

- time the object of praise is God.
- 4) They glorified and praised God for all the things that they had heard and seen – as it was told unto them. All the excitement of that night caused them to worship the Lord.
 - 5) (Psalms 29:2) "*Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*"

✚ *Glorifying and praising God from the depths of our heart is true worship. We do not worship when we sing without concentration, daydream during prayer or give to the Lord grudgingly or half-heartedly.*

Conclusion: The question to ask yourself this evening is how much do you glorify and praise the Lord from the depths of your heart? Do you spend time truly worshipping the Lord each day?

Christmas Story (pt 6) Shepherds

14 December 2016 Wed – Luke 2:8-20 – Christmas16 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Picture with me what it might have been like for the shepherds in the field the night Jesus was born. They probably had their sheep inside of a simple sheepfold, perhaps made of a stone fence with thorn bushes on top. They may have been sitting near the entrance around a small fire trying to keep warm. Some of them may have fallen asleep. They may have been telling stories to pass the time. If it was in the middle of the night, one may have been on watch duty while the others slept.

Whatever they were doing, all that changed when the angel appeared and the sky lit up like the blaze of a huge fire.

Transition: this evening we are going to examine the details of the shepherds experience, their search and their response.

1. The Shepherd's Experience (v.8-14)

a. The setting

- 1) Shepherds were in the same country that is near Bethlehem.
- 2) They were "*abiding in the fields*" lit. living in the fields under the open sky.
- 3) They were watching, guarding and protecting their sheep.
- 4) It was during the night.
- 5) Suddenly, an angel of the LORD "*came upon*" them, lit. stood by them.
- 6) God's glory shone around them. The word "*glory*" is somewhat difficult for us to grasp. It speaks of splendour, brightness, magnificence, excellence, a most glorious condition. The fact that this glory shone around them, it must have been a bright light. The same word describes the blinding bright light Paul saw on the road to Damascus (Ac 26:13).
- 7) A more literal translation of the phrase "*they were sore afraid*" might be they were put to flight by great terror. The sudden appearance of an angel in God's bright shining glory caused them to run away in terrifying fear.

b. The angelic message (v.10-14)

- 1) His first words were “*fear not*” lit. do not run away in terrified fear.
- 2) He then said he brought good news of great joy. This good news would be for all people. It was not just for them. It was not just for the Jews. It was for all people.
- 3) That very day a Saviour was born to them (v.11). The word order is different in the Greek. “That was born to you today a Saviour, who is Christ Lord, in city of David.” In Greek, the word order stresses emphasis.

☞ *Jesus was born to be our Saviour from the judgment of sin that we deserve.*

- 4) The angel then gave them a twofold sign. 1) They would find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. 2) He would be lying in a manger.
 - a) The *swaddling clothes* did not necessarily prove their poverty, but it did indicate that the baby was a recent newborn.
 - b) *Lying in a manger* narrowed their search to places where animals were fed.
- 5) Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly host. The word “*host*” describes the armies of heaven. This host was a great number of God’s angels (plural in v.15). They did two things:
 - a) They praised God. Their praise may have been in word or in song, we do not know.
 - b) Verse 14. Here the word glory is used differently. The emphasis is more on honour than on the brightness.
 - c) They announced that the coming of Christ would bring peace and good will (kindness, pleasure, delight, satisfaction) to men.

2. The Shepherd’s Search (v.15-16)

a. Their decision

- 1) Once the angels were gone again into heaven, the shepherds began an excited chat.
- 2) They talked one to another, or back and forth.
- 3) They said, “*let us go now*”. They did not delay. The

complete phrase literally states, “let us go through now as far as Bethlehem”. Evidently they were not just outside the city wall but rather in the hill country around Bethlehem.

b. Their speed

- 1) They went in a hurry and with an eager desire.
- 2) They searched until they found Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus in a manger. Remember, this is sometime during the night.

☞ *This is a good reminder to us that when God speaks to us through His Word or through the preaching of His Word, we ought not to put off our response. We should obey right away.*

3. The Shepherd’s Response (v.17-20)

a. They shared their experience

- 1) The phrase “*they made known abroad*” means that they told Joseph, Mary and others that must have been present what the angels had said to them. They shared a thorough description of what they had heard from the angels.
- 2) Notice the response of those who heard them.
 - a) All who heard wondered or marvelled (v.18). The angel’s message directed them right to the baby. This convinced them that what they heard from the angel was true.
 - b) Mary kept all that they said in her heart and pondered them (she brought them together in her mind with all the other facts that she previously learned).

b. They glorified God

- 1) The shepherds returned to their flocks on the hillside.
- 2) As they went they were glorifying God. Just as the angels had glorified God, so did the shepherds. It was like they were putting a spotlight on God to give Him honour and to make him shine.
- 3) As they went they were praising God. Praising is offering words of worship and honour. It may include singing praises. This word is found 9 times in the Bible and each