

## Wrapped in Swaddling Clothes

### Scripture:

Luke 2:1-12 “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. <sup>2</sup>(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup>And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. <sup>4</sup>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:) <sup>5</sup>To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. <sup>6</sup>And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. <sup>7</sup>And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. <sup>8</sup>And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

### Introduction:

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition. 2000 defines swaddling clothes as (1.) Strips of cloth wrapped around a newborn infant to hold its legs and arms still. (2.) Restrictions imposed on the immature.

I found a description of swaddling clothes on the internet that went like this: Swaddling clothes or "bands" were what babies were bound up in. the new baby encased in a sort of pocket with board back, of quilted cotton cloth ornamented with frills and elaborately embroidered. The child's hands and feet were held in place and the ears held close to the head by its cap. The contraption resembled the American Indian's packsack for carrying around the papoose. One could carry the child on one's back, could place it on its back in the cradle or hang it on the wall.

I believe that many Christians still have Jesus wrapped in those swaddling clothes and treat Him as though He were still that baby in the manger. It's time to address the issue of who Christ is in order that He can begin to do what He desires in and through us.

- I. We keep Christ as a babe in swaddling clothes when we fail to recognize the power that is with us.  
II Corinthians 4:7 “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”
  - A. We know nothing of Jesus' childhood until we find Him at the temple debating with the elders.
    1. After we first understand that there is a calling upon our lives and God has put gifting in our lives, we must spend some time in obscurity coming to understanding.  
Luke 2:52 “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”
    2. We are not ready for a complete release until we come to an understanding of who we are and who Christ is in us.
  - B. Many operate out of natural gifting and ability and never realize the full potential of “Christ in us”.  
Colossians 1:25b-27 “...to fulfill the word of God, <sup>26</sup>the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. <sup>27</sup>To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
    1. The mystery is revealed to the saints. (They grow in wisdom and in stature)
    2. The mystery is that Christ has chosen to limit Himself to the release He can get from the saints.
    3. Christ is not to be kept in swaddling clothes in order to keep Him under control or simply to be on display.

4. Christ must be released from the swaddling clothes.

II. We release Christ from the swaddling clothes when we let Christ in us lead and direct our ministry.

- A. We must have faith in the Christ in us if we want Him out of those swaddling clothes.  
Matthew 17:19-20 *“Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? <sup>20</sup>And Jesus said unto them, **Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.**”*
- B. We must believe that we have the strength of the Lord if we are going to let Christ out of those swaddling clothes.  
Philippians 4:13 *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*
- C. We must realize that the authority of Christ is within us if we are going to release Christ from those swaddling clothes.  
Luke 9:1-3 *“Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. <sup>2</sup>He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. <sup>3</sup>And He said to them, **“Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.”**”*

III. We release Christ from the swaddling clothes when we become the people of God He has called us to be.

Matthew 5:13-16 *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. <sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup>Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

- A. Be a testimony of the grace of God and let Christ out of those swaddling clothes.
- B. Be such a witness that others are drawn to the kingdom of God and you will let Christ out of those swaddling clothes.
- C. If we do not release Christ from the swaddling clothes, they will become the burial shroud for us. As Christians we cannot live for ourselves.
- D. Get Christ out of the swaddling clothes today.
- E. It’s time to pray that the life of Christ will begin to be seen in us.