

DON'T BE AFRAID

You Can Trust God With Your Fears

**A look at God's message
to those participating in
the birth of our Lord.**

Lesson 4

Mission Arlington • Mission Metroplex Christmas Curriculum • 2010

4

Am I Important?

Luke 2:1-20

I Bring You Good News of Great Joy

Scriptures

Jeremiah 1:4-8
Jeremiah 29:11

Memory Verse

Do not be
terrified. I am
your God.
(Isaiah 41:10
NirV)

Have you ever wondered if your life matters? Have you ever asked, "Am I important?" Have you ever wondered why you're here? Those kinds of questions can lead to fear - fear of not finding the right job, fear of messing up your life, fear that you don't really have a place in this world, etc. We've looked at the fears surrounding others that first Christmas long ago. Let's see what we can learn from some unexpected shepherds.

At the time Zechariah and Elizabeth and Joseph and Mary were living, the Roman Empire was ruling much of the world as they knew it. The man ruling the Roman Empire was Caesar Augustus, and he decided to make a law. He wanted to count the people in his empire (a census). To do that, everyone had to go to the town of their ancestors.

Joseph was a descendant of King David which meant he had to go to David's town to be registered, or counted. Bethlehem was King David's town. Joseph and Mary traveled together all the way from Nazareth, in the north, to Bethlehem, in the south.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, they found the city full of other people who were there to be counted. The city was so full there wasn't a room left for Joseph and Mary.

"While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped Him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed Him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:6-7 NirV)

Just as God announced Jesus' conception to Mary and then Joseph, He was now ready to announce Jesus' birth.

Out in the fields around Bethlehem that night, the shepherds were looking after their sheep. God sent another angel, just as He had with Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph! Not only did the angel appear, but "the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified." (Luke 2:9 NirV)

Just as the other angels had, this angel told the shepherds not to be afraid. There was good news instead, certainly nothing to be fearful about. The angel said, "I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people." (Luke 2:10b NirV) God had good news for these men, these shepherds who were often overlooked or looked down on. And as great as that was, the news wasn't only for them; it was for ALL people!

Application

The birth of a baby is good news any time, but this was no ordinary baby.

This baby was the Christ, the Messiah, the One the people had been waiting for.

What else did the angels call Him?

Savior! What a wonderful word! Who was He a Savior for? The shepherds and all people.

A Savior saves people from something. What could we possibly need to be saved from?

The Bible tells us we all have a problem. That problem is called sin. (Rom 3:23)

We deserve death because of that problem, but God offers eternal life instead. (Rom 6:23) He does it because He loves you. That's why He sent Jesus. (John 3:16) Will you accept that gift today?

The angel continued with wonderful details. "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:11-12 NIV)

Then, that angel was joined by many more angels. They all praised God saying, "Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God." (Luke 2:14 CEV) And just as suddenly as they appeared, the angels went back to heaven.

With the same confidence and surety that Joseph showed, "the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'" (Luke 2:15 NIV) Off they went, hurrying towards Bethlehem. They found Mary and Joseph, and they found Jesus lying in a manger just as the angel had said.

When the shepherds left, they couldn't keep the good news to themselves. "They told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child." (Luke 2:17 NIV) People were surprised and amazed by what they heard . . . a Savior . . . for everyone!

What an unlikely group of visitors! Most people looked down on shepherds as rough, dirty, unimportant men. Look what God did, though. He chose these men who weren't usually included and He shared the birth of His Son with them - before He shared it with anyone else! The Bible tells us that, "God chose the things of this world that are common and looked down on. He chose what is not considered to be important to do away with what is considered to be important. So no one can brag to God." (1 Corinthians 1:28-29 NIV) These shepherds couldn't brag about themselves. What they could brag about, though, was that God had come down to earth in the body of this precious little baby. And boy, did they brag!

Maybe you feel like you are in good company with the shepherds. Maybe you are looked down on. Maybe you are fearful because you don't see your importance in the world. This life is not for you to have bragging rights. The God of the universe has an amazing plan for your life. (Jeremiah 29:11) Will you accept the Good News of Jesus' birth as the shepherds did? Will you let God direct you to that amazing plan?

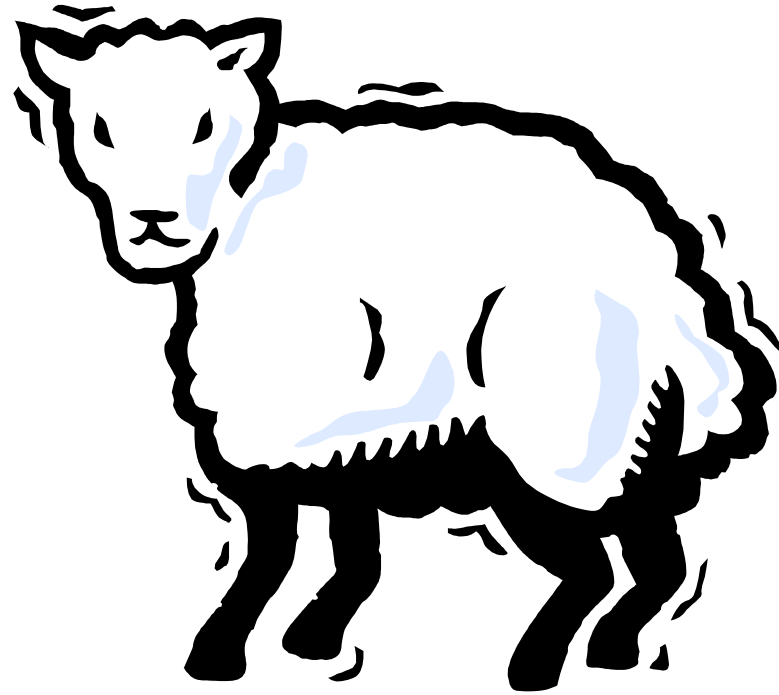
Preparing for the next Lesson

Lesson 5

Flight to Egypt - Matthew 2:1-18

Activities

- **Memory Verse Activity:** Make a paper chain of sheep. Use a long, strip of thin paper. Fold accordion style to the width of the sheep you would like. Draw the outline of a sheep on the top fold, making sure the head and tail touch at the ends where the paper is folded. Cut through all the thickness and open out to reveal a chain of sheep. Print the memory verse, one word per sheep, across the paper chain. Be sure to include the scripture reference.
- Sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus. Bring a cake, if possible.
- Reenact the story for parents and friends.
- Make Nativity scenes. The nativity scene can be full sized using an appliance box as the back drop with your students and a few stuffed animals as the participants. The nativity scene can also be small enough for each student to take home. Provide construction paper, glue or tape, scissors, etc. and let your students be creative.
- Make a multitude of angels. Use round Christmas ornaments as the head and cardstock or construction paper cones as the body. Provide glitter, pipe cleaners, etc.
- **Dig Deeper:** Read 1 Corinthians 1:25-29. Talk about how God's ways are not like ours. Review the lesson in light of these verses.



Do not be terrified.

I am your God.

Isaiah 41:10

Word Search

s d r e h p e h s d d o d o t
a i m e h e l h t e b l r r e
d l a r s i h e a c d y e r p
i e p r u z t h e n i g e m n
a p o l s a e c h u n z h c w
g o o d n e w s f o r a l l o
f a y a e e h t m n a p e r t
a g b r c t n a o n e l y o s
e r e y a h n n y a e r a f d
b h o j n i e o d s a f r n i
t y o z s c h a r l a h p o v
o h a u f a r b e e m p l r a
n e s a d l a g o g o p l o d
o e p n a g y n r n e l b o g
j h p e s o j d n a y r a m p

census

David's town

Bethlehem

Mary and Joseph

no room

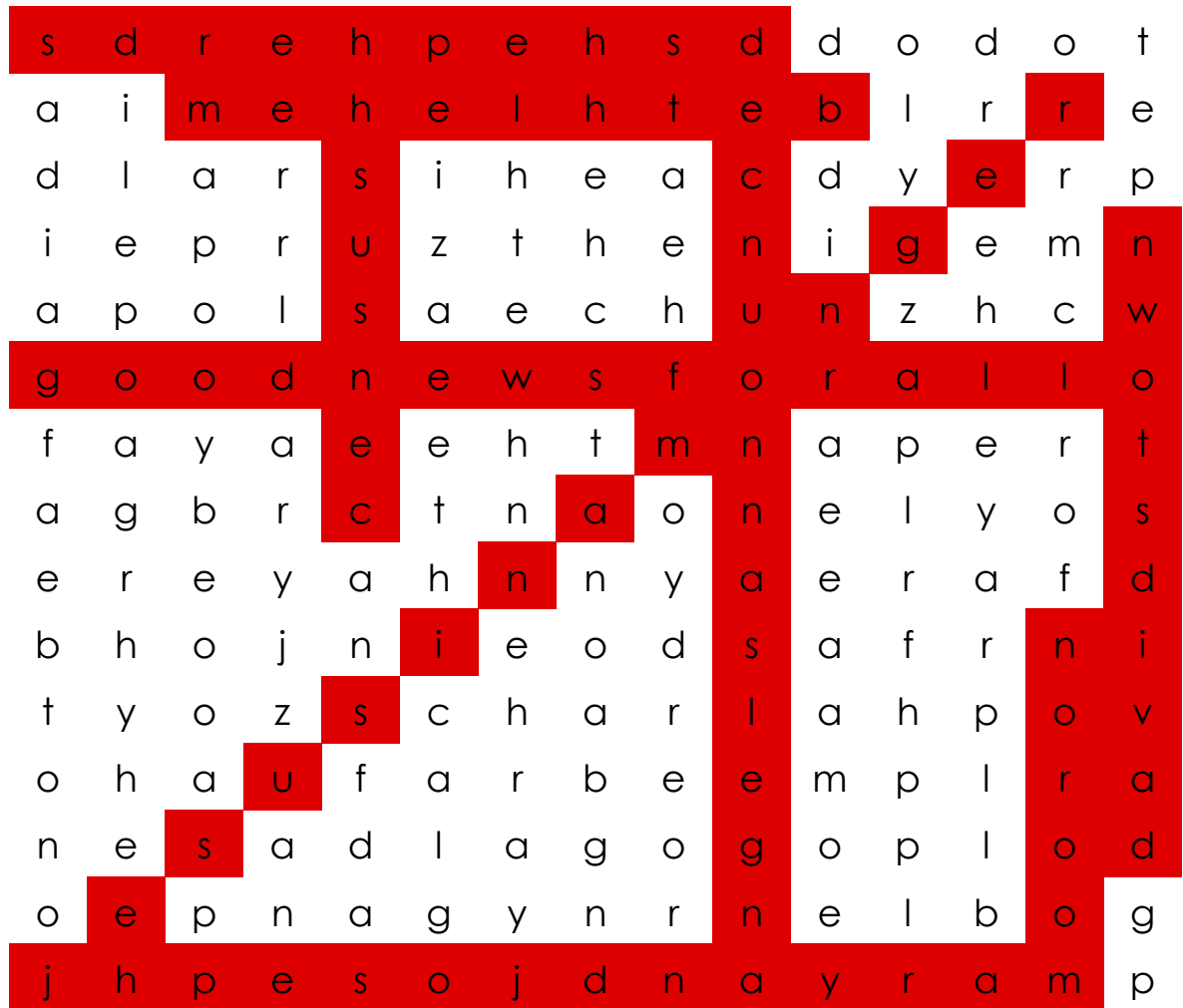
Jesus in a manger

angels announced

Good News for all

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h e a r a i a m i d
s h e p h e r d s a
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