



Glad Tidings of Great Joy

By: Ron Rupè

"And the angel said unto them, 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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth, peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:10-14)

Here we find the very first Gospel messengers and the Gospel message in its entirety: A Savior is born! God extends peace to man! God's will is good toward man! This is God's highest glory! And, good tidings of great joy to all people! All other messages, all other truths, and all other doctrines are founded in these profound statements. Consider what these angels proclaimed:

"Unto you is born...a Savior" Before Christ was born the whole world was in bondage to sin and death. They were enslaved to sin and the power of darkness. But now, a Savior is born! Savior means conquer and deliver. He has come to deliver us from the bondage of sin and set us free indeed! Those who come to him are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into his kingdom. Because of him, we are no longer slaves to the power of sin, but free to serve the living God! For a world that lies in darkness, these *are* good tidings of great joy!

"And on Earth...peace" Because of sin, mankind was alienated from God and enemies with God; there was no peace between God and man. Men and women were keenly aware that God was not pleased with their lives; they had nothing but fear and dread to face their God. But now, God sent Christ with the word of reconciliation! God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them! Christ brought remission of the sins that are past! After so long a time, Christ brought "Peace on Earth"; peace between God and man!

"Good will toward man" Christ is the expression of God's attitude toward mankind. It is God saying to us, "I am for you, not against you." He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things! Every word that Christ spoke was God speaking good will toward us. Every work that Christ performed was God showing us that his will is good toward us! These *are* good tidings of great joy! He did not come to condemn us, he did not come to destroy us, but he that is come is for us!

"Glory to God in the highest" God's early creation brought God glory, and still does. Who doesn't marvel when they consider the earth, stars, and all living things? In addition, God's mighty works and miraculous deeds of old brought him glory. But now God has done a new thing; he has sent his Son, the Savior! This is glory to God in the highest! His crowning glory! Christ brought the "highest" glory to God, the plan of salvation brings the "highest" glory to God, and all who come to Christ and salvation bring the "highest" glory to God!

"Good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" The angel said "Unto you is born ... a Savior." Friend, these good tidings are not for a select few or a certain race; they are good tidings of great joy for all people - including you! Unto you is born a Savior! What wonderful words to hear! Unto YOU is born a Savior! His deliverance is for you. His peace is for you. His good will is toward you! This Gospel message is to you. Will you respond to God's message of deliverance, peace and good will?

Testimonies

From the day I was born, I've always been surrounded by saints. I've attended the church of God my whole life and know and love each and every person that walks through the church door, but does this make me saved? Not by any means. Just by being around and personally knowing people who are living for Christ does not automatically make me a Christian also.

The first 12 years of my life I was content to just be around everyone, feeling their love for God through their love and friendship to me, but that was false. These safe and secure feelings started to fade. I realized these people have something that I began to crave deep in my heart.

Just a few months after I turned 12, our church was holding a revival. Oh, I loved revivals. I loved all the visitors that came, but mostly I always could not wait to hear our guest preacher. However, this revival was different. I still enjoyed the fellowship with everyone, but this time there was an uncomfortable stirring in me as I sat back and listened and watched the guests and preachers. Instead of just listening to the messages, I heard them. My heart would start to pound faster and I could feel myself wanting to cry. These feelings really distressed me. During the altar call after the first few services I would just stand frozen, unable to move forward, partly from my pride and fear of embarrassment and partly from not knowing what my step forward would mean for me. I would go home feeling frustrated and discouraged. Finally, after one service the stirring in my heart was so forceful that I couldn't bear it any longer. I started crying and moving forward, blinded by tears. I finally made it to the altar, hardly noticing anything else around me. I began to pray, asking Jesus to forgive me and to live in my heart. Soon I felt the gentle hand of my pastor on my shoulder, kneeling in prayer with me, he helped me to take my first step to life with the Savior. As I stood to return to my seat, I realized there were several others also kneeling at the altar, including my best friend, and I felt my heart leap with joy knowing they were also receiving God's precious gift to us. After the service was over, I'll never forget all the different ones who hugged me, telling me how much they loved me and were praying that God would convict my soul.

Now life hasn't always been easy since I was saved, in fact I've had many battles, and highs and lows, just like anyone else, but these instances only made my relationship with Christ stronger. So, my friend, I encourage you to also take the step forward and receive Christ today, if you have not already.

Kayla Hyden Age 21

No Room Medley

Words and Music: John W. Peterson

No room, only a manger of hay, No room, he is a stranger today,
No room, here in His world turned away, No room, No room...

Angels in heaven up yonder, Watched with amazement and wonder,
To see the Son of the Highest treated so.

No room, here in the hearts of mankind,
No room, no cheery welcome to find,
No room, surely the world is blind, No room, No room...

Have you any room for Jesus, He who bore your load of sin?
As He knocks and asks admission, Sinner won't you let him in?

Room for Jesus, King of glory, Hasten now, His word obey
Swing your heart's door widely open, Bid Him enter while you may.

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Stories for Boys & Girls

The Story of a Wonderful Baby's Birth

The Christmas Story as told by Elsie Egermier



Out on the streets of Nazareth the people were standing in groups, talking excitedly. News had just reached their city that the great emperor of Rome had commanded all of them to go to the town or city from which their families had come and have their names written on lists. The emperor wished to have a list of the names of all the people in his great kingdom, or empire. And no one dared disobey his command.

Soon travelers were seen going in every direction, for the emperor's command had been read in every city in the land. Out from Nazareth a company of people started toward the south, and in that company were Joseph and Mary, for they were both of the family of David, and they were going to Bethlehem, the city of David, to have their names written upon the list at that place.

The road to the south led through the country of Samaria, then over the hills of Judah to Jerusalem. From Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary went further south, till they came to Bethlehem. Some of their company had left them in other cities along the way, while others had joined them. And when they reached Bethlehem they found that it was swarming with people who belonged, as they did, to the city where David was born. From every part of the land these people had come, and they had filled the lodging-rooms till no more place could be found for the new arrivals.

The long journey from Nazareth had been very tiresome, and Mary longed for a place to rest. But Joseph could find no place except in the stable of the inn. And here they stayed during their first days in Bethlehem.

God had not forgotten his promise to Mary, and one night while she was in Bethlehem he gave her the child, Jesus. And Mary wrapped him in soft cloths called swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger where the cattle fed, because she could find no better place.

The people of Bethlehem did not know that the angels were watching over the city that night. They did not hear the angels' glad song when Jesus was born. They did not see the joy of Mary and Joseph as they bent over the wonderful child in the manger. And so it was that God's greatest gift to men came right into that neighborhood and those people did not receive it as a gift from God because they did not expect a Savior to be born of such a humble person as Mary.

But there were shepherds watching their flocks that night in a field near Bethlehem. Perhaps David, the shepherd king, had tended sheep in that same field many years before. These shepherds knew about David, and about God's promise to David that one of his descendants would be the Savior of men. And they may have been talking about God's promise when the angel of the Lord suddenly came near and a glorious light broke upon them through the darkness. Trembling with fear, they looked upon the angel and wondered why he had come to them. Then he spoke, and said: "Fear not, for 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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And you will find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger."

What a wonderful message! The shepherds listened eagerly to the angel's words, and when he finished speaking they saw a multitude of angels join him and begin to sing. Such music this world had never heard, for the angels were singing one of heaven's glad songs, giving glory to God in the highest. And they also sang, "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

When the song ended, the angels went back into heaven and the glorious light faded again into the darkness of the still night. But the shepherds never forgot the sweetness of that song nor the joy it brought to their hearts. They did not wait until daylight to hasten to Bethlehem in search of the wonderful child, but said to each other just as soon as the angels disappeared, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord has made known unto us." So they left

their flocks and hurried to Bethlehem, and there they found Mary and Joseph in the stable, with the infant Jesus lying in the manger.

The shepherds told Mary and Joseph about their angel visitors and about the wonderful song that the angels sang. And no doubt they knelt before the manger and worshipped the little babe who lay quietly sleeping in the hay. Then they ran into the streets of Bethlehem and told everyone whom they met about the angel's visit and about the wonderful child who had been born that night in a stable of the city. And the people wondered about the strange things that the shepherds told.

When the baby was eight days old, Joseph and Mary gave him a name, and they called him by the name the angel had chosen. That name, Jesus, means "salvation," and it told to men the work that God had sent this child to do.

There was a law among the Jews that an offering should be made to the Lord for the first boy child born into each family. Among the rich people this offering should be a lamb, but among poor people the offering of only two young pigeons would please God just as well. When Jesus was forty days old Joseph and Mary took him to the temple at Jerusalem to give their offering to the Lord. They brought two pigeons, for they were poor and could not bring a lamb.

An old man named Simeon was in the temple when Joseph and Mary came to bring their offering. This old man had served God many years, and he longed to see the Savior whom God had promised to send into the world.

When Mary brought the baby Jesus to the temple, God's Spirit caused Simeon to know this child was the promised Savior. He came eagerly to meet Mary and took her babe in his arms. Then he said, "Now may God let me depart in peace, for I have seen with my eyes the salvation which he has sent."

Another faithful servant of the Lord was in the temple that day, an old lady named Anna, who spoke words of prophesy to the people. When she saw Jesus, she too gave thanks to God.

Mary never forgot the words of these dear old people concerning her wonderful child. She remembered, too, the story that the shepherds had told, about the angels' visit to them, and about their words and song. Always in the days that followed, Mary thought about these strange things and wondered how her son Jesus would finally become the King and Savior of the world.

Prayer of the Month



Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the gift of your son Jesus, and the plan of salvation. Help us as we walk each day to bring this gift to all we meet. Amen

CHILDREN & YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS

December 17th, 2000

6:00 p.m.

☺Everyone is welcome! ☺

The Church of God	Pastor David Chancellor
118 West Main	Email: dchancellor@juno.com
PO Box 6187	Website: http://www.geocities.com/moorecog
Moore, OK 73153	Spanish translation available in Services
(405) 794-2765	

Service Times:

Wednesday Prayer Meeting	7:00p.m.
Sunday School	9:30a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30a.m.
Sunday Young People's Service	4:45p.m.
Sunday Children's Service	5:00p.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00p.m.

We have literature available for those who would like to study the Word of God in the confines of their home. Let us know if you are interested by contacting us at the above telephone number, address, or website.

