

# SPONTANEOUS JOY! / Sunday, December 21, 2014

Unifying Topic: GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST

## Lesson Text

- I. **Jesus Is Born** (Luke 2:8-10)
- II. **An Angel Announces The Messiah's Birth** (Luke 2:11-15)
- III. **Shepherds Tell The Christmas Story** (Luke 2:16-20)

Lesson Text: And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. (Luke 2:20, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Sometimes an event in people's lives causes spontaneous celebration. What might cause people to be wild with joy? Angels announced the birth of the Savior and a multitude of heavenly host praised God.

Lesson Aim: To explore the events that led to the angels' spontaneous joy and the shepherd's' praise to God for Jesus' birth.

Life Aim: To help believers remember that Christmas is about the good news of Jesus' coming in the form of a man to be the savior for the world.

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- 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.  
2:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.  
2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.  
2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.  
2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.  
2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,  
2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.  
2:15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.  
2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.  
2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.  
2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.  
2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.  
2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

## HISTORY:

**Luke 2:1-7** <sup>1</sup>While God was preparing the world for the coming of the Savior, He moved the heart of the Roman emperor to send out an order saying that everyone had to go back to the city from which the people had come in order to be registered (**vv.1-5**). There they'd be told how much tax they had to pay. Mary and Joseph made the trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem. This fulfilled Micah 5:2. After a long journey of some seventy-five miles undertaken by Mary, heavily pregnant, she and Joseph arrived at Bethlehem. When they arrived they found no place to stay except a stable in which to sleep. That night God's own dear Son was born in the stable and Mary and Joseph wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him on the hay in the manger (**vv.6-7**). God made sure that Mary and her baby were kept safe, despite unhygienic conditions around them in the stable.

## LESSON:

### **Luke 2:8-10 Jesus Is Born**

**2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.** Now there were some shepherds in a field in this same country (*the area around Bethlehem*) watching over their sheep that night. <sup>2</sup>These shepherds had to watch for wild animals attacking the sheep at night. We all know that Jesus is the Great Shepherd and we as Christians are spoken of as "*sheep*."

**2:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.** There is a disruption in the field where the shepherds were abiding. There appeared an angel of the Lord bringing God's glory to shine all around these shepherds. The religious people would snub and ignore the shepherds, but here, an angel comes to the shepherds. The shepherds were despised because they were unable to attend services and keep

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/the-birth-of-jesus/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/luke/04.html>

the ceremonial laws of washing and cleansing. It was such a spectacular night in the field of the open sky! God gave His first message of His Son to common shepherds that were watching over their sheep.

**2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.**

The angel's appearance was that of splendor and glory, and the angel's message was one of reassurance and Good News! They were not to be afraid because the angel wanted them to hear this Good News that was to be of great joy for all people. If someone was bringing good news to you that would encourage and make you happy, they wouldn't want you to be afraid of the messenger! The Gospel of Jesus Christ is Good News!

## **Luke 2:11-15 An Angel Announces The Messiah's Birth**

**2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.** This is the day! It happened this day in the city of David, a Savior—the Messiah is born! Bethlehem was about 5 miles south of Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup>It is called the "*city of David*" because David grew up there along with his father Jesse and his seven brothers. In fact, David tended sheep in the fields outside the village just as the shepherds were doing the night the angel appeared to them. Some of the Jews had been awaiting and looking for the arrival of this Messiah foretold in the Old Testament for years; the one to deliver them from the Roman rule—He is Christ the Lord! Three titles reveal the greatness of Mary's Son in this verse.

1. This Christ child is the Saviour of the whole world. **Saviour** is actually an Old Testament word that means "*One who delivers his people.*"
2. He is **Christ**, the Gr. equivalent to Messiah which means "*the Anointed One*", who has come to save the world, and...
3. He is **Lord**, the Gr. word for Master; used to translate the covenant name of God showing His Deity to be over all people and things!

**2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.** The angel reveals a sign for the shepherds to find the baby. They will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. The "*swaddling clothes*" refers to a long piece of linen used to wrap babies. It was wrapped tightly to prevent movement. Maybe the tightness made babies feel secure.

**2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,**— Without warning; without prior announcement; it means that the angels weren't there, and then they were everywhere; a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. The spectacular appearance of the heavenly host means an army of angels, ten thousand times ten thousands. The shepherds had a special glimpse into the spiritual world.

**2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.** The angels did two things:

1. They announced that glory is to be lifted up to God in the highest.
2. They announced peace and good will toward men. By *peace* is meant the peace of reconciliation, the *good will* between God and man.

God's gift of peace will come not to all men, but to those whom God is pleased to call to Himself.

**2:15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.**

Just as soon as the angels came, they were gone away from the shepherds into heaven. There was spontaneous joy and excitement around Bethlehem!

1. The shepherds immediately decided to visit. And "*the shepherds said to each other, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass...*" Going to Bethlehem meant they were located some distance away, but they were willing to make the trip in order to see "*this thing*" (the birth of the babe) "*which is come to pass*" that the angels had just proclaimed.
2. The shepherds realized this message that they had just received, was from the Lord—"*The Lord hath made known*

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1997-12-21-Christmas-Joy/>  
<http://pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

unto us." These shepherds are good examples for us to imitate today. They received by faith the message God sent them and then responded with immediate obedience and spontaneous joy!

## **Luke 2:16-20 Shepherds Tell The Christmas Story**

**2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.**

3. They rushed to see for themselves. With swiftness they found Mary, Joseph. And they saw the baby lying in a manger.

**2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.**

4. The shepherds shared the message. They were the first to bear witness to the Savior of the world. In that day, the shepherds were so little trusted that a shepherd's testimony would not be accepted in a courtroom but God used them to tell others about the Savior. This was a solemn obligation as well as a great privilege.

**2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.** To those who knew nothing about the Lord but heard it from the shepherds, were full of wonder at the things they heard, but they never responded and never moved to find Him for themselves. Most believed that only priests and high priests had this type of experience with God.

**2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.** As these events occurred with the shepherds, <sup>4</sup>Mary knew that Jesus was special. She knew that He was the Son of God, and she pondered these events; quietly treasuring all these things in her heart.

**2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.** The excited shepherds were still rejoicing; glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen as they returned to their flock.

### **SUMMARY:**

That night, some shepherds were in the field in the same country guarding their sheep and there appears an angel of the Lord in the night sky with the glory of the Lord shining all around them. At such a spectacular sight, fear came upon the shepherds. But, the assurance by the angel of the Lord led the shepherds to not be afraid because he brought Good News that would fill them and everyone else with great joy! (vv.8-10).

The Good News by the angel of the Lord was in regard to God's Son, the Messiah that had just been born, which would be the Savior, Christ the Lord! They gave the shepherds the place to find Him—in the city of David, which is Bethlehem. They let the shepherds know that He was the Savior, Christ the Lord that was born on that day. They were told to look for the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host appeared with that angel giving praise and glory saying "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*" The angels now disappeared and the shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem to see what the angels had revealed to them (vv.11-15).

They went with haste and found Mary and Joseph with the babe lying in a manger. When they had seen with their own eyes, they began spreading this Good News of this child to others. To those who knew nothing about the Lord, but heard it from the shepherds became full of wonder at the things they heard. But they never responded and never move to find Him for themselves. And Mary pondered; quietly treasuring all those things in her heart. The excited shepherds were still rejoicing; glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen as they returned to their flock (vv.16-20).

### **APPLICATION:**

Most of the times a baby will bring spontaneous joy to a dead situation. In Jesus we find hope. An announcement of His life brought that spur-of-the-moment joy to all. He is able to overwhelm any struggle we go through. Look at what God has done.

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<sup>4</sup><http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/luke/04.html>

<http://pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>