

## **An Incredible Night**

### **Luke 2:8-20**

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. NKJV

Move yourself back 2000 years ago to a poor third world country. To a patch of land hardly a quarter the size of Illinois. To a people oppressed by their Roman captors. To a little village that was despised by even the nations own people. To a young woman, hardly an adult.

Now lay all your hopes for all the world on that. Does that sound like a plan?

So you see in our test today, a little village hardly worth noting, so much so that when Herod killed all the male babies 2 years old and younger that it does not even merit mention by the historians of his day.

And simple shepherds come to worship Him at His birth. Not the religious, not the royal, but the less than common were invited to the greatest event since the creation of the world.

But what really made that an incredible night was not the shepherds. Not the place or His human lineage. But what made that the most incredible night ever was intangible, something that cannot be measured or even observed with physical sight.

That is what I want to talk to you about this Christmas Day.

- I. It was a night of incredible LOVE.
  - A. Only Jesus could put it in fully significant words.
    1. Jn 3:16 (NKJV) For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
    2. Jn 15:13 (NKJV) Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

- B. It was not that we loved Him and therefore God reciprocated.
1. You see usually love is a mutual thing and does not survive when it is withdrawn by one part or the other.
  2. 1Jn 4:19 (NKJV) We love Him because He first loved us.
    - a. It is incredible that God's love is so generous.
    - b. He loved us when we held Him as an enemy.
  3. Ro 5:8 (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
    - a. You see Jesus was born in the shadow of a cross.
    - b. It was his destiny from the day He was conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin.
    - c. It was for this cause that He came into the world.
    - d. That is why we even have a Christmas Day.
    - e. Without the CROSS there would be no Christmas.
  4. Eph 2:3 (NKJV) among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
    - a. Dead in sins when He touched us and made us alive in Jesus Christ through the power of His resurrection.
    - b. What incredible love.
    - c. Eze 16:1 (NKJV) Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: "Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4 As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. 5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. 6 "And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' 7 I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare.

8 When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God.

- d. Essentially that is what God did at Christmas.
- e. He looked down through time and he saw you and me in our filth and helplessness, and He loved us enough to send His Son, His Only Begotten Son, to demonstrate His great love for us. Hallelujah.

C. What wondrous love is this oh my soul.

- 1. What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this,  
That caused the Lord of bliss,  
To bear the dreadful curse,  
For my soul, for my soul,  
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

II. It was a night of incredible mercy.

A. It was God's love that moved Him to have mercy on us.

B. Mercy has the idea of compassion.

- 1. God looked at this old world with all its turmoil and strife and He did something about it.
- 2. Like the passage we read in Ezekiel, God now had mercy not only on Israel but on the whole world.
- 3. His mercy was what we needed.
- 4. It displays His tenderness and gentleness.
- 5. But unlike many people, His mercy would cost God.
- 6. His Son would be the personification of mercy.
- 7. Like the Samaritan that had mercy on the man robbed, His compassion cost Him.
- 8. It was not simply in word but in action.

III. Something very similar to mercy is forgiveness. That night was a night of incredible forgiveness.

A. We were rebels against God, following our own desires and trampling on God's commands and His will.

- B. But God purposed to forgive us.
1. That is what Christmas is about.
  2. It is about people estranged from God in heart, desires and actions.
  3. But God intends to forgive us for all who will repent, He offers forgiveness.