

Messiah: The Lord

We all tend to get very excited about the baby Jesus born of a peasant woman in a lowly manger. The remarkable condescension of God woos every one of us to this amazing story. The problem is, however, that we sometimes fail to grasp the real story behind the story. The great Mahalia Jackson used to sing a song that began like this:

“Sweet little Jesus boy, they made you be born in a manger;
Sweet little Holy Child, we didn’t know who you were.”

In verse 11 of our text today, the angel tells the shepherds clearly who this Jesus really is.

Luke 2:8-16

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”
16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

The angel tells the shepherds that Jesus is “a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” In our past three studies we have investigated the meaning of “Christ,” and have found that this is the word for Messiah, Anointed One. There were three offices in the Old Testament that required anointing: prophet, priest and king. Jesus fulfills each of those Old Testament offices in His redemptive work for us. Having said that Jesus is the Christ, the angel goes on to say He is “the Lord.” This is remarkable because in the Old Testament the word “Lord” serves to translate the Hebrew “Adonai,” which takes the place of the sacred name of God, Yahweh. After the Babylonian exile, Jewish rabbis would rarely speak the name Yahweh or write the name Yahweh for fear of profaning the sacred name. For this reason, they substituted the Hebrew Adonai, which the Greeks later interpreted Kurios, which in English simply means Lord. When the angel, therefore, said that Jesus is the Lord, any Jew would know he was speaking about the Deity. This is the highest title ever given to our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the day when He is exalted before the eyes of every human being, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

This means at least two things for all of us:

I. We must call Him Lord.

In I Corinthians 12:3, Paul explains to us that no one can authentically call Jesus Lord apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. And, in Romans 10:9 he teaches us that anyone who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and believes in his heart that God has raised him from the dead will be saved. We must call Jesus our Lord.

II. We must claim Him as Lord of our lives.

In Luke 6:46, Jesus asks the question, “Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I tell you?” Jesus must be the Lord of every aspect of our lives — the Lord of our thinking, all of our opinions and convictions, the Lord of our possessions, the Lord of our time, the Lord of all of our relationships, the Lord of our sufferings and diseases, and the Lord even of our death.

We know from history that there was a great price exacted from those who professed Jesus as Lord, because Caesar Augustus was known as “Lord” in his office as emperor of the Roman Empire. Many of our forbearers were put to death for claiming Christ as Lord rather than Caesar. We, however, gladly proclaim and own Him as Lord knowing that one day His Lordship will be revealed to all flesh. As Charles Wesley writes in his hymn, “Christ by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord.”

Discussion Questions

1. Why is the title “Lord” in verse 11 so extraordinary?
2. What does it mean to call Jesus Lord?
3. What does it mean really to own Him as Lord?
4. Why is it difficult to live under the Lordship of Christ?
5. Why is it important that you continue to grow in your submission to Christ’s Lordship?

Going Deeper

1. Under what circumstances do you find yourself hesitating to follow Jesus as Lord?
2. How can you in your personal life more fully submit to Christ as Lord?

