

“Promise Fulfilled”

12-24-13

Everyone loves birth announcement. It brings joy to our hearts. In Scripture tonight, Luke records Jesus' birth announcement to shepherds in the fields outside of Bethlehem. These could possibly be very same shepherds that raised sacrificial lambs for the temple. Lambs of these shepherds might have been used in Temple as sacrifices for forgiveness of sins of the people. And now they're hearing about the greatest sacrifice of all, the baby named Jesus.

The Angels announced that the Savior was born and invited shepherds to go and see Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God come to earth. This Lamb of God would take away the sins of world. This lamb was God's Lamb who would go to the cross for our sins.

His coming was greatest event in all of history and it had just happened! Isaiah's Prophecy of Promise was fulfilled. Isaiah 7:14, *“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”* This long awaited Messiah was here!

Remember what angel had said to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, *“She (Mary) will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”* This same angel said to Mary in Luke 1:31-33, *“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”*

For centuries, the Jewish nation had waited for this event, the birth of the King. When it did finally happen, it wasn't announced to the people in power or to the whole nation. Instead it was announced to some plain, ordinary, and humble shepherds.

The Good News about Jesus is that He comes to all of us. He comes to anyone who has an open, humble heart and lives with you and in you. Whoever you are, or whatever you do, Jesus comes to you. He accepts you just as you are. He wants you to humbly come to Him and give Him the gift of yourself. Out of His great love for you, He has given Himself!

Open to Luke 2. At first, the shepherds were terrified. Can you imagine what it must have been like to see angels in the sky? The sky all of a sudden was glowing in light, the light of the glory of God! But their fears turned to joy as the angels made their announcement about Messiah's birth. Look at verses 10-14, *“And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

In this birth, salvation was made known. From Psalm 98, *“The LORD has made known His salvation. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”* This baby is our Savior!

Once the shepherds received news, look what they did next. Verse 16 says, *“They went with haste!”* They hurried as fast as they can! They ran to see the baby! They couldn't wait to see the Savior, the Messiah!

After seeing the Messiah in manger, what did they do next? They spread word! Verse 17-18, *“And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told*

them.” They wanted everyone to know what had happened! They wanted everyone to know the promised Messiah was born. The Old Testaments prophecies were fulfilled. The King was here!

Jesus is your Messiah, your Savior. Do you look as forward to meeting Him, as the shepherds did? Do you run to Him each day? Are you with Him in prayer and the study of His Word? Do you have a relationship with Jesus that’s so special, you can’t help but share your joy with your friends, family and neighbors?

We all have stormy times in our lives. Worries about our health, finances, jobs, and our families. But through it all, you need to remember, there’s light beyond the storm. There’s hope greater than whatever it is you’re facing. Jesus is that hope! You need to show those experiencing darkness, the Light of Jesus Christ! You need to tell them God loves them and there’s joy in this season!

This child is the Light of the World. He’s the Light that shines in a darkness that’s powerless to overcome it. This is the promised Sun of Righteousness. This is the Life that brings light to all God’s children. This is the One whose glory is that of a Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.

There was a special song written for Christmas Eve by a pastor and a school master. Every year we sing this carol by candlelight. Two men, Josef Mohr and Franz Gruber lived in Oberndorf, Austria. The entire countryside was locked in the grip of cold and hunger that Christmas. People and animals were going hungry.

The people looked forward to the Christmas Eve service with its music. Christmas Eve was a bright spot because of the joy of the event. When the men started to work on the Christmas Eve music, they were horrified to find the starving church mice had eaten the church organ bellows and the organ was not playable for the Christmas Eve service.

They almost canceled the service, but then decided to make the best of it. They spent most of the night before the Christmas Eve service writing a simple hymn tune that could be accompanied by guitar. The next night, the congregation was blessed as they sang their new Christmas song by guitar: Silent night, holy night. All is calm, all is bright. Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild. Sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.

On the Christmas Eve, un-wrap God’s sweet gifts of love and joy and let the Light of Jesus Christ, your Savior, shine through your life tonight, and throughout the coming year.