

## **The Heart of Christmas Luke 2:10-11**

Our Christmas program this year was titled “This is Christmas.” The subtitle of the work is “Celebrating the heart of Christmas.” The introduction to the book/music says, “The sole intent of this work is to draw attention to that Child, the King, sent to earth to redeem the world, for this is the heart of Christmas.”

We know that the Christmas season presents us with many wonderful things to focus on—family gatherings, fun activities, gifts, trees, lights, travel, etc. Sadly, if we were to get our understanding of Christmas from the secular media or from advertisements, we might not even realize that Christmas has anything to do with Jesus. We might think that Christmas is little more than a mid-winter holiday based on mythology and legend. The world seems intent on shifting the heart/focus of Christmas away from Jesus.

Further, as we look at the Christmas story in the Bible, we find many secondary people and things we could focus on—Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men, Herod, angels, shepherds, the nativity scene, etc. Such people and things are important, but they are all secondary; they are not the center of the Christmas story.

What is the heart of Christmas? Is it the gifts, the music, the trees, the food? Is it Mary or the Wise Men or the angels? Is it family and generosity? No.

In this message, I want to look at the true heart of Christmas—the birth of Jesus. That’s what we are celebrating; that should be the focus of our attention. The birth of Jesus is the heart of Christmas.

And there is probably no better passage revealing the heart of Christmas than Luke 2:11-12.

Nearly every word in this passage is important.

Let’s look at several things we learn about the heart of Christmas from this passage:

- I. The heart of Christmas is “good tidings of great joy.”
- A. The words “I bring you good tidings” is one word in the original language (εὐαγγελίζομαι). “I am proclaiming good news.”
  - B. The good news is the Gospel; it’s the Gospel because it’s good news.
  - C. Good news is the response to the bad news. The bad news is that we are all sinners who deserve to suffer the just penalty for our sins. The bad news is that we are under the wrath and condemnation of God because of our sins. The bad news is that if we don’t find forgiveness, we will be separated from God eternally.
  - D. The good news is that God has provided a way for us to be saved from our sins. The good news is that someone has come to deal with our sin problem.  
  
*1 Tim 1:15 ... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; ...*  
That is the good news; that’s the Gospel. That good news should bring us great joy. Because of this good news, we can be reconciled to God.
- Trans:** The heart of Christmas is good news—“good tidings of great joy.”
- II. The heart of Christmas is “for all people.”
- A. The original says lit. “to all the people.” (παντὶ τῷ λαῷ). God has in mind a particular group of people—his people, the chosen people—the Jews. Vs. 11 says that the savior is born “unto you” (ὑμῖν).
  - B. Jesus came specifically for his people, the Jews, the nation of Israel.  
*Mt 15:24 [Jesus] said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*
  - C. That fits with OT expectations—the Savior would be Jewish and provide salvation for the Jews. Paul tells us that salvation is for the Jew first. Jesus came to save his people.
  - D. But of course we know that, “he came unto his own, but his own received him not” (John 1:11). If non-Jews put their faith in Jesus, they will be saved. Salvation extends to “whosoever will.”

**Trans:** The good news of salvation through Christ is for all people—both Jews and Gentiles. Whosoever will may be saved through faith in Christ. That’s the good news at the heart of the Gospel. No matter who you are and no matter what you’ve done, you can be saved through faith in IX.

Since this good news is for all people, we should tell it to all people. Like the shepherds, we should make known abroad this message concerning the child that was born.

III. The heart of Christmas is that a “Savior” is “born.”

- A. The birth of Jesus is the very center, the heart of the Christmas celebration. We are celebrating the birth of our Savior.

The secular world says little or nothing about this central aspect of Christmas. Some people would be shocked to hear that Christmas has anything to do with Jesus. That’s a shame, because Jesus’ birth is the whole reason for the season.

- B. Who was born? A “savior.” The Savior is one who saves; one who rescues. What do we need to be saved from? We need to be saved from the penalty of our sins. In a certain sense, we need to be saved from God’s wrath against our sins. Jesus is the one who saves us.

1. There is a direct link between the word “savior” and the name “Jesus.”

2. The angel told Joseph to use this name.

*Mt 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

3. “Jesus” is Greek form of Heb. “Jehoshua” or “Joshua,” which means “Yahweh is salvation.” Jesus is the Savior, the one who saves us from our sins. His name reflects his role as Savior.

Luke 19:10 Jesus came “to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Matt 20:28 He came “to give his life a ransom for many.”

Jesus offers salvation to all, but you must accept him (Jn 1:12). If you don't turn to Jesus in faith, he will not save you. Have you done that? The fact that Jesus is the Savior does not mean that he will save you if you reject him.

C. The Savior was "born."

1. I suppose God could have saved sinners in any number of ways.
2. But what God chose to do was send a human to save humans. God himself took on humanity to save us from our sins. The Savior was born as a human.

*Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

3. In fact, the word "born" is emphasized in this context—lit. "because born to you today a savior who is Christ the Lord." The emphasis is on that word "born." The angels were sent with a message that began, "Born to you..." The Messiah is born.
4. This is what we call the incarnation—God the Son taking on a human nature; the divine adding a fully functional human nature to himself. The good news is that the Son of God has been born into a human family.

D. The Savior was born "in the city of David."

This is another important detail. What was the city of David?

1. Jerusalem is called the city of David because that's where David set up the capital of Israel.
2. But the original city of David was Bethlehem; that was David's home town.
3. And the prophet Micah foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2 *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

4. And not only born in the city of David, but also born of David's family line. The Messiah had to be from the tribe of Judah and also a descendant of David, and Jesus was.

Rom 1:3 ... *Jesus Christ our Lord, ... was born of the seed of David ...*

The Jews would have been expecting their Messiah to be born in Bethlehem from King David's family line. Jesus alone fulfills the OT expectations for the Messiah.

E. The Savior is "Christ the Lord."

1. *Christ*—the Greek translation of the Heb. word "Messiah," the anointed one.
  - (a) In the OT, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed with oil. The Messiah is the ultimate prophet, priest, and king. He is the uniquely anointed one; he's anointed by the Spirit of God.
  - (b) The OT prophets foretold the coming of the anointed one, the servant of the Lord, the Son of God and the son of man, one who would save the nation of Israel and establish an eternal kingdom. The good news is that the one anointed for that task has been born.
2. *the Lord*—this title is commonly used of God in the OT. This is a divine being; no Jew would call a mere human "the Lord." The good news is that Christ is the Lord; the Messiah is divine; he is God with us—Immanuel; God in the flesh.

3. People have historically had difficulty understanding how Jesus could be both human and divine, but we see this truth from the very beginning of Jesus' story. The Savior/Messiah is the Lord; God has come to us in human flesh; the Lord has been born into a human family.

*Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

The name "Immanuel" means "God with us."

The Savior is Christ the Lord. Sometimes people want to separate Jesus the *Savior* from Christ the *Lord*. Some people like the idea of Jesus saving them from their sins, but they are less excited about obeying Christ as master. We cannot do that.

Here we have all three titles—Savior, Christ, and Lord—apply equally to this divine human person. If we want to accept Christ as Savior, we also have to recognize him as Lord. We must accept Jesus and believe in him as the Bible portrays him—Savior, Lord, and Christ.

Cf. Rom 10:9

What is the heart of Christmas? What is the good news that the angels proclaimed to the shepherds on that dark night almost 2000 years ago? A Savior, Christ the Lord, has been born for us. God himself has come to save us from our sins. Christ will save us from our sins if we put our faith and trust in him.

That's the message that our secular world wants us to ignore or forget. That message is an offense to our dark and dying world. They don't want to acknowledge the heart of Christmas. They want to substitute so many other things to distract from that message. They'll put forward all kinds of alternatives for that message. They want to ignore that message or replace it.

But as Christians, we must affirm that the heart of Christmas is the birth of our Savior, Christ the Lord. He has been born for us. Jesus came to save us from our sin. That is good news for all people. It's a message we should receive and treasure. It's a message that we must tell others so that they may be saved.

This message is good tidings of great joy if you believe in Jesus. If you have not believed in Jesus, you should do that. For those of us who have accepted that message, Jesus' birth should be the heart and center of our Christmas celebration. The Savior, Christ the Lord, has been born.