

which already with His birth was so proclaimed and made known. Jesus' coming, according to the angel's adjectives, is *good* tidings of *great* joy. Do you say, 'But how do I know it is also for me'? Maybe I am excluded from this message of hope and peace and joy and salvation rich and free? Oh, but listen with me yet to the third adjective the angel uses. What does the heavenly messenger say? I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be for some people? Which shall be for a few people? Which shall be for an elect people? Look at the text - is that what it says? No, no, the angel said, which shall be to all people. All people means here you have a message which is for all people, for every country, tribe, nationality, and race, for all ages, and people of whatever status and race. Here is a message of salvation for all people.

We know the Bible clearly teaches only those ordained to eternal life shall be saved in the end but the gospel message is for all people and it is to be earnestly offered to all in the Name of God with the honest promise, whosoever believes on Him, this Saviour born in the city of David Who is Christ the Lord, whosoever repents of sin and trusts in Him shall be saved. No people are excluded from the sincere, well-meant divine call of the gospel, and all who respond to that call shall not be put to shame. Please listen to the angel's adjectives and don't exclude yourself when the angel was told by God to say, "*Fear not, I bring you glad tidings of good things which shall be to all people*". The Christmas message is a message of salvation and hope for this world, none excluded, all included.

I urge you to hear and believe the angel's adjectives with the announcement of Jesus' coming, and encourage all who love the Lord to be excited with me with God's choice adjectives in the tidings of Jesus' birth. These adjectives were selected by God purposely, you may be sure, to have us believe His gospel truly and completely and to rejoice therein intensely and repeatedly and to promote this good news zealously and constantly. God grant such true saving fruit also on this gospel word. Amen.

Hans Overduin, Radio Pastor
December 11, 2005

Publication No.236

BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST

Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America

Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



THREE GOSPEL ADJECTIVES

The tidings of Jesus' birth as recorded in Luke 2 is something that may be well known by some, but others have never heard it yet, and how many still do not understand the gospel message with His birth. To grasp the message of Jesus' birth is to realize it is a story of endless worth! To have us see something of the wonder of His birth and its endless worth, I invite you to study with me just the adjectives in the angel's Christmas message. Our text is Luke 2:10 where we read about the angel's message to the shepherd, "*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.*" There are three adjectives in the angel's message which I would highlight with you.

Do you know what an adjective is? You know what a noun is, right? A noun is a person, place or thing, or object, or subject of any sort. The word "book" is a noun; the word "house" is a noun. But if I say, this is a great book; the word "great" is an adjective that describes the noun, book. If I say to look for the red house on that street, the word 'red' is an adjective describing the noun 'house'. So adjectives are those words that describe nouns. Looking at Luke 2:10, notice the three nouns the angel uses and the three adjectives for those nouns. The angel speaks of tidings, and joy, and people. I bring you tidings of joy which shall be to people or, for people. The text doesn't just say that though, does it? No, God in heaven gave the angel specific instructions what to say with Jesus' birth in that lowly stable in Bethlehem. This is what the angel had to say to the shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you what kind of tidings - *good* tidings. Of what? Of joy - no, not just joy but of *great* joy, which shall be to people - no, which shall be to *all* people. Do you hear the adjectives, the inspired adjectives of God here with the Christmas message?

Think about the choice words here used. The angel came to bring tidings; he came to bring a report or announcement from the heavenly throne room of God. And what is the announcement with Jesus' birth? I bring you a good report, says the angel. Glad tidings he came to bring....not sad tidings, not bad tidings, but good tidings! "I bring you good tidings" is one of the main words used for preaching the gospel. Preaching is declaring good tidings from God to us. In Romans 10:15, Paul exclaims, "*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things*". Twice there the very same word is used as in our text, telling of the angel bringing good news.

The gospel is about good news. Good news is news that is true, and helpful, and relevant to us. And the good news of Jesus' birth is that with His coming is born a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. Jesus is not just another deliverer of sorts but He is the long promised and only Saviour come to save His people from their sins. He is also the Saviour Who is Christ the Lord. The word "Christ" means that He is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God, sent of the Father and anointed and equipped by Him and the Holy Spirit to be the almighty Saviour able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

The message of Jesus' birth is about good tidings! Do you need to hear good tidings? Gospel news? The shepherds were people who were longing for some good tidings. They were a lowly people who felt their sins and shortcomings and who longed for deliverance, not from their poverty financially so much, but from their poverty spiritually. They longed for that promised Saviour foretold in the Old Testament Who could and would deliver them from their sins and sinfulness, Who could save them from the devil's plots and powers, Who could deliver them from death's dark hour, and give them peace of heart and hope in life and communion with God. And the angel says to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news"! The Christmas message is good news for it tells us of the birth of Jesus come to be Saviour, and of the almighty, everlasting, infinitely gracious, and compassionate Saviour He truly is!

The message with Jesus' birth is good news. Good news, do you hear? How much bad news and sad news do we hear all too often? The gospel message, the preaching of God's Word, is good news. More than 2000 years ago now, in the fullness of time, in Bethlehem of Judah, Jesus was born, come to seek and to save sinners! Jesus was sent of the Father to give His life a ransom for many. Jesus coming, born as a baby in Bethlehem, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, proclaims how He came to cover for our sins from our conception on even till our very last breath. Oh, it is good news that He came, and how He came, and when He came, and for what He came, and where He is now since He came, sitting at God's right hand as the Almighty Saviour of sinners, through His Word and Spirit gathering His church, saving sinners and preparing all things for His coming again to establish His eternal kingdom.

Jesus' coming is good news! Do you receive it as such too? Is the gospel of His birth, come to be Saviour of sinners, good news for you personally? The angel proclaimed it to the shepherds as good news for them and certainly God now has me proclaim and preach the gospel as good news also for you and for me today. Jesus' coming is good news for as we read in John 3:17, "God sent not His Son into this world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." Jesus' coming is good news for, as we are told in Luke 19:10, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Jesus' coming is good news! Do you believe it for

yourself, do you receive Him for yourself as your Saviour and Lord? The shepherds did and they found out, yes, Jesus' birth is good news and after seeing the Christ-child, we are told in Luke 2:20, they returned "*glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.*"

"Fear not!" said the angel to them, "*for behold, I bring you good news of great joy*". Let us stop at this next adjective too. Christmas is a message of great joy! Literally in the Greek it says mega joy. How much Christmas celebration which leaves out the gospel message really offers no true and lasting joy. Much of the joy of this joyful season is very superficial, very short-lived, and ultimately most disappointing. If your joy is dependent on the pleasures and treasures of this world and just reaching out for more and more of it, true joy and great joy just will not be found. But when you understand the gospel with Jesus' coming to be the Saviour of sinners, coming to give deliverance from sin, and forgiveness of sin, and peace with God, and everlasting righteousness for us before God, and the gift of eternal life with God, then you may know of a great joy that doesn't get packed away with the Christmas decorations, and doesn't go away even in the trials and hardships of life. Great joy is what God gives to His people who look to Christ and trust Him as their only Saviour and Lord. Jesus' birth as Saviour Who is Christ the Lord is so much a matter of joy because in Him and with Him all our salvation from beginning to end is complete and guaranteed and you find with Him and His saving work for us and in us a comfort unbelievable, a comfort of peace and security for soul and body, and in life as well as in death, and a refuge strong and sure that will never be put to shame. Apart from Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord there just is no hope or help for us. But whosoever believes on Jesus, and relies truly and wholly on Him for all deliverance from sin and all approval with God, shall not perish but have abundant life here already and everlasting life hereafter. This is the good news of great joy!

Oh, how Jesus did have to suffer and go through most difficult times in obtaining salvation for people like us. It started already right with His birth as there was no room for Him when He was born and shortly after He had to flee the region to escape the terrorist attack of Herod against Him. Praise God, Jesus went on with His life-saving work even to the death of the cross, giving His life a ransom for many. What an amazing gospel, for believing in this Jesus, the once crucified and now ever risen and exalted Saviour of sinners, God graciously receives you and me as cleansed and redeemed, and, indeed, as His very own dear children, adopted into His family, recipients of His love forevermore and heirs of eternal life with Him in unending glory, peace, and joy in the world to come.

This Christmas, can you be content without the joy of the Lord? This is the message of the angel, "*Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy*"! That is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good tidings of great joy