

Luke 2.8-20

Who is Jesus and why did he come?

Brownie Carol Service, Christ Church Northcourt Road 06.12.04

I wonder if you could give me some help. Who's this a picture of..? (*put up first acetate*). When was he/she born? When was he/she a baby? What about this one..? (*put up next acetate*). Who's this? When was he/she born? When was he/she a baby? Etc.

It's silly to ask when Shrek was born, or Homer Simpson, or Scooby Doo, isn't it? That's because they are all made-up, they weren't born, they never grew up.

So what about you? When were you born? (*ask some of the children and maybe adults*). We were all born weren't we, because we're real people, unlike Shrek and Mr Incredible and Homer Simpson. We were really tiny once, and had to be carried everywhere and looked after all the time by our parents.

So what about Jesus? Is he like all those cartoon characters, who were never born and never grew up, or is he like us, a real person who was a little cute baby once?

Let's look at the Bible and see what the angel told the shepherds: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you: he is Christ the Lord."

"Christ" is another name for "Jesus". Jesus was born in the town of David: he's as real as you and me. That's the real message of Christmas: Jesus is as real as you and me.

Jesus was born in the town of David (that's Bethlehem), he was tiny, he ate mashed-up food, drank a lot of milk, made his nappies dirty, cried when he was hungry. He had to grow up, he had to go to school and do homework and tidy his room, play football with his friends, go on holiday with his Mum and Dad, just like you and me.

That's why the angel said, "I bring you good news of great joy." It's good news that Jesus was born like one of us, because of who Jesus is. Jesus is God's one-and-only Son, sent from heaven to become like us. In Jesus, God had arms and legs, eyes and ears, a nose, finger-nails, chest hair...

But the good news is even more than that. It isn't just about who Jesus is, it's about what he did as well. Do you remember what the angel said: "a Saviour has been born to you." Jesus is the Saviour. In fact, the name "Jesus" means "God saves". In Jesus, God saved all Christians from death. We all deserve to die because we are all so bad, and we all think so many really bad things. Jesus died so we don't have to.

But the good news is even more than *that!* After Jesus died, he rose from the dead, and now lives in heaven with God the Father. God has promised that when we die, he will raise all Christians from the dead too, and they will go and live with Jesus in heaven for ever. That's *really* good news.

Let's see what Bible says the shepherds did after they heard the good news. First of all, they said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." They weren't satisfied with the angel telling them about Jesus, they wanted to see for themselves. Why don't you come and see for yourself? I've told you some of the good news this evening, so why don't you come and find out more? We have loads of services on over Christmas, so why don't you come along to some of those to find out more about Jesus and the good news?

After the shepherds had found Jesus, they told all their friends about him, they were so excited! They told them who he was, and what he was going to do. They told their friends about the good news. Why don't you invite some of your friends along to the Christmas services, or to Godzone on Sunday morning, so they can hear the good news about Jesus as well?

Finally, the shepherds went back to their fields, "glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen." When we sing carols, we are glorifying and praising God for sending us his Son Jesus to be our Saviour. We're praising God because in Jesus he was born like you and me. So why don't we do that now, let's praise and glorify God by singing our next carol.