

# Connect360: Christmas Lesson: Hope Has Come

December 19, 2023

- *The Christmas lesson included in the Connect360 unit “Kingdom Power: The Sermon on the Mount” focuses on John 1:1-14..*

The baby Jesus may have been born at night. The gospel of Luke doesn't mention the time of day, and we are only told that Mary gave birth “when the days were completed for her to give birth” (Luke 2:6). However, we do know that the announcement was given to the shepherds at night while they were tending the sheep.

Nighttime was certainly the appropriate time because the world was living in darkness. Neither Herod the king nor even the chief priests and the scribes rushed to Bethlehem to worship the newborn king. Herod was anxious to know where this king was born, not to worship him, but because of his paranoia of perceived rivals he wanted to get rid of him. Herod's fear and rage led him to the merciless killing of the boy babies in Bethlehem.

The physical darkness where a young Jewish girl gave birth in a dark, noisy, smelly stable reflects the moral darkness of the world then and throughout history. Babies still are being killed. Children are being kidnapped and sold into slavery. Wars are waged by crazed egomaniacs, while innocent people are caught in the crossfire. The poor are exploited by the rich. Selfishness, greed, anger, lust, envy, dishonesty, jealousy and addictions continue to plague humanity. Not even schools, hospitals, workplaces, churches, mosques, synagogues, nor even homes are immune to violence. “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

John testified that light has come into this world. Darkness attempts to overpower the light but is unable. Light extinguishes darkness. Just before Jesus announced he was the light of the world, he forgave a woman caught in adultery (John 8:11). Any person may claim supernatural powers and perhaps be arrogant enough to claim moral authority to forgive sins, yet Jesus proved he was the light of the world by healing a man blind from his birth (John 9:7). The One who brought light into this man's dark world is the One who brings light to all who believe.

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