

## You Can't Have Our Christmas Just Yet, Luke 2:1-20 – December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 (Christmas Sermon)

- First let me say, you're the greatest church a pastor could ever dream of, and I wish you a blessed Christmas and the best New Year ever.
- Here we are, it's that time of year again; we celebrate what's arguably the biggest holiday in the entire world; the holiday we call Christmas.
- It probably goes without saying, but we all know the reason for the season, and we're in good company with the likes of the prophet Isaiah.

**Isaiah 9:6 KJV** For 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, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

**Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

**Luke 2:1-20 KJV** And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (2) (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) (3) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. (4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) (5) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. (6) And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. (7) And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. (8) And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (9) And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. (10) And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (12) And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, (14) Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (15) And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. (16) And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. (17) And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. (18) And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. (19) But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart. (20) And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

- I'm going to approach Christmas a little bit differently this year this because, I sensed the Holy Spirit was leading me in a different direction.
- Let me explain, about eight years ago, back in 2006, the Lord had ministered to me that the world was entering the end of human history.
- It was for this reason we commenced with our weekly prophecy updates on Sunday mornings, in addition to teaching through God's Word.

- Actually, in the new year of 2014, we'll have had 8 years of weekly prophecy updates, which if my math is right, brings the total to over 400.
- I share that to say this, the last 8 years have brought with them an increasing realization that we've overstayed our welcome in this world.
- And, every year during Christmas, this reality becomes more evident as the world tries harder to take our Christmas from us, as Christians.

- To them I would simply and humbly say, you can't have our Christmas, not just yet anyway. You'll have to wait until us Christians are gone.
- And, if the truth be known, you may not have to actually wait much longer with the way things are now looking in this Christ rejecting world.
- By the way, if my understanding is correct, and I'm pretty sure it is, you'll get to have at least "7" years to celebrate "7" more Xmas holidays.

- I'm always amused by the abbreviation; "Xmas." Try as they may, but they still can't X Christ out of Christmas, as "X" is Greek for "Christ."
- I'm now at the place, as a Christian, where I can say to a Christ rejecting world, have your Xmas' or whatever, but it's after we're raptured.
- Until then, your politically correct, gender-neutral celebration of the winter solstice and happy holidays, are simply going to have to wait!

I like how one commentator said it when speaking of the outspoken atheist Richard Dawkins he writes; "Dawkins can issue a secular intifada against Christianity all he likes, but we got the best holiday, the best music, and the best message – joy to the world and peace on earth. So Christmas ain't going away [not just yet anyway]..."

- Oh by the way, strong Christian families who aren't ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ like on Duck Dynasty, ain't going away neither.
- We, like Phil Robertson are not bashful, but bold, not arrogant or militant, but confident, not in ourselves, but in our Savior whom you mock.
- OK, take him off the most successful program in your history, but you just wait until Jesus takes us off this sinful world at the end of history.

- You'll forgive my unconventional Christmas Sermon this year, but I've been compelled to title it, "You Can't Have Our Christmas Just Yet."
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for the remainder of our time together today, as I seek to fill in some of the blanks as to why it's getting so bad.
- I think you would agree that there is an all out war, not only on Christmas during this time of year, but on Christians with each passing year.

- It seems with each passing year, here in the U.S., we're no longer free to make any proclamation of faith or even any quotation of scripture.
- Here's why, the proclamation of the name of the Savior, has the implication that we are the sinner, and as such, Jesus Christ has got to go.
- While this may explain, it doesn't excuse, their mocking of us, and divisiveness towards us, when we celebrate Christ's birth at Christmas.

- I suppose it should come as no surprise given that we need look no further than 2 Peter 3, as to why this too points to Christ's soon return.

**2 Peter 3:3-7 NIV** (3) First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. (4) They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." (5) But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. (6) By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. (7) By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

- I'm of the belief that this Day of Judgment is coming sooner than mankind realizes, and the good news is that until it does, it's not too late.
- This is the good news of hope in the Christmas message of comfort, encouragement, peace, goodwill, and good tidings of great joy, to all!"
- But this time, He won't come as a baby born in a manger and He won't come as the Savior dying on a cross, He will come as King of kings.

- The first time Jesus came, He was born at night, but this time, when Jesus comes for His bride, He takes her away as a thief in the night.
- The first time Jesus came, He was born to die, but this time, when Jesus comes, He takes those who are born again and they'll never die.

- It's for this reason, during this season, we celebrate the Savior's birth, and in so doing, we are in effect, also celebrating the Savior's death.
- Were it not for His death and resurrection, His work here on earth, of bringing peace, and good will toward men would've been incomplete.
- Jesus came through a virgin's womb when He was born, and in His death left this life through an empty tomb, so we could be born again.

- One has well said how, that "Jesus entered our world through a door marked "No Entrance," and He left through a door marked "No Exit."
- Because of this, the question becomes will we allow Him entrance into the door of our life, for eternal life in heaven, when we exit this life?
- I would submit that this is why Jesus was born as a child into the world. It's so we could come as a child to Him as the Savior of the world.

**Mark 10:15 NIV** I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

- In other words, the Savior of the world was born to die, so that we can be born again to live. His birth points to His death for our eternal life.
- The way Jesus entered this world would be similar to how Jesus would leave this world in that His death is woven into the fabric of his birth.
- His body wrapped in cloth then He lay in a stone manger at His birth, His body wrapped in cloth then He lay in a stone tomb at His death!

- Just as Jesus entering the world was similar to His leaving the world, I believe so too will it be similar to when He takes us out of this world.
- There are remarkable similarities in what the world was like when He came as a baby, and what it's like when He comes as a Bridegroom.

- The first similarity is that Jesus was born at night, in darkness, literally, and spiritually, as the light of the world, as the Savior of the world.
- I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to figure out that the world we live in is waxing more and more evil not just by the year, but by the day.
- Suffice it to say, the light of God's glory brightly shining on shepherds that dark night, will also shine on us His bride, as a thief in the night.

**1 Thessalonians 5:2 NKJV (2)** For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

- The second similarity is that Jesus was born to Joseph and Mary who were not only alone, but were also very far away from their home.
- Luke's gospel indicates that Mary alone wraps him in cloth and places him in the manger, and she does this after giving birth to her baby.
- As for those of you who wonder where the wise men were, it's thought that they did not come until later when Jesus was older as a child.

**Matthew 2:1, 10-11 NKJV** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ... (10) When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. (11) And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

- The reason I point this out, is not because I wish to ruin the nativity scene you put up for Christmas, rather, it's to reveal another similarity.
- Simply put, we, as the bride of Christ, are like Mary, the bride of Joseph, we're alone, we're very far from home, and we're of little strength.
- Here's how I get there, as Christians, we stand-alone in a world not our home, and are of little strength in numbers, as only few enter in.

**Matthew 7:13-14 NIV** "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. (14) But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

**Revelation 3:7-8 NIV** "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. (8) I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

- By the way, being of little strength is a good thing, and we, like the Apostle Paul can boast in our weakness because then we are strong.
- This should bring us glad tidings of great comfort and joy, because Jesus is our strength during those times when we're weak and all alone.
- I've experienced how, and am convinced that; "God helps those who cannot help themselves." God helps the helpless, and the hopeless.

- It's this third similarity that is the most fascinating of them all, and the reason I say that is because it sort of ties into and fits with them all.
- Here's what I'm thinking, unto us a Savior is born as a babe in the little town of Bethlehem, which by any standard is small, and obscure.
- If that weren't bad enough, the Saviors birth announcement first goes out to filthy lowly shepherds, which by any standard are nobody's.

- Why is the Savior's birth at night in a feeding trough, to a couple alone, in an obscure town, then, first announced to filthy lowly shepherds?
- You'd think the Savior of the world would be born during the day, in a cleaner place, a better town, then, announced to all of society's elite.
- I think it's because, during the day, you don't need the light, a cleaner place doesn't need to be cleaned, and society's elite wouldn't RSVP.

- Furthermore, if the Savior had been born in pomp and plenty, it wouldn't have been good tidings of great joy, which would be to all people.
- If the announcement had only gone to society's elite, and not to lowly shepherds then good tidings of great joy would be for "those" people.
- In other words, if this will bring great joy to shepherds then it will bring great joy to "all" people," from "all" walks of life, especially nobody's.

- This is why it is God became a man, "Immanuel," (God with us), Who sends to us His only begotten Son, because of His infinite love for us!
- Jesus was born in this way, for us here today, as if to say; "I love you, and I want to save you, so you won't perish but have eternal life!"
- How can one be saved, confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that your greatest need was His greatest deed.

- In closing, and in keeping with the similarities we looked at, I'd like to share some other similarities with Joseph and Mary who did just that.
1. Joseph and Mary would never be the same again, so too if we confess with our mouth; believe in our heart we're never the same again.
  2. Joseph and Mary had future plans that were changed because of Jesus, so too do our future plans also change now because of Jesus.
  3. Joseph and Mary believed in the miracle of the virgin birth, so too when we believe in the Lord Jesus, we're born again in the new birth.
  4. Joseph and Mary were common people, the, nobody's of this world, so too does God love the common nobody's who are in this world.
  5. Joseph and Mary accepted the Savior of the world coming to them as a child, so too we come to the Savior of the world humbly as a child.