

Sunday, December 25, 2022 Christmas Day ***“Rejoice He is Born”***

Luke 2:8-20 John 1:1:5, 14

Merry Christmas! IT is a day to rejoice and give thanks to God for His gift to us in Jesus Christ! IT is a day to celebrate because Jesus is born and through his birth we have been given the hope, peace, joy and love of God all wrapped up in His Son!

For many people hearing this story read aloud is an important part of this day. So as you listened to this story which has been spoken sung, acted out and put to music through the imaginations of many people throughout 2000 years of history, just what stood out for you? What aspect of the story calls your mind and heart to focus on the words Luke wrote about Jesus birth? IS it the angels speaking to Mary and Joseph separately about how their lives would change with Jesus' birth? Is it the circumstances of Mary delivering Jesus in a stable in another town? Or is it the angels who sang and told the shepherds about Jesus? Maybe it is in listening to the words about the Star which shone brightly over the place where he lay which was seen by people far away? Or maybe you are responding to the whole story like Mary who treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

What is it that you are treasuring and pondering about Jesus' birth this morning? Or are you distracted in memory or anticipation of what is to come today?

As we reflect on Jesus' birth we need to realize that Matthew and Luke were not the only ones who wrote about Jesus coming to live a human life. After sin entered the world God indicated that a savior would be coming from the seed of the woman, Eve. God revealed right away that this seed would be the one that would crush the head of the serpent (satan). We know that seed pointed to Jesus. Genesis 3: 15. *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*” This was about 1500 years before Jesus' birth.

Isaiah prophesied *“For unto us a child is born..”* and it is Handel's “Messiah” which echoes these words. But what about Micah 5:2 which focuses on the town of Bethlehem? *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will*

come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Bethlehem is the setting for the birth of Jesus—a small town, which was crowded at the time because of the census. Yet a town where people lived and were open to hearing the messages of the shepherds as they shouted out Jesus’ birth.

We read in John 1:14 “ *And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.*” The word became flesh. The New Creed states this in describing God: “We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,”

Jesus was a real baby- fingers, toes face and was born in the natural way by Mary. Jesus became one of us. But he was more than this.. He was the One who came in the name of God to bring hope and better life. HE was the one who destroyed the fear of death and brings to us the joy of promised eternity. Jesus was born for this. And for His life we offer thanks and praise to God.

Angels took a prominent role in preparing people for Jesus’ birth. Speaking to Mary and Joseph, to singing loudly from the sky, to again in dreams to keep the child safe, the angels left God’s presence to share God’s message to the world. For that night and day, the angels shared the story of the birth of Jesus. Until the shepherds saw and believed in the Christ child, the message of Jesus’ birth was kept quiet. But soon the streets were filled with the Good News of Jesus’ birth. Good news of great joy just like the angels sang.

Is this good news of Jesus birth in your hearts in this moment? Maybe we need to hear these words again, *“I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. to you is born this day a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.”*

How do you respond to this Good News? We sing, we shout, we rejoice, we laugh and enjoy this day as filled with wonder and hope. For today is Christmas- when God gave us Jesus! Let us praise God and rejoice! Jesus is born!

Prayer

Eternal God, in Jesus Christ your light shines in our darkness, giving joy in our sorrow and presence in our loneliness. Fill us with the mystery of your Word made flesh, until our hearts overflow with praise and joy, for he is beginning and the end of all that exists, living forevermore.

Amen