

Luke 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.

Analysis

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. This verse contains the angel's proclamation of Jesus' identity and mission, comprising perhaps the most theologically dense announcement in Scripture. The preposition "unto you" (hymin, ὑμῖν) makes the birth personally relevant to the shepherds—this event has immediate significance for them and all humanity. The verb "is born" (etechthē, ἐτέχθη) is aorist passive, indicating a completed action done by God—the Messiah's birth is divine initiative, not human achievement.

The phrase "this day" (sēmeron, σήμερον) emphasizes the present reality and urgency of the announcement. "In the city of David" identifies Bethlehem and connects Jesus directly to the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16), establishing His legal right to David's throne. The three titles given to the newborn reveal His comprehensive identity and work: **"Saviour"** (Sōtēr, Σωτήρ) identifies His mission to deliver humanity from sin; **"Christ"** (Christos, Χριστός), the Greek equivalent of Hebrew "Messiah," means "Anointed One," establishing Him as the long-awaited fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy; **"Lord"** (Kyrios, Κύριος) is the Septuagint translation of Yahweh, the covenant name of God, indicating divine identity.

The combination of these three titles is extraordinary. "Saviour" emphasizes His work; "Christ" emphasizes His office; "Lord" emphasizes His nature. Together they proclaim that the baby born in Bethlehem is simultaneously the promised Davidic King, the Deliverer who saves His people from their sins, and God Himself.

incarnate. This is the gospel in miniature: God becomes man to save sinners and reign forever. The angel's use of "Lord" is particularly significant—in Greek, Kyrios was used to translate the divine name Yahweh in the Septuagint, making this a clear claim to Jesus' deity.

Historical Context

This announcement occurred approximately 5-6 BC in the context of intense messianic expectation in first-century Judaism. Following the Maccabean period and under Roman occupation since 63 BC, Jewish hopes for the Messiah had reached fevered pitch. Various groups held different messianic expectations: Zealots hoped for a military deliverer, Pharisees for a righteous teacher who would restore Torah observance, Essenes for a priestly Messiah, and common people for someone who would free them from Roman oppression.

The title "Saviour" (Sōtēr) carried political as well as spiritual connotations in the Roman world. Caesar Augustus, who reigned when Jesus was born, was hailed throughout the empire as "Saviour" and "Lord." His birthday (September 23) was celebrated as "good news" that brought peace to the world. The angel's proclamation of Jesus as the true Savior and Lord directly challenged imperial ideology, establishing that Jesus, not Caesar, deserved ultimate allegiance. This political dimension would eventually lead to Jesus' crucifixion on charges of claiming to be a king.

Bethlehem's identification as "the city of David" recalled Israel's greatest king and God's covenant promise that a descendant of David would reign forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). By the first century, this promise had remained unfulfilled for nearly 600 years since Babylonian exile ended the Davidic monarchy. The angel's announcement that the Christ was born in David's city declared that God had finally fulfilled His ancient promise. Archaeological evidence confirms Bethlehem's existence as a small village near Jerusalem, and tradition has identified the Church of the Nativity's location since at least the second century AD.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do the three titles (Saviour, Christ, Lord) together present a complete picture of Jesus' identity and work?
2. What does the angel's use of 'Lord' (Kyrios) to describe the infant Jesus reveal about His divine nature?
3. How does announcing Jesus' birth in 'the city of David' connect the New Testament to God's Old Testament covenant promises?
4. In what ways does the proclamation of Jesus as 'Saviour' and 'Lord' challenge worldly rulers and political systems?
5. Why is it significant that all three titles are applied to Jesus at His birth rather than only after His ministry, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

ὅτι	ἐτέχθη	ὑμῖν	σήμερον	σωτὴρ	ὃς	ἐστιν	Χριστὸς
For	is born	unto you	this day	a Saviour	which	is	Christ
G3754	G5088	G5213	G4594	G4990	G3739	G2076	G5547

κύριος	ἐν	πόλει	Δαβίδ
the Lord	in	the city	of David
G2962	G1722	G4172	G1138

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 9:6 (Parallel theme): For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Matthew 1:21 (Salvation): And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Acts 2:36 (References Christ): Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Matthew 16:16 (References Christ): And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Luke 1:43 (References Lord): And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

1 John 5:1 (References Christ): Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

John 4:42 (Salvation): And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

Philippians 2:11 (References Christ): And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Luke 2:4 (References David): And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

Matthew 1:16 (References Christ): And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.