

I. Introduction

Merry Christmas! Today we are celebrating the coming of our Savior; the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord! Last week, we looked at the story of Christ's birth, and just now our Sunday School has reminded us of how Jesus was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem, 2,000 years ago. This morning, we are going to continue the story in Luke and see what happened just after Jesus was born. Let's read Luke 2:8-20.



II. Scripture Luke 2:8-20

[8] And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. [9] An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. [10] But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. [11] Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. [12] This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." [13] Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, [14] "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." [15] When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." [16] So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. [17] When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, [18] and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. [19] But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. [20] The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

III. Teaching

Can you imagine the scene on that night? The shepherds were out in the fields, watching over the sheep in the dark night. It was probably cold, and they most likely bundled up in their warmest clothes. The nights were long and they were surely sleepy, but it was important to stay awake and watch, because wolves or other wild animals might come during the night and attack the sheep. Perhaps the shepherds told stories to pass the time, or perhaps they prayed, maybe even asking the Lord to send the long-awaited Messiah.



The shepherds had passed many long, dark nights just like this. But on this night, something new, something miraculous happened. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and they were terrified. **(Luke 2:10) "But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."**



This story is true history, but it is also full of symbolic meaning. The dark and dangerous night speaks of this fallen world where people live without knowledge and without peace. Like the wolves and other wild animals of the fields, there are unseen enemies who seek to do harm. But the angel brings Good News of great joy to this lost and fallen world.

The world is greatly in need of Good News, because mankind has strayed from the path of truth and is lost in sin, as **Isaiah 53:6**, says, **"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."** We are lost, and like lost sheep, we often feel alone and afraid. We know that it is our sins which have separated us from God, and often even from friends



and family. We knew what was right, but because of pride and selfishness we chose to leave the way of righteousness and go our own way, and we ended up in a dark and scary place.

But the Lord God who created the heavens and the earth has not abandoned us. Instead, He has provided a way of salvation by coming into this world in the person of Jesus Christ and taking our sins upon Himself through His death on the cross. The Lord is God, but the Lord did not come in glory; instead, He came as a little baby, born as the Son of Man and the Son of God. This child, who is Immanuel, God with us, came in humility and began His long journey to the cross by being born of Mary and laid in a manger. The angel announces to the shepherds, **Luke 2:11-12, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."**



Here is the miracle of Christmas. A little baby, who is God the Son, was born to experience life in the world He created and to die for the sins of the world. The Savior was not born in a king's palace; He was born in a stable. He did not come to the capitol city of Jerusalem; He came to the little town of Bethlehem.

Joseph and Mary and the shepherds knew that this was a miracle baby whose birth was announced by angels. They knew that this child is the Savior of the world. But most of the people, even in Bethlehem, did not know that the Messiah had come. Jesus came quietly and in humility. God sent His angels to announce the birth to a few, but God's chosen way was for the news to be delivered to the rest of the world by those who had met Jesus. The shepherds were among the first, but we also are among those who meet Jesus. After the angel announced Jesus' birth, the shepherds said to one another (**Luke 2:15b**), **"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."**



They hurried to go and see. And after they had seen Jesus, they went out again. **Luke 2:17, "When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child."** As soon as the shepherds knew that the Messiah had come, they spread the word; they went and told others the Good News of great joy. We can learn from their example. First, we need to meet Jesus and know the truth of the things we have been told about the coming of Jesus. And then, like the shepherds, we can experience the joy of going and telling the Good News to others.



Jesus is Good News. To those in darkness; He is the Light and Truth. To those in need of protection; He is the Great Shepherd. To those who are lost; He is the way. To those who fear death; He is life and Resurrection. To those who are ill; He is the Great Physician. To those in captivity; He is freedom. To those in need; He is the Great Provider. To those haunted by the past or anxious about the future; He is the Alpha and the Omega. And to all who confess their sins and trust in Him; Jesus is Savior, Redeemer, and Messiah - the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Through Jesus, we can have peace with God and peace for our anxious hearts.

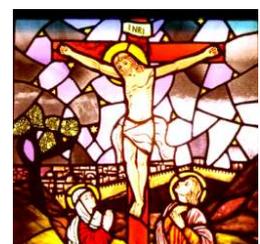


Jesus is Good News. And Christmas is the celebration of the Good News of His coming. This Christmas, let us not allow the Christmas trees, decorations, and Santa Claus to distract us from the true meaning of Christmas. Instead, let all of these things become good opportunities to tell people about Jesus.



IV. Conclusion

Like the shepherds, let's go and tell others the Good News. (Luke 2:11), **"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."** The Savior has been born, a Savior who loves us so much that He died on the cross for us. And, on the third day, He rose from the dead and He is alive today and here with us. Jesus is Lord and Savior. Let's pray!



V. Closing Prayer