

A Christmas Vocabulary

Luke 2:1-20

There is a vocabulary associated with Christmas. There are words so identified with this holy day, so deeply associated with the Christian faith, that our Christmas cards will feature these words. Sometimes, one word speaks for itself; it says it all. You may receive a Christmas card with the word *Glory* on the front... or *Light*... or *Joy*... What do these terms mean?

Glory

Luke 2:8-9 “In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, *and the glory of the Lord shone around them*, and they were terrified.”

- What we see in this passage is the Shekinah, the revealed presence of God. We see it in the glow of angels who’ve been in the presence of God. We saw it in the glow of Moses’ face who’d been in God’s presence.
- *Glory is when the invisible attributes of the invisible God are made visible.*
- Once we’ve seen the glory of God, the natural response of the believer is to respond by *glorifying God*... That is, to bring the attributes of God they have seen into the open with specific praise.
 - Luke 2:14 “*Glory to God in the highest heaven*, and peace on earth to people He favors!
 - Luke 2:20 “The shepherds returned, *glorifying and praising God* for all they had seen and heard, just as they had been told.”

Light

Luke 2:9 “...and the glory of the Lord *shone around them*”

John 1:4-5 “In him was life, and the life was the *light* of men. *The light* shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

- Light pictures holiness. “God is light and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5)
 - You cannot get light dirty.

- Light makes the dirt show up. In fact, the closer to the light you get, the more the dirt shows up.
 - John 3:21 “But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.”
 - A person who lives in the light has nothing to hide.
- Light reveals; it shows the way.
 - “Their word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).
- Light coming to a dark place is a picture of hope... to those who are helpless and hopeless.
 - In Luke 1:78-79 (ESV), Zechariah said, “Because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high *to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*”
 - Matthew 4:16, KJV “*The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.*”
- Light is an expression of God’s presence. God is here. We are not forsaken.
 - In John 9:5, Jesus said, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
 - Jesus reveals the truth about God. He personifies the truth.
- *Light: God has come in holiness in truth to deliver those trapped in darkness.*

Joy

Luke 2:10 “But the angel said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of *great joy* that will be for all the people’”

Our situation was hopeless. We bore upon our shoulders the weight of enormous sin. We were on our own, left to our own resources. We couldn’t change. We were helpless to fix it. We couldn’t escape. We were doomed. We were in fear. ...And then comes the news. Good news. Joyful news... news of *great joy*.

Savior

Luke 2:11 “Today a *Savior*, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.”

A savior is one who rescues people who are helpless to get themselves out of the fix they are in.

Somebody has written:

*If our greatest need was for information,
God would have sent an educator.*

*If our greatest need was for technology,
God would have sent a scientist.*

*If our greatest need was for pleasure,
God would have sent an entertainer.*

*If our greatest need was for money
God would have sent an economist.*

*BUT SINCE OUR GREATEST NEED IS FOR FORGIVENESS,
GOD SENT A SAVIOR.*

Messiah

Luke 2:11 “Today a Savior, who is *Messiah* the Lord, was born for you...”

- Christ is the New Testament word for Messiah.
- The Messiah is the promised one, repeatedly foretold in the Old Testament scriptures, going all the way back to the Garden of Eden.
- Messiah means anointed one. As prophets, priests, and kings were inaugurated into office by the pouring of olive oil over their heads, so Jesus the Messiah is anointed as God’s prophet, priest, and king – anointed not with oil, but with the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus is the anointed one of God, sent to redeem and save humanity from sin and, in the end, establish God's kingdom on earth.

Immanuel

- Luke 2:11 “Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, *the Lord*.” Born *for you*. Born *here*, in the city of David, *the Lord*.

- The word incarnation means, *in flesh*. Jesus is God in a body.
- Matthew 1:23 “See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name Him *Immanuel*, which is translated ‘*God is with us.*’
- John 1:14, Message “*The Word became flesh and took up residence among us.*”

When we say that God came to be with us, we don’t mean that God put on a “man costume” and dressed up so as to *appear* human. We mean that he really and truly became human. He took on a genuine physical body. He got tired, he got sleepy, he got hungry. Mary would change his diaper. He experienced the full range of human emotions. Jesus experienced what it meant to grow up. He had a human spirit. He was tempted from every angle of attack as we are, though without sin. In the incarnation, Jesus fully identified with us in our humanity. He truly became... *God... with us.*

Gift

We know about the giving and receiving of gifts at Christmas.

- Luke 2:11 “Today in the city of David a Savior was born *for you...*”
- John 3:16, KJV “For God so loved the world, that *he gave* his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

A gift is not something one earns (wages), nor is it something one achieves. This gift is completely undeserved. One doesn’t achieve it; one can only receive it – and no gift is yours *until* you accept it. That God the eternal Son would become God the incarnate Son. That the Father would send his Son... That the Son would die for our sins... *is a gift.*

- II Corinthians 9:15, Weymouth “Thanks be to God for his *unspeakably precious gift!*”

From: smalltownbaptist.net