

December 9, 2018

‘Believest thou...’

Isaiah 9:2 and Luke 2:8-14

The title of this message is from John 11:26. Jesus tells us ‘everyone who lives and believes in him will never die.’ ‘Believest thou?’

What is it we try to teach our children and grandchildren about Jesus in the midst of what we see all around us? Sometimes it is as if we are being drawn away for the birth of Jesus and just see lights, and sales, and cards, and gifts. As we shop more on the web even the sense of other people and the hustle and bustle of being around others will be gone. We will become lonelier and lonelier staying at home. Christmas will become shopping on the internet.

It was time: God’s time. We call it Christmas! A baby was going to be born. His mother was a virgin when she conceived. This baby’s birth would be called the First Advent. He would be crucified and raised from the dead. He will come again. That will be the Second Advent!

Christmas is a time to remember that the mystery of the Old Testament was fulfilled. This baby boy, this birth, explained how God would put enmity between the enemy of our souls, Satan, and the woman. This baby would grow up and die to bruise Satan’s head. (Genesis 3:15)

Somehow it was always God’s will that all people are to be blessed by this birth. (Genesis 12:3) Christmas is a time on continuous challenges: Believest thou? What do we believe?

Centuries had passed since David was told a descendent of his would be born and his kingdom would be forever. (1 Chronicles 7:11-15)

This promised child would be born in the city where David had been born: Bethlehem which means House of Bread. (Micah 5:2)

A virgin would be with child and she would name her baby **Emmanuel**, “**God is with us**.” (Isaiah 7:14).

‘Believest thou’ that unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called **Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace**. (Isaiah 9:6).

It was God’s time. It was night. Mary having walked 90 pregnant miles was now in the City of David. Here the **Christ, the Messiah** (Daniel 9:25), the **Anointed**, the **Bread of Life** was born.

That night his father Joseph named him **Jesus** “for he shall save his people from their sins”. (Matthew 1:21) Joseph and Mary did not know what we now know about this birth: about this child. He is called the **Son of the Most High**. (Luke 1:32)

Isaiah had written that people who walked in darkness would see a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2) Did you ever walk in darkness? ‘Then spoke Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the **Light of the World**: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12) ‘Believest thou’ that Christ is the Light of the World?

We sing of our dear Savior’s birth. The mystery of the Old Testament was no longer a mystery for our God in an incredible act of grace and mercy and perfect judgment has declared darkness would no longer reign. The mystery of the ages was answered in this baby boy we call Jesus the Christ. The answer to the mystery is this baby: Christ is our hope of glory and the hope of all who believe. (Colossians 1:27)

That night the course of human history was changed forever. God entered the human race. From that night we are no longer bound to a personal future doomed by our sin and heading only to death. The hopeless efforts to make ourselves worthy of a Holy God were now changed. God had prepared a way of hope for all people.

Human history was interrupted and changed by the birth of this baby at a time and in a place. Grace and eternal life was possible.

“In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:

to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and 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 heaven, and on earth peace among all people!’”

“When the angels had left the shepherds and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what the angels had told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.” (Luke 2:15-20)

It is the same for us today as it was for those who experienced it then: the shepherds and wise men, the king and religious leaders. We are asked today ‘believest thou’ that this child was born for all the people we come in contact with? We are the bearers of glad tidings. We are the shepherds of today. Do we run to this child? Believest thou? Do you run to tell others?

This baby, the only begotten Son, (John 1:18) **Son of Man** and **Son of God**, was Mary’s first child. How awesome was this event and the fact Mary would have at least five more children. Matthew records a discussion in Jesus home town “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us?” (Matthew 13:55-56) If they had been asked “believest thou” that your brother is the Christ they would probably have said no they did not think he was special but they would believe later after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Today as Christmas approaches ‘believest thou’ that ‘in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

This is the Christmas message. He is in the world the world that came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who receive him, who believe in his

name, he gives power to become children of God, born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:10-13)

And the **Word** became flesh and lived among us. (John 1:14)

Jesus tells us if he is lifted up he will draw all men, women and children unto himself. This is the season to lift him up. (John 12:32 and 3:14-15)

For more than 2,000 years men, women and children have prayed in Jesus name. For we have an advocate, Jesus Christ the **Righteous** is our **Advocate** with the Father. (1 John 2:1) He is the **Mediator** between God and you and me. (Timothy 2:5)

This baby is **Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending**, who was, and who is to come again, **the Almighty**. (Revelation 1:8).

The spirit of the Lord GOD was upon him, because the LORD has **Anointed** him; this baby was sent to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners. (Isaiah 61:1)

Jesus called himself the **Good Shepherd**. (John 10:11) Peter called him the **Chief Shepherd**. (1 Peter 5:4)

This baby is the **Christ of God** (Luke 9:20), the **Consolation of Israel** (Luke 2:25) and the **Chief Cornerstone** (Psalm 118:22/Ephesians 2:19-22)

Jesus is the **Deliverer**: who shall come out of Zion (Romans 11:26), the **Great High Priest** (Hebrews 4:14), the **Head of the Church** (Ephesians 1:22), the **Holy One of God** (Mark 1:24).

He has told us that **he was before Abraham** and that **he and the Father are one**. (John 8:58)

He is King of the Ages eternal, immortal, invisible, **the only wise God**, to him be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:17)

The wise men called him **King of the Jews** (Matthew 2:2) Paul names him the **blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords** (1 Timothy

6:15); Jesus is the **Lamb of God** which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29) and he is the **Lion of Judah**, the **Root of David**. (Revelation 5:5)

Jesus says to you and me he is **the Way, the Truth, and the Life**: no man comes unto the Father, but by him. (John 14:6) Because of this baby there is a Way, we can know the Truth and we can have Life eternal.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote 'his name shall be called the **Lord of Our Righteousness**.' (Jeremiah 23:6).

Jesus would be a **Man of Sorrows** (Isaiah 53:3) and **The Bright and Morning Star**. (Revelation 22:16). Jesus is **Our Passover**. (1 Corinthians 5:7)

He is the **Prince of Life** (Acts 3:15) and our **Redeemer** (Job 19:25). Jesus identifies himself as the **Resurrection, and the Life**. If we believeth in him, though we were dead, yet shall we live.

Jesus is the **Son of David** the **Son of Abraham**. (Matthew 1:1)

He is the **True Light**, which lights every person's darkness (John 1:9) and the **True Vine**. (John 15:1)

This baby would make righteousness, salvation, truth, good news, faith and the word of God real for us. For two thousand years people would pray in his name the name above all names.

Jesus' birth makes the love of God's grace a reality. God's perfect love came as a baby and that perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:18)

From Romans chapter 10 we read 'If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

'How are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.’ (Romans 10:9-17)

‘Believeth thou’ that you can be sent to fulfill Romans chapter 10 in the life of another person?

‘Believest thou’ these things about Christmas: the First Advent? Where will you be for the Second Advent?

‘Believest thou’ that ‘Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord?’ (Isaiah 45:23/Romans 14:11/Philippians 2:10)

‘In our hearts we are to sanctify Christ as Lord. We are always to be ready with an answer for anyone asks us of the hope that is in us.’ (1 Peter 3:15)

Like the shepherds we are to tell people. Because of this baby you can be a peacemaker.

We are witnesses. We are the living testimonies of the reality of the birth of Jesus. We are messengers of hope. We have a message of good news. As the trajectory of the earth and all people was forever altered that night so the trajectory of every individual’s life can be altered.

‘Believest thou?’ How will they believe unless someone tells them? Faith comes by hearing. We are the shepherds of today. We are to run and tell what great things have happened historically and in our own lives. We are living testimonies to the grace and love of our God in his son Jesus.

This isn’t just about the phrase Merry Christmas. This is the greatest story ever told. This is a story that will bring light in to darkness no matter how horrible that darkness is. This is the promise of our God in his son Jesus our **Savior**.

The trajectory of sin and death is broken; the trajectory of our lives was broken and we are new and on a new course into eternity.

Believest thou? Then speak, praise, be a light in darkness. Tell of the presence of God the father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All nations will be blessed by this baby. (Genesis 26:4)

PRAYER

O Lord, open our hearts to be renewed with the great news of the birth of Jesus. Fill us with a message of hope and grace and light. You have changed our lives forever. Use us this Christmas season to bring light where there is darkness. We praise the name of our Savior and we thank you in his glorious name Jesus Christ. Amen