

December 25, 2016

I Want to Know Jesus

"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Philippians 3:10-11

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people! Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord!! This will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:8-14



Most of us have heard and read this passage numerous times over the years. Most of us have enjoyed hearing Linus quote it on "A Charlie Brown Christmas" for years. The point is we all know what it says, right?

But have you ever noticed the one totally unique word in this passage; in the angel's announcement of the birth of the Christ? Look at what the angel said again, ***"I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people! Today in the town of David a SAVIOR has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord!!"***

That word and the promise that lies behind it is totally unique in all of the belief systems that mankind has ever held. The child born in Bethlehem all of those years ago was born to be our Savior; our rescuer. No other world religion now being practiced by men is founded on this single word. No other world religion promises its followers a Savior. Jesus is totally and completely unique because he comes into the world to be just that, our Savior.

When those shepherds left their flocks that night they went to find out if what the angel had told them was true, but they very probably did not go to see the Savior of the world. I am not sure that they fully understood the meaning of that announcement on that beautiful night. In fact, I am pretty sure they had no clue. I am also pretty sure that we don't always understand the meaning of those words either.

"...a Savior has been born to you..." That simple phrase encompasses so much doesn't it? It reminds us that we are lost and without hope because of the sins each one of us commits. It reminds us that no matter what we do we cannot rescue ourselves from the certain destruction that comes with the wrath of God that we have earned. Those words remind us that we are so, so in need of a Savior; someone to rescue us from the storm. And that announcement reminds us that our Savior is not a good man trying to live a good life whom God will use to rescue us. No, no, our Savior is the Christ the Lord, the very Son of God.

When we celebrate the Christmas story we are celebrating that amazing gift delivered to us all on that night so long ago. Our God, our Father, whose love we cannot begin to comprehend has given us his Son, his one and only Son, as Savior. No greater gift has ever been given. On that night hope was born, hope that cannot be threatened by, nor overcome by any force in this world.

Of that gift the Apostle Paul would later write, *"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things...For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"* (Romans 8:28-39)