

## *Tuesday's Touch #48*

*...from Pastor Ed ...December 22, 2009*

### *The Contradiction of Christmas*

*Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born unto you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ... You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." Luke 2:8-12*

**T**he Christmas story with its shepherds, angels, manger scene, Christmas star and wise men has been so ingrained in the hearts and minds of Christians that it would now be easy to miss the great contradiction of Christmas. This collision of heaven and earth actually explodes with contradiction.

The angelic announcement to the shepherds that the Christ had been born would have been to any Jew the glorious realization of the hope of the ages. The seed of the woman promised from the beginning - the seed of Abraham who was to bless the whole world - the son of David who was to reign upon the throne forever - had finally come. Seven hundred years prior Isaiah strained human language to tell of His coming.

For unto us a Child is born,  
Unto us a Son is given.  
And the government shall  
be upon His shoulders;  
And His name shall be called,  
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father,  
Prince of Peace...  
*Isaiah 9:6*

It certainly seemed absolutely fitting that such an announcement should be made by angels shrouded in heavenly glory and resounding with choruses of praise unto God. So far, so good. The Messiah has come! Where shall we find Him? Let us behold this glorious event!

Then come the unthinkable words, "You will find Him in an animal's feeding trough." Surely this must be some kind of cosmic joke. But - would these holy angels jest? No, the shepherds hasten into the town of Bethlehem and find it exactly as the angel had said. And thus begins the seemingly endless train of contradictions surrounding Christ.

The eternal, infinite, divine Word has become robed in finite flesh.<sup>1</sup> The Creator of the universe is now cradled in a virgin's womb.<sup>2</sup> Though He was in very form, God, yet He humbled himself to become an obedient servant.<sup>3</sup> Though He was rich yet for our sakes He became poor.<sup>4</sup> The almighty Law-Giver was born under the law.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout His life the contradiction would only continue. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.<sup>6</sup> The hope of Abraham was rejected by Abraham's children.<sup>7</sup> The chief Cornerstone is rejected by the builders.<sup>8</sup> The Lion of the tribe of Judah would become a bloodied Lamb.<sup>9</sup> The sinless Son would receive the wrath of the Father against sinners.<sup>10</sup> The Light of the world would die in darkness.<sup>11</sup> The Altogether-Lovely-One would be marred beyond recognition.<sup>12</sup> The Fountain of all life would be swallowed up in death.

And as if that's not enough, this "curse of the contradiction" would seem to pass upon all who would

be associated with Him. The birth of this holy Child would mean the death of thousands of other children in Bethlehem.<sup>13</sup> The virgin highly favored by God would be pierced through with a sword of sorrow.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the Prince of Peace would not bring peace, but a sword that would divide nations and families.<sup>15</sup> Those who would reign with Him must suffer with Him.<sup>16</sup> Those who would be wise must become fools for His sake.<sup>17</sup> Those who would be strong must become weak.<sup>18</sup> The One who came to set men free tells the slaves to obey their masters.<sup>19</sup> If we would inherit the world we must become strangers and pilgrims in the world.<sup>20</sup> If we would be lovers of God we must hate this present world.<sup>21</sup> If we would live we first must die.<sup>22</sup> What kind of Savior - what kind of Messiah is this? Why would any follow?

Ah, here is the mystery of godliness. The Gospel of Truth bearing eternal life is shrouded in contradiction that is nothing but foolish, repugnant nonsense to the world. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, neither would he ever desire them.<sup>23</sup> God has chosen the foolish, weak and base things to confound the mighty.<sup>24</sup> He has chosen the contradiction. Seeing, they cannot see; hearing, they cannot hear.<sup>25</sup> Truly, unless a man is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God.<sup>26</sup>

But to those who are called and given the sight of faith, the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Christ becomes our wisdom, strength, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption before God.<sup>27</sup> The straight and narrow opens up into green pastures and broad streams where we find rest to our souls, and discover His yoke to be easy and His burden light.<sup>28</sup> For now, the kingdom of God does not come with outward observance,<sup>29</sup> but to those who know its reality within, the angels' chorus rings loud and clear –

*Peace on earth, good will toward men!*<sup>30</sup>

If you do not know that reality, please call upon God and ask Him to reveal His Son in you. May the Contradiction of Christmas bring you everlasting peace.

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Savior of the World,

Let our hearts be enlarged and enraptured by the spectacle of your coming into the world. May we be blessed to extend your kingdom as we celebrate your birth this Christmas.

Amen

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**Bible References:** 1. John 1:1, 14. 2. John 1:2; Lk 1:31, 35. 3. Philip 2:5-8. 4. 2Corinth 8:9. 5. Gal 4:4. 6. John 1:10. 7. John 1:14. 8. Matt 21:42. 9. Rev 5:5-6; John 1:29. 10. 2Corinth 5:21. 11. Lk 23:44-45; Matt 5:14. 12. Isa 52:14. 13. Matt 2:16-18. 14. Lk 2:34-35. 15. Matt 10:34-37. 16. 2Tim 2:12; Philip 1:29. 17. 1Corinth 1:18-23; 4:10. 18. 2Corinth 12:10. 19. Coloss 3:22. 20. Heb 11:13; 1Pet 2:11. 21. James 4:4; 1John 2:15-16. 22. Matt 10:38-39. 23. 1Corinth 2:13-14; 24. 1Corinth 1:27-28. 25. Lk 8:10. 26. John 3:3. 27. 1Corinth 1:24; 30. 28. Psalm 23; Matt 11:28-30. 29. Lk 17:20-21. 30. Lk 2:14

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