

TEXT SERMONS
SPECIAL DAYS – CHRISTMAS

Title: **“WHAT CHILD IS THIS?”**

Text: **Luke 1:32**
“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest”

The angel Gabriel came to a virgin named Mary, and said to her: *“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. **He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.**”* (Luke 1:30-32)

What Child is this? There have been many false answers given to that question. Even in Jesus’ lifetime there was a diversity of opinion and wide division over the identity of Jesus.

- Some said He was merely the son of a carpenter (Matt. 13:55);
- Some that He was only a Rabbi, that is, Jewish Teacher of the Law of Moses (John 3:2);
- Some ventured to say that He was a prophet (Luke 7:16);
- The Apostle Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” (Matt. 16:16);
- There were those of His enemies who said that He had a demon. (John 10:20);
- Others said that He was crazy. (John 10:20).
- In later years, and even today, there are some who say that He is merely a mythological figure like the Greek gods and goddesses.

The Christmas Carol, from which I have borrowed the title of this message, answers the question with these words: “This is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.....” But even that is not the full answer. What Child is this Who was born in a stable and cradled in a manger and whose birth is celebrated all over the world at what we call Christmas time?

The angel Gabriel said, *“He shall be great.”* Some people achieve greatness but Jesus was born great. Speak if you will about Alexander The Great, Frederick The Great, Charlemagne the Great or Napoleon The Great, however, Jesus Christ is not a Great One among other so-called great ones. His greatness was not achieved through military conquests, by elevation to high office by the populace or by genealogical succession. He was great at birth!

What Child is this? To get the right and full answer let us glean from the Divine Document, the Bible, the truth as to Who Jesus is. There are at least five areas in which we see His greatness declared and demonstrated. What Child is this?

HE IS THE GREAT GOD.

In the book of Titus we read, *“looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our **great God.....**”* (Titus 2:13)

Here the writer declares that Jesus Christ is *“our great God.”* How many, at the time of Jesus Christ’s birth, recognized the babe in the manger as the Great God? How many today acknowledge Him as the “Great God?”

St. Augustine said: “He is the Maker of the sun, yet made under the sun; Author of the heaven and the earth, yet under the heaven out of the earth; unutterably wise but in His wisdom was a babe without words; filling the world, but lying in a manger.”

Jesus Christ is not “a” god, but the true God above and beyond all gods of mankind’s imagination. He is:

- **The God of Genesis one:** *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* (Gen.1:1 compare Colossians 1:15-17)
- **The God of John one:** *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”* (John 1:1-4)
- **The God of Colossians one:** *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”* (Col.1:15-17)
- **The God of Hebrews one:** *“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person....”* (Hebrews 1:1-3)
- **The God of Revelation one:** *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”* (Rev.1:8)

He is the only true God known in biblical revelation. What Child is this? He is the Great God!

HE IS THE GREAT KING.

*“But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the **Great King.**”* (Matthew 5:34-35)

Our text in Luke 1 states: *“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of **His kingdom there will be no end.**”* (Luke 1:32-33)

There have been many kingdoms in the history of the world - the kingdoms of the Egyptians, the Medes, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, The English Empire, the Germans, the Soviet Union, among others. But all have declined. However, King Jesus’ Kingdom is different: *“of His Kingdom there shall be no end.”*

Is He your King? Does He rule in your life? If not say, in the words of another hymn:

“King of my life, I crown thee now,

*Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.”*

Let us join in the Pauline doxology written to Timothy and say, “*Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*” (I Tim.1:17)

What Child is this? He is the Great God and the Great King!

HE IS THE GREAT PRIEST.

“*Therefore, since we have a **great high priest** who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*” (Heb.4:14-15)

As the Great Priest, Jesus Christ is the Mediator between mankind and God. A priest in the Old Testament offered sacrifices for sin. Jesus Christ is not only the Priest but He was the sacrifice as well!

The writer of Hebrews reminds us in these words: “*Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.*” (Hebrews 3:1) Jesus is seen as the Apostle *and* High Priest. As an Apostle He came from God to men to represent God before men. As High Priest, He goes from men to God to represent men before God.

Because Jesus Christ is the Great Priest we can approach God through Him; we can pray to God and He intercedes for us. Aren't you glad that you have a Representative in Heaven interceding for you?

What Child is this? He is the Great God, the Great King, the Great Priest!

HE IS THE GREAT SHEPHERD.

“*May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that **great Shepherd** of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*” (Hebrews 13:20-21)

What Child is this? He is the Great Shepherd of His sheep. When we say, “*The Lord is my shepherd*” we are not saying He is one of many shepherds, for He is the only True Shepherd – truly the Great Shepherd!

Psalm 23 is about our Great Shepherd. It is the favorite of most Christians. It is comforting in times of sorrow, encouraging in times of sickness and assuring as we journey day by day with Jesus, our Great Shepherd. Sheep in the custody of the Great Shepherd are well cared for.

The words in Psalm 23 are words learned in youth, quoted in adulthood and cherished in old age. With this Psalm in their hearts millions have lived, and with it on their lips, multitudes have died. It is the Great Shepherd Who makes the Psalm what it is. It is the Great Shepherd Who is the Chief Attraction. Therefore, it begins: *“Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”* Jehovah is the eternal, self-existing, all-sufficient covenant making and covenant keeping God of Israel. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament.

Therefore, it was fitting that, at His birth, shepherds were summoned by the angelic choir to come to the manger in Bethlehem to see the Great Shepherd.

What Child is this? He is the Great God, the Great King, the Great Priest and the Great Shepherd!

HE IS THE GREAT SAVIOR.

*“.....we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our **great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.**”* (Titus 2:13)

Several times in the New Testament Jesus Christ is referred to as *“God my Savior”* or *“God our Savior.”*

- Luke 1:47 - Mary said, *“My spirit rejoiced in God my Savior”*;
- I Tim. 1:1 - Paul said he was an apostle *“by the commandment of God our Savior”*;
- I Tim. 2:3 – Paul reminded Timothy to pray for all *“for this is good in the sight of God our Savior.”*
- Titus 2:10 - *“adorn the doctrine of God our Savior”*;
- Titus 2:13 - *“.....we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”*
- Titus 3:4 – Paul speaks of *“the kindness and love of God our Savior”*;
- Jude 25 speaks of *“the only wise God our Savior.”*

By virtue of the truth that He is The Great God, He therefore, is the only and Great Savior! The shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night were startled as angelic announcers proclaimed, *“Unto you is born this day A **Savior** which is **Christ the Lord.**”*

Only a **Great God** could be the **Great Savior** providing a **Great Salvation** for **Great Sinners!** Whatever else He is, if He is not the Great Savior we, as a race of lost sinners, are doomed to remain lost forever.

What Child is this? He is the Great God, the Great King, the Great Priest, the Great Shepherd and the Great Savior!

CONCLUSION

The angel said, *“He shall be great”*. The One Who was born on that first Christmas is indeed:

- The Great God - who became man;
- The Great King - who became a subject;
- The Great Priest - who became the sacrifice;

- The Great Shepherd - who became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world;
- The Great Savior - Who died for our sins.

I now change the question from “**What Child is this**”? to an emphatic statement as follows:
“**What Child this is!**” He is:

- Nobler than the Noblest;
- Lordlier than the Lordliest;
- Kinglier than the Kingliest;
- Loftier than the Loftiest;
- Mightier than the Mightiest;
- Greater than the Greatest!

One of our current praise choruses contains these words:

*“Great is the Lord and worthy of glory,
Great is the Lord and worthy of praise;
Great is the Lord, now lift up your voice,
Gr—r—e—a—t is the Lord!”*

Great? Yes, but not unknowable; Great? Yes, but not unapproachable; Great? Yes, but not untouchable; Great? Yes, but not unavailable - for He says, “*Come unto me all you who labor and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest.*” (Matt.11:28)

Invite the Great God, the Great King, the Great Priest, the Great Shepherd, the Great Saviour into your heart and home at this Christmas time!

*“Behold, you shall bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus **he shall be great.**”*

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