

Good Tidings of Great Joy

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.

In a world of darkness and seemingly bad news Christians are a GOOD NEWS PEOPLE.

When Jesus was born the day was no better. The Romans had taken control of the Jewish people who had no aspirations conquering others but just wanted to be left alone. The land was filled with both political and religious corruption and the abuse of power. Poverty and oppression was widespread. Into that day came the GOSPEL, THE GOOD NEWS. And we are the benefactor of that good news today.

I. The Hearers of the Good News.

A. The shepherds.

1. The first announcement of the Messiah's birth was given by an angel to some anonymous shepherds. Why shepherds? Why not to priests or scribes? By visiting the shepherds, the angel revealed the grace of God toward mankind. Shepherds were really outcasts in Israel. Their work not only made them ceremonially unclean, but it kept them away from the temple for weeks at a time so that they could not be made clean. God does not call the rich and mighty; He calls the poor and the lowly (Luke 1:51-53; 1 Cor. 1:26-29). Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 176). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books
2. 1 Corinthians 1:26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27

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; 28 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, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

II. The Powerful Presentation of the Good News.

A. God can make an impression.

1. He can light up the heavens with angelic beings.
2. He could write His message in the stars.
3. God was hi-tech before there was hi-tech.
4. But still God seldom does such things.
5. When God came to Elijah on Mt Sinai it was in a still small voice.

B. So the heaven lights up as with laser lights.

C. The voice of the angel was heard clearly by all the shepherds.

D. God filled the sky with angels to proclaim the birth of the Son of God.

III. The Message of the Good News.

A. "Do not be afraid,

B. For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy

1. That is what the gospel is, good news.
2. If received it will bring great joy.
3. God does not always give a message of joy and hope.
4. But this message is potentially a message of joy and hope to all.

C. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior,

1. The name Jesus means the Lord is our Savior.
2. He is the rescuer of lost souls. And all soul are lost until He finds them.
3. He was born in Bethlehem the city where David was also born.
4. David was an ancestor of Jesus.

D. Who is Christ the Lord.

1. These words had much more significance for them than for us.
2. Today these words are taken in vein more than in worship.

3. Christ means the anointed of God, it is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew word Messiah.
 4. Lord was master, ruler, supreme.
- E. 12 And this will be the sign to you:
1. God often gave signs of the truthfulness of His message.
 2. Because we are such faithless creatures, we like seeing before we believe.
 - a. Joh 20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
- F. You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."
1. What a humble birth for a king, the highest and greatest king.
 2. But it shows us how far He descended to save us.
 3. 2 Corinthians 8:9 (NKJV) 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.
 4. Philippians 2: 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.
- G. 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,
1. Last week I went to hear a performance of Handel's Messiah. What a wonderfully stirring piece to listen to. But the shepherds heard one much better.
 2. I hope you like praising God for if you don't I don't think you will enjoy heaven at all.
- IV. The Recipients of the Good News.
- A. Which will be to all people.
1. Wait, not just the Jews.
 2. What a wonderful development.

3. The message of Jesus is for everyone. For EVERYONE.
- B. And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"
1. Some of the newer translations put this quite differently.
 2. They say "peace toward men of good will." DRV or "peace among men with whom he is pleased!" RSV
 3. But this cannot be for man on his own needs a Savior else the angels would never have come.
 4. The idea that there are men of good will without God is to say that man is sick and needs only a little medicine.
 5. But the Scripture teaches that man is dead and needs new life.
 - a. Eph 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,
 - b. Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,
- C. So the message was intended for you, a sinner, dead in sins, sunken deep in your own transgressions.
1. Luke 19:10 "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 2. 1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

First, one angel appeared (Gabriel?) and gave the glad announcement; and then a chorus of angels joined him and gave an anthem of praise. For the first time in centuries, the glory of God returned to earth. Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 176). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Jewish word shalom (peace) means much more than a truce in the battles of life. It means well-being, health, prosperity, security, soundness, and completeness. It has to do more with character than circumstances. Life was difficult at that time just as it is today. Taxes were high, unemployment was high, morals were slipping lower, and the military state was in control. Roman law, Greek philosophy, and even Jewish religion could not meet the needs of men's hearts. Then, God sent His Son! Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 176). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.