

# Christmas Realized

Luke 2:1-21

My text is [Luke 2:10-11](#): “*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.”* 那天使對他們說：不要懼怕！我報給你們大喜的信息，是關乎萬民的；<sup>11</sup>因今天在大衛的城裡，為你們生了救主，就是主基督。

I want to begin by asking some questions: “*Who was this Jesus? What did He come to do? Why did He come to earth? What child was this?*” If we can figure out the answer to these questions, we will come to the conclusion that Christmas does change everything. Christmas should change everything for you.

One of the best ways to fully understand the identity of Jesus and the impact of His message is to focus on the **What, When, Where, Who, Why** and the **How** of Christmas <sup>1</sup>

## I. The “What” of Christmas.

**A. The angel.** The angel appears to the shepherds. Angels are the warrior-messengers of heaven. Angels have swords. They are always prepared for a fight. How would you react at the sight of a mighty angel?

### B. The Shepherds.

1. The shepherds are afraid. The angel’s first job is to calm them down. How did he calm them down?

a) By what He said, *Fear not* 不要懼怕！ God always wants us to move from fear to faith.

b) The reason they should not fear was because of the news the angel was about to announce to them.

**C. The news** the angel brought. This is the “what” of Christmas - “*I bring you good news...*” 我報給你們大喜的信息 this is the gospel -

### 1. The good news was needed.

a) It was needed because of the condition of men’s hearts. The world was dark. Men’s hearts were dark. People needed this good news!

b) The good news was needed in society. The whole world was under the control of one man - Caesar Augustus. His given name was Octavianus - When he became supreme ruler of the Roman Empire he adopted the name of his adoptive father and uncle - Julius Caesar. He gave himself the title

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<sup>1</sup> (special thanks to Joel Pankow for this helpful idea: [www.sermoncentral.com](http://www.sermoncentral.com)).

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Augustus which means - *of the gods.*” And so he was called Caesar Augustus. This man was the most powerful man on the face of the earth. Think of the power: he issues a decree and all the world must obey. (Luke 2:1) *“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.”* 當那些日子，該撒亞古士督有旨意下來，叫天下人民都報名上冊。

- c) There was peace in the world then only because Rome was such a powerful ruling force - no man dared to say that his life was his own. Every man was a slave to Rome. A World ruled by one man.
  - (1) Taxes were high, unemployment was high, morals were slipping lower & lower, and the military state was in control.
  - (2) Men were burdened, oppressed, discouraged, & sinking deeper & deeper into sin & wickedness - led by the Roman example .
- d) That was the condition of society then - and the condition of men’s hearts. The news the angel brought was needed.

2. **The good news was proclaimed.** Now the angel comes to these shepherds - God is ready to reveal some good news to a world filled with bad news.

- a) This news is **“of great joy”** 大喜. It has the idea of “mega joy” or super-sized “cheerfulness.” This good news is exceedingly exciting because God is bringing the solution to the sin problem.
- b) And this good news is **“for all the people”** 是關乎萬民的. God’s mega message was never intended to just be for one group of people in one part of the world. **The “what” of Christmas is God’s good news, which is “joy to the world.”**

## II. The “When” of Christmas

- A. God’s timing is always right. Verse 11 says, **“Today.”** The birth of the baby had taken place that day and now they were given the announcement of His arrival. The timing of the Incarnation was perfect. [Galatians 4:4](#): *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,”* 及至時候滿足，神就差遣他的兒子，為女子所生，且生在律法以下，
- B. Everything came together at last for God to make a visit by sending His Son to redeem us from our sins. The world system was ready, people were searching for meaning, prophecies were fulfilled and the Christmas characters were prepared. God was in no hurry, but when the time was right, He moved into action!

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C. The birth of Jesus is the hinge on which the door of history swings. We live on a visited planet and that visit happened at a precise point in history. You can count on Christmas being true because we don't celebrate a fable; we commemorate the birth of our Lord in the stable.

III. **The “Where” of Christmas.** The “what” is the mega message of amazing news. The “when” was a specific time in history. The “where” of Christmas is in the **“town of David”** 在大衛的城裡。

A. This little village of Bethlehem was called David's town. It was where his grandpa Boaz and his father Jesse were from, and where David grew up. David took care of sheep just like the shepherds were doing the night the angel showed up.

B. It was no accident that the baby was born in Bethlehem.

1. This fulfilled a 700-year old prophecy found in [Micah 5:2](#).

2. God used Caesar Augustus to move Mary and Joseph from the small town of Nazareth the 90 miles (a five day walk) to the other little village of Bethlehem. Caesar Augustus thought he was so powerful - but in this case he was merely a puppet in the hands of God. As it says in Jer. 1:12 *“the Lord said...I am watching over my word to perform it.”* 耶和華...說：「...我留意保守我的話，使得成就。」

3. After Jesus was born, [Matthew 2](#) tells us that a group of astrologers from the East came to Jerusalem because they wanted to find the one who was born king of the Jews. They had followed a star but now they needed more specific directions. They knew when he was born but they didn't know exactly where.

C. Herod, who was the king in Judea, wanted to know where this baby was to be born. He was very disturbed and threatened by the news that a king had been born. He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the law. He had one very specific question for these experts: *“Where is the Christ supposed to be born?”*

D. The religious leaders knew where Christ would be born. In Matthew 2:5 we see how quickly they answered Herod's question. They knew their Bible! They didn't have to talk about it, or even consult their official documents. No one even needed to open the Old Testament: **“In Bethlehem in Judea...”** 在猶太的伯利恆。 These religious guys knew it in their heads but they didn't know Him in their hearts. They held the truth but they didn't allow the truth to hold them! It's not what you know, but what you do with what you know that makes the difference.

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IV. **The “Who” of Christmas.** The ‘who’ is announced in [Luke 2:11](#), it reads, **“Has been born to you Savior, Christ, Lord.”** 為你們生了救主，就是主基督。 Each of these words is important.

A. **Savior.** This word means, **“Deliverer.”**

1. Jesus came to set us free from sin, and to deliver us from the dominion of the devil. His role as Savior was described to Joseph in [Matthew 1:21](#): *“you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”* 你要給他起名叫耶穌，因他要將自己的百姓從罪惡裡救出來。
2. Because we’re sinners, we need a Savior. This title would have caused the people of that day to be startled because they knew that God alone was their Savior. [Isaiah 43:3](#): *“For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”* 因為我是耶和華—你的神，是以色列的聖者—你的救主。 To call Jesus “Savior” is to acknowledge Him as God and to admit guilt before Him, and the need for forgiveness.

B. **Christ.** This is the Greek word for “Messiah.” It means, “THE ANOINTED ONE.” It is used over 500 times in the Bible. The nation of Israel always lived in the future as they waited eagerly for the Anointed One, who would bring salvation to them.

C. **Lord.** In the Old Testament, this amazing title is reserved for God alone. The angel here is declaring that Jesus is Jehovah - the God of the Old Testament. Jesus is not just from God; He is God Himself. Paul put it this way in [1 Corinthians 8:6](#): *“there is...one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist...”* 有一位主，就是耶穌基督—萬物都是藉著他有的；我們也是藉著他有的。 God had become man! The infinite had become an infant. As Lord, Jesus is Master. He’s in charge. He’s supreme. And as such, I must bow before Him. (see [Philippians 2:9-11](#)) This baby changed the world. That is ‘who’ He is!

V. **The “Why” of Christmas.** He came because of you.

A. Jesus was born - God became man - for you and for me. Notice the two words tucked in the middle of [verse 11](#): *For unto you* 為你們....

1. The shepherds did nothing to deserve the privilege of hearing the good news of great joy. They were just out doing their jobs.
2. It was by grace that God announced the news that would change their life: **“A Savior has been born to you.”** 為你們生了救主 And when they heard

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this, verse 16 says that “*they went with haste and found...the baby* 他們急忙去了，就尋見...那嬰孩 The announcement from the angels went into their ears, down into their heart where they made it personal, and then out to their feet as they responded in faith.

B. The Savior can never save you until you cry out, “Christ came for me and then died as my sin substitute. I accept the Anointed One into my life and I surrender to His Lordship.” He came because of you and for you.

VI. **The “How of Christmas.”** It all starts in heaven with God’s perfect plan and it arrives on earth where peace comes to those who personally receive the message

A. The message from heaven - After the one angel appeared to the shepherds, suddenly an entire army of angels filled the sky with an outpouring of adoration in verse 14: “*Glory to God in the highest*, 在至高之處榮耀歸與神！ They couldn’t help but break into praise because Savior-Christ-Lord had been born. Their praise then led them to declare a message of peace: “*and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!*” 在地上平安歸與他所喜悅的人！

B. The message is a message of peace.

1. In the Old Testament, “peace” is the word *shalom*. It refers to a state of wholeness and harmony that is intended to affect all relationships.

2. The New Testament describes at least three spheres of peace:

a) **Peace with God** – that’s the *vertical* dimension

(1) Because of what Jesus Christ did on the Cross, you and I can now be at peace with God. God the Father poured out His wrath, fury, and indignation on His Son. He died in our place, as our sin-substitute. [Colossians 1:20](#) says that Jesus reconciled Himself to all things “*making peace by the blood of his cross.*” 既然藉著他在十字架上所流的血成就了和平，便藉著他叫萬有一無論地上的、天上的一都與自己和好了。

(2) Listen carefully. We don’t deserve this ‘peace to men on whom His favor rests.’ What we deserve is death and eternal punishment. But, because of God’s great love, He provided a way for us to be set at one again with the God of the universe. His anger is fully absorbed in the sacrifice of His Son.

b) **Peace of God** – this takes place *internally*

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- (1) To have the peace *of* God internally, we must first experience peace *with* God vertically. The upward dimension must be taken care of *before* inward peace can permeate our lives. Those at peace with God can experience the peace of God.
  - (2) Shortly before Jesus died, He declared in [John 14:27](#): “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.*” 我留下平安給你們；我將我的平安賜給你們。我所賜的，不像世人所賜的。你們心裡不要憂愁，也不要膽怯。 This inner peace is a gift from Jesus. We will experience this peace in proportion to the room we give the Spirit of Jesus in our lives.
- c) **Peace *with others*** – when we have peace *with* God and we experience the peace *of* God, we can then extend peace *horizontally*.
- (1) Peace *with* God enables us to have the peace *of* God. Christ as Savior brings peace with God; Christ as Lord brings the peace of God. Another way to say it is that we can’t have the peace of God until we know the God of peace. When we’re at peace *with* God, and we have *internal* peace, we can then be at peace *with others*.

Let me summarize.

The *what* of Christmas is “***the good news of great joy for all the people.***”

The *when* of Christmas is “***today.***”

The *where* of Christmas is in the “***town of Bethlehem.***”

The *who* of Christmas is “***Savior, Christ, Lord.***”

The *why* of Christmas is “***to you.***”

The *how* of Christmas is “***Glory to God...and peace to men...***”

Is Jesus *your* Savior? Is He *your* Christ? Is He *your* Lord? This baby was God’s own Son and He came to change the world. Has He changed *your* world? Someday God will give each of us an exam. It will have one question on it: “*What have you done with Jesus?*”