

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:8-20



SYNOPSIS

Matthew and Luke include accounts of Jesus' birth. Matthew focused on the magi while Luke focused on the shepherds. Parallels between Jesus, David, and sacrificial sheep are highlighted to emphasize the kind of Messiah who was "born this day". A sudden light in the darkness begins the euangelion (good news) of the coming of the Savior of the World.



OUTLINE: THE W'S

1

WHO & WHERE: SHEPHERDS, BETHELEHEM

The shepherds near Bethlehem raised sheep that were meant to be pure, unblemished temple sacrifices. Bethlehem was called the City of David because it was David's place of birth and anointing. Israel's ruler was prophesied to come out of Bethlehem (Mic 5:2). David and Jesus were both surrounded by sheep and anointed in secret under the rule of a jealous king. Both initiated triumphal marches into Jerusalem. But where David's crown was made of gold, Jesus's was made of thorns. David's throne was temporary; Jesus's is eternal.

regardless where Jesus's actual birthplace was (cave vs. relative's house, vs Migdal Eder), the presence of the shepherds prophetically declares Jesus as the pure, unblemished lamb who would (in the words of John the Baptist) take away the sins of the world. In the midst of turmoil and despair, the Son shone in that darkness, and angels heralded the birth of a new world order.

2

WHAT: THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOOD NEWS

Euangelion is the Greek word for the good news of the ascension of a new king. Heralds would go before him throughout the land and deliver the message with gifts. With Jesus's birth, everything changed. He did not come to vanquish only Rome but all evil and to bring peace to all under his rule for eternity.

Faith in Jesus requires a new paradigm:

- Nicodemus received a new paradigm for how to enter the Kingdom of God.
- The new paradigm of the Temple was to see Jesus as the embodied presence of God and how people would commune with him.
- Here, Jesus is introduced as a king who is anointed to become a sacrifice on behalf of his subjects.

3

WHY: BECAUSE HE LOVES US

The simple truth of the incarnation of God in Jesus is his love for us. Jesus emptied himself to become fully human (Phil 2:6-8) so that he could die in our place and free us to truly live.

May we marvel at the wonder that is Jesus's birth.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

What is one shift your paradigm/worldview has undergone as your faith in Jesus grows?

2

In what ways do you sense Jesus asking you to hold onto hope that his light will shine into your darkness?

3

What aspect of the "euangelion" of Jesus is the "goodest" part of the "good news" for you?

4

The characters in this story experience belief, amazement, and curiosity. What is your response to Jesus's birth?

5

What kind of Messiah (i.e. Savior) have you hoped for? How is Jesus better than that?



BIG IDEA

P. Phil repents from losing his sense of awe & wonder at the incarnation of Jesus. The reality of God himself becoming a helpless baby to be with and, one day, die for his people because he "so loved" them should feel incredible to us.

Ask the Holy Spirit to help us shift our paradigms and make sense of our lives in light of the wonder and implications of Jesus's birth.