

A Savior Has Been Born TO YOU!

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

**“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”**

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

When God created the heavens and the earth, Job 38 tells us that the angels all sang and shouted for joy. But in Genesis chapter three there was no singing. Mankind was driven out of paradise. Sin had entered God’s perfect creation and ruined it and the crown of his creation, mankind. An angel was posted guard armed with a flaming sword so man could never enter Eden again and eat of the tree of life. The only singing and rejoicing was heard in hell as the devil thought he had ruined everything.

But another day came when the gates of heaven were flung wide open and an army of angels sang a new song of praise. Just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, another man entered the world, the God/Man Jesus Christ. He came to save us and give us life. Today let’s join the shepherds outside of Bethlehem and see what causes angels to sing. A Savior is born to you.

I. This is our message.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. Why did the angels appear to the Shepherds out in the middle of nowhere? Jerusalem made more sense. There you had the temple, the priests, and important rulers. You had more people there. Why the Shepherds? Shepherds were blue collar workers down there on one of the lowest rungs of the social ladder. They smelled like shepherds, talked like shepherds, and walked like shepherds. Why them? For the same reason God chose the humble and lowly Mary to be the mother of Jesus and not some princes or the daughter of the high priest. It is for the same reason that Jesus did not shy away from talking to tax collectors, prostitutes and adulteresses. Jesus is the Savior of all people, even the lowly.

So the angel came to these lowly shepherds. **An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.** Why were the shepherds afraid? I keep my car in pretty decent shape. I don’t think it looks bad at all for being 16 years old. But if I parked down at Jerry’s next to a brand new car, suddenly my car doesn’t look so good. Compared to a shiny new car, you can see every little dent and ding. That is why the shepherds were afraid. They were standing before the glory of the Lord and one of his holy angels and the holiness of the moment exposed them for who they are, terrible sinners.

Who can stand in the presence of God? Adam and Eve did, once. Created in the image of God they walked with God and talked with God. What happened? They sinned. And when God came to visit, they hid. They felt their shame and nakedness before God. We should. Anyone should. Since the fall every inclination of the human is evil all the time. We lost the image of God and bear the sinful image of man. The shepherds were not afraid while they stood next to fellow sinful shepherds. But before God’s glory our sin and unholiness is exposed. We should be afraid.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. The shepherds had every reason to be afraid. But the angel says they have no reason to be afraid. They don’t because of the message. They have a Savior. This was not a mere historical fact. It was personal. “To you,” the angel said. This is their Savior. And did you notice something? The shepherds were no longer afraid. Even when the sky was filled with an entire army of holy angels, they still were no longer afraid.

This message is also your message. You have a Savior. You do not fear God any more. This Savior was born to take your place and die for your sins and to offer his perfection and holiness as your perfection and holiness before God. We fit now. And it is for you. If you read in the Arlington Enterprise of some person inheriting a million dollars, what is that to you? You might be happy for that person, but you will quickly forget it. But if a lawyer knocks on your door and tells you that you inherited a million dollars, you will scream for joy because it is for you. A Savior is born to you.

I. Is it also your message to share.

This is your message. And it is also your message to share. **So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.** Let's say you have a very important message to get out and you had unlimited resources to do so, what would you do? You would hire the best advertising company. You would take out ads in the papers, television, cable, the internet. You wouldn't share the message yourself. You would hire a great communicator who is articulate to share the message.

How does God share the message of a Savior? The best he has are the angels. But God sends out the shepherds instead. Why send weak, frail, imperfect humans like us to do a job worthy of angels? For two reasons. One, it is the same message whether spoken from the mouth of an angel or a shepherd and it is the same Holy Spirit who works through those words whether an angel or a human is speaking. Reason two? To make our joy complete.

You don't have to knock on doors and share the message with total strangers either. You are serving as evangelists right now as you come to church and sing hymns and let those who are near you hear your joy and see your faith. Mary gained from the visit of the shepherds. So did Joseph. So did the shepherds. So do we. And yes, they went out and told others, too.

III. It is your message to live.

This is your message. It is your message to share. It is also your message to live. **The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.** On the one hand, it would seem that the message of a Savior didn't change a lot of things in the lives of these shepherds. They went back to their old jobs, continued to work as shepherds, and probably died as shepherds. But on the other hand the message changed their lives completely. Being a shepherd had new meaning as they gave glory to God as shepherds.

It didn't matter to them whether they lived and died as shepherds, or if something better came along or not. They were happy and content because they have the one thing that matters, a Savior. May the same kind of contentment come to you. You have the same peace. The same favor rests on you. If God blesses you with greater things, we praise him. If he takes some or all of it away, we still praise. We can because a Savior has been born to us.

The angels sang when God created his perfect world. They sang again when God's promised Savior was born into this world. We are told that angels cheer and sing when a lost sinner is brought to faith. They didn't sing because they were the ones being saved. They sang because God so loved the world. How much more do we have reason to sing. A Savior is born to you. This is your message, your message to share, your message to live. Amen.