

WHY DOES THE BIRTH OF JESUS BRING GLORY TO GOD?

I'm going to start off this morning with a Bible trivia question. Here goes: **How many angelic** appearances were connected with the **birth** of Jesus? **Four**, right?

- 1) First, an angel appeared to an elderly Jewish priest by the name of Zacharias as he served in the temple.
- 2) Second, an angel appeared unto Mary.
- 3) Third, an angel appeared unto Joseph.
- 4) Fourth, an angel—then a multitude of angels—appeared unto shepherds.

All **four** angelic appearances surrounding Jesus' birth have **three** things in common:

- 1) **First**, the angel—or host of angels—didn't **just appear**—they **always brought a message** from God!
- 2) A **second common** feature in all four appearances is this: The message always included the words, "Fear not!" **Why?** I'm not going to take the time to elaborate on this too much, but I will say this: Mary and Joseph were fearful because of what the angels **said to them**; Zacharias and the shepherds were fearful at **the sight** of them!
- 3) And a **third common** denominator is this: The messages that the angels brought **are recorded for us** in God's Word! And since God saw fit to include them in His Word, they are obviously **messages that God wants** us to know!

This morning, we are going to be focusing on the message from God—through the angels—to **the shepherds**, that still rings true for today. Please take your Bibles and turn to Luke 2; follow along as I read verses 6-14. As you already know from your outline, we are going to be **zeroing in** on this question: "**Why Does the Birth of Jesus Bring Glory to God?**"

Before we consider the question, "Why the birth of Jesus brings glory to God," I want to briefly consider...

1. The picture. Notice again what it says in vs 8 (read).

What kind of men were shepherds at the time of Jesus' birth? **Randy Alcorn** provides some interesting insight into the character of shepherds during Jesus' day:

- They were at bottom of the social ladder and had the same status as tax collectors and dung sweepers!
- Jewish writings at that time stated that no one should feel obligated to rescue a shepherd if they fall in a pit!
- They were given the label "sinners"—the same label given to women of ill repute!
- They were so unreliable that they could not be called upon as a witness in court!
- And you were forbidden "to buy wool, milk, or a kid from a shepherd" because it was assumed to be stolen property! (<https://www.epm.org/resources/2008/Mar/11/shepherds-status/>).

It was to this group of **despised men**—the **outcasts of society**—that an angel of the Lord appeared to!

What was their reaction? Verse 9 says that the "glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid." The brightness and splendor of this angel caused a **group of rough, tough men** to literally "fear a great fear." In other words, they were **terrified!**

--In vs 10, the angel tells them to 'Fear not! I have **good** news that will bring great joy—not **bad** news.

And this good news is for **all people**—which would, of course, **include them!**

What was the good news?

--Vs 11: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

We'll come back to that thought in a little bit; for now let's look at vs 13.

--Vs 13: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God..."

If **one angel** scared them, imagine how terrifying **a multitude** of angels would be!

What was the message of this multitude—this army—of angels?

--Vs 14 "Glory to God in the highest..."

And that brings us to our question: “**Why** does the **birth of Jesus** bring glory to God?”

I’ve shared this with you before, but here it is again. I’ve witnessed—firsthand—the birth of **six** children: **five** of my own children and **one** c-section delivery **as an observer** while going through LPN school. **Not one** of those births was announced by **even one** angel—much less than by a multitude of them!

So **what was it** about the birth of **this baby** that caused a multitude of angels to say: “Glory—praise and honor—be rendered unto the God of heaven for what He has done!”

2. The properness of giving glory to God

Why was it “proper”—why was it **appropriate**—for a multitude of angels to say, “Glory to God in the highest?”

One reason was because of... A. The Person who was born

I intentionally have the “P” in “Person” capitalized. **Why?**

Because Jesus was **no ordinary person!**

--in Mt 1:23, Jesus is called “Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us.**”

--In Lk 1:78, Jesus is referred to as “the dayspring from on high [who] hath **visited** us.”

--In John 1:1, Jesus is referred to as the Word—and that the **Word was God**. And in John 1:14, we see that Jesus—**the Word who was God**—“became flesh, and **dwelt among us...**”

--**I Timothy 3:16** “And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh...**”

--**Hebrews 10:5** “Wherefore when He [Jesus] **cometh into the world**, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but **a body hast thou prepared me:**”

And these verses are just the “tip of the iceberg!”

--**Nine** times, Jesus says, “I am come...”

--And **ten** times, Jesus says, “I came...”

It is an impossible-to-miss, unmistakable Bible truth that **God left heaven and visited earth** in the form of a man! And that “visit” **started off as a baby** in a manger in Bethlehem—and is one of the reasons the multitude of the heavenly host shouted, “Glory to God in the highest!”

That’s not the **only reason**, though. Another reason the birth of Jesus brought glory to God was...

B. The purpose for which Jesus was born

Why did God leave heaven and come to earth in the person of Jesus?

Most of us **know the answer** to that question, don’t we? In fact, we **know it so well** that I’m afraid too many of us **under-appreciate** the significance of why He came!

Why did Jesus come? To be our **Savior**, right? We see that in verse 11: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a **Saviour**, which is Christ the Lord.”

And we see it in Mt 1:21 “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He **shall save His people from their sins.**”

But it wasn’t merely the **birth** of Jesus that **saves us** from our sins. And it wasn’t **the example** that Jesus lived while visiting earth that saves us, either! **Salvation from our sins** required the **death of Jesus!** Once again, the Bible is unmistakably clear regarding this truth.

First, that truth is seen in ... **1) The statements made by Jesus.**

Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to **give His life** a ransom for many.”

John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd **giveth His life** for the sheep.”

Second, we see it in ... **2) Scripture written by others.**

--Paul in **Romans 5:8** wrote: “But God commendeth [demonstrated; showed] His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us.**”

--Peter in **I Peter 1:24** wrote: “Who His own self **bare our sins in His own body** on the tree...”

--John in **Revelation 1:5b** wrote: “...Unto Him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in His own blood,**”

Why did the birth of Jesus warrant praise and honor to God?

First, because God came to earth **as a man**.

Second, because God came as a man **in order to die** for those He created!

Third, C. Because of the perfections of God seen in the birth—and death—of Jesus

What do I mean by the “**perfections** of God?” The “perfections of God” are the **characteristics** that make God, God—often referred to as **attributes**.

Why refer to them as **perfections**? Because as Ryrie rightly observed, “...all of the qualities or attributes of God are perfect” (*Basic Theology*, pg 39). Pretty hard to argue with that!

So what attributes—what characteristics and qualities of God—are demonstrated in the birth and death of Jesus? **Spurgeon** says **all of them!** Notice **the quote** on your outline: “All the attributes of God were in that little Child most marvelously displayed and veiled. Tell me one attribute of God that is not manifest in Jesus, and your ignorance shall be the reason why you have not seen it so.” (*Great Preaching on Christmas*, pg 51).

How many attributes/characteristics of God are there? Theologians aren’t 100% in agreement, but anywhere from 15-23! We obviously aren’t going to go through anywhere close to that many, but I do want to point out some of the perfections of God that were demonstrated in both **the birth and death** of Jesus.

1) The perfections of God seen in the birth of Jesus. What attributes of God—what qualities and perfections—are demonstrated in Jesus coming to earth as a baby?

--**Power** is obviously one of them! **Why?** Because it is **impossible** for a virgin to **become pregnant**—and Mary certainly understood that! Please turn to Luke 1:30; notice what it says in verses 30 and 31. For the sake of time, we are going to skip a few verses but notice now what it says in verse 34.

What was the angel’s response to Mary’s question? Verse 35 “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and **the power** of the Highest shall overshadow thee...”

What does that mean? Simply this: God was going to miraculously fertilize an egg in Mary’s womb without the involvement of a man—which is obviously impossible—**from man’s perspective!** Not impossible **for God**, though—and the angel says that very thing in vs 37: “For with God nothing shall be impossible.”

But the **miraculous conception** of Mary wasn’t the only display of God’s power demonstrated in the birth of Jesus. We also see God’s power when we consider how He chose **to conceal and limit** His power when He became a man.

King Solomon, in his prayer of dedication after building a temple for God, said in 1 Kings 8:27 “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the **heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee**; how much less this house that I have builded?”

Solomon is saying that **if heaven is too small** for God, **any building** that a man builds can’t contain Him either! So for God to subject Himself to the **frailties and limitations** of a man is a display of power! **Spurgeon** put it like this: “Lo! What power, for where is power so great as when it concealeth power? What power, that Godhead should unrobe itself and become Man!” (*Great Preaching on Christmas*, pg 51).

Power isn’t the only attribute seen in the birth of Jesus; **faithfulness** is another. **How?**

Because God promised Adam...and Eve...and Satan—in Genesis 3:15—that the seed (offspring) of the woman would someday “bruise”—meaning **crush**—the head of Satan! And Jesus was the promised “seed” that came to do just that!

Next, let’s consider... **2) The perfections of God seen in the death of Jesus.**

What attributes—what characteristics and qualities of God—are demonstrated in the **death** of Jesus? The **love of God** is certainly seen in the death of Jesus—if you have a **Biblical** understanding as to **why** He died! Why is a **Biblical** understanding **important**? Because at **face value**—and from a **human** perspective—it **seems unloving**—and incredibly **wrong**—for God to let a **perfect, sinless** man be cruelly treated and hung on a cross for crimes He did not commit! How could God **love His Son**—and **allow Him to be treated** that way?

But that's not the **Biblical truth** of what happened, is it? The cross is **not about** God's love for **His Son**—it is about God's love **for us!** God **loved us** so much that **He came** to earth—in the form of a man—to **die the death** we deserved for **our sins** so that we wouldn't have to pay for them ourselves!

Jesus was our **substitute**; He died in **our** place!

--**Isaiah 53:4-6** "Surely He hath borne **our** griefs, and carried **our** sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for **our** transgressions, He was bruised for **our** iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and **the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**"

--**John 15:13** "Greater **love** hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

--**I John 3:1** "Behold, what manner **of love** the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:"

Not only is the **love** of God seen in the death of Jesus, so is the **holiness** of God. How? Because God's holiness requires **that sin be punished**—not ignored! And the only way sin against an **infinite, holy** God can be **properly paid for** is by us being **separated from Him forever**—unless someone suffered our penalty for us!

But that "Someone" would have to be sinless in order to be our substitute! And Jesus, of course, was!

--**II Cor 5:21** "For He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] **to be sin for us**, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him [Jesus]."

--**Galatians 3:13** "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, **being made a curse** for us..."

--**I Peter 1:18-19** "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the **precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"

Considering those two together—the **love** of God and the **holiness** of God—we see the attribute of God's **wisdom**. Who but God could come up with a plan whereby His **divine justice** is satisfied because sin is paid for—and **His love** for mankind is satisfied because a way was provided for sinful man to be justly forgiven?

Stated another way, who but God could come up with the way for **the ungodly** to be declared **righteous?**

--**Hebrews 2:9** "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for **the suffering of death**, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the **grace of God should taste death** for every man."

--**Romans 11:33** "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

Back to our question: *Why does the birth of Jesus bring glory to God?*

--Because of the **Person** who was born—God with us.

--And because of the **purpose** He was born—to die in our place.

--And because His birth and death **point to the perfections** of God: His power...and faithfulness...and love...and holiness...and wisdom.

Why did the angels cry "Glory to God?" Because they couldn't help it! God provided the **person** of salvation and the **plan** of salvation and **performed** everything necessary for our salvation—and **no one else** could or should be praised for that!

To again quote Spurgeon: "They [the angels] believe in no doctrine which **uncrowns Christ** and puts the crown upon the head of mortals. They believe in no system of faith which makes **salvation dependent upon the creature** and which really gives the **creature the praise.**" (*Great Preaching*, pg 52)

In light of that, we need to consider...**3. The promotion of "salvation" that brings glory to man**

Are there systems of faith—are there denominations and religions—that teach salvation is dependent on what **man the created** does—instead of what **God the Creator** has done?

Sadly, there is a **lot of teaching** that takes “the crown off Christ” and puts it on the heads of men!

Without “naming names,” let’s think through some of the “systems of faith” and what they teach about salvation. Just to make sure there is no confusion, I’m defining **salvation** as the way to be **forgiven** of our sins...and to **become a child of God**...and be **welcomed into heaven** after we die.

Do some churches teach—and do some people believe—that we **have to be baptized** in order to get to heaven?

--**Yes**; they do—and that’s why many churches teach that an **infant needs to be** baptized!

--**But how** does **getting sprinkled with water** bring praise and honor to God?

How does baptism point to and promote the greatness and goodness of God who came to earth and died in our place?

--**Baptism** doesn’t promote Christ, does it? It takes the crown off Christ—and puts it on man!

Here’s another. Do some churches teach—and do some people believe—that if I try **really hard to be a good person**, that I will get into heaven?

--**Yes**; they do! But how does being a **good person** bring praise and honor **to God**?

How do good works **that I do** promote the greatness and goodness of God who came to earth and died in my place?

--**Good works** that I do **don’t promote Christ**, do they? It takes the crown off Christ and puts it on me!

Not only that, it is the opposite of what God says in Ephesians 2:8-9 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the **gift** of God: **Not of works**, lest any man **should boast**.”

One more: Do some churches teach—and do some people believe—that if I just believe **about God** that I will get into heaven?

--**Yes**; they do! In fact, some people are quite proud of themselves and say, “I believe in God—and I believe in Jesus!” But does merely **believing in the existence** of God—and **mentally agreeing** that Jesus came to earth as a baby—wash away **your sins**?

--No; it doesn’t! We must **personally put our faith and trust** in Jesus and **receive Him** for ourselves! Jesus is **God’s gift** to us—but He must be **received** by us!

John 1:12 “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:”

What about **you**? What are **you counting on** to get to heaven? If you are counting on what you **did in the past**—or are **trying to do now**—you have taken the crown **off Christ** and have put it on yourself!

Can I urge you today to take the crown **off you**—and put it where **it belongs**—on Christ!

--He is the One who **left heaven**...and came to earth...and lived a perfect life!

--He is the One who **died in your place**—and satisfactorily paid for **your sins**!

--He is the One who will **forgive you** if you come to Him **in repentance and faith**!

--And He is the One who rightly deserves to **hear from us**: “Glory to God in the Highest!”

So what would God have us do based on what we’ve heard this morning?

1. First and foremost, each of us needs to ask ourselves the question I asked just a moment ago:

What are **you counting on** to get to heaven? Only you—in your heart of hearts—can truly answer that question! If you are counting on what you **did in the past**—or are **trying to do now**—you have taken the crown **off Christ** and have put it on yourself! And do you honestly think that God will **accept you**—into **His** heaven—if you **reject** the matchless **gift of Himself** as a sacrifice for your sins?

2. Second—if you are a child of God—how much—and how often—do you **praise and thank God** for the **gift of Himself**? And are you warning your friends and family members that true salvation brings **glory to God**—not to **them** and what **they** do?