

The Real Christmas Story

Luke 1:26-38

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible."

38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. NKJV

Well Christmas is almost upon us now. I went with Victoria to Peoria to pick up some presents for the grand children yesterday. There wasn't hardly anyone in town. Everyone was full of the Christmas spirit.

As we walked through the mall you could just see the joy of the season on every face. Happy shoppers rushing home with their treasures.

The modern version of the Christmas story would have the shepherds saying to one another, Let us go now even unto the mall and buy presents for one another to commemorate this glorious day. Or let us kill the fatted calf and have a great feast with our family and friends.

The saddest thing about Christmas to me is that it is not about what most of us think it is about.

- I. The story of Christmas is an interruption.
 - A. An interruption in history.
 1. Rome was in charge of the world and had brought a sense of stability to the world.
 2. Herod was in charge of Israel and was remodeling the temple to keep the Jews in line.
 3. For the most part, outside of Israel, the world was nothing but paganism

with the beginnings of even emperor worship.

- B. It was for all intents and purposes Satan's world.
 - 1. Where even in Israel, the one nation that was to be dedicated to the true God there was a total breakdown of the priesthood and even the Pharisees had given themselves over to a religion of self-development and good works that they taught would earn them a place in the heavenly kingdom.
 - 2. There was little regard for human life.
 - 3. Unwanted children were left exposed to the elements to die.
 - 4. Fathers could have their entire family slain and everyone thought it was OK.
 - 5. It was as the song goes, "The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin."
- C. But into that world came a baby through a lowly servant of the Lord.
 - 1. God didn't thunder across the skies with millions of flaming angels.
 - 2. He didn't blast Rome into oblivion.
 - 3. He didn't even send a fiery prophet to condemn the empty religion of the Jews.
 - 4. He sent a baby, a baby so helpless and pure.
 - 5. He sent His Son wrapped up in human flesh.
 - 6. He sent Him to a young virgin living in the hills of Galilee even Nazareth a despised city.

II. The story of Christmas is about the love of God.

- A. It is not until the baby becomes a man that we understand the full intent of His mission.
- B. He did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.
- C. He did not come to condemn the prostitutes and tax gathers but to restore them.
- D. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.
- E. He come as a personification of the love of God.
 - 1. Jn 3:16 (NKJV) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- F. His mission was to present God's mercy and grace to a world that would never make it any other way.

G. He came to be a light to the Gentiles and the Savior of His people, Israel.

III. The story of Christmas is about humiliation.

A. The Second Person of the Trinity humbled Himself and became a baby, subject to all the laws of nature that He had created.

1. He become hungry and cried.
2. He felt weary from His labor.
3. He experienced the growing pains of childhood and youth.
4. He humbled Himself and was Himself subject to Mary & Joseph.

B. He humbled Himself to be born in a barn, laid in a manger.

C. He humbled Himself with a life of poverty.

1. My dad always used to say that he wished he had been born rich instead of so good looking.
2. But Jesus had His choice.
3. He planned His own birth, parents, place, social standing and all the rest and He never took advantage of who He was as God's Son.

D. He humbled Himself in His death.

1. He did not die of old age, but a violent death of suffering and shame.
2. He gave His back to those who were merciless and to those that spit in His face.
3. He was crucified between two thieves.

IV. The story of Christmas is about sacrifice.

A. I love that song.

1. He left the splendor of heaven knowing His destiny. Was the lonely hill of Golgotha. There to lay down His life for me.

B. Jesus gave us the example of sacrifice through the Christmas story.

C. He gave us a lesson of sacrifice in the widow's mite.

D. We have been called to follow in those same foot steps.

1. Like the widow that Elijah came to who was out gathering sticks to make one final cake of bread after which she and her son would die.
2. But Elijah says to her make me a cake first.
3. And she did it. She did it. Why. She had no promise of reward as we do.

4. She had no guarantee that she and her son would not now die that much sooner for this stranger had eaten up the final stores of food.
- E. Jesus said, that if you seek to save your life you would lose it. But if you gave away your life you would have it forever.
 1. Do we have that kind of faith this Christmas.
- F. Jesus came from heaven as a helpless babe, the very Son of the Highest as the text says.

Christmas done right will be an interruption.

It will be filled with love.

It will be a humiliation, to realize that without Christmas you would have a miserable life, ending in shame and death and eternal punishment as you would give account for your sins for all eternity.

Christmas done right will mean sacrifice. When was the last time we really sacrificed for the cause of that babe born in the manger.