

Christmas Cards from God:
A Savior Has Been Born
Luke 2:1-20

Dr. Steve Horn

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Christmas Eve Service

Text Introduction: The title of this series “Christmas Cards from God,” originates from the idea that each of the messages that we are considering this Christmas season come from angels. Since we understand that angels spoke on behalf of God, the messages that we consider are direct messages from God. Each message, of course, has a specific, historical message to the original recipient, but each message also has a more general message about Christ that certainly applies to us.

Three weeks ago we considered this idea: “Do not be afraid.” That is a message that the angel spoke to four individuals or groups—Zechariah, Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds. Next, we considered the message to Mary: “His kingdom will have no end.” Then, last Sunday, we looked at the continuing message to Mary, “For with God, all things are possible.” We said, “If God is in it, there is nothing that is impossible.”

These are great messages of Christmas, but tonight, we come to the central reason of His coming. It was the message announced to the shepherds watching over their fields by night.

Text:

Introduction: On December 13, 2003, as my alarm radio sounded, the first thing I heard was, “Though no official word has been given, Prime Minister Tony Blair is now giving his own confirmation that Saddam Hussein has been captured.” Simultaneously my wife and I sat up in bed as if to say without words, “Did you hear that?” No snooze this morning—indeed we had heard correctly what everyone would soon know. I told the lady who sold me coffee. “Praise Jesus,” she said, “That is good news.” I walked outside the store to see the newspaperman filling his machines. He knew. In fact he was lamenting that Sadaam’s capture did not happen earlier enough to be in the paper.

The angel told the shepherds, “I have some good news.”

What about their good news?

Promised Message—Here is the culmination of all that God is doing in history. And it was for all. For God so loved the world.

The “whoever” of John 3:16 is actually the Greek word *pas* which means all. It is linked in the Greek text with what comes next, “the ones believing in Him” so that the literal translation would be “all the ones believing in Him.” What does “all” mean? “All” means “all.” That’s the beauty of this text. If you are one believing, you are “all.” So, we get the idea “whoever.” We get the idea “no matter who you are” and “no matter what you have done.”

The Whoever of the Whoever—Jews in Jesus' day would have thought that Messiah was only for them. Jesus came announcing that His salvation was for all who would believe regardless of race or nationality. That is why I think the angel came to these shepherds and while later the wise men were beckoned by a star to see Him.

The Whatever of the Whoever—No matter what you have done. Jesus told a great parable to emphasize this point. The parable of the Prodigal Son communicates with passion that no matter what you have done and no matter how far away from the father you have roamed, you can still come home.

The Whenever of the Whoever—Jesus also told a story, a parable, about the whenever of the whoever. That is, it is never too late to believe. In Matthew 20, we read about the Parable of the Vineyard workers. A vineyard owner went to hire daily workers. He hired some at 9, some at noon, some at 3, and some at 5. When the end of the day came, all got paid the same. "Deathbed converts and lifelong saints enter heaven by the same gate." (Max Lucado, 3:16—*The Numbers of Hope*, 70.)

Personal Message—"You" Years ago, someone gave me a calendar of Bible verses that was personalized. Here we could read, "A Savior has been born for Steve." And John 3:16, "For God so loved Steve that if Steve believes..."

But the good news is only good news if we believe. If we do not believe, the other things really do not matter. "Do not fear" hinges upon His being Savior. "His Kingdom will have no end" hinges upon you receiving Him as Savior and participating in His Kingdom. "All things being possible with God" is only a motivational platitude if He is not also Savior.

A Message to Proclaim—Don't keep this good news to yourself. The shepherds give us a great example to go tell.

Later that day that I had heard of Sadaam Hussein's capture, I thought of the good news the shepherds heard that glorious night in Bethlehem. "Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And then the shepherds "made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."

As I thought about the shepherds' joy, I felt a little bit awkward about my joy. Indeed, Saddam's capture was good news, but very small in comparison to the good news that a Saviour has been born for all people.