

Jesus came and Brought **Joy** (Luke 2:10).

Prepared and preached by Pastor Steve Rhodes for and at Bethel Friends Church in Poland, OH on December 11, 2022

## THE LIGHT OF HOPE

*As Craig T. Kocher states, "Christian hope is fundamentally different from optimism. Christian hope locks its steely eyes on the devastation of the world around it, and readily acknowledges that things may not get better. Christian hope does not bury its heat in Yule-tide cheer and artificial lights, but like an Advent wreath glowing stronger and brighter each week, this hope pushes its way into the brokenness of the world clearing a path in the wilderness so the true light might burst into the darkness."*

*Kocher then goes on to cite a story told by Tom Long, about a rabbi Hugo Grynn, who was sent to Auschwitz as a little boy. In the midst of the concentration camp, in the midst of the death and horror all around them, many Jews held onto whatever shreds of their religious observances they could, without drawing the ire of the guards. One cold winter's evening, Hugo's father gathered the family in the barracks. It was the first night of Hanukkah, the Jewish Feast of Lights.*

*The young child watched in horror as his father took the family's last pad of butter and made a makeshift candle, using a string from his ragged clothes. He then took a match and lit the candle. "Father, no!" Hugo cried. "That butter is our last bit of food! How will we survive?"*

*"We can live for many days without food," his father said. "We can not live a single minute without faith and hope. This is the fire of hope. Never let it go out. Not here! Not anywhere!" [Pulpit Resource, Logos Productions, Inc, 2005]*

Jesus is our Savior and He brings us hope. Through our hope we have joy. Do we have joy in Jesus?

Advent candle:

The third Sunday of Advent is the candle of Joy. For many in this world joy may be far away. They stand alone, uncertain, lost and confused. There is no security in their lives. There is no joy. There is no knowledge of Jesus.

But we can share our hope. We can let others know of the joy that comes through Christ; that no one needs to be alone and joyless. We light the candle of Joy

knowing that we can share that light with others. We can be Hope and Joy. In this time of Advent, we know that we have that promise.

Today my theme is:

Jesus came and brought **Joy**

Luke 2:8–14 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup>*And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

<sup>9</sup>*And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.*

<sup>10</sup>*And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.*

<sup>11</sup>*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

<sup>12</sup>*And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”*

<sup>13</sup>*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

<sup>14</sup>*“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

## I. Context...

- a. What is the context of this passage?
- b. Jesus has just been born and this is the passage in which the angels visit the shepherds.
- c. The meaning of the word angel: **Angel**. The Hebrew word *malak* simply means “messenger”; it may refer to a human messenger (1 Kings 19:2) or a divine messenger (Gen. 28:12). The basic meaning of the word is “one who is sent.” As a divine messenger an angel is a “heavenly being charged by God with some commission.”<sup>1</sup> The word is found 103 times in the Old Testament. The Greek word *angelos* occurs 175 times in the New Testament; however, of men it is used only 6 times. The word *angelos* is similar to the Hebrew *malak*; it also means “messenger ... who speaks and acts in the place of the one who has sent him.”<sup>1</sup>
- d. The shepherds were in the same region.
- e. They were out in their fields.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerhard von Rad, “*Mal’āk* in the Old Testament,” in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:76–77.

<sup>1</sup> Paul P. Enns, [\*The Moody Handbook of Theology\*](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 286–287.

- f. They were out there for the purpose of watching their flocks by night.
- g. A lot of study could be done about shepherds and the humility of that job. We often hear shepherds were the lowest class. They always go back to Genesis where Joseph's brothers sold Joseph to shepherds but those were Egyptian shepherds, or Egyptian views of Shepherds. There is some Rabbinic literature negative of shepherds but that is from the 4th century AD. Dr. Rydelnic does not think they were the lowest class. Dr Rydelnic agrees with the Life Application Study Bible that these might have been the shepherds supplying the lambs for temple sacrifices that were used for forgiveness of sins. This would be true regardless of the season.<sup>2</sup>
- h. They [the shepherds] were literally guarding their flocks for the night.
- i. Verse 8 tells the place. Verse 9 is about to tell what happens.
- j. This is all happening simultaneously to the previous verses. Jesus has been born and it seems that at the same time as His birth, or right after His birth, this happens.
- k. An angel of the Lord "appeared" or "stood." The NASB says "suddenly."
- l. The Greek verb for "stood" carries the idea of "suddenly."<sup>3</sup>
- m. →What is it like to have something appear suddenly?
- n. →The shepherds didn't see the Angel coming over the hill.
- o. →The shepherds didn't hear the angel of the Lord be given clearance for landing.
- p. There is also Theological debate about what "Angel of the Lord" means. Sometimes that can mean an appearance of Christ in the Old Testament, Christophany. Or, a bodily appearance of God the Father, which could be Christ, Theophany. In this case I think this is a high-ranking angel.
- q. The "glory of the Lord shone around them"
- r. →What does this look like? Ezekiel chapter 1 is similar.
- s. We do know they were scared.
- t. R.C. Sproul makes the case that this is the Shekinah glory of the Old Testament. The angel of the Lord is bathed in the Shekinah glory.<sup>4</sup>
- u. *The word shekinah does not appear in the Bible, but the concept clearly does. The Jewish rabbis coined this extra-biblical expression, a form of a Hebrew word that literally means "he caused to dwell," signifying that it was a divine visitation of the presence or dwelling of the Lord God on this earth. The Shekinah was first evident when the Israelites set out*

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<sup>2</sup> Open Line on Moody radio 12.22.2018

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, vol. 4, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament library, 183 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Renewing Your Mind, 10.03.2021

*from Succoth in their escape from Egypt. There the Lord appeared in a cloudy pillar in the day and a fiery pillar by night: “After leaving Succoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people” (Exodus 13:20–22).<sup>5</sup>*

- v. The shepherds were terribly frightened.
- w. The Greek uses the verb for “frightened” once and then a noun describing them as frightened along with an adjective to describe them as “greatly frightened.”
- x. Verse 10: The angel now speaks.
- y. We are going to come back to verse 10 in a minute, but let me explain the rest of the context.
- z. The angels are telling the shepherds that the Savior has been born and further they tell the shepherds where to find the Savior.
- aa. Then we have this amazing worship of the angels.

## II. Good news of great joy...

- a. Jesus has come and this is good news.
- b. Notice that Jesus’ birth is good news.
- c. Further, Jesus’ birth is news that brings great joy.
- d. Notice the modifiers.
- e. Jesus’ birth was not just any old news.
- f. Jesus’ birth was good news.
- g. One source shares: *This translates the Greek verb euangelizō, which means to preach the good news. The noun (euangelion) is translated by the word “gospel.” This verb is found eleven times in the Gospels, and ten of these are found in Luke.*<sup>6</sup>
- h. Jesus’ birth did not just bring joy, no, His birth brought great joy.
- i. Where is our joy?
- j. Tony Evans shares the following:
- k. *SOMEBODY has come up with a great concept—putting playrooms in doctors’ offices. Many parents bring their kids to the doctor because they are sick and they need the doctor to see them. The playrooms are designed to distract the children from the pain of their problem until their problem gets fixed. The playroom gives them joy in a bad situation.*

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/shekinah-glory.html>

<sup>6</sup> Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 108.

- l. *That's the way God works. Even though things may not be going the way we want them to be on the outside, God has designed a "playroom" in our soul. In the midst of our circumstances, His joy can distract us from our pain or discomfort, until He makes provision for our change or healing.*<sup>5207</sup>
- m. The is good news for all people.
- n. This includes gentiles.
- o. One source shares: *Are Gentiles included here, or is this a reference only to the Jewish people? Luke envisioned the gospel as being for all people, including the Gentiles (Acts 15:1–29; 18:10); but here, as in 3:21; 7:29; 8:47, the people of Israel were primarily in Luke's mind. The singular "people" refers everywhere else in Luke to the people of Israel.*<sup>8</sup>
- p. So, this passage directly refers to the Jewish audience, but later Luke will include all people.
- q. Luke was written to a gentile audience. Remember that he wrote Acts which shows the Gospel going to all people.
- r. The Gospel is good news for all people.
- s. This is great joy for all people.
- t. Where is our joy at Christmas time?

### III. Applications

- a. Does Christmas bring you joy?
  1. Christmas should bring us joy.
  2. Christmas should bring joy for all people.
  3. The joy is that the Savior has come, and the Savior is for all people.
  4. Do we realize that Jesus' death and resurrection is for everyone?
  5. Our ultimate joy must be from the gospel not Christmas lights, presents, or many other good things, but from Jesus.
  6. Our joy comes from life with Jesus (John 15) and life eternal.
  7. Our joy comes from having hope.
  8. Our joy comes from salvation eternal.
  9. We must focus on joy in Jesus this year.

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<sup>7</sup> Tony Evans, [\*Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations: Stories, Quotes, and Anecdotes from More than 30 Years of Preaching and Public Speaking\*](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009), 174.

<sup>8</sup> Robert H. Stein, [\*Luke\*](#), vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 108.

10. We must pray that Jesus brings back the joy of our salvation (Ps 51:12).

- b. The amount of funerals I pastor are in phases. In 6 years serving a church in Alliance I pastored 46 funerals. I do not know how many I have pastored here, but I know that I have pastored over seven since August. Most of the time the deceased is an older believer who was ready to go home to the Lord. Most of the time I can declare that at the service.
- c. The difficult funerals are those that I am unsure about.
- d. Once I was at a cemetery and I looked in the grave. I saw roots next to where the coffin was to be buried. It hit me. This person's casket will be down there. Her body will be down there. That is why the Gospel matters.
- e. The Gospel matters for the fuller life now and eternal life later.
- f. Listen when we know Jesus death is a non-factor.
- g. That is why Jesus' birth is good news of great joy and for all people.
- h. Jesus changed everything. Death is not the end. When Jesus was hanging on the cross He told the thief next to Him, "Today, you will be with me in paradise." Through death, we pass into paradise which is Heaven.
- i. C. S. Lewis—"If we really think that home is elsewhere and that this life is a 'wandering to find home,' why should we not look forward to the arrival?"
- j. A weary traveler's most dreaded sign is NO VACANCY, but that is not true with our home in Heaven. There is always room in his house. This speaks of God's care for his own.<sup>9</sup>
- k. We can go to Heaven for all eternity because of Jesus.
- l. Jesus gives us abundant life now and eternal life later.
- m. This is good news of great joy.
- n. Certainly, when the angels came the people had been burdened trying to keep the law for their salvation. Jesus died and rose again and by grace we are saved.
- o. This is good news of great joy.
- p. This is for all people.

*A MOTHER was having a gathering to celebrate the birth of her newborn son. She invited a bunch of friends over to celebrate his arrival. She welcomed her guests, and they all had a great time celebrating, eating, and drinking.*

*After a while, one of the ladies said, "Well, bring the baby out. Let us see it."*

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<sup>9</sup> Alan Tison, "Funeral for a Christian Man or Woman," in *Christian Minister's Manual*, ed. Guthrie Veech (Cincinnati, OH: Standard, 2006), 159–160.

*The mother went to get the baby from his crib—he was nowhere to be found. She started to panic and feel fearful. Suddenly, she remembered that the baby was still at her parents' house, where she had left him that morning. She and the guests had been having so much fun they had forgotten what the party was about in the first place. During the Christmas season, many people get busy with celebration and forget that the birth of Jesus Christ is the reason for the season.*<sup>14710</sup>

Jesus came and brought us good news of great joy for all people.

Do you know Him?

Pray

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<sup>10</sup> Tony Evans, [\*Tony Evans' Book of Illustrations: Stories, Quotes, and Anecdotes from More than 30 Years of Preaching and Public Speaking\*](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009), 60.