

ASPECTS OF THE GOSPEL AT CHRIST'S BIRTH
LUKE 2:8-20

Introduction

In our text today, we find one of my favorite parts of the **CHRISTMAS STORY**—the story of the **ANGEL OF THE LORD** visiting **SHEPHERDS** in a field of **BETHLEHEM** on the night of **CHRIST'S BIRTH!**

As we read through this part of the **CHRISTMAS STORY**, let's see some important **ASPECTS OF THE GOSPEL** that are found woven within the story here. This is not by accident! Because the **CHRISTMAS STORY** is **ALL** about the **GOSPEL** of **JESUS CHRIST!**

I. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST REMOVES FEAR! (Vs 8-10)

We know there are many different things in this world that can bring forth **FEAR** into our lives!

- A. Fear Can Be Caused By A Sense Of Being Overwhelmed.**
Put yourself in the sandals of these lowly **SHEPHERDS** for a minute. Up to this point their greatest **FEAR** was probably the possibility of having to deal with predators.

Then, all of a sudden, the **ANGEL of the LORD** came upon them and **the glory of the LORD** shone round about them!

None of us have ever had anything like that happen to us, but we can be sure that it was a most frightening experience because the **BIBLE** says it was!

This was an **out of the ordinary experience** for these **SHEPHERDS!** Most folks I know of don't like the unexpected. That was most likely true for these **SHEPHERDS** as well! It was surely an **overwhelming experience.**

- B. Fear Can Also Be Caused By Adverse Circumstances.**
Adverse circumstances can come our way in a moment. They may take on many different forms:

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It might be the death of a loved one.
It might be a serious illness.
It might be an accident.
It might be a financial setback.
It might be adverse circumstances of another nature that may bring harm into our lives.

These **adverse circumstances** can be a wake up call, but they can also bring **FEAR** into our lives.

- 1. Fear Can Be Caused By That Which Is Unknown.**
Do you think any of these **SHEPHERDS** thought their life might be coming to an end here? Can you imagine what was going through their minds?
- 2. Fear Can Be Caused By That Which Is Known.**
Do you think any of these **SHEPHERDS** lives might have flashed before their eyes in a moment?

What I'm saying is that this was a **CIRCUMSTANCE**, like many other **CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE**, which easily brought **FEAR** into the lives of these poor **SHEPHERDS.**

But notice what the **ANGEL** of the **LORD** said to these **SHEPHERDS!** "**FEAR NOT!**" Notice that the basis for "**FEAR NOT!**" was not in what was happening in their hearts at that moment, but rather in **the MESSAGE that was revealed!** The **MESSAGE** that the **MESSIAH**, the **CHRIST**, the **ANOINTED ONE**, the **SAVIOUR** had been born!

You see, the **GOSPEL OF CHRIST** is what can remove **WHATEVER FEAR** we may have in our lives!

It comes from the confidence that we in **CHRIST** that is expressed by **PAUL** in **Romans 8:31...**

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“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

The verses immediately after that one assure us that whatever comes upon us in our lives after we have **CHRIST**—whether it be *tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, or whatever else may come in this fear filled life*—nothing can separate us from **the LOVE OF CHRIST!**

Once we have **CHRIST**, we have help for **ALL** of life's **FEARS!**

Psalm 118:5-6—“I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place. 6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?”

2 Timothy 1:7—“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

SO, THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST REMOVES FEAR...

II. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BRINGS GREAT JOY! (Vs 10)
Notice the second thing the **ANGEL of the LORD** said to these **SHEPHERDS**.

“...for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy.”

Note that the **ANGEL of the LORD** did not bring them **HAPPINESS**, but **JOY!** **HAPPINESS** and **JOY** are two different things.

HAPPINESS is based on **HAPPENINGS**. The **APPEARANCE** of this **ANGEL** was bringing **FEAR**, but his announcement was one that would bring **JOY!**

JOY is based upon **ASSURANCE** in spite of the **HAPPENINGS!**
The **GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST** brings **JOY** to the life of a

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BELIEVER even in the midst of **HAPPENINGS** that may not be pleasant!

III. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS FOR ALL PEOPLE! (Vs 10)
“...which shall be to all people.”

2 Peter 3:9—“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

A. The Good News Is—The GOSPEL Is For ALL PEOPLE!
Whosoever will may come!

Male or Female, Adult or Child, Jew or Gentile, Bond or Free, to the Wise and the Unwise, to Every Race, to Every Tongue, to Every Person—No Exclusions—The **GOSPEL** is for **ALL PEOPLE!**

B. The Bad News Is—Not All Will Respond To The GOSPEL!
The **GOSPEL** is only effective for those who **BELIEVE** it. (*John 3:16-18*)

1. Some Will Never **HEAR** The **GOSPEL!**
2. Some Will Never **HEED** The **GOSPEL!**

IV. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST EMPHASIZES THE VALUE OF THE INDIVIDUAL! (Vs 10-11)
“Unto you”

JESUS not only came for the **WORLD**, but **HE** came for me and for you!

V. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BRINGS SALVATION! (Vs 11)
“a Saviour”

It implies that the one being saved is in peril!

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We **ALL** were in peril of death and hell because of our sin!

It implies that the One doing the saving is able!

JESUS CHRIST is the **ONLY ONE ABLE TO SAVE!**

**VI. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS IN A PERSON. (Vs 11)
"...which is CHRIST the LORD."**

Again, **JESUS CHRIST** is the **ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE!**

SALVATION is **NOT** in a **CREED** or **CODE OF CONDUCT!**
SALVATION is **NOT** in a **RELIGION** or **RELIGIOUS**
CEREMONY!

(Baptism or Communion)

SALVATION IS ONLY IN A PERSON—THE LORD JESUS
CHRIST!

Acts 4:12—“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

John 14:6—“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

**VII. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BRINGS GLORY TO GOD.
(Vs 13-14, 20)**

A. We See The Glory Expressed By Angels—The Heavenly Hosts! (Vs 13-14)
“...there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praised God saying, Glory to God in the highest...”

Why? Because it is **ALL** about what **GOD** had done!
When it comes to **SALVATION—GOD thought it, HE wrought it, HE brought it, and then HE bought it—it is all about HIM and what HE has done!**

B. We See The Glory Expressed By Man—The Shepherds!

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(Vs 20)

“The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”

Again, it was **ALL** about what **GOD** had done!

And, it was about **the veracity or truthfulness of GOD!**

VIII. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST BRINGS REAL AND LASTING PEACE AND GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN! (Vs. 14)

A. The Gospel Of Christ Brings Peace To Men!

Isaiah 57:20—“But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

Job 15:20-24—“The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor. 21 A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him. 22 He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword. 23 He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand. 24 Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.”

John 14:27—“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Just as there can be no **PEACE** in this troubled world until the **LORD JESUS CHRIST** rules and reigns on this earth, there also can be no **PEACE** in the heart and life of any individual until **JESUS CHRIST** rules and reigns in their own personal life!

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B. The Gospel Of Christ Brings Good Will To Men!
Jeremiah 29:11—“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

That is goodwill!

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17—“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, 17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.”

That is good will!

John 10:10—“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

GOD'S MERCY and GRACE are available to ALL who BELIEVE!

IX. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST CALLS FOR A RESPONSE.
(Vs 15-16)

These SHEPHERDS responded by FAITH to what they were told!

GOD'S REVELATION of HIMSELF and HIS WORD have ALWAYS called for a RESPONSE! The RESPONSE of FAITH!

Hebrews 11:6—“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

That verse is found in the “*Hall of Faith*” chapter in the BIBLE, *Hebrews 11*, that is FULL of those in the past who heard from GOD and RESPONDED to what they heard!

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.”

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“By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”

By faith, by faith, by faith...over and over that which pleased GOD was **BY FAITH!** And the LORD is still looking for the **RESPONSE OF FAITH!**

X. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS MEANT TO BE SHARED.
(Vs 17-20)

These SHEPHERDS shared the **GOOD NEWS** with others!

What the SHEPHERDS heard from the **ANGEL of the LORD** was **GOOD NEWS!**

But it wasn't **GOOD NEWS** to be hidden from others, but to be shared with others—and that they did!

Conclusion

So we see these **ASPECTS OF THE GOSPEL** here in this portion of the **CHRISTMAS STORY!**

What has the **GOSPEL** done for you? Are you **SAVED?**

Listen to me, **CHRIST** wants to remove your **FEAR** today and give you **HIS GREAT JOY of SALVATION** that **HE** has made available!

That **SALVATION** is in the **GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST!** **HE** is the only **ONE WHO** can **SAVE** you and give you real and lasting **PEACE** in your life, but you must **RESPOND TO HIM BY FAITH!**

If you have responded to the **GOSPEL** are you sharing it with others?