

Christmas 2018 | David Baumgartner

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Date: 23 December 2018

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[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. As I said, tonight we're celebrating the night that God stepped into humanity.

What a precious night that was. If you have your Bibles or your cell phones, you can follow along with me. The Gospel according to Luke chapter 2. We're going to be looking at a real historic event. It actually took place. It was so important that it split history into two. We talk about A.D. and we talk about before Christ, B.C.

Tonight, I'd like for us to have a brief look at the first human beings, besides Mary and Joseph, who actually got to see this new Savior.

Jesus. In Luke chapter 2, let me read this. In Luke 2, verse 8, it says that in the same region, this is where Jesus was born, there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

[1 : 14] Verse 9 tells us that an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terribly frightened.

I want to stop right there and just ask yourself, place yourself right there. You're watching your flocks that night, and then everything is calm, everything is easy, and suddenly you're bathed by this brilliant light that appears.

And it's an angel of the Lord, a messenger of Almighty God Himself. And understandably, they were filled with fear.

Who wouldn't be? Would you? I know I would be. It goes on in verse 10. Boy, friends, these two verses are packed with information.

I see at least seven things that it tells me. First of all, I bring you good news. Good news. That's the verbal form of the gospel.

[2 : 34] In the Greek, the gospel, euangelion. Secondly, notice that it's great joy for all the people. Who here needs to hear good news?

Yeah, good news bringing great joy. If you need to hear good news, friends, I'm glad you're here tonight. Notice that it's the city of David. This birth was historically significant in that it fulfilled this long-awaited prophecy regarding this little town of Bethlehem.

Fourth, the angel says, a Savior has been born. In other words, this is not just any birth. No, a Savior has been born. And notice, he says, born for you.

That tells us Jesus didn't come for the angels. No, he came for you. He came for people. No matter who you are, no matter what you've done, no matter what you're going through right now, he came for you.

And then six, that he is the Christ. He's Messiah. He's the deliverer, the anointed one. And lastly, the angel said that he is God himself, the Lord.

[3 : 53] How amazing that is. And then he goes on in verse 12. This will be a sign for you. I wanted to stop right there. What's a sign? What does that mean?

Why was it needed? And what does it tell us? Well, to answer that, I would like to ask the kids to come up. All you little guys, all you big guys, come on up here.

Come on up right in front here. I need to ask you to help me through this. Yeah, come on. I want you to sit down right up here. No, face me. You're going to be facing me because I've got some questions for you.

Yeah, come on down. Yeah, come on. You too. Yeah. Come on down. Come on, Zach.

Come on. I've got some questions here for you. Yeah. Boy, I tell you, some of these guys, they're just too big, aren't they?

[4 : 52] All right. I know it's Christmas time. Come on. You look up at me. Look here. Look here. It's Christmas time.

I've got some questions to ask you. Who here would like a car? Yeah, you want a car? All right. You didn't drive here tonight, did you, by the way?

No? Okay. Well, did you know that in order to drive a car, you need a license to drive? So I've got a test for you.

Okay? And we're going to see how well you do. I know your parents and your grandparents, your friends are looking on. So I got a test for you. First of all, let me ask you, what is this?

A what? A stop sign. What does it tell you to do? Stop. All right. I knew that.

[5 : 51] I think I do. At least sometimes I don't. Then what do you do when you see the sign? You stop. And then what do you do?

Stop. You do what? Stop. Well, I don't see it says go. You're supposed to stop, right? And then what?

You wait. That doesn't say wait. I don't know. I don't think they're doing too well tonight here. Let's go on here. I tell you what. I'm not going to give you a passing grade on that one, okay?

Let's try another one. How about this sign? What does this one tell you to do? What does this one tell you to do? Yield. What's that mean?

Wait. Anybody? Yield. You wait. So you just wait. Yeah, you wait for somebody, huh?

[6 : 51] You wait for me, right? You wait for me. I'm driving the car next to you and you wait for me. Yeah, I like that.

I'm going to give them a good one on that one. That was good. How about this one here? Here's a sign. Oh. What does that mean?

Does anybody know what this sign says? Two roads that are connected. Any of you know what this means?

Yeah. It means merging traffic. In other words, there are times in life that we need to slow down and let the other guy move in to your lane.

Isn't that right? You had a lot of road rage today. If we would learn to wait. If you could learn one thing tonight, that's a good thing. How about this one here?

[7 : 53] What does it mean? Road work ahead. So this, now notice here all these other signs, they tell me what to do, right?

It's like a command. What does this one here say? What's the command? What's the command here? What's it telling me to do? How about you? How about you older guys over here?

What am I supposed to do? I should stop my car, get a shovel out of the trunk and help the guys. What's the command here? What's the command here? No.

Ah, no. It means that I'm to be watching for something. It means that I need to have my eyes looking out to see what's going on.

And that's important. Here's my last sign here. Tell me what this one says. Watch out for a bridge.

[8 : 58] You mean a bridge might fall? Yeah. I tell you what. If you, what happens if you're not watching for this sign?

What happens? Yeah, the bridge might be gone. Someone else out there helped you. You know, I don't think you guys are ready to drive yet. All right.

You guys go ahead and sit back with your parents. Thank you so much. That was really good. The gospel writer tells us that the angel said in verse 12 that there will be a sign for you.

And here's what that sign is. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. In other words, here's what you need to know.

Here's what you need to know about him. Two things. First, he's a newborn baby. He's wrapped in these bands of cloth. Now, that's a very common practice, isn't it?

[10 : 05] For newborn babies to be wrapped, to be swaddled in these strips of cloth. But secondly, he's lying in a manger. What's that?

That's a feeding trough. A feeding trough used to feed animals. Normally, babies are born in these clean, safe environments, right?

Today, babies and parents are surrounded by medical technology, the best that's out there, and medical professionals to make sure that everything goes right.

But not this baby. No. That manger scene isn't like what we see on Christmas cards. No. The sign speaks of Jesus' humility.

Yeah. Yeah. His humility. In fact, everything about the birth of this baby points to his humility. The Bible tells us that Jesus' parents were poor.

[11:07] They traveled to Bethlehem, an 85-mile journey on a donkey. And I'm sure Mary, who was pregnant at the time, would have felt every jolt.

It tells us that there was no room for them in the inn. And so, Mary and Joseph had to settle for this place where they kept animals.

And then, it says that there's not only no room for them, but just think of the humiliation. But the angels know who he is.

Suddenly, it says in verse 13, And then what happened?

It says in verse 15, Now listen closely.

[12:08] Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

They believed what the angels said, because the Lord had made it known to them. And it says in verse 16, They came in haste, and they found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as he lay in the manger.

They heard the message, these shepherds. They saw the sign, and they found Jesus. Hallelujah. And then in verse 17, it says then that they made known the statement which had been told to them about this child.

And all who heard it, listen carefully, All who heard it wondered at the things which were told to them by the shepherds. And then at verse 20, it says that the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

That night, friends, changed them forever. But I have a question. What about those people that heard what the shepherds had said?

[13:28] What about them? What about all the people that heard this testimony that the shepherds had shared? It says that all who heard it wondered.

Now, I looked up that word. That word wondered can mean one of two things. It could mean, first, that either they were extraordinarily impressed, or two, they were disturbed about it.

Think about that. I find it amazing, my friends, that there's no mention or no record of anyone going to check the baby Jesus himself.

Isn't that amazing? Apparently, most of the people in those days missed the sign. And here's why. It's because they were looking for a conquering hero who was born in royalty.

They were not looking for humility. They missed it. And you know what? Jesus is still being missed today.

[14:39] Isn't that true? Today, many people view God, the God that's described in the Bible, as unattractive.

I'll just tell you that. They see the God in the Bible, it's unattractive. They'll say, that's not my idea of who God ought to be.

And so, when you think like that, the tendency is to make up your own God. Just make him up.

They'll say, I want a God who will fix all my problems.

Well, friends, I would say, he will, if you just let him. If you let it his way. Or, I want a God who approves of everything I say and do.

Friends, he's our creator. I would say that he knows what's best for us, doesn't he? Let him have his way. Or, how about this?

[15:44] I want a God who will love me just as I am. I would say, friend, he already does. He does.

And he sent his son into the world to prove that. That little baby grew up, lived a perfect life. He taught us what God the Father is like.

And then, to tell us that our God is full of compassion, mercy, forgiveness. And then Jesus fulfilled his role as Savior.

Wonderful Savior. How did he become a Savior? How did that happen? He did that by allowing himself to be executed on a cross.

He took mine and yours place on that cross. And that's the good news. He bore the punishment that you and I deserve.

[16:53] And thereby becoming our Savior. That is, for all those who are willing to believe and to receive that good news. that is God's gift to all of us.

Each one of us here. The good news that you and I need for the rest of our lives. Friends, if you have not already done so, receive that gift this Christmas. It'll change your life just like it did those shepherds. Don't miss the sign. Jesus is who. I need you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.