

Praise of Angels and Home of Shepherds

The Babe in Manger

Annunciation To The Shepherds

Worship of Shepherds

Text:

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.

Commentary:

Luke 2:8, And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

I. Shepherds represent the working class and were at this time considered to be in one of the lowliest of occupations. God from the beginning extended the grace of his Son to social outcasts.

A. The angels, except for the appearance to the wise men, did not appear to the rich, prominent, aristocratic elements of society announcing the birth of Jesus.

B. Diety and angels continue to be very concerned about people like you and me.

II. The angels appeared to the shepherds on the night in which Jesus was born.

III. Shepherds care for literal sheep and figuratively for God's people.

A. Psalm 23:1, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

B. Isaiah 40:11, He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

C. Jeremiah 23:1-4, "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares the Lord.

Therefore this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: “Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the Lord. “I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the Lord.

D. Hebrews 13:20, May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,

E. 1 Peter 2:25, For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

F. 1 Peter 5:2, Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.

IV. Jesus was at once the Great Shepherd and the sacrificial lamb.

V. Angels appeared to shepherds at night. The shepherds were abiding in the field keeping watch over their flocks.

A. Jesus was evidently born at night.

B. The names of these shepherds are not given.

C. We are not told how many shepherds there were.

VI. Angels appeared to shepherds who were considered at that time to be among the most humble of occupations.

A. Jesus is especially interested in the humble and outcast people of earth.

B. Luke 5:12-14, While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord if you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man, "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him. Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

C. Luke 14:12-14, Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

D. Jesus pictured himself as the Chief Shepherd.

E. David was also well known as a shepherd in his youth.

Luke 2:9, An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

I. When angels stood before the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone round about them the shepherds were sore afraid... as were Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph.

- A. “The glory of the Lord” mentioned here was evidently not present when the angel appeared to Zecharias, Mary and Joseph.
- B. The sudden appearance of the angels caused the shepherds to fear, a customary reaction to such an unusual occurrence!
- C. Acts 9:3, 4, As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”

II. “City of David” is used 43 times in the New International Version which most often refers to Jerusalem, one of David’s capital cities, but in Luke 2 the “City of David” is Bethlehem, the city of David’s birth.

III. An angel appeared to the shepherds in the fields while they kept watch over their sheep at night.

IV. The sudden unexpected appearance of the unnamed angels produced fear in the hearts of the shepherds.

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.

I. The angel calmed the shepherds by telling them not to fear because he had good news for them.

II. The angel had good news which would bring great joy to all the people.

III. Unfounded and exaggerated fear has been a plague to mankind ever since the fall of Adam and Eve.

IV. Unnecessary fear is the bane of the human race.

A. The angel's first recorded words were designed to calm the shepherds: "Don't be afraid."

B. Fear can be good or bad.

V. The angels announced "good tidings of great joy" to all people.

A. The good tidings were for all people, not just Jewish people.

B. Luke was a Gentile who here announces the angelic appearance to Jewish shepherds.

C. Matthew, a Jew, announces the appearance of the star to Gentile magi.

Luke 2:11, Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

I. A Saviour was born that day, the angel said.

II. The Saviour had been born in the city of Bethlehem of Judaea, the city of David.

III. The angel gave three designations for Jesus:

A. **Saviour** – the Saviour from sin, not Saviour from the Roman Empire.

B. **Christ** – the long awaited Messiah.

C. **Lord** – divine Master.

IV. The angel announced, "For there is born unto this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

- A. Jesus is called: Saviour, Christ, Lord.
- B. The place (city) of the Lord's birth was specified.
- C. The time (this day) of Christ's birth was also stipulated.

Luke 2:12, This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

I. The child for which the shepherds were to seek would be:

- A. Wrapped in swaddling clothes.
- B. Lying in a manger. Not many babies, newborn, would be found lying in a manger in a barn.

II. The angel told the shepherds exactly what they should look for:

- A. A babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. This was nothing unusual.
- B. A babe lying in a manger. This was unusual and this was the sign. How many newborn babies would be found lying in a manger in the little town of Bethlehem that night? Only one!

Luke 2:13, 14, Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

I. After this announcement suddenly and immediately a multitude of angels/heavenly host appeared praising God.

- A. Psalm 103:21, Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

B. Daniel 7:10, A river of fire was flowing coming out from before him. Thousands and thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

C. Deuteronomy 33:2, He said: “The Lord came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Haran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes.

D. Job 38:7, while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy.

E. Acts 7:53, you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.

F. Galatians 3:19, What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

II. The multitude of angels praised God, glorified God in the highest, Gloria in Excelsis Deo.

III. The angelic multitude voiced the prayer for peace on earth among humans.

A. Christ is the Prince of Peace which relates to peace among men and peace between men and deity.

B. Conflict resolution is a major need of the human race!

C. Peace comes to men in whom God is well pleased, to men of good will.

IV. Suddenly a multitude of angels/heavenly host joined in to say:

A. Glory to God in the highest.

B. On earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

V. A host of angels serve as the “bodyguard” of God.

A. Psalm 103:21, Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will.

B. Daniel 7:10, A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.

VI. Peace:

A. “Peace on earth; good will to men.”

B. “Peace to men of good will.”

C. “Peace among men in whom he is well pleased.”

Luke 2:15, 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.”

I. Suddenly, as quickly as they appeared, the angels were gone and the shepherds were again left alone.

II. The shepherds did not ignore this wondrous happening but decided immediately to go to Bethlehem to see that which God had revealed to them through the angels.

III. The angels had not commanded the shepherds to visit the Christ child but they with enthusiasm as one man immediately headed for Bethlehem.

A. This is what God would have us do; that is, with excitement and enthusiasm serve God without any pressure or force.

B. We are to be internally motivated!

IV. When the angels “went away into heaven,” the shepherds immediately decided to go to Bethlehem and find the child of whom the angels had spoken.

V. The word “Lord” here refers to God the Father. Verse 11 had just spoken of Jesus as “Lord.” He too is deity.

VI. The angels had not commanded the shepherds to search for Jesus, but they had told them where they could find him.

Luke 2:16, So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

I. The shepherds went in haste to find Jesus! It was their top priority. It must be our top priority.

A. They found Mary, Joseph and the Christ child.

B. Who would have thought that the Son of God would be found in a stable?

C. In what strange places may we surprisingly find Jesus?

II. The angels came to Bethlehem with haste and found the baby Jesus of whom the angels had spoken along with Mary and Joseph.

III. We are to serve God with gladness and singleness of heart.

Note: We never again hear of these shepherds. Wonder what happened to them!

Luke 2:17, When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

I. The shepherds related to Mary and Joseph the appearance and the message of the angels.

II. This must have been encouraging to Mary and Joseph and was confirmation to Joseph and Mary of what had already been divinely revealed to them.

III. Having heard the testimony of angels and having seen the Lord Jesus, the shepherds told all they knew of what they had seen and heard.

IV. The gospel must be proclaimed. We cannot “bottle up” the good news within ourselves.

Luke 2:18, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

I. All who heard the “Gospel According to the Shepherds” wondered, were amazed!

A. But did they do anything else in addition to being amazed?

B. Most then and now are simply made to wonder, but do not let their wonderment cause saving changes in their lives.

II. The greatest event in the history of the world, the birth of God’s Son, did not make The Bethlehem Daily News.

A. The media, the establishment wasn't interested.

B. Common people passed the word mouth to mouth.

III. The shepherds evidently did not tell just Mary and Joseph what they had seen and heard, but they also told others.

IV. All that heard of these matters wondered, were amazed by what the shepherds told them.

V. We too must proclaim the word of the Lord to all accurately.

VI. Did those who heard the message go to see Jesus, serve him faithfully, or did they just "wonder?" How about us in this regard?

Luke 2:19, But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

I. Mary held these happenings in her heart as being precious to her and pondered, thought about them often.

A. How would you have liked to have read Mary's baby book?

B. Mary continually had these things on her mind, meditated on them and wondered what all this meant.

II. Mary pondered all these things in her heart and continued to think about them and what they might mean.

Luke 2:20, The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

I. The Shepherds returned to their sheep.

A. What difference did this encounter with the angels and the baby Jesus make in the way these shepherds did their jobs?

II. The shepherds glorified and praised God for the things they had seen and heard.

A. What they saw was exactly what they had been told.

B. God's word to us is also true and will be proved to be so as we get "further along." We will understand it all by and by.

III. The shepherds returned to their work, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard.

A. This grand experience did not free them from their daily responsibilities.

B. What changes did these events produce in the lives of the shepherds.

C. Nothing more is said of the shepherds. We are simply left to wonder about what happened to them.

Conclusion:

I. We have a long way to go to bring the **peace** on **earth** Christ wants for his people.

A. The celebration of the birth of the Christ child makes us kinder and gentler.

B. This kinder and gentler spirit must characterize our personalities and characters every day of our lives, not just during the Christmas season.

C. Matthew 5:9, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

II. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1864 during the Civil War wrote the Christmas Carol, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day."

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th' unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head: "There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead: nor doth
He sleep;
The wrong shall fall, the right prevail, With peace on earth, good will to men."

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men!
Amen.

Praise of Angels and Homage of Shepherds

The Babe in Manger

Questions

1. The song, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" was written by _____ in _____ during the _____.
2. _____ represent the _____ and were, at the time of Jesus' birth, considered to be in one of the _____ of occupations.
3. _____ appeared to the _____ on the night in which _____ was _____.
4. Jesus was at once the _____ and the _____.
5. Jesus is especially interested in the _____ and _____ of earth.
6. Jesus healed a man who was covered with _____. He taught that we should invite the _____, the _____, the _____, the _____, the _____ to dinner if we want to be blessed.
7. An _____ of the Lord appeared to the _____, and the glory of God shone around them, and they were _____.
8. Others who were afraid when they saw angels included _____, _____ and _____.

9. The _____ were not to be afraid, the angels told them, because the angels were bringing _____ of _____ which was to be for all the _____, not just to the _____ people.

10. _____, a Gentile, here wrote of the angelic appearance to _____ while _____, a Jew, wrote of the appearance of the star to _____.

11. Today in the _____ of _____ a _____ has been born to you; he is _____ the _____.

12. Jesus is in Luke 2:11 designated as _____, _____ and _____.

13. Jesus was born in _____ of _____, the hometown of _____.

14. The shepherds were to look for a _____ wrapped in _____ and lying in a _____.

15. Suddenly a great company of angels appeared saying, “_____ to God in the highest, and on _____ to men on whom his _____.”

16. The angels glorified God in the highest, _____ in _____.

17. The _____ immediately with _____ went to _____ and found _____, _____ and the _____ lying in the _____.

18. The shepherds told everybody what had happened. Those who heard the “_____ to the _____” were _____ and _____.

19. Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her _____.

20. The _____ returned, _____ and _____ God for all the things they had _____ and _____, which were just as _____.

Discussion Question: What can we do to help bring “peace on earth, good will toward men?” _____

Finished exam can be mailed or dropped off at
Mason Street Church of Chris
2600 N. Mason Street
Appleton, WI 54914
920-734-0785