



# THE EXHORTER

---

***“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40***

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. ([prchurchofchrist.org](http://prchurchofchrist.org))

May 19, 2013

## Jump Start # 503

---

***Luke 2:10-11 "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.'"***

It is interesting when looking at the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, to see all the different people who were afraid when they first heard. Mary was afraid when an angel appeared to her. Joseph was afraid. Herod was fearful of the new king that was born. When the angels appeared to the shepherds in the field, they too were frightened. These were extraordinary events about a very special birth-the birth of Jesus.

The announcement of Jesus' birth first came to shepherds in the field. The announcement was made by angels. The coming of Jesus was considered by Heaven to be "good news of great joy." Paul told the Galatians when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His son born of a woman. Heaven had been awaiting that day for a long time. All the elements were right and it was time. Jesus came, as our verse indicates, to be a Savior.

The angel told the shepherds that there was born for you a Savior. I wonder if the shepherds knew that they needed a savior and in what context that meant for them. The Jewish mind knew the prophets told of a coming Messiah. He would be a king and sit on David's throne. Most were thinking a military person-a ruler, with armies, that would sack Rome and restore the national independence that Israel once had. The Jewish hearts longed for independence. Under David, the nation was as large as it had ever been. It was a power to be noticed and feared. David conquered. The Jewish people longed for those days again. Those were the good ole' days and they loved to hear legends and stories passed down from generation to generation about that.

God had a different kind of salvation in mind. This Savior, Jesus, came for all people, not just Israel. His kingdom would be spiritual and the salvation would be not from Rome, but a far

greater enemy, Satan. From the very first, the mission of Jesus was defined. He came to save. He came to save from sin. His fight wasn't with Rome, but with Satan. The greatest threat wasn't Caesar, it was death. That was the one thing no one could do anything about. Death was the end of the road for all people. It hung over everyone's head. Death wrecked plans, destroyed families and kept people in fear. No one could do anything about death, that is, until Jesus came. He conquered death, by dying Himself and being resurrected never to die again. Even the powerful Roman machinery could not stop death. Jesus could. And by doing that, He took away Satan's greatest power.

The announcement of Jesus' arrival was "good news of great joy for all the people." Great choice of words! The word "gospel" means, "good news." The coming of Jesus was the gospel of great joy. Christ is joy. Christ is hope. Christ is peace.

A friend shared an interesting conversation with me. He was inviting someone to come to church services. The person had the usual excuses, busy, not sure, and he turned the question around and asked, "Why do you go to church?" My friend responded, "I like it." That stunned him. He had not met anyone that "liked church." People went to church because they "had to go," or "they were trying to avoid Hell," or, they had an obligation-he didn't think anyone liked church. How different. How refreshing. How inviting. What is there to like? Jesus, of course. Jesus' people. Hymns about Jesus. Prayers to Heaven. Preaching of the gospel. It is good news of great joy!

That makes us think about our feelings and attitudes about going to worship. Do we have that sense of great joy because of the good it involves? That sure changes a person's outlook and reason for going. "I like it..."

That's the thought that the angels had when Jesus came, "I like it." That's the thought that God had throughout the ministry of Jesus. Twice God said, "I am pleased" - I like it. Even the death, as terrible, painful and necessary as it was, was something that Heaven liked. It had to be, if we were going to be invited in.

I like it...that ought to be our thoughts about Jesus, the Bible, His church and worship. I simply like it. Good news of great joy!

Roger Shouse

