

A Great Announcement, Part II

Lesson Focus

Building on the previous lesson, we focus on another great announcement about Jesus' birth. This one is the one to the shepherds, after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem. Once again we see God at work. The birth of Jesus was such a significant event God once again sent an angel to make it known. We recall and celebrate Jesus' birth because He is our Lord and Savior.

Key Passage(s)

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of 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.

– *Luke 2:10-11, NIV*

For the Parent

Pick back up on the discussion of announcements. Talk about how we often send announcements after something has occurred. For instance, when a new baby is born, it's not unusual for the parents to send out birth announcements with the name of the baby. Once again, this is a time for celebration.

God decided a special announcement was in order when Jesus was born. He sent an angel to appear to the shepherds and tell them about the birth of the Savior. Discuss with your child a bit about shepherds and how God is identified as the Great Shepherd. Talk about the responsibilities a shepherd bore including protecting his or her flock.

Then look at the announcement itself with your child. Point out that once again the angel has to deal with fear. Once the angel tells the shepherds not to be afraid, the angel finishes the wonderful announcement. Talk about the words used: good, great, joy, etc. depending on your translation. Discuss a little with your child about what those words mean.

Conclude with a brief talk, nothing too deep, about the words Messiah the Lord or Christ the Lord, whichever is used in your translation. Reveal to your child this means (in plain terms) the one God has chosen. When someone had to answer for our mistakes, God chose His own Son. That's how much He loves us.

For the Child

Last lesson you looked at announcements before something happened. We also can have announcements after an event happens. One of the most popular announcements like this is when a baby is born. The parents usually put the name of the baby, whether the baby is a boy or a girl, and also some numbers, such as how tall the baby was, how much the new baby weighed, and the time and day the baby was born.

When Jesus was born, God sent an angel to make an announcement. This angel appeared to shepherds who were in the fields with their flocks. Shepherds seem to hold a special place with God because we know Jacob was a shepherd as was David. We'll see later how Jesus talked about Himself as a shepherd. This is why we call God the Great Shepherd. Shepherds had to take care of their sheep and this sometimes meant being in great danger. When a lion came around wanting a meal, it was the shepherd who had to defend the flock. Shepherds had to be brave protectors. No wonder God talks about being a shepherd!

That's why we can understand the angel appearing to shepherds to tell them the good news of Jesus' birth. First the angel calms them down, just as Mary had to be calmed down. Now notice the words used: good, great, joy. This is a happy announcement, indeed! This was a time for celebration. Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, God's chosen. And here He was as a little baby boy!

We will learn later on what exactly it took for Jesus to be able to wipe away our mistakes. The Bible is clear that what Jesus did was according to a master plan. God knew what it would take to erase the bad things we do. And He knew only His Son could do it. That's one of the many reasons we call Jesus the Messiah or the Christ. God loves us so much He chose Himself to take care of the mistakes we've made and the mistakes we will make. That's how wonderful Jesus is.

Reinforcement

Work with your child to memorize the key verses for this lesson. Quite simply, these are some of the greatest words ever in Scripture and they bear remembering. Start out with your child by simply memorizing the words as they are written and then help your child be able to recite them with feeling and emotion. These words should flow from your child's mouth with joy and excitement.

As the Christmas season approaches, this passage is used often. If your child desires, ask about the possibility of your child saying these words, whether in a Christmas play or during a church service. With proper support and encouragement, this can be a very positive experience for your child. Of course, if your child doesn't want to do it, this isn't something to necessarily push him or her on. Memorizing the words and being able to recite them is what is important.