

CHRISTMAS EVE 2024 - A Gift Like No Other

Andy Deane · 12/24/2024 · Luke 2:1-20

Every tradition has a story, but tonight, we'll focus on the story behind the greatest Christmas tradition: giving gifts. Text TRADITIONS to (951)425-4425 to learn the Christian origins to 15 modern Christmas traditions.

Luke 2:1-7, *1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world...3 And everyone went to their own town to register. 4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

A GIFT LIKE NO OTHER: What preparation is needed?

- Need: Sin has made a real mess of humanity and we needed help.
- Effort: God put in the work with prophecy and His providence: Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2
- Timing: God planned it, all of it, even the chaos: Galatians 4:4
- Setting: God orchestrated it, why a manger? To show His humility and accessibility to all.

Luke 2:8-10, *8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.*

A GIFT LIKE NO OTHER: Who deserves to receive it?

- To ordinary people: shepherds: *I bring you good news*
- To bring them extraordinary joy: *will cause great joy for all the people*
- Even though they did not deserve it: *they were terrified...afraid*

Luke 2:11-14, *11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

A GIFT LIKE NO OTHER: What's makes it so valuable?

- Savior: our gift has a name, and His name has a meaning: Matthew 1:21, *the angel of the Lord...said..give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*
- Messiah: The one who fulfills every Old Testament prophecy.
- Lord: He reigns over all and yet came to serve: Mark 10:45
- It would take 33 years for people to see His true value when He died on the cross for our sins.
- God would not only save us, but He would adopt us into His family: 1 John 3:1

Luke 2:15-20, *15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

A GIFT LIKE NO OTHER: How do you know it's appreciated?

- They ran to the gift: *Let's go...and see...So they hurried off.*
- They talked to others about the gift: *they spread the word*
- They thanked God for the gift: *glorifying & praising God*

The tradition of giving gifts was initiated by God:

- James 1:17, *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...*
- John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...*
- Romans 6:23, *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
- Ephesians 2:8-9, *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God*

The gift of Jesus is offered to you today!

- Don't leave it unopened. If you're ready to receive it, let this Christmas be the moment you embrace the gift of God. How? Repent of your sins. Believe the gospel. Follow Jesus.
 - John 1:12, *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God...*
 - Romans 10:9, *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
- If you're not ready to unwrap that gift yet, please come back each Sunday (or watch us online) to learn more.