

The Wednesday Word, December 12, 2018: Light from the Shepherds

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flock by night" Luke 2:8.

Let us just think of these shepherds for a moment' They have always captivated those of us who have read the story of the birth of Christ – old and young alike. Yet we know very little about these men. Indeed, all we do know of them is contained in the record of the Lord's birth in Luke's Gospel.

Many scholars are of the opinion that shepherds, in those days, were a despised class. In general, they were dishonest and unclean according to the standards of the law. Some, on the other hand, say they were men of God for only men who lived near to God would be visited by the angels.

I, with respect, beg to disagree with the latter theory. Why? Because Jesus came for sinners. Why then would His earthly ministry begin any differently (Luke 19:10)? These Shepherds were men who were entirely unworthy of the least of God's attention. They were just like us. They represented the outcasts and sinners for whom Jesus came.

I very much doubt that, as they sat there on the hills, they were looking for a Messiah of any description. And, by the way, neither were we...we were not seeking God (Romans 3:11), but He was seeking us, and He found us (Luke 15:4).

The angels brought glad tidings to the Shepherds. They told of the birth of the Saviour. They heard the voice of God in that message. May we all hear God's voice today and every day. God has spoken to us through, by and in His Son. Have we taken time to listen to what He said?

But back to our story. God evidently gave the shepherds FAITH and they believed for it is by the word of the Lord that faith is generated (Romans 10:17). I'm sure these men were somewhat surprised to be told that they would find the Saviour wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. I can just hear them ask,

"What did you say he is?"

"A Baby"

"The Messiah is a baby?"

Yet, note, they looked at each other and said, "Come let us now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass (Luke 2:15)." They didn't say, "Let us go and see if this has happened or not. " No, they believed and in obedience they went. And when they went they found.

And it is with that same faith that we can draw near to the Lord Jesus this Christmas. Faith knows that although He was the Lord of Glory, He was also born in poverty, in Bethlehem. Faith also knows that He came to be the Saviour; but not just a Saviour...He came to be our saviour.

And not just our saviour, He's my saviour and your saviour. He brings a personal salvation. Have you received Him for yourself?

The Shepherds, after encountering Christ, became "Men with a Mission." We read that on their return to the hills they made known to everybody that which was told them concerning this child. They were just simple shepherds, but they were the first to proclaim the arrival of the Saviour. And as they went on their way, they not only told the good news, but they glorified and praised God for all the things they had seen and heard.

What of us? We can go "Gospeling" every day of the year.

Like the Shepherds, we too can be Evangelists who tell the GOOD NEWS to those whom we meet.

And that's the Gospel Truth!