

Savior, Christ, and Lord

December 25th is the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus. This date was given us by the emperor Constantine in the year 336 A.D, but is an unlikely date because of the fact the shepherds were in the fields with their flocks. More likely, Jesus was born sometime in September before the sheep were brought into the fold for the winter. The fact is, however, that the Son of God was born to a virgin girl named Mary, who, though the intended bride of Joseph, had never been with a man until after Jesus was born. On the day of His birth, the angel of the Lord, which is the angel Gabriel, announced His birth to the shepherds in the field, saying, "*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 Saviour, 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*" Luke 2:10-12. The shepherds rushed to Bethlehem, and found the baby Jesus exactly as they had been told.

Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room for them in the inn. He was "*wrapped in swaddling clothes*" and "*laid in a manger.*" Having been raised on a dairy farm, I know that a manger is not such as we see depicted in the manger scene. Instead, a manger may be a hundred feet long with cattle eating the hay both day and night. Into these poorest of surroundings our Savior was born.

There are three things I wish to point out in the message of Gabriel to the shepherds. First, this baby was said to be "*a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.*" We will examine each of these three, "Savior," "Christ" and "the Lord."

The Savior

The name "Jesus" is the English equivalent of the Hebrew name "*Yeshua,*" which means "salvation." Jesus is both the "savior" and the "salvation" of everyone who trusts in Him. When Joseph realized that Mary was pregnant before their marriage, the only conclusion he could reach was that she had been unfaithful. Joseph was a righteous man who dearly loved Mary and was unwilling to make her a "*public example,*" which means she would have been publicly stoned to death as a fornicator. When Joseph decided to "*put her away privately,*" the angel Gabriel appeared to him a dream, saying, "*Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and*

thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" Matthew 1:20-21. Notice that as Savior, Jesus saves the believer "*from their sin*" and not, "*in their sin.*" The modern church says, "We are all sinners, and we sin every day. We will continue to sin as long as we live in a body of flesh." Such a people have never trusted in Jesus to be "saved from their sin." They do not believe in the one John the Baptist called "*The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" John 1:29. But exactly who is this Savior? Again, the angel Gabriel said He is "Christ, the Lord."

The Christ

The title "Christ" is the Greek counterpart for the Hebrew Messiah. The angel Gabriel came to the prophet Daniel with the promise of one called "*the Messiah, the Prince*" who would "*...make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness...*" Daniel 9:24-25. He gave a timeline for the appearing of this Messiah which was mathematically perfect unto the very year Jesus was baptized by John. When He was baptized, the Holy Ghost descended on Jesus in the bodily form of a dove, and a voice from heaven was heard saying, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*"

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." Hebrews 10:5.

Christ is as eternal as God is. He is the creator of all things. He continued for all time and eternity as a Spirit without a body. Millions of lambs had been slaughtered under Moses' Law, and not one was found which could "*take away sin.*" It was Christ, our creator, who chose to become a man in order to have a body and blood sufficient to take away sin.

The Lord

The Bible says, "*The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*" I Corinthians 15:47. The first man was Adam, who was formed from the dust of the earth and created in the image of God. Adam disobeyed God and sin entered into the world. Untold billions of people have been eternally lost because of the first man's sin. God is a just God, and his justice required there must be a "*second man*" to undo what the first man had done. No natural man could accomplish such a thing, but Jesus was not just a natural man. He is the Lord from Heaven, and when he was born into this world, the Bible said, "*Let all the angels of God worship Him.*" Hebrews 1:6. As we celebrate this Christmas season, let us not forget the baby born in the manger is Jesus our Savior, who is Christ the Lord!

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