

Shepherds, Angels and a Baby

An old pioneer travelled westward across the great plains until he came to an abrupt halt at the edge of the Grand Canyon. He gawked at the sight before him: a vast chasm one and a half kilometres down, twenty nine kilometres across, and more than a hundred and sixty kilometres long! He gasped, "Something musta happened here!" A visitor to our world at Christmas time would also probably say, "Something must have happened here!" Indeed, something did happen. God came to our world on the first Christmas.

Luke 2: 8 – 20

1) Life disrupted

- When God has an exceptionally important announcement to make He seems to do it in a spectacular way.
- When He wanted to get Moses' attention He set a bush on fire without it burning up and then spoke to Moses from the burning bush
- It is interesting that Moses was also looking after sheep when God spoke to him
- The shepherds were just doing what they always do until God breaks into their nice quiet life disrupting it with a most spectacular entrance.
- God isn't interested our daily routines. He will disturb our lives for His purpose and will to be accomplished in them.
- If we want to see God do something good in our lives then be willing to have your life disrupted.
- We would normally prefer God to work around our lives so that our lives are disrupted as little as possible when God wants to work.
- Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all that he had, give to the poor and follow Him. The rich man went away sad. He wanted God's work in his life without his life being disrupted.
- When the angel appeared the glory of the Lord shone around them
- The Glory of the Lord is a significant aspect of Messianic prophecy – hence this isn't merely a minor detail put in by Luke.
 - Ezekiel saw the Glory of the Lord fill the Temple (Ezekiel 43: 4 & 5; 44: 4)
 - Ezekiel was prophesying during the time of Israel's exile in Babylon and thus was prophesying concerning the time of the second Temple
 - Jesus was born during the time of the second Temple.
 - Isaiah 40: 5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken
 - Isaiah 60: 1 -2 Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you

2) The Angels preach the Gospel

- The shepherds were terrified but the angel reassures them and then preaches the Gospel to them
- How can I say that they preached the Gospel to the shepherds
- The angel said that he brings good news of great joy that will be for all the people
- The words “good news” in the Greek is euaggelizō which means “Gospel”.
- This is the Gospel or good news not only for the Jews but for all people as was prophesied that the even the Gentiles will receive the blessing of the Lord
 - Isaiah 49: 6 It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth
- The angel then emphasises the birth of Jesus in the town of David
- Why didn't he just say Bethlehem?
- The emphasis was on the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecy that the Messiah was to be in the line of David.
 - 2 Samuel 7:12-13 When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
 - Jeremiah 23:5 “...I will raise up to David a righteous branch. A King shall reign wisely and execute judgment and righteousness in the land.”
- The angels moves from showing the prophetic signs of the expected Messiah to being blatant that the child who has been born in the barn and lying in the manger is none other than the Saviour – the long expected Messiah
- He refers to Jesus as “a Saviour has been born to you
- He is Christ the Lord
 - The word “Christ” comes from the Greek variant of Messiah.
 - Not only did the angel refer to Him as Messiah but as “The Lord”
 - This child lying in a manger is none other than God incarnate – God who has become flesh.
- A host of angels then appeared giving praise to God and invoking peace on men on who God's favour rests
 - This Saviour, Messiah will bring peace between man and God

3) The Shepherds Respond

- The shepherds then went and found Mary, Joseph and Jesus
- They didn't keep this news to themselves – they spread the word concerning what they had been told about this child
- They glorified and praised God
- Meeting Jesus ends up with us worshipping God and telling others of what we have experienced of Him
- Our lives will forever have been changed from the ordinary to serving Him