**The Response of Heaven and Earth**

**to the Birth of the Savior**

**Luke 2:8-20**

Big Idea: Heaven and earth declare and celebrate the good news of the birth of the Savior.

The beginning of this chapter tells us that Jesus is from the line of David who is born in the city of David, Bethlehem then Luke turns our attention to how both heaven and earth respond to his birth.

**The Response of Heaven (8-14)**

The response of heaven is that God sends an angel to *declare the good news* (8-12). In the hills of outside Bethlehem, *God comes to the insignificant*, unsuspecting shepherds watching sheep. We know nothing about them other than shepherds did not have good reputations. They were a tough crowd, untrustworthy, unskilled labor. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them so that they are filled with fear, terror really (2:8)! The very throne of heaven, God’s throne, dispatched an angel to deliver the news. With the angelic messenger comes the *light of heaven*, the glory of the Lord penetrating the cold and darkness of earth. Like a glorious sunrise, daylight overcoming the nighttime sky, God’s glory is revealed against the backdrop of human darkness and sin.

The angel recognizes the shepherd’s fear and responds, fear not for I bring you good news of great joy. The message was, do not fear because I have *good news* of great joy that will be for all people. Why are they afraid? Well, it is not unusual for any of us to be afraid when we run into something unusual. But this fear is not just the fear of the unknown. The bible describes the response of those who encounter the presence of God or angels as fearful. Fear came after sin entered the world when humanity rejected God’s rule in their lives. Fear is the response of sinful humanity to the presence of God or angels because it accentuates our sinfulness. But the good news overcomes human fear. Great joy surrounds the birth of Jesus because God’s eternal plan is coming to a head.

The good news is of *great joy* because, this day is born in the city of David, Bethlehem, a Savior who is Christ the Lord. The good news is one of great joy because of the location of this birth and the titles that describe this baby. The city of David points us to the Old Testament promise of the coming King would be from the line of king David (Luk 2:4). This newborn child is first, *a Savior*. A Savior is one who saves others. We are so impacted by sin that we cannot save ourselves but need a Savior outside of ourselves to save us. For many, our greatest problem is that we think we can fix or save ourselves. Others think politicians can save us, technology can save us, a happy marriage can save us, etc. Second, he is Christ, *the Messiah* God promised. God promised a Deliverer to end all deliverers, who would rescue Israel forever. He has come in Jesus, the Christ. Third, he is *the Lord*, the Sovereign God who rules the universe. The angel said the good news is that he came to be their Savior, Messiah, God himself (Luk 2:15). Then the angel gives them a sign, evidence that this message is true. They will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothing and lying in a manger. First we have seen that God sent an angel to declare the good news, next God sent *angels to celebrate the good news* (13-14).

God sent an *angelic choir*, an army of angelic soldiers to celebrate the birth of the Savor saying, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased (13-14). It’s as though the seams of heaven burst open because joy is thundering forth from the throne of God and the good news cannot be contained, a Savior is born. *Joy turns to praise*. There is something about joy that must be expressed in praise. This good news includes the *promise of peace* among those with whom God is pleased! This peace is both personal and interpersonal. Jesus’ coming brings spiritual peace, reconciliation with God through the cross. So, the apostle Paul can say, since we have been justified by faith, wehave peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1). Once we have peace with God, we can experience peace with others because all hostility comes from sin and sin is remedied when we have peace with God. This is the peace for those whom God is pleased, pointing us to the necessity of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Heb 11:6). So, faith is the means by which we experience peace (Rom 15:13). The response of heaven to the birth of the Savior is to declare the good news and celebrate the good news. Now let’s look at the response of earth to the birth of the Savior.

**The Response of Earth (15-20)**

When the angelic choir leaves, the shepherds go to Bethlehem to see what the Lord has made known to them (15). Arriving in Bethlehem, the shepherds find the newborn Savior. Christianity is not a blind faith nor a fairy tale. If you investigate it, you will find that it is credible and true. And finding Jesus, the *shepherds declare the good news*, making known what they had been told, Jesus is the promised Davidic king, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (17)! Those who heard it were amazed, they wondered about the good news (18). Luke seems to point to this response as being interested, curious, even intriguing, but short of faith. I say this because he contrasts their response with Mary’s, but Mary treasured up these things, that is, she pondered or reflected on them in her heart (19). Mary held this information close to her heart, thinking and reflecting about what it all meant.

Then the shepherds returned home *celebrating the good news*, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen as the angel told them (20). Their joy, their gladness in the gospel crescendos into praise like the crest of a wave. Again, *joy naturally turns to praise*. Their joy and gladness is a taste of the joy that the Father and the Son and Spirit have experienced for Eternity. Their joy is so full that it overflows toward have faith in him (2:15; Rom 15:13). Joy and peace are central to the Christian life. The response of heaven and earth to the birth of the Savior is to joyfully declare and celebrate the good news.

Life Group Questions:

1. What is the main point of this passage?
2. Why do you think God used angels to declare and celebrate the birth of the Savior?
3. What does it means that Jesus is a Savior and Lord? How does he save?
4. How does him being a Savior show us our need for a Savior?
5. Give an example of how Jesus saved you personally?
6. Why do you think that the Angel came to declare the good news to shepherds?
7. Why do you think that the shepherds responded the way they did?
8. Do you think they could have been so enamored with the angels that they could have neglected the content of the good news?
9. What does the message of this passage teach us to day?
10. Is there any way that your celebration of Christmas has overshadowed the message of Christmas?
11. How does it apply to my life as a follower of Christ?