

# First An Angel, Then the Shepherds

*Promise: that birth of Jesus means God is saving sinners from judgment*

Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20  
(Christmas Eve, 12/24/19)

*And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people." – v. 10*

**Lead In** – The young narrator in the Children's Christmas Program had it almost right. But what he spoke was this: *And there were shepherds out in the field, washing their socks by night.* I'm guessing *watching* sheep and *washing* socks are equally exciting activities... This evening I want us to hone in on the activity of the shepherds in response to an angelic pronouncement of good news...

## I. Everything Of the Coming Messiah So Ordinary

- Caesar Augustus had ordered a census...
- A young expectant mother forced to travel...
- At the birth, perhaps a few animals on hand...

## II. The Scene Shifts Suddenly to Surrounding Fields

- Were sheep herders out in season of lambing?
- What would surely cause fear in all sinners!
- But the angel comes bearing the gospel!
- And the heavenly choir the *Gloria in Excelsis*...

## III. How Beautiful The Feet Of Gospel Proclaimers

- It is the shepherds turn for bringing glad tidings!
- They repeat the divinely delivered glad tidings!
- And Mary exemplifies how to receive it...

**Parting Shot** – I trust you know the title "Pastor" means "Shepherd"? How fitting that we should call ministers of Word and Sacrament Pastors. For shepherds were the first to herald the angelic message. And after all, Scripture reminds us that we are the people of God's pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Little wonder Peter was told... We are fed and cared for by the Gospel. Do we treasure it? Do we ponder it? And do we join the heavenly chorus is ascribing glory to God?

**Lk 2:1** In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

**Lk 2:4-5** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Even Seraphim unable to look upon the Lord's glory (cf. Is 6:1-2).

*euangelizō "good news", "glad tidings", "gospel"*

**Is 40:9 KJV** O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy

## Luke 2:8-20 ESV

*The Shepherds And the Angels*

<sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

**Gloria in Excelsis:** *Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people of earth.*

**Tonight as we partake of Holy Communion:** *Angels We Have Heard on High...*

**Ro 10:15** And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" (cf. Is 52:7)

**Ps 95:7** For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

**To Simon in Jn 21:** "Feed my lambs", "Tend my sheep", and "Feed my sheep".

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