

TOOLBOX

EVANTELL'S

HOLIDAY 2018

THE *Unexpected* MESSIAH

BY LARRY MOYER
Founder & CEO, EvanTell

Have you ever gotten a desired Christmas present that wasn't exactly the kind of gift you were expecting? At first, you felt a measure of disappointment. Then you found out that the giver knew what you needed even better than you did.

If so, then you've felt a small measure of what the people of Jesus' day experienced. They anticipated a Messiah who would rescue them, but this didn't happen in the way they expected.

The Bible mentions two men traveling to Emmaus, distraught over the recent crucifixion. Jesus, without their knowing who He was, appeared to them and inquired about their sadness. They expressed the expectation and disappointment of many as they explained that the chief priests and rulers had crucified Christ and added, "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21).

Christ's disciples expected a political leader who would save their nation. They failed to see that God was giving them a Messiah far superior to the one they expected—it was the unexpected one.

This unexpected one—whom we know as Jesus— is fully God but also became fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit through the virgin Mary, an ordinary person of low income. He came as a helpless baby, placed in a trough used for feeding cattle and wrapped in swaddling clothes. But most important of all was that He was born to die.

The angels declared to the shepherds, "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

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THE *Unexpected* MESSIAH

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To save the world Christ took the punishment sinners deserved, died on a cross in our place, and rose again. When we personally place our trust in Christ as our Messiah and Savior, we are pardoned from sin and given the gift of eternal life completely free.

What an unexpected Messiah—someone who would not simply help their nation, but someone who would pay for the sins of everybody, everywhere. A Messiah whose mission was far greater than they ever anticipated! It is no small wonder that an angel said to the shepherds, “I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people” (Luke 2:10).

So, what does that have to do with us? Everything! We can now proclaim to all those we meet over the Christmas holidays, “The first Christmas He came to us. This Christmas you can come to Him.” What better message could we have for everyone this Christmas? What greater calling could we have than to be His ambassadors and invite people to come to the unexpected Messiah.

Unexpected AUDIENCE

BY SARAH BOWLER
Communications Manager, EvanTell

When we have an important message, we carefully think about the best dispersal method. Perhaps it's launching a podcast with a catchy tagline or a blog with a creative theme. We almost certainly seek out celebrity endorsements and bolster our social media following. The bottom line—gaining popularity with the right people (usually the rich and famous) is key to our success.

Yet, the King of the Universe chose a different strategy to herald the message of eternal life. Taking on human flesh, He descended quietly from His heavenly throne to be born in a lowly manger and raised among the poor.

Angels announced from the sky, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10).

But who were the first people to hear these words? Not rich kings. Not the most famous or powerful. Not even respected religious rulers. The first guests to the manger were shepherds, a foreshadowing of the

true “good shepherd” who would lay down his life for His people (John 10:11).

These good tidings, though, didn't stop with the shepherds. The four Gospel accounts of Christ's time on earth all emphasize the same thing—Christ came with a message of hope for all people.

A star in the sky brought a caravan of foreign magi to worship the Christ child (Matt. 2). A Syro-Phoenician woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter (Mark 7). Jesus offered living water to a Samaritan woman (John 4). And, over and over again, Jesus healed lepers, the blind, the lame, and others scorned by society.

Part of the beauty of the good news is that it knows no boundaries. Jesus Christ is a Savior for all mankind—whether shepherd or magi, Jew or Greek, helpless or privileged. Let's do our part to invite others to behold the King who traded a throne for a manger.





Unexpected MESSENGERS

BY DAVID **SOUTHER**
President, EvanTell

When we think of an ambassador, we typically imagine someone that we deem as highly qualified for the position. Most ambassadors in our day are highly educated, socially adept, and come from positions of power and authority. Only the best should represent a head of state and speak on his or her behalf.

However, who is “best” in God’s eyes does not always match the world’s opinion. In God’s providence, the first human ambassadors to proclaim the good news of Christ’s birth were a group of simple shepherds.

“Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds”
(Luke 2:17–18).

Shepherds were not educated in speech, were far from experts in Old Testament prophecy, or mighty in the world’s eyes. They were among the least likely messengers God could have chosen.

However, the fact that the Lord used them to convey the message fits with God’s character and ways found throughout scripture. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 1:27:

“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.”

God established a track record in the Old Testament of using the least likely people to carry his message and accomplish His purposes. Joseph was a slave and a prisoner. Abraham was old. Moses was a shepherd and is believed to have stuttered. Ruth was a refugee and her direct descendant, David, was a shepherd. Elisha was a farmer, and Amos, a fig-picker.

Jesus continued selecting the “least likely” to be His messengers in the New Testament. The disciples were ordinary people with ordinary professions, including fishermen and tax collectors. Yet God used them mightily to proclaim the gospel:

“Now when they [the religious leaders] saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

God’s track record of choosing and using ordinary people should bring us great comfort. Our success in sharing the gospel does not depend on our ability, but our obedience; not our eloquence but our faithfulness; not our position in society, but our position in Christ. He uses the ordinary to do the extraordinary.

This Christmas, thank God that He has chosen you to be His messenger, and carry His message to as many as will hear.

THE *Unexpected* MESSAGE

BY DANNY RAY

Director of Operations, EvanTell

You know the story and are probably very familiar with the passage of scripture found in Luke 2:8–20. It opens with shepherds doing what shepherds do — “keeping watch over their flock by night.” Their routine watch is then interrupted by the very radiant appearance of an angel of the Lord that casts a bright light around them. The angel’s message in layman’s terms:

Don’t be afraid — relax, I need your full attention.

It’s good news — that goes beyond happiness to great joy.

It’s for all people — not just for the people of Israel, but for all mankind.

Today the Savior is born! — the one who will deliver you and mankind from their sins has come.

After hearing the angel’s message, the shepherds believed enough to go and confirm the good news for themselves.

“So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger” (Luke 2:15–16).

They arrived at the location and found the Child as the angel had described. Although the full conclusion of this good news had not yet come to fruition, the shepherds “made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child” (v.17) The shepherds “and all those who heard

it marveled at those things which were told them” (v.18) because they recognized that they needed a Savior.

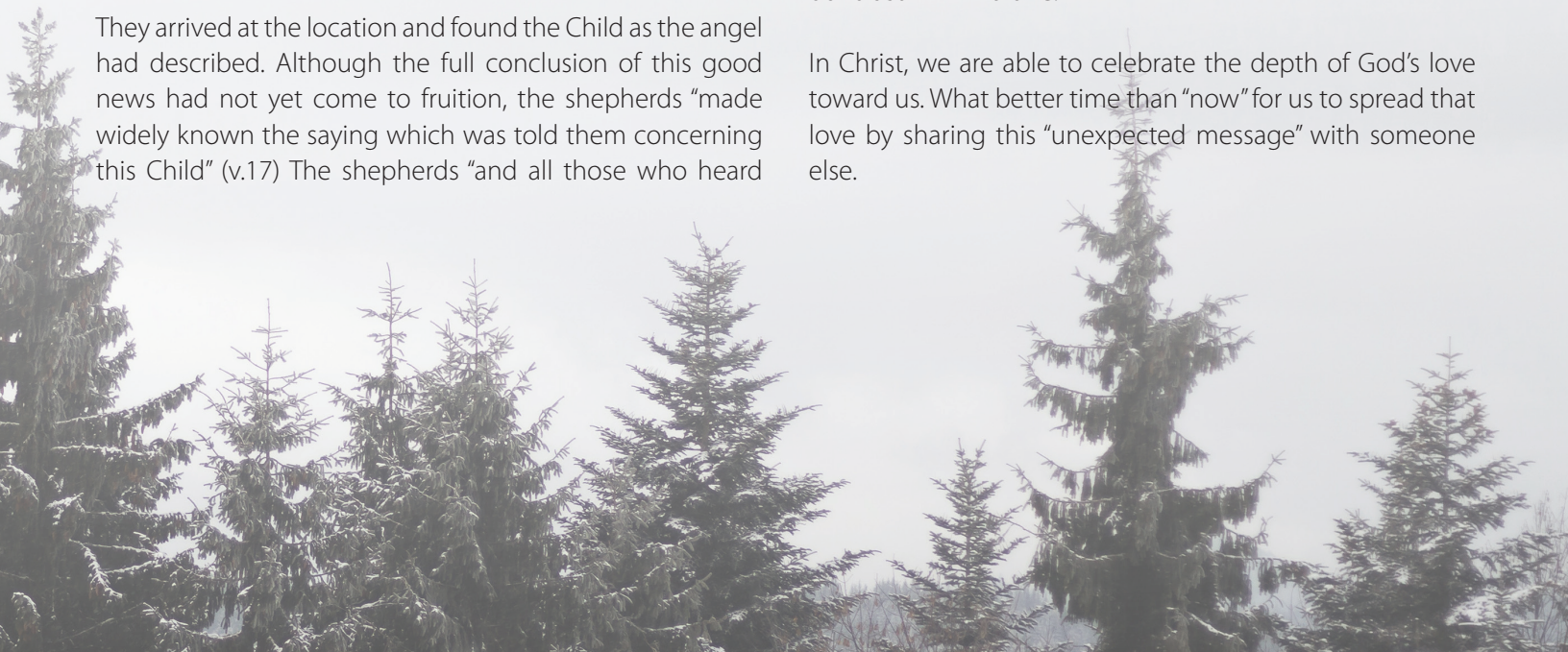
It is said that these same shepherds may have been caring for the very lambs which were destined for sacrifice during the time of Passover. They were in the habit of trying to get things right with God. Then in a way that only God could do, He reached out to mankind, because, mankind was not good enough to reach up to Him.

Did some misinterpret the unexpected message? — Yes. The Pharisees kept stumbling over the law. The Sadducees could not get past the resurrection of the dead, and then there were those who just would not believe — period. Mankind remains the same today. However, that certainly does not void the unexpected message heralded over two thousand years ago.

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

This same Jesus, who left eternity to enter time as a baby in a manger, is the same Jesus who would later die on the cross for your sins and mine. As the shepherds were entrusted with the initial announcement of His coming, we have been entrusted with telling the rest of the story — that He came to die for our sins, and we will be raised with Him if we put our trust in Him alone.

In Christ, we are able to celebrate the depth of God’s love toward us. What better time than “now” for us to spread that love by sharing this “unexpected message” with someone else.



Finishing THE Task

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"

Acts 1:8

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