

Why Shepherds?

Luke 2:8-18

- 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.
10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.
13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.
16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.
17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.
18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

A few questions of Why?

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16 Most all of us, I suppose, at one time or other, has wondered WHY THAT THIS GREATEST EVENT OF ALL TIME WAS REVEALED TO SHEPHERDS. WHY WAS IT REVEALED TO SHEPHERDS AND NOT TO THE THEOLOGIANS OF THAT DAY; they were the one were trained to hear It? AND WHY DID IT COME AND BYPASS THE RICH, AND COME TO THE POOR? Also, why did It bypass the learned and wise, and come to the humble and unlearned? There is a few questions of why in this.

- THIS GREATEST OF THE GREAT EVENTS
- Without the Incarnation there could be no further unveiling of Redemption
 - "On earth, peace and good will towards men".

21 Now, remember, THE MESSIAH WAS ALREADY IN THE CITY, borned in the city, in a stable; RIGHT BY THE GREAT CATHEDRALS WHERE THE GREAT PRIESTS, AND THE THEOLOGIANS, AND THE WISE, AND THE TRAINED, ALL WAS THERE WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH. And there He was, right in their midst! BUT WHY THEN DID THEY GO OUT ON THE HILLS OF JUDAEA TO UNLEARNED, UNTRAINED, UNCULTURED, POOREST OF ALL? Looked like the most unfit person for such a task, to reveal the Message and send them out to bring the Message.

- GOD WAS ALREADY INCARNATE and THE ANGEL OF THE LORD HAD ALREADY DELIVERED THE MESSAGE OF HIS COMING (ACCOMPANIED BY THE GLORY OF THE LORD), YET THE RELIGIOUS WORLD KNEW NOTHING ABOUT
 - God had bypassed them all.
- GOD DEALING SO PERSONALLY WITH PEOPLE IN THEIR DAY (Zechariah and Elisabeth, Mary and Joseph),
 - People being filled with the Spirit, the Spirit of prophecy,
 - Manifesting Himself in such outstanding ways (angelic visitations, His glory overshadowing the virgin), yet they are total strangers to it all. Yet claiming to believe it.
- AND YET THEY KNEW NOTHING OF IT

Receiving it the way He send It

22 You know my opinion? I BELIEVE IT'S BECAUSE OF THE WISDOM OF GOD, THAT HE KNEW THEY WOULDN'T RECEIVE SUCH A MESSAGE THE WAY IT COME

- "He knew that they wouldn't receive It the way It come"
 - WE NEED TO STAY HUMBLE SO THAT RECEIVE THE MESSAGE, NO MATTER WHICH WAY HE CHOOSES TO SEND IT.
- IT TAKES A CERTAIN STATE AND A CERTAIN CONDITION TO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE A DIVINE MESSAGE
 - And this story shows us clearly how HE BYPASSES THOSE WHO ARE NOT IN THAT CONDITION
- The danger of PRECONCEIVED IDEAS, and PUTTING CONDITIONS ON GOD.
- He is always willing to send forth His Message.
 - THE CONSTRAINING FACTOR IS NOT HIS WILLINGNESS TO GIVE, BUT RATHER OUR ABILITY TO RECEIVE
- Is not this BORNE OUT IN OUR EXPERIENCE?

- **WHENEVER WE BECOME HUMBLE AND TEACHABLE HE ALWAYS SPEAKS TO US.**
- We have to become as little children to receive the Kingdom.

Matthew 18:3

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

IT WASN'T IN THE TASTE OF THEIR LEARNING. It was different. **IT WASN'T WHAT THEY HAD BEEN TRAINED TO BELIEVE HE WOULD BE LIKE.** It was **CONTRARY TO THEIR THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING.** All **THEIR TRAINING**, all **THEIR LEARNING** was bypassed, become naught. I believe it was **THE WISDOM OF GOD THAT KNEW THAT THEY WOULDN'T RECEIVE SUCH A MESSAGE.**

- Their downfall was because of **THE OLD ENEMY** –
 - Man's wisdom and understanding
 - Man's learning vs Divinely-given revelation
 - For some people **THEIR NATURAL AGE** is against them

Proverbs 3:5-7

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

- **AND MORE SO WHEN THAT IS MIXED WITH RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE**
 - "He came contrary to their theological understanding"
 - "All their training, all their learning was bypassed"

Mixed up & Set in their ways

23 So the Messiah was here, and there **MUST BE SOMEBODY RECOGNIZE IT.** **AND HE KNEW THOSE WHO HADN'T BEEN MIXED UP IN SUCH STUFF AS THAT.** He would be more able to get His message to **AN UNLEARNED GROUP**, than He would be to **A MIXED-UP GROUP THAT WAS SO SET IN THEIR WAYS THAT NOTHING COULD TURN THEM, NOT EVEN THE WORD OF GOD.**

- "A mixed up group, so set in their ways"
- **THE GREATEST ENEMY THAT WE HAVE TO RECEIVING PRESENT-DAY TRUTH, IS THAT WHICH WE HAVE BEEN MIXED UP IN.**
- God in His Wisdom knew that visiting people in such a condition would be **CASTING HIS GREAT PEARLS BEFORE SWINE**
 - So He bypassed them all
- God is no respecter of persons
- "Somebody must recognize it"
 - There will always be a remnant according to the election of Grace
- **"GOD HAD TO GO BACK THERE".**
 - **THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE READY IN JERUSALEM CAUSED HIM TO LOOK ELSEWHERE**
- **BEARING IN MIND THAT THE MESSAGE IS STILL UNFOLDING ITSELF. "THERE IS YET MUCH LAND TO BE POSSESSED". SO WE NEED TO REMAIN IN THIS CONDITION.**
- He doesn't change, and He is always willing to bring forth the revelation. However, **ITS THE ATMOSPHERE THAT BRINGS THE RESULT ALWAYS.**

Men of Low Estate

- Humble people, with their affections off the things of the world

25 Notice, **ANGELS COMING AND GIVING THEIR MESSAGE TO MEN OF SUCH LOW ESTATE**, when there were **MAN THERE MUCH MORE (EARTHLY THOUGHT OF) QUALIFIED THAN THESE POOR, ILLITERATE SHEPHERDS.**

- Earthly vs Heavenly qualifications

The shepherd was the most illiterate of anybody, HE DIDN'T NEED TO KNOW NOTHING BUT JUST ABOUT HIS SHEEP. He DIDN'T NEED TO KNOW MATHEMATICS. He didn't need to know how to split an atom. HE DIDN'T NEED NO SCHOLARSHIP. HE JUST HAD TO KNOW HIS SHEEP, THAT'S ALL THAT HE NEEDED TO KNOW.

And God, the great Wisdom, and the Fountain and resource of all wisdom, would CHOOSE SUCH A PERSON AS THAT (persons, rather, as that), and BYPASS ALL THE WELL-TRAINED SCHOLARS THAT'S TRAINED TO KNOW THAT.

The Prophet

- THE PROPHET obviously many times had asked himself the question of WHY THE ANGEL CAME TO HIM.
 - The Lord knew that the prophet WOULD RECEIVE IT,
 - Would KEEP IT PURE (he had no religious baggage)
 - And would NEVER DENOMINATE IT (he would stand in the gap between the groups as one born out of season).

... Caiaphas the high priest, many other great man, all Israel's mighty learned, all the denominations, and ALL THE BOASTING THEOLOGIANS, GOD BYPASSED EVERYONE OF THEM! Now, that's God's wisdom.

Divine Honour

26 Notice, THE HIGHEST HEAVENS HASTENING TO HONOR EARTH'S MOST HUMBLE AND UNLEARNED.

- We need to REALISE THE HIS VISITATION AND HIS REVELATION ARE HIS GRACE TO US.
- HE HONOURS US BY CONDESCENDING TO VISIT OUR SOULS.
 - NEVER TAKE IT AS RIGHT AND NEVER TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.
- HE SHONE HIS GLORY ON THEM WITH THE MESSAGE. THAT IS HOW HE HONOURED THEM.

THE HIGHEST OF HEAVEN CAME DOWN TO MAKE HISSELF KNOWN TO THE LOWEST OF THE EARTH, bypassing all between to make Himself known to common herdsmen; COMING TO GIVE THESE COMMON HERDSMEN THE GREATEST MESSAGE OF ALL TIMES. There HAD BEEN MANY GREAT [MESSAGES]. ... Noah's day, and the prophets, and the great priests, and so forth, had been in the days gone by. The great learned man, kings, potentates, monarchs, BUT HERE HE COMES WITH THE GREATEST OF ALL THE MESSAGES. WHAT WAS THE MESSAGE? "MESSIAH IS HERE NOW!" See? And to make that known, He bypassed all the trained, to make it known to humble shepherds.

- The Highest of Heaven
 - PREACHED TO BY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD HIMSELF
- THE MESSAGE OF HIS COMING

27 THINK OF IT: all of the clergymen, ALL OF THE CHURCHMEN, all of THE TEACHERS, all of THE THEOLOGICAL TRAINING, all THE MONEY HAD BEEN SPENT, all the churches, and the doctrines, and the denominations, WAS ALL BYPASSED! All the learning that they had spent on ALL THE MISSIONARIES, and ALL THE PROSELYTING, ALL THE MEMBERSHIP, AND EVERYTHING THAT THEY HAD THOUGHT THEY HAD DONE HONOR TO GOD, YET THE KEY MESSAGE OF ALL OF IT WAS BYPASSED FROM THEM. Strange! Why? See?

- HE BYPASSED IT ALL AND HONOURED SHEPHERDS WITH HIS KEystone MESSAGE.
- HE SEARCHED THROUGH THE EARTH SEEKING WHOM HE COULD HONOUR WITH SUCH A MESSAGE IN THAT DAY, and in His great wisdom He chose the shepherds.
- THESE WERE REPRESENTATIVE MEN, AND THIS ACCOUNT IS PLACED HERE FOR US TO LEARN FROM.

28 And notice, not only that, but THE MOST UNLIKELY PLACE FOR SUCH AN EVENT. ... AND NOW NOTICE WHERE THE MESSAGE WAS: And I wonder, tonight, IF WE WERE LOOKING FOR THE TRUE MESSAGE OF THE LORD JESUS, I WONDER IF IT WOULD BE IN A UNLIKELY GROUP, ... THE MOST UNLIKELY PLACE, AND TO THE MOST UNQUALIFIED SPEAKERS. Shepherds knewed nothing about speaking, ONLY CALLING SHEEP; well, maybe that's why It come.

Nobles and Nobodies

- **Noble** – a person of rank or position (humanly speaking)
- **A nobody** – a person of no importance and no authority

30 It bypassed all the nobles of the land. IT BYPASSED ALL THE NOBLES, AND WAS REVEALED TO THE NOBODIES. ALL THE NOBLES that were decorated with--with GREAT DOCTOR'S DIVINITY and--AND PSYCHOLOGY, and--AND HIGHLY EDUCATIONS, and great cathedrals and things, IT WAS ALL BYPASSED AND REVEALED TO NOBODIES.

The Unwelcomed Christ

- HE ALWAYS COMES WHERE HE FEELS WELCOME (AND WHERE HE IS APPRECIATED).
 - "The Unwelcomed Christ".
- BUT SEE HERE WHAT HE WILL DO FOR THOSE WHO MAKE HIM FEEL WELCOME.
 - Bearing in mind that He is Jehovah - HIS VERY ESSENCE IS TO MAKE HIMSELF KNOWN.

God takes the nothings to make the somethings.

- HE WOULD LOVE TO TAKE THE SOMEBODIES BUT THEY WON'T LET HIM.
 - They have too many other ideas, objectives and agendas
 - They would get the Message too mixed up in other things
 - And among people who would not appreciate It. So He bypasses them and honours the humble and unlearned.

"AND AS LONG AS WE THINK WE'RE SOMETHINGS, THEN WE CANNOT BE USED IN THE HANDS OF GOD. WE MUST FORSAKE ALL WE EVER KNEW OR LEARNED."

- TO KNOW CHRIST REQUIRES A TEACHABLE SPIRIT.

Outside of the Organisations

"They didn't have nine hundred and ninety-six different organizations as we have today. They had about three. And in the three, follow down to three, and none of the three recognized It."

- None of their organisations recognised It when He first came. He had to reveal Himself outside of them all. He would have come to them but they wouldn't have received Him.
- VERY FEW PEOPLE IN ANY GENERATION ARE WILLING TO RECEIVE IT THE WAY HE SENDS IT. VERY FEW ARE WILLINGLY TO LOSE ALL THAT THE WORLD COUNTS GAIN.

Divine Interpretation

"they did not recognize Him **because It didn't fit their interpretation.**"

- WE HAVE TO BE SO CAREFUL IN DICTATING TO GOD THE WAY THAT HE SHOULD MINISTER TO OUR NEEDS.
 - We will find His Word of promise bypassing us just as it did them in that day.

"God doesn't need anybody to interpret His Word. **He is His own Interpreter.**"

- HE INTERPRETS HIS WORD BY MANIFESTING IT.
- Hence **we should worry** when what we claim to be the correct interpretation of the Word brings forth no manifestation.
- The greatest hindrance to receiving divine wisdom is man's wisdom.
- We have to master this thought of human ability. He abases the proud and gives grace to the humble.

Jas 4:6

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

Inspiration

47 What inspiration to those herdsmen! The Angels coming down to speak to herdsmen, Angels of God coming to speak to a bunch of shepherd.

Vindicated Word of truth

49 Now, the vindicated Word of Truth.

- It was a vindicated Word of Truth - they found Him exactly had been told them.
- Follow the Message of the Angel and you will find Him just as He said.
- God will always back up what He promises, and will never stir up your expectation to something that He doesn't desire you to have.

Divine Compatibility

how fitting it is to **a shepherd to receive a message of a new borned sheep**. It could **come to nothing else** but a shepherd. That's why **He was borned in the stable**, and not in a house.

- The shepherds were **perfectly suited to the Message**.
- Representative men. **They didn't mind how It came nor where It came**.
- **THEY WERE READY TO RECEIVE IT IN A STABLE BECAUSE THAT'S THE TYPE OF PEOPLE THEY WERE.**
 - They had no links to society, so worried not of the shame.
 - They had no ecclesiastical teaching to stand in the way of the Message.
- **LIKE MARY, A PEASANT GIRL, THEIR CONDITION WAS CONDUCIVE TO SIMPLE FAITH IN THE MESSAGE OF THEIR DAY.**
 - "Be it unto me according to Thy Word".

At home with their Lamb in their Stable

53 **See how at ease these herdsmen was in the stable?** What do you think **a theologian** would have been in there? He'd a-put a pin over his nose, and said, "Get me out of this place." See? **He would have been so out of place, he'd been in misery.**

- You're in a miserable and wretched condition when you feel out of place in the presence of the Lamb's Message.

54 But, you see, **it was "just at home" to the shepherds**. **God knows where to send His Message**. See? Just exactly right. **In this state the shepherds was in then, IN THEIR STABLE WITH THEIR LAMB**, a-vindicated Message that they had heard. How beautiful! In **THE PRESENCE OF THE MESSIAH, VINDICATED WORD OF THEIR MESSAGE**.

- **THEIR LOWLY FRAME OF MIND AND THEIR SIMPLICITY PERFECTLY SUITED THEM THE MESSAGE THEY RECEIVED.**
- **THE DOVE CAN ONLY COME TO THE LAMB.**
- **SHOWING BOTH THE NATURE OF GOD, AND ALSO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE THAT HE CHOOSES TO HONOUR.**
- Their lowly status made them feel perfectly at home there. This was an environment and condition that they were used to walking in.

Personal Revelation

- Their Lamb - personal revelation makes the Message personal to you. Luke 2:11-"For unto YOU is born this day in the City of David a Saviour". It's our Church, the Message we believe. When its "my parents church" then it shows a lack of personal revelation.
- Note there was only one Lamb, one manger, one stable, one Angel's Message etc. "We are not divided, all one body we".

63 But the shepherds felt completely at ease in that place with God's Lamb.

Our Denomination

"And they believed if there was such a thing as the Messiah on earth, It would certainly have to come to their denomination. It would be their group would receive It, or "It wasn't right."

Did you notice then? God never chose any out of their group, but He chose that who wasn't connected with any of it. **Because one group would said, "You see what we did?"**

- He in that day chose to reveal Himself outside of all of their religious systems. What an indictment of the state of religion in that day (and yet there were genuine individuals in there - Nicodemus etc).
- Lord, help us to never be found in such a condition.

When **they had a beautiful place for Him to come**, they had everything fixed for Him to come, and then to think that He would come down (and go) and not bring their teachers the message, and would give It to a bunch of unlearned shepherds? **And then bring His own Son, and have Him born in a--a stable, a common livery stable?** Well, in a--in a manger of hay? Why, it couldn't be so." **They wouldn't believe It, because It was so humble.**

- Showing that they had the Written Word, but didn't know the nature nor the essence of the Author. The Nativity shows us **Who He really is** - His humility and simplicity.
- "If you want to stay with God then stay humble".
- Satan is in all the pomp and outward glory. Jehovah is in character, simplicity and humility.
- "The way up is the way down".

Think. Christ's first converts and first congregation was shepherds, not clergymen; shepherds, herders. Why shepherds? Ha.

First Noel

Out praising and glorifying God for what they'd seen and heard, heard Angels sing for their first time to a human being. Angels had never sang to a human being before. And look at the choirs, how they had stood and trained and trained those voices; they'd sing at the birth of the Messiah; and they were all bypassed.

The first time Angels ever sang at a celebration, it was in heaven. If you'll look in Job 38:7 (as I see some of you taking notes), when God first planned on making His first creation, the earth...

The Angels first sang at the original creation - the mortal creation that fell. Here was the beginning of the immortal creation - the cure for the curse, the beginning of the reversal of all that had been undone.

97 Now, notice. God is fixing to make another creation. He creating mortal earth, mortal life. Angels sing in heaven. But here He's creating a new Life, Eternal Life for man, and He's singing to His subjects through Angels: on the earth, not in heaven. Heaven had Eternal Life. See? And He sang... They sang to the heavens, when the mortal creation come in; and here the immortal creation is coming in, and now they're singing to earthly people: the first time to shepherds. Striking, isn't it? 98 He had started a new creation. What was it? A creation of Himself. God was made flesh and dwelt among us. That's... The Bible said, "In the beginning of the creation of God..."

- The immortal creation is coming in - the new creation. Jesus is the Beginning of the Creation of God.
- Remember, there is always singing at the birth of a king.
- Jesus said, in Matthew 5, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

104 Mary said, in Luke 1:52, when she was anointed with the Spirit, the Holy Ghost upon her, she said, "He has exalted them of low degree." Mary said that, the mother of Jesus, said, "He has exalted those of low degree." Luke also said, "The common people heard Him gladly." *****