

To Whom Does Christmas Come?

Luke 2:8-20

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 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. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

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

I. Unauthorized Changes- Genesis 3, 11

So, what's the big deal about adding a few details to the story or changing some of the details in order to make it fit what we think would sound better? Who wants you to get Scripture incorrect, even though it's not out-right denial of what is said, even though it is not blasphemous, even though on the surface it's no big deal? Satan!

Channel your inner Dr. Phil and ask, "Eve how's that working for you?"

II. Unassuming Characters - Galatians 4:4

I've always been amazed at the cast of characters surrounding the Christmas story. A young woman, a teenager named Mary; Joseph, a carpenter; Zacharias and Elizabeth; Simeon and Anna, two people faithful to God even though there had been 400 years of silence from God; wise men, foreigners from the pagan lands of the East; and then there were the shepherds, the humble, the lowly, the working class, living out in the fields.

CNN didn't show up, Fox didn't cover it, Onion ignored it. There were no Christmas parades, political proclamations, or parties that night. Jesus' birth was not attended by the religious rulers of Israel, or the powerful Herod, or Quirinius, the mighty Roman governor of Syria. In fact, they were part of the problem.

The message of salvation still comes to the ones who will listen and who will humble themselves as a small child before God. Why shepherds? Because they were humble enough in heart to receive the message. They were not so entangled with the things of this world to be too busy to hear or too proud to care. The Lord still comes to the contrite and humble of heart, to the poor in spirit who know they fall short of God's glory, to the ones who are hungry for something significant and eternal.

III. Unexpected Company – Vs. 15

Christmas will come, but the question is, "what kind of person will actually experience Christ?" He comes to the bruised reed not to the proud rod. He is born in those who know they need to be born again. He comes not to people because of their social status, their righteous religiosity, their skin color, or their bank account balance, He comes to the humble of heart, those "broken over their sin."

Why do so many people miss Jesus? They made no excuses why they could not come. They did not say, "Well, I'm not dressed for the occasion. When I get some new clothes, I'm going to see Jesus." They didn't say, "When I get my life all cleaned up then I am going to answer the angel's invitation to come to Jesus." They didn't say, "Shepherding is a full-time job and I just don't have the time right now. But one day soon I am going to have some free time and then I am coming to see Jesus." They were united in their desire to see Jesus.

III. Uncompromising Commitment– Vss. 16-17

To hear and respond to Christ is to take up His work. We now have the responsibility "to make Him known." And I want to use this as a teachable moment. We have done some trial runs for our Pray and Go strategy for evangelism. And I'm going to ask you to open up your hearts to this concept. Dr. Adrian Rogers said that most churches are like an arctic river - frozen at the mouth. May we never be a tongue-tied church in a hell-bent world.