

**“Good News of Great Joy”
December 17, 2017**

Luke 2:1-20

CORE: “Behold, I bring you Good News of Great Joy that will be for all the people.” These are some of the greatest words ever spoken to humanity!

*On December 24, 1906 Canadian American inventor **Reginald A. Fessenden** made the first audio radio (as distinct from Morse code) broadcast of entertainment and music to a general audience, broadcasting from Brant Rock on the coast of Massachusetts. This is considered the beginning of amplitude modulation broadcasting, or AM radio. The program included Fessenden playing the song “O Holy Night” on the violin and reading Luke Chapter 2, from the Bible. The main audience for this transmission was an unknown number of shipboard radio operators all along the Atlantic Coast.*

1. It was FOR EVERYONE

- **“Shepherds”** were the lowest class of Jewish society
- Considered **unclean**—forbidden to enter the temple (and most towns)
- Truly was **“good news...for all the people”**—for every person on the planet! (No one excluded!)

2. It RELEASED HEAVEN on earth

- **“Host”**—a vast army
- **The brave shepherds’ response: “...and they were terrified”**
- **The typical angelic greeting: “Do not be afraid”**
- **The glory of the Lord was so strong—every ounce of fear left these shepherds as they “glorified God for everything they had seen and heard—spreading the news everywhere”!!! (NOTE: These were men who were forbidden to go anywhere near a city/village—now went everywhere!)**

3. It brought GREAT JOY

- The Gospel is anything BUT irrelevant, condemning, harsh, bigoted, or archaic words!
- It is GREAT news of cataclysmic transformation—producing GREAT Joy inside us!
- If we are not experiencing GREAT JOY—chances are we have disconnected from the GREAT NEWS!

4. It SHATTERED THE SILENCE

- **400 years of silence; no word from God to His people.**

- Some assumed that God was dead...or mad...or indifferent...or had nothing else to say...
 - In the gap—Rome rose to power; the Greek culture infiltrated the Hebrew way of life
 - The Pharisees & Sadducees formed their respective religious cultures—endlessly arguing over Sabbath laws & the afterlife—yet agreeing that God was neither present nor powerful...
- Then, **the silence was broken by a baby’s cry**—a helpless cry in the night—from the only One who could help us!
 - The Word become human—fully identifying with the brokenness and weariness of the world.
 - **“Immanuel”**—God **WITH** us!

5. He came IN THE MIDDLE OF CHAOS

- **Rome** threw all of Israel into turmoil—everyone relocating for a census & property assessment in order to raise taxes!
- **Mary & Joseph** returned to **Bethlehem**, the town of their origins (under a cloud of **scandal**)—personal upheaval—and not everyone was believing their story—conceived by the HS—under suspicion with all their dreams undone.
- The “stable” was a cave—the parking lot for animals—a rustic shelter—all alone in the middle of the night.
- The **only thing perfect** about that night—was the baby—and the message the Angel brought.

CLOSING

The powerful 12-word message: “A Savior has been born to you—He is Christ the Lord”

- (Not, “Clean up your act” or “You are in trouble—try harder”)
- These 12 words will change any life! **He IS the Word of God**—He contains everything that is in the heart of God
- He came **“to us”**—to **bridge a gap** that we could be as **close** to Him as we could possibly be! (***“The Word became flesh & blood and moved right into the neighborhood” John 1:14 MSG***)
- **The Good News: all that was lost**—innocence & intimacy; authority & proximity; freedom & fulfillment; identity & destiny—**will be restored!** We were “once far off—now brought near”! “Once not a people (without place or purpose or connection)—NOW we are His people.”