

The Lowly Shepherds

Luke 2:8-20

December 17, 2017

Last week: Christmas from Joseph and Mary's perspective.

This week: Christmas from the Shepherds perspective.

Next week: Christmas from the wise men's perspective.

Christmas Eve: Tying it all together.

A few reminders of the overall account:

God used a census to move two people 80 miles to fulfill His plan and prophecy.

Prophecy fulfilled: Seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15), Jew not Gentile (Genesis 12 and Numbers 23), Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), Family of David (2 Samuel 7), Born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14 and Jeremiah 1).

We celebrate Jesus' birthday on December 25th but most likely wasn't his birthday. Census would not have been issued in the dead of winter (roads unpassable). "Jesus wasn't born on December 25. Our red-letter date on European calendars came about when early church leaders set aside the day to honor the birth of Christ and to eliminate a pagan holiday that had been celebrated on December 25. The pagan holiday honored the birth of the sun, adding to the attraction of making the day one to honor the birth of the Son. It took the better part of a century before Dec. 25th became known as the birth of Jesus".

~ Andy Cook

Jesus was born, not with fanfare or in rich royalty, but just the opposite and was placed in a manger. The birth of our Lord took place at a place no one expected.

Because of what Jesus did, does and will do we can know Him. In fact, if you are a Believer you are born twice and die once, if you are not a Believer you are born once and die twice.

This morning: THE SHEPHERDS

They were the first to know of Jesus' birth.

They were considered outcasts:

Not considered witnesses in open court.

Their work was ceremonially unclean.

They were kept away weeks at a time so they couldn't go to the temple to cleanse themselves ceremonially.

In modern terms they were a lower class "blue collar" workers who went mainly unnoticed, and in the lower class of society¹.

Note, however, the number of times "shepherd or shepherds" (or reference) is used in Scripture and how it gives the opposite connotation.

Adam was to keep over the animals (Genesis 1:26).

¹ Chuck Missler

Abel was called Keeper of the Sheep (Genesis 4:2).

Psalm 23, The Lord is my Shepherd and elsewhere as the Good Shepherd.

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 100:3)

Why the Shepherds then²?

Shame the religious leaders.

*But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are that no flesh should glory in His presence. **1 Corinthians 1:27-28.***

Why not the Pharisees, why not the High Priest, why not Herod or kingly folks?

To bring them joy (Luke 2:10).

Verse 8 – same country – same vicinity (Greek word). So either on the outskirts or right outside Bethlehem. (Literally can mean, space between two places or limits, a region or country, tract of land, the (rural) region surrounding a city or village, the country).

Some of the sheep the shepherds would have overseen would have been used for temple worship (sacrifice). So imagine “connecting the dots,” not being able to go to the temple, hearing from the angel and then knowing who had been born. Now we may better understand verse 20.

Angel of Lord appears to you.

Journey confirms it.

The Shepherds oversaw the sheep that were slaughtered for the sins of the people and were the first to go and see the Shepherd who would ultimately be killed (life given) for the sins of the people, ending sin sacrifice once and for all. “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”

For the sake of Mary and Joseph (verse 19) confirmation. Who give credit.

To fulfill God’s plan

Jesus came to die for ALL! This goes for shepherds, kings, and everyone in-between (THE Gospel).

We can’t be made righteous without Jesus (blood, trusting, follow).

God’s plan will always prevail, always!

Prayer Focus:

-I would thank God for His Son Jesus.

-I would trust Him as Savior today.

-As a Believer I would not get used to the true Christmas account, rather enjoy it.

-I would worship God this Christmas for who He is in spite of who I am. I would trust and follow the Good Shepherd.

² Gabriel Powell