

Introduction: Shepherds, like all occupations and all people groups, are a mixture of good and bad. David was a shepherd as a young man (1 Samuel 16:1-11). Later in life David wrote a song declaring that The Covenant God of Israel is his shepherd (Psalm 23). And, Jesus declared Himself to be THE Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14-15). But, all shepherds were an abomination to Egyptians (Genesis 46:34). The benevolence of David and his men to Nabal's shepherds implies that some people harassed shepherds (1 Samuel 25:1-7). Moreover, Jesus contrasted hired hands, who harm their flocks, to Himself (John 10:12-13). *** With this brief biblical background, we will examine what Luke was inspired to write about shepherds tending their flocks the night Jesus was born.

I. Angels appear to shepherds to tell them good news: a Savior is born to them and to all people; and on earth, peace to men of whom God is well-pleased. (Luke 2:8-14)

- A. An angel came upon shepherds who are terrified of his glory; but, he announces good news of joy concerning the birth of a Savior. (*Verses 8-11*)
1. Shepherds are abiding, watching the flocks at night, an angel of The Lord came upon them and His glory shone around, and they were made afraid with fear greatly. (*Verses 8-9*)
No home: Shepherds must be with their flocks 24/7/365. Practically speaking good shepherds have a lonely and homeless life focused on caring for their sheep.
Terrified: Seeing an angel with The Glory of The Lord shining all around him made these shepherds extremely terrified!
 2. The angel said, 'Fear not! For behold! I am bringing good news to you, great joy that will be for all 'the people': has been born to you today a Savior being Messiah The Lord, in David's city (Bethlehem)'. (*Verses 10-11*)
Fear not: Immediately, the angel sought to comfort them: Fear not!
Joy: With an exclamation, he says he is bringing good news of great joy that will be for all Israel – 'the people' of Yahweh God.
Savior: Today a Savior, being of David's 'house' and therefore Messiah, is born in 'house of bread'.
- B. The sign of a baby in a house feed trough, then multiple soldiers of heaven glorify God. (*Verses 12-14*)
1. And this sign to you: you will find a baby having been wrapped in strips of cloth in a feed trough of a house. (*Verse 12*)
A sign to know: The circumstances will indicate The Savior has been born into a family of humble means. The baby will be only wrapped in strips of cloth and will be lying in the feed trough (manger) on the level where people of a family of modest means ate and slept above the lower level where the few animals that belonged to the family came inside for shelter at night.
 2. Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly 'soldiers', praising God saying. 'Glory in the highest to God and on earth peace in men of whom [He is] well-pleased'. (*Verses 13-14*)
Soldiers of heaven: A heavenly host of 'warrior' angels of God now join with the first angel, and they are praising God. If one angel struck fear in the shepherds, image how they feel now!
Glory: They are proclaiming together the Glory of the Highest God – the only True God.
Peace: They announce peace to all people on earth that God has found pleasing to Him, those who have received His grace.
- Psalm 123:** In the Christmas morning Psalm, God's people proclaim to The One enthroned in the heavens that, as servants with their masters, thus will they be with Yahweh their God until He is gracious to them. This fits perfectly with what the heavenly host proclaimed to the shepherds.

II. The shepherds exhort each other to go see what they have heard; after seeing, they make known The Word and people are amazed and they return glorifying God. (Luke 2:15-20)

- A. When the angels leave, the shepherds exhort each other to go Bethlehem to see; they find Mary, Joseph and the baby. (*Verses 15-16*)
1. As the angels had departed the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this word which The Lord has made known to us. (*Verse 15*)
Exhortation: Notice how the shepherds exhort one another to go see about The Lord's Word to them. It is a great benefit to be part of a team, because 'Two are better than one ... and a three-fold cord is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes 4:7-12).
 2. And they came, having hastened, and found Mary and Joseph and the new-born babe being laid in an animal feed trough. (*Verse 16*)
Go and find: So they go and they find the new-born Savior just as they had been told by the heavenly host of God.
- B. They make known The Word they were told and all are amazed; and, they return praising God. (*Verses 17-20*)
1. Having seen, they made known about The Word having been told to them about the child, and all having heard were amazed about what was said by the shepherds. (*Verses 17-18*)
Make known The Word: The shepherds went out to tell the word about what they had heard and seen from The Lord about the baby born to be The Savior of the world.

Those who encounter The Savior will tell others about Him

Amazed: All who heard were amazed! It is a night of miracles upon miracles.

2. ... The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.
(Verse 20)

They glorify and praise God: These acts of worship to God are a fitting response to all that happened to the shepherds.

Seeing God fulfill His Word leads to glorious praise

Application: Sharing The Savior with others as a team gets people excited about the True God and brings them to a closer encounter with Him. As a result of this the members of the team are even more motivated to tell others about The Savior!

Those who encounter The Savior will tell others about Him

Application: Those who tell others about how God fulfills His Word of salvation to them are inspired to glorify and praise God in worship.

Seeing God fulfill His Word leads to glorious praise

Bottom Line: May we be like these shepherds in telling others about our experience with God through His Son, THE Savior. It is God's will that we do this; and, in the doing we will be moved to worship God, both glorifying Him and praising Him.

Conclusion: The shepherds are an example of people who hear the good news of Jesus and exhort each other to encounter Him. Then, having experienced Him, they tell others what they have heard and seen. The end result is that they are praising and glorifying God for those who are also amazed by Jesus through their telling them about Him.

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