

The Great Expectation Series1

“We’ve Got Good News”

December 15, 2024

Scripture Text: Luke 2:15-20 NKJV 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.

VERSE 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.”*

The shepherds had received direct contact from God's very throne room. They were overcome by the excitement of being chosen to spread the heavenly news to everyone who had long awaited this day! The shepherds helped carry the cornucopia of joy to fill the people's hearts along the way to gaze upon the Messiah born in Bethlehem.

There is a significant difference between joy and happiness. Joy is considered a deeper state of contentment and well-being, whereas happiness can be a temporary feeling of pleasure... receiving a Christmas gift. The confidence in knowing that the days are getting close to the Lord's return brings a deep joy within your spirit regardless of the trouble in the world.

VERSE 16 *And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.*

The text makes it apparent that Bethlehem was not far away because the shepherds left their flocks behind while they rushed to see the promised Messiah. Perhaps they had placed the flocks in a secure area with their dogs.

One can only imagine the joy that filled their hearts and souls as they saw the face of the Christ child.

While the shepherds were there, Mary and Joseph may have had the opportunity to share their encounter with an angel who told them about Jesus' birth. The appearance of Jesus in the manger connected all the dots! Emanuel... God is with us in human form! Messiah has come to redeem us and give us a more desirable future.

VERSE 17 *Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.*

God's goodwill toward men was manifested when He sent Messiah, who was the height of His glory toward man's redemption. God's plan for the redemption of all humanity is the most significant act of His mercy and grace. Because of this, we voluntarily praise Him without having to be asked to honor Him. Hallelujah! We are resupinates of eternal life in Christ Jesus!

At last, the prophetic word had become flesh to live among us. They had been touched by an angel and accompanied by a heavenly host. They were beyond excited, and life would never be the same again. Wherever they met people, they retold the story of their encounter with the angel and seeing the Christ child.

VERSE 18 *And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*

Finally, God's goodwill to men in sending the Messiah brought peace into the world. A mere man can never attain true peace within his fallen nature. Jesus declared, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."* **John 14:27 NIV.** ‘

Peace has been sent here for all, and it flows to us from Christ's taking our nature victoriously upon himself. John

The shepherds, humble and unassuming, had the honor of sharing their miraculous encounter with angels with others, generating excitement and joy among all who heard. **John 1:14 NKJV** *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Your excitement about what God has done or is doing can encourage others, or your lack of it can also influence people.

VERSE 19 *But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.*

In contrast to the shepherds, who outwardly glorified God, Mary deeply contemplated all the events surrounding Christ's birth. Yes, He was her son, yet He was the Saviour of the World, and she would have to release Him. Her meditation and relationship invite us to consider how we respond to God's revelation in our lives.

Has the Lord placed something on your heart lately? Are you wondering about how it will come together? Like Mary, *God works in us to will and do of His good pleasure*. We all have a significant part in God's economy, and we can't pass it off to someone else. If we fail to grow (our faith is challenged) as a plant is designed to develop and produce fruit, we will wither away and die.

Did she know what cruel death He would bear to save her and the world?

VERSE 20 *Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.*

These often-marginalized shepherds became proclaimers of great joy throughout the land, telling their stories. Their praising and glorifying God is significant and vital in responding to God's divine revelations. The true joy is celebrating God's work in our lives and the world. Their joy-filled worship illustrates God's message of faithful worship for all people, from the least to the greatest. These humble shepherds became the first evangelist affirming their faith and spreading the good news of Christ's birth. Their lives would never be the same!

The shepherds' message calls believers to recognize and respond to God's desires in our lives, as they did when they proclaimed the Messiah has come.

The Question: Will you proclaim, “We’ve Got Good News!” to a world that needs Hope and Joy?

Applications:

We are given good news to dispel the darkness and the feelings of sadness.

His joy is contagious and brings health to the body and soul.