

Why Shepherds? - Part 2

Scripture: Luke 2:8–20

Code: B101227

It would make sense to announce the birth of the Messiah to students of His coming. It would make sense to proclaim His arrival to those who had the ability and authority to spread the news throughout the world. But God didn't do that. He chose to entrust this magnificent news to a group of shepherds with no social standing and no voice in the community. Why?

God revealed Jesus' birth to the shepherds to shame the religious leaders. God, revealing such news to the shepherds is consistent with Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 1:27-28. He says, "But God chose what is foolish to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are." You might say, *but the religious leaders didn't know they were being put to shame!* That's right, and the wise, strong, and favored in the world don't know it either. They are not put to shame in their own eyes, but in God's eyes.

God revealed Jesus' birth to the shepherds to bring them joy (Luke 2:10). What brought the shepherds joy was not the birth of a baby per se, but birth of the Messiah in particular. The angel said this news is "great joy for *all people*" (Luke 2:10), but then narrowed it by saying, "For unto *you* is born this day . . ." (Luke 2:11). This announcement was specifically for *them*. Even though only the shepherds received this announcement that night, God directed Luke to record the event so every believer can share in the joy of their Messiah's birth.

Does it bring you joy to know the Son of God became flesh *for you*? Do you realize you did not deserve to hear the gospel and receive eternal life? God sent His Son to be the Savior of the world and yet many people were ignorant of His birth. The same is true today. If you're a recipient of His gracious salvation, it's for your joy. You did not deserve to be saved, but God revealed Himself to *you* for your joy.

God revealed Jesus' birth to the shepherds for the sake of Mary and Joseph. Recall that both Mary and Joseph received the news via angelic messengers. They were young, and angelic appearances were rare—to say the least. Joseph could have divorced Mary. Mary could have rejected her divine appointment. They both could have passed the visions off as wild dreams. But they both accepted the angel's message and obeyed the Lord. When the shepherds described their experience, Mary "treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). The shepherds' testimony confirmed to Mary and Joseph what they had experienced themselves.

Think about the grace of God in this. Have you made a significant decision—a large purchase, a job opportunity, or which school to attend—and afterward experienced an affirming sign? If we are following [God's will](#), we don't *need* those signs of affirmation; but we find comfort in those gifts of grace from God.

God revealed Jesus' birth to the shepherds for His own sake. What did God accomplish by making

this announcement? By sharing the joy of His Son's birth with a few shepherds and confirming to Mary and Joseph what they already knew, God received glory and praise from everyone involved. Those who heard the testimony marveled at it (Luke 2:18) and "the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God . . ." (Luke 2:20). Think of it this way: it brought God joy to give joy to the shepherds.

When God acts, while it is for your joy and your benefit, ultimately it is for Himself. Hebrews 12:2 says, ". . . for the joy set before him [Jesus] endured the cross..." Paul explains in Ephesians that God's work in salvation is "to the praise of his glorious grace" (Ephesians 1:6), and "to the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:12), and again "to the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:14). How much glory and praise are you giving to God this Christmas season?

As you look forward to a new year full of opportunity, remember that whatever God does, He does for your joy, your benefit and ultimately His glory.

Merry Christmas and have a blessed New Year!

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