

The Shepherds

“They Were Told”



“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:10-11

Many times when we think of shepherds at Christmas we are reminded of the young boys in flannel bathrobes that don't have a speaking part in a Christmas pageant. They may have to point to a star, but it often is not considered an important part of the story. We could think the same about the shepherds in the Bible. But, both are very important.

Each of us is an individual with great worth regardless of our social status. The shepherds signal the fulfillment of a dramatic promise—the arrival of the Good Shepherd. They are told of the arrival of “Christ the Lord.” The irony is

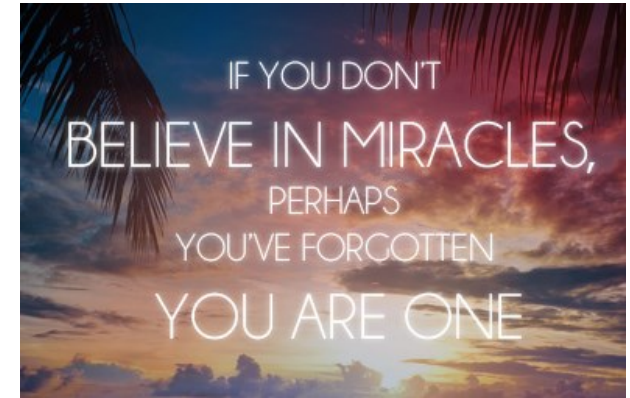
that the “sign” of His arrival is a child “wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.” And this King is not even born in a big city like Jerusalem, but in a small town in a manger. The shepherds who were not highly thought of are joined by angels in Heavenly celebration. The shepherds were the meek and lowly representatives of humanity!

The reaction of the shepherds is interesting. I think if angels would appear to me at night and started singing “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” I would be scared and wonder what was wrong with me. They were afraid as the Scripture says but they didn't panic. When the angels left they talked it over and decided they should go to Bethlehem and see this miracle.

I don't think they abandoned their sheep as some suggest. I think they probably left some of the shepherds with the sheep. Although if we want to go out on a limb, we could say they all went and God took care of the sheep while they were gone.

After all they had a message to tell everyone. They had become a chosen people. That decision is yours! We do know they went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and worshipped Him.

Their job wasn't done though. We are told they went around and told everyone they could what they had seen and how they had been told about the Messiah. The Bible tells us that people wondered at the things the shepherds were telling them, but Mary kept all this in her heart.



Have you ever had someone tell you they had seen something that you didn't think was possible?

There are several things that people might think about this person. Some believe and some do not. This is like our faith. Either we believe what the Bible tells us or we do not. We can't take certain verses from the Bible and say we accept them, but do not accept other verses. If we accept Christ as our personal Savior and believe He is the Messiah, we like the shepherds believe. But we could be like some of the people in Bethlehem must have been and think these disreputable people had a few problems. The choice is our “free will.”

How reputable are the shepherds anyway? Many feel they were sort of “misfits”, very low on the social ladder. They were common citizens, part of God's creation, just like us. But, they were selected by God to see this magnificent sight, and chosen by God to hear the angels sing. What a wonderful privilege. Christ referred to Himself as a shepherd, and today He is the shepherd to us. He cares for us all the time, just as a good shepherd. Some said they were “misfits in society.”

GOD surely listens,
understands and knows
the hopes
and fears you keep in
your heart. For
when you trust in His
love, miracles
happen!

What does it mean to be a “misfit”? Does it have to do with social status or good looks, or money? We are told that Christ didn't stand out as an individual. Isaiah 53:2 says “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.” If that is a misfit, I want to be one.

And so we find, like the Shepherds, that we are not loved because there is anything special about us. But we become special because of His great love. Jesus loves the very least of us, showing us the power and beauty that comes from being restored in His great image. Rom 8:29. In so doing He invites us into a world of love, beauty and everlasting justice.

“When you are going through something hard and wonder where God is, remember the teacher is always quiet during a test, but always present.”

“Go Tell It On The Mountain”

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.
[Refrain]

The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.
[Refrain]

Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born, and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.
[Refrain]

*Refrain:
Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.*

John Wesley Work, Jr., 1907



“Let's shout it from the mountain top.”

Prayer: Lord, thank You for coming to this earth and taking on our sins. Help us to have the same simple faith of the shepherds. Then help us to also, like the shepherds go and “shout it from the mountain top” that the Lord has come and we are forgiven. Amen

1. Have you ever had a vision or known someone else who did?
2. Why do you think God chose the disciples rather than someone with authority or respect in the community?
3. Do you ever feel like a misfit because of your faith?
4. How are we like the shepherds?
5. How does knowing we are loved by Christ help us in everyday life?

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We live on a blue planet that circles around a ball of fire next to a moon that moves the sea, and you don't believe in miracles?