celebrate the birth of the Christ child whether that birth happened in December, April, July, or October. The important thing is that we celebrate

the birth of Jesus because our lives are totally changed because of it. Jesus coming to earth means that I have eternal life. Because Jesus came to earth you can know that you have eternal life. How's that for a reason to celebrate? So let the scholars argue, spit and sputter all they want about when the actual, technical birth date of Jesus Christ was. Oh, and by the way, how do they know that 2000 some years ago they didn't have the warmest Winter in history and that is why the shepherds were out that night? I remember a year in the 70's when we were walking around outside in Wisconsin with nothing but a thin zip sweatshirt on. I mean it was like over 50 degrees. What matters to me is that we celebrate the birth of the most significant person in history. So significant, in fact, that history is HIS Story! If you want to get ready, prepare your heart and celebrate in March, June, September or whatever you believe to be "accurate", go for it! We really should celebrate the birth of Christ every day of the year anyway.

[NOTE 3] So it is important that we celebrate the fact that Jesus came to earth for US. He is a personal Savior! We can have a personal relationship with the Creator of the Universe. That is awesome. Not like a car, a dress, or an accomplishment is awesome, but the very definition of the word AWESOME! God came to earth for you and for me! I have talked about living like we are children of God a few times this past Fall. It is one thing to realize and celebrate that God came to earth in the form of a little baby, lived in such a way as to be a perfect example, died on the cross to pay the death debt for sin for me and then rose from the dead, conquering death so I can have eternal life. And it is another to live like Jesus is born in us. Christmas without Christ is a mass of messes. That's what we are without Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, and the power of the Holy Spirit. We are a mass of messes. **[NOTE 4]**

The overall theme for our advent season here at Doster has been "Born in Us Today." Like I said earlier, it is one thing to believe He was born for us. But it is yet another and very difficult to grasp what it means to have the Christ child born in us today. The Bible clearly tells us that Christ was born for us. Jesus' life and example shows us that we need to live like Christ is born IN us. Most of you have heard the term "Born Again." It comes from Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in the gospel of John, chapter 3. Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." So we must be born of water and the Spirit and seek to live Jesus' way ... follow Him. **[NOTE 5]**

It is hard for us to even imagine the impact that the announcement from the angels had on the Israelites. For thousands of years they had been hearing about a "Messiah." One who would bring peace, deliverance, a Savior. But the Israelites were thinking, save us from the Romans, from political oppression, from domination. They were thinking saved from poverty, saved from the Roman oppression. As usual the

people were thinking much smaller than God was. God was thinking saving the world from sin and evil, saved from death or eternal separation from God. You can see why there was a discrepancy between the kind of Savior that Jesus was and the kind of Savior the people were looking for. But that's a whole other story. The Israelites had been putting all their eggs in one basket for thousands of years. They had been oppressed for many years by different nations of people. All their hopes were pinned on the coming of a Savior, a Deliverer, the MESSIAH! The term "Christ" is Greek for "Anointed One" and Messiah is our transliteration of a Hebrew term with a similar meaning. Anointing was for a special service like that of "priest" or "king". But Jesus was prophet, priest, and King! The Jews had been expecting a very special deliverer who would not simply be "an anointed," but "THE ANOINTED." So as the Shepherds excitedly shared this announcement the people would have been filled with hope and excitement that just maybe ... this child would be the long awaited "MESSIAH!"

So try to muster up even a tenth of the anticipation and excitement that the Jews had as they awaited the Messiah, this Christmas. Celebrate Christ come to earth! It is difficult though because we are not oppressed. Even the worst of us here in Allegan County has it better than 3/4ths of the rest of the world. In fact, we have it very good. So we don't long for and really feel the "need" for a savior, at least not in the physical sense, or in the way the Israelites needed one. And that is why so many evangelists concentrate on the spiritual and emotional. That is where we feel the need for Christ. That is the emptiness or the Jesus-shaped hole that we find when Jesus is not in our lives.

I want to say one more thing about the words used here in our text from Luke chapter 2. In verse 11 the word Lord, means God. It is the translation of the name Yahweh or Yahveh which refers to none other than the one and only God who created the earth and everything in it, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel. Christ the Lord thus describes the child in the highest possible terms! There is nothing more special. There is no higher honor, no higher name, than Christ the Lord. When Jesus comes back again every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD! [NOTE 6]

Think back to when you were a kid and you could hardly wait for Christmas morning. Is there now or was there something that you were so excited about that you could barely sleep the night before? I don't know, opening presents, playing in a big game, performing, or something like that. If you are thinking or remembering a time like that you have just an inkling, a vague idea, of how important this announcement that the angel gives to the Shepherds is to the Israelite people. That is the kind of anticipation that we should have every time we celebrate the coming of Jesus into the

world. Jesus coming to earth changed EVERYTHING! We are to get excited about the chance to celebrate the birth of the Christ-child because it changes everything, because it gives us hope, it means the possibility of eternity in heaven, it means there is hope for peace, for paradise, for love to win. Praise God for Christmas. Praise Him for the incarnations, for the Word made flesh. I will not sing of shepherds watching flocks on frosty nights or angel choristers. I will not sing of a stable bare in Bethlehem, or lowing oxen, Wise men trailing a star with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Today I will sing praise to the Father who stood on Heaven's threshold and said farewell to His Son as He stepped across the stars, to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. And I will sing praise to the infinite, eternal Son, Who became most finite, a baby who would one day. Be executed for my crime. Praise Him in the heavens, praise Him in the stable, Praise Him in your heart. [NOTE 7]

Just as this Santa is bowing to the Christ-child, with hat in hand, so should you and I. Let's bow down to worship Christ the Lord. Let's be obedient and share the good news. Let's honor God, let's praise God!!! Just like the angels did some 2000 plus years ago. Don't let the world, or evil, or anything else be able to keep you quiet! Don't let anything shoosh you! Get excited! Celebrate with gusto the coming of God to earth as a little child, Christ the Lord, Your Savior, born for you!

Let's pray ... ABBA Father, our Holy Daddy, listen to our prayers. Hear us as we seek to properly celebrate the event of your coming to earth. Thank You God for sending Your one and only Son, to earth. Jesus changed everything! Thank You Lord for salvation! Thank You that we can know we are going to heaven if we have Jesus in our hearts and do our best to live like Jesus is our Lord. What an awesome God you are! You are the wonderful, counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace! Thank You for sending Jesus to be the Good Shepherd! May we Honor You as we Honor the birth of your Son as we celebrate the most important birthday in History! May he lead us and may we follow Him! We ask and praise and pray this in the name of Your Son, our Lord, and our Savior ...Jesus Christ...AMEN

Sermon Notes for “For Unto Us is Born ... A Savior, Christ the Lord”

based on Luke 2:1-20 (mainly verse 11)

Given on Christmas Day, December 25, 2022 in Doster

- I. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He came to pay the debt we owed for sin, and open the lines of communication between us and God.
- II. If you take “Christ” out of “Christian” all you have left is i-a-n and that stands for I Am Nothing. That’s what we are without Jesus.
- III. It is of utmost importance that we celebrate the fact that Jesus came to earth for us. He is a personal Savior. Because Jesus opened the way, we can have a personal relationship with the Creator of the universe!
- IV. Take “Christ” out of “Christmas” and all you have left is “mas.” That’s what we are without Jesus, a mass of messes. Therefore, we need to recognize that Christ was born for us, and live like He is born in us!
- V. Jesus was called the “Messiah” by the angels. This was significant. Jesus just wasn’t the kind of “Messiah” the Israelites were looking for. Jesus is “The Anointed One”!
- VI. Jesus coming to earth, “God among us” changed everything: it gives us hope, peace, and makes going to heaven something we can know. It means that LOVE wins. Praise God for Christmas!
- VII. So now what are you going to do about it? What will be different today because of this message from God? Please write an “I will ... statement” before you go home, have Christmas dinner, and possibly forget about it.