

The Angel's Message: To You Is Born This Day A Saviour.

Text: Luke 2:1-14

Suggested Hymns:

34, 628, 627, 624, 33

1) The Saviour

2) Is Born

3) To You

4) This Day

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 2:1-14, ¹ *And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.* ² *This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.*

³ *So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.* ⁴ *Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,* ⁵ *to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.*

⁶ *So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.* ⁷ *And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

⁸ *Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.* ⁹ *And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.*

¹⁰ *Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.* ¹¹ *For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* ¹² *And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."* ¹³ *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. This was the angel's introduction as he delivered his great message from heaven on Christmas day, the first Christmas that dawned upon the world.

Christmas is intended to be a day of joy, of universal joy. Not another day in the year is hailed with such delight by both young and old as Christmas day.

Not another festival of the Christian Church causes so much gladness as does this glorious festival, which, by the grace of God, we have again been permitted to celebrate today. Today the whole world round about us seems turned into a sea of gladness. Faces beaming with joy are seen everywhere.

Man for once seems to forget his own precious self and to find pleasure in making others happy. Tokens of love are exchanged among friends. Parents desire to see their children happier on this day, and children desire to see their parents joyful.

Brothers and sisters under the Christmas tree more than on any other occasion are made to feel that they are members of the same family. Thus Christmas has come to be a day of joy, a day of prevailing happiness, a day in which almost everybody feels that he should be happy and make others happy.

But this time-honoured custom of bestowing and receiving gifts, though laudable in itself, is not the foundation nor everywhere a token, of that joy of which the angel speaks. The angel does not say, *I bring you good tidings of great joy, for henceforth this day shall be among men a day of showing love and kindness.*

No, he says, “¹¹ ***For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.***” The true reason for joy on Christmas day is to be sought in the fact that a Saviour was born unto us this day. This is the great message of the day.

Let us consider then, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, *The Angel's Message: Unto You Is Born This Day A Saviour.* Every word of this message is of utmost importance. We shall, therefore, analyse it and consider its four component parts. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. A Saviour

“*A Savior,*” says the angel. — Could the criminal on the scaffold receive better news than to be informed that the governor’s messenger has arrived with a pardon? Could the shipwrecked person who is about to sink into the depths of the sea receive better help than to be grasped by a strong hand and lifted into the boat? Now, we are all as the criminal and the drowning man.

We are sinners and as such we are lost and condemned. By the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden the whole human family was corrupted with the filth of sin and made despicable in the sight of God, who is a consuming fire to evil-doers. Hell and damnation is our inevitable doom because we have sinned.

Why were the shepherds greatly afraid when, as we are told, “*an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them?*” They were afraid because they were sinners. Nothing in heaven or on earth could frighten man if he was sinless.

But now we have a Saviour, a Saviour by divine assurance, a Saviour to deliver us from eternal death. O my friends, could we receive better news than that? We value the help of a person who saves our life and rescues us from temporal death. But here is the Saviour from greater perils than all the dangers upon earth, the Saviour from hell.

O how we should rejoice, how we should thank our God for that Saviour, who is God Himself, who could never save us from eternal death if He were not God. Or do you doubt that the Babe of Bethlehem is the Saviour that came down from heaven?

Look into our Christmas Gospel and all doubts must disappear. We read, *¹And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.*

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into *Judea*, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David *to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.*

O what a wonderful child! For the sake of this child the whole world is set in commotion. God puts into the heart of the greatest living ruler, Caesar Augustus, to issue a decree of registration which affects the whole world.

In every land under the Roman rule the inhabitants must return to the city or place of their birth to be registered. And why all this? That Mary and Joseph should go to Bethlehem and that the child Jesus should be born in the city of David. Yes, what a wonderful child!

Not only the world, even the heavens are set in commotion for the sake of this child. The angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem to bring them the good tidings of the Saviour's birth; *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:* ¹⁴ *“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*

What more evidence do we want that this child is the Saviour? Could God do more than to set heaven and earth in commotion to make us understand the importance of the great event in the holy night?

2. Is born

But let us continue and look at the next word in the angel's message. He says, “*Born*” born is a Saviour, and the following account is given of His birth: *“⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”*

The Saviour of the world was born in extreme poverty. There was no bed or cradle for Him; He was laid in a manger. And the fact that He was laid in a manger also discloses the place of His birth. He must have been born in a stable, where mangers are kept and animals are fed. He was born; the Saviour of the world was born! What joy and happiness is contained for us in that little word!

Suppose God had come down from heaven in His glorious majesty to deal with us fallen creatures, could we stand before Him? No; we would have to cry for the mountains to fall upon us, and for the hills to cover us.

But now God is born; the Word is made flesh; God is become man; God has taken upon Himself our human nature; God is become our brother. Could there be a greater-evidence of God's love to man?

Could God show more plainly that He desires our eternal happiness than by giving us His own Son, in our own likeness, in the form of man, in all respects the same as we with the exception of sin?

For what was the purpose of all this? Why did God become man? That he might work out that righteousness which God requires of man and which no man can show forth, that in our stead, as our substitute. That He might fulfil the commandments and atone for all our transgressions by a painful suffering and bitter death.

The Babe of Bethlehem is our Redeemer, who reconciled us to God, in whom God has manifested His great love to the sinful creature. *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*¹ No better illustration could be given of this great Word of God than the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

3. To you

But the great trouble is that so many people do not believe in Jesus Christ. The sinner who is conscious of the greatness of his guilt might say, *'There is surely no help for me. Others may rejoice in the Saviour and joyfully kneel at the manger of the heavenly child. As for me, I have no right to be there, I must stay away.'*

But what does the angel say in his message? He says, ***For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior.*** Whom does he mean? He was addressing the shepherds. Did he mean the shepherds alone? Or, since the shepherds were members of God's chosen people, of the Jewish nation, did he mean to say that to the Jews alone a Saviour was born?

No, my friends, the angel himself explains these two little words, *"to you,"* when he says, ***Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.*** To whom, then, is the Saviour born? O joyful message, to all people! Do you hear it, O sinner?

To all people, that is, to all who ever lived on the face of the earth from the first man, Adam, to the last man who shall be born before the coming of the day of judgement, to Jews and Gentiles, Christians and non-Christians, saints and sinners.

You have a claim upon this child and even if you are ever so great a sinner. Let your sins be as many as the sands on the sea-shore and as black as night, the Babe of Bethlehem extends also to you His little hands and bids you rejoice in the full forgiveness of your foul deeds.

You have as much right to this heavenly child as the greatest saint. For this child is *the Son of man, who came to seek and to save that which was lost.*² *He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.*³ *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.*⁴

And if you had done ever so many wrongs and had shown yourself ever so unworthy of God's love, come, let not the greatness or the multitude of your sins keep you away; come and say, *'O heavenly Child, I can hardly believe it, but it is true, yes, it is true and certain, You are mine also, my brother, my God, my Saviour, for You were born also for me.'*

4. This day

There is but one more expression in the angel's message: *"This day,"* this day is born to you a Saviour. What does that mean *"this day?"*

The angel obviously meant to say nothing more than that now was the hour of fulfilment of all those divine prophecies concerning the coming Saviour from the beginning of the world.

That promised Deliverer did not come some time ago and remain unknown, nor was He to be expected in some future day, but now, this very day, He came.

To convince the shepherds the angel gave them a special sign. He said, ¹² *And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.*

This was indeed a sign by which the shepherds could not be misled. That a new-born infant should be cradled in a manger was a most extraordinary thing,

and if that night some other child was born in Bethlehem it was surely bedded more comfortably than Mary's son.

¹¹ *For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior.* It is this day always for those who believe in Him. The moment the sinner believes in Jesus, the Saviour is his and all the blessings of the Saviour are conferred upon him.

Melanchthon was once asked by a learned man why we still say, "*This day Christ is born,*" notwithstanding the fact that Jesus was born so many hundreds of years ago. Melanchthon answered, "*Are you not in need of a Saviour this day? Because every day we must have a Saviour we still say, This day He is born."*

Let this day then be for you the day of Christ's birth, the day in which Christ is born anew in your heart. This day, when you hear His voice, harden not your heart. Let this day be unto you a day of rejoicing in the Saviour.

And when no more we can say "***This day,***" there will be an endless day, a day of glory, of happiness and bliss, a day in which we shall unite with the angels and sing glory to our God and Saviour for ever and ever. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ John 3:16

² Luke 19:10

³ John 1:29

⁴ 1 John 2:2