**A Gift Wrapped in Swaddling Cloths**

Based on [Luke 2:1-20](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk2.1-20)

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Christmas Eve

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Christmas Eve is about the birth of Jesus Christ as happened around 2017 years ago. We don’t know precisely how old the earth is, or what year God created it. So we label our years, not from the beginning of history, but from this day, the birth date of the Saviour of the world. Everything before that we count backwards B.C., everything after that we count forward A.D. And it is wonderful to realize that whenever anyone says the year, they confess the birth of Christ.

The way we record time acknowledges the birth of Jesus Christ to be the central point of human history. It was a truly pivotal event. **And it is somewhat ironic that while the world was going about its business…when Quirinius was governor of Syria; when Caesar Augustus ruled the Roman Empire,** when a census was being issued, the most important person in the world was being born...and the world took no notice of it.

(1) The First part of this Christmas gospel is how Jesus came humbly into the world. Jesus Christ was born in a small town, to common people, forced into a stable, to be born there alone with or among animals. And the world took no notice of him. Consider this: what God regards as important; the world ignores. What the world regards as important; God ignores. That is the contrast that only faith knows about, as Scripture says, “**God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are**” (1 Cor 1:28).

Jesus was born low and despised in the world. He came into the world by being born of a virgin, so that God Himself, the creator of the universe is to be found in a little child who cries, and nurses, and messes diapers. Just another baby, or so it seems. And when he is born, the world goes on as usual, but heaven rejoices. There was no pomp or fanfare from the world at Jesus’ arrival. But in heaven there was much rejoicing. Angels sing praises to God at the birth of the Savior.

(2) The second part of this Christmas Gospel is about the necessity of preaching. Jesus Christ Our Lord could have been born a thousand times, but it would all have been in vain if it had not been preached and revealed to us. Jesus Christ is our greatest gift from God. He is a treasure. What profit would it be to a man to have a treasure and yet not know that he has it? Or if he knows it is buried in his cellar but he doesn’t know where to look.

Had Christ come in glory and splendor, there would be no need for preaching, every eye would see it and know him and there could be no argument. Kings and Emporers would have all raced to his cradle to smother him with empty praise and vanity, and there could be no believing in him through faith. But it is precisely because the birth of our Lord is so lowly, that it must be preached, so that it can be believed against all appearances. It is because the Saviour of the world and the Son of God is hidden and buried in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger that his birth must be announced.

For this reason, an angel appears to shepherds watching their flocks by night. He came to announce from heaven the importance of what had taken place without their noticing. The angel said, “**I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”** And with this, though the earth is quiet and still, the heavenly host of angels praise God and say, “**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!**”

It is in reference to this event--witnessed only by Mary, Joseph, and a handful of nameless Shepherds--that the whole history of the human race measures time. **This treasure--hidden from the wise and revealed to little children—is that the salvation of the world will not come through electing the right leaders, or through innovation and technology.** There will not be a new self-help book tomorrow that will finally diagnose and empower you to solve your problems today. Man can artificially prolong his life, but he cannot conquer death and hell.

Salvation is not something that mankind is capable of. Salvation is one man alone, Jesus Christ, who came into the world as a light shining in the darkness. **In him we have peace: Peace to know that he forgives the sins of those who come to him; Peace to know that our spiritual enemies, sin death and the devil, cannot separate us from the love of God; and Peace to know that a final conquering of evil will happen when he returns to make all things new.** All this was given to us 2000 years ago on the first Christmas. When Caesar Augustus issued a census, when Quirinius was governor of Syria, and when the world was conducting business as usual, God did a new thing. He sent us His own Son as a ***gift*** from heaven, a Christmas present wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

“**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**” (Isaiah 9:6).