

**A Savior, Christ the Lord**  
**Luke 2:1-14**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

So, which of you here is perfect? Come on, let's see the hands, which of you here has never sinned? OK, which of you hasn't sinned today? But, before you raise your hands to that question, let me rephrase it according to God's viewpoint. Which one of you didn't gossip today, or get angry with someone today, or lust in your heart today, or covet the gift someone else got? In other words, which of you was perfect today, not only in your actions, but also in all your thoughts? None of you!

Do you know God's law? You are to be perfect in *your thoughts, in your words, and in your deeds*. So then, with this understanding, which one of you would like it if God were to suddenly appear right here in front of us all? How many of you would like it if one of God's holy angels appeared in front of you today? I would imagine that none of us would feel very comfortable if we were confronted as the shepherds were in our text: *And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.*

If an angel were to appear in our midst, and God's glory were to shine around us, I am sure we would be a bit terrified too. Each of us would consider our life, and think of our sins. Your thoughts would probably be just like mine in that situation, "I am not worthy to stand in the presence of God's almighty and perfect glory." To stand in the midst of such glory as a sinner, is to stand before the holy, perfect, and righteous judgement of God. Who can stand there? Certainly no sinner! Certainly no man!

God's wrath against sin is a terrible thing to behold. God has no patience for it. God will not tolerate sin *or sinners*, to stand in the presence of His glory. God's righteous demands are that sinners must suffer His eternal wrath and punishment. For sinners, the glory of God is a frightening thing to witness.

But there is more that happened on the night of Jesus' birth. The angels had a message for those sinful shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night: *Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. "And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"*

How I tire of hearing people pervert the angels message, "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men." Too many people today take those words from God, through His angelic messengers, and give them an entirely different meaning. It is amazing the number of people use these words to show that God would have all hostilities between men and nations come to an end. Another group has hi-jacked this as God's message to stop bullying. An animal activist group has claimed this is God's message to stop help animals.

Yes, we are to live in peace with our neighbors, in fact, you are to love your neighbors as yourself. We are to strive to end wars and bloodshed over all the earth. God does indeed desire that no man would take the life of another. And yes, God did give us the responsibility to care for all of the creatures of creation, and the creation itself. But, if these are all the angel's message is to convey, then there was no reason for God to send the Baby born in Bethlehem.

This angelic message has to do with the fact that those shepherds, you, and I are terrified at the thought of facing God as judge. There is a fear of His righteous indignation against sin. It is why the shepherds fell to the ground terrified. On that night, those men were confronted with their sins. They were faced with the fact that they were sinners, there was no way that they could look upon the glory of God and survive.

Then the angel spoke, the angel gave them good news. It was contained in one little sentence, *For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* We could break down that good news even more to these words, *a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* This is where peace on earth, goodwill from God toward men, comes.

This is the good news of Christmas. In a manger lay a little Baby, a Holy Child, the very Son of God, the promised Messiah, a Savior, Christ the Lord. Shepherds were the first to hear this good news. Shepherds were the first to hear that those who have faith in this little Child of Bethlehem need not fear the glory of God, despite their sinfulness. Why? Because a Savior had been born! Dearly beloved of God, this is what Christmas is all about, it is about the greatest gift the world has ever known – or, for that matter, ever will know. It is about God's gift of peace. It is about appeasing God's wrath against sinners, and it begins with the birth of a Savior.

Hidden in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger is God's plan of salvation. It is difficult to see God's plan in the innocence of a little Child. Yet, that little Child, that innocent little Babe, lying in a bed of straw, would redeem all people from their sin.

God's eternal plan was put into motion that night so long ago. God knew that the Babe of Bethlehem would live a perfect life in obedience to His holy law. God knew that the soft tender flesh of Mary's infant would be beaten and spit upon by Jewish and Roman leaders alike. God's plan was that the delicate flesh of His Only-begotten Son would be pierced by spikes driven through His hands and feet. What is most important, is that God's plan was for this Child, to place Himself at the mercy of cruel men and suffer the pains of hell.

Why would God do this? To redeem you! To pay the price demanded of His holy righteousness. This Child was born to free you from the curse that you, in your sinfulness, have brought upon yourself.

To *you*, is born this day, in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Those shepherds on that Judean hillside pastures understood these words. This very simple sentence told them a number of things. First, it told them that the long-awaited Son of David was born. He who would be King over Israel eternally, had finally come into the world.

It told them that this Child was God's Christ, God's anointed One, the Messiah. This was the One promised to put an end to sin and death, eternal death. Messiah would make atonement for the salvation of sinful men.

Finally, the word Lord, in Hebrew, was saved only used in reference to God. It was the word which designated the One God of Israel, "I, the Lord your God, am One." These shepherds heard, in this one angelic pronouncement, that the Child born in Bethlehem, was the long-awaited Messiah of God. It was in fact, God Himself in human flesh, hidden in the swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. They were ecstatic because finally, the One long awaited who would redeem all mankind from their sins, was born that night.

My friends, this is your gift this Christmas – *unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* Tonight we celebrate that Jesus Christ, the Son of God was born in Bethlehem. He came to grant us the greatest, most expensive, the very finest gift ever given – His life as a ransom to free you and me from our sins. This Child was born to sacrifice His life on the cross of Calvary to cleanse us and make us able to stand in the presence of the glory of God. He gives us the gifts of forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation – the very gift of an eternal place in heaven.

Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, God's Christmas present of His Son's sacrifice is given to you this day. Christ comes to you and your sins are forgiven.

This will be a sign unto you; You will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

The words spoken by a man, are the lowly manger and swaddling clothes that hold that Babe today. Those words bring the forgiveness He purchased to save you from your sins. Simple water - Bread and wine are the swaddling clothes which hold the Savior, hidden from those who do not have the eyes of faith, but they are there for all to see, for all who believe. In spoken Word, in the font, under the bread and wine, Christ is hidden. The Savior is there to free you from your sins, a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

Come, with all haste! See the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. There is born to you today, a Savior who is Christ the Lord. Amen.