

**12-20-20 Message From
LESSON TO LEARN FROM THE TIME OF CHRIST'S BIRTH
SUNDAY SCHOOL HOUR**

It is hard to believe that this week is Christmas. Who would have ever thought that we would still be dealing with crazy lockdowns over this coronavirus. This whole year has been a year of drama and controversy. This morning I would like to put all this aside. I have to confess that ever since election day I have stopped watching the news. The night Jesus was born we read that the angels announced His entrance into the world with these words.

Luke 2:9 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.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

The angel that announced the birth of Christ when He came to this world, said he brought good tidings of great joy.

Listen to what the angels said,

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

On earth peace, good will toward men.

When Christ came to planet earth, the angels proclaimed glad tidings, of peace, good will, and joy.

They cried out, GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN!!!!

This world is filled with bad news and discouraging news.

Bad news makes good news.

I have news for you, Jesus is Lord and He's going to tell every leader move over and He is going to singlehandedly straighten out this mess that men have made of our planet.

THERE WILL BE NO VOTE, THERE WILL BE NO OPINION POLLS.

When Jesus comes He will bring peace on earth.
When Jesus comes He will bring healing. No more pandemics.
When Jesus comes He will straighten out the news stations. No more lies.
When Jesus comes He will bring good will toward men!

Now every year, around Christmas I used to gather the family around the Christmas tree and I would read the Christmas story and then we would sing some Christmas hymns.

Sometimes, when this world gets kind of hectic, and my schedule gets confused, I still like to just sit down and read God's word and forget about all the confusion of this life.

While Martha was frazzled in the kitchen, Mary decided to sit down at the feet of Jesus and listen and escape for a while by sitting at the feet of Jesus!

Now we don't have a Christmas tree here this morning, but let us imagine we are all huddled together and let us imagine, we are sitting around the Christmas tree, and let's take some time to read the Christmas story!

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Luke 2:2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

Luke 2:3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Beth-lehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

Luke 2:5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Luke 2:6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luke 2:9 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.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:15 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 Beth-lehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Luke 2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Luke 2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Now let us consider some lessons we can learn from the Christmas story.

I. THE BIRTH OF CHRIST TOOK PLACE DURING THE HEIGHT OF ROMAN POWER AND GLORY.

In the days of Caesar Augustus. Caesar Augustus was Rome's greatest ruler. He was the adopted son of Julius Caesar.

So great was he that all the other Roman Emperors after him and many others around the world used his name as a title. "Caesar and even Augustus came to mean Emperor or KING.

Caesar Augustus was that Emperor that fought and destroyed Mark Antony and Cleopatra of Egypt. Under his leadership Rome had what was called the Pax Romana. An age of Roman peace unknown to the gentile world previous to this. Only other time like it was in the days of Solomon.

Here are some interesting facts about the time:

The month of August (Latin Augustus) is named after Augustus; until his time it was called Sextilis (the sixth month of the Roman calendar). Commonly repeated lore has it that August has 31 days because Augustus wanted his month to match the length of Julius Caesar's July,

Augustus was deified soon after his death, and both his borrowed surname, Caesar, and his title Augustus became the permanent titles of the rulers of Rome for the next 400 years, and were still in use at Constantinople fourteen centuries after his death. In many languages, Caesar became the word for emperor, as in German (Kaiser) and in Russian (Tsar). The cult of the Divine Augustus continued until the state religion of the Empire was changed to Christianity in the 4th century. Consequently, there are many excellent statues and busts of the first, and in some ways the greatest, of the emperors. Augustus' mausoleum also originally contained bronze pillars inscribed with a record of

his life, the Res Gestae Divi Augusti, which had also been disseminated throughout the empire during his lifetime.

With this political Backdrop we realize that God puts it into his heart to tax the whole world to fulfill the prophecy that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Lessons to learn:

1. *God is in control even of ungodly political leaders.*

God revealed this truth to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream.

Daniel 4:17 This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

When you study the history of these leaders.. it is baffling how it is that they were so base yet so powerful. HITLER is a prime example..

It seems.. the more base and wicked the person, the more powerful they are in this world system.

2. *God gives leaders for various reasons..*

Sometimes God does not give the world leadership because they are great leaders. Many times leaders are given as a punishment to a wicked world. Then in the end God punishes the wicked nations and leaders that were used for that cause.

An example of this is ancient Babylon, and Assyria. God used Babylon and Assyria to punish Israel and then punished them for their wickedness.

This makes me tremble for our our present state and situation with the change over of leadership in our nation. Is God setting us up for a great fall?

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE IS THE THIRD HIGHEST OFFICE IN THIS COUNTRY!

Next in line after the vice president to be elected. Think about the kind of person that is in that position. Think about who will soon be the vice president.

Isaiah 3:11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

Isaiah 3:12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

Isaiah 3:13 The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

I heard that more woman are being appointed in Biden's administration than any other time in history. It is no longer a question of who is qualified to lead, it is a matter of gender and race. A fulfillment of Isaiah 3:11-13 as a judgment against the sins of our nation.

II. JOSEPH AND MARY WERE USED OF THE LORD TO BRING CHRIST INTO THIS WORLD.

1. They were people just like us.

Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Beth-lehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

Luke 2:5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Luke 2:6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

A. They had to deal with the daily trials of life. Just like us.

What a hassle.

What an Inconvenience.

They would have never chosen to do this.

THINK OF ALL THE HASSLE.

THINK OF ALL THE WORK INVOLVED IN MAKING THAT TRIP.

Most of us would have protested to the authorities.

We would have asked for an exclusion.

We would have just not complied.

I AM SURE THERE WERE MANY IN JOSEPH'S DAY WHO JUST REFUSED TO PAY THE TAX!

Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Romans 13:2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Romans 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

Romans 13:4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Romans 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Romans 13:6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Romans 13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Romans 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

III. GOD ALWAYS HAS THOSE WHO ARE READY TO GIVE HIM PRAISE.

Luke 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Where were the leaders of this world?

Where were the religious leaders?

Where were the scribes.. and Pharisees?

I wonder, if the Lord were to pay a visit to planet earth today, who would go to meet Him?

MORNING MESSAGE
LESSONS TO LEARN FROM THE LOWLY SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:9 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.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:15 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 Beth-lehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Luke 2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Luke 2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

I. THE MESSENGERS SENT TO THE SHEPHERD:

Lowly shepherds working the evening shift.

They were not the rich.

They were not the noble.

They were not the political leaders..

From the first day of our Lord's birth He was despised and rejected.

We are pilgrims and wanderers.

We are not the noble, the mighty, the great.

Luke 2:9 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.

God will be glorified even if the nobles and the religious leaders refused to do it. God will find those who are willing.

When the Pharisees asked the Lord to command the people to not shout out their praises to God, note what He said to them:

Luke 19:39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

Luke 19:40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

God will be magnified and glorified even when the high and lofty ones of this world refuse to give God the glory due His name!

So who does He use when Jesus was born? He uses the lowly shepherds.

II. THE MESSAGE TO THE SHEPHERDS.

1. Fear not:

Like the animals of the forest fear when men enter their habitat.

So we mere mortals fear when the angels come into our territory and would seem to invade our comfort zone.

Today there is such a removal from our lives any sense of the divine that there is no fear of God.

People have no cognizance of His presence.

There is no fear of His person or even those who represent Him.

We are living in a Paganistic world indeed:

Pilate: Marveled that Jesus did not fear him.

 Herod and his soldiers mocked Christ.

 The pharisees dared to try and trick Christ with their questions.

HAS ANYTHING CHANGED?

2. NOTE THE MESSAGE OF THE ANGELS: "I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS.."

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

The Christmas message is a good message.

The Christmas message is good tidings.

The Christmas message should bring great joy to all people:

Jesus is the Saviour of the world.

Jesus came to take away our sins.

GOOD NEWS.

GOOD NEWS.

How ironic it is that our governor has locked everything down for the Christmas season. The world brings us constant bad news. When we watch the news on TV it is constant bad news. Our Lord said, when Jesus came into this world it was a proclamation of GOOD NEWS!

3. THIS IS A MESSAGE OF GREAT JOY:

OF GREAT JOY.

The word great comes from the greek word MEGAS

3173[?] megas, meg'-as; includ. the prol. forms, fem. megale, plur. megaloi, etc.; comp. also 3176, 3187; big (lit. or fig., in a very wide application):-(+ fear) exceedingly, great (-est), high, large, loud, mighty, + (be) sore (afraid), strong, X to years.

Joy to the world kind of news.

G5479chara, khar-ah'; from 5463; cheerfulness, i.e. calm delight:-gladness, greatly, (X be exceeding) joy (-ful, -fully, -fulness, -ous).

gladness greatly joy joyful joyfully joyfulness joyous.

MEGA JOY!

What the world gives is discouragement.
What the Lord brings is hope and joy and good news.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

4. THIS IS A MESSAGE GIVEN TO ALL PEOPLE.

Jesus is the Saviour of the whole world, not just given to the Jews only but to all people!

III. THE ANGELS ANNOUNCED OUR LORD'S BIRTH:

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Jesus is indeed JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

JESUS = God in the Flesh. He was man.

CHRIST = Anointed king of Israel. He was King.
THE LORD = God in the flesh.. He was Lord.

IV. THE SALUTATION GIVE TO THE SHEPHERDS:

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

1. Note. WHO GAVE THE SALUTATION? IT WAS GIVEN BY A MULTITUDE OF ANGELS.

When we think we are all alone.
WE NEED TO REMEMBER THERE BE MORE WITH US THAN WITH THE
ENEMIES OF CHRIST.

I Kings 19:9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

I Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

I Kings 19:11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:

I Kings 19:12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

I Kings 19:13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

I Kings 19:14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Note the Lord said I still have a remnant!

I Kings 19:18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

We need to remember that we are on the winning side.
We are not losing.

Remember the words of Job:

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:

Remember the words of Meshach Shadrach and Abed-nego:

Daniel 3:17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

Daniel 3:18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

Remember the words of Paul the Apostle:

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Romans 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Remember Elisha when the God's chariots of fire surrounded him.

II Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

II Kings 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

WE STILL SERVE THE SAME GOD!

But what has changed when the Lord replied to Pilate:

John 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

John 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

John 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

NOTE WHEN WE ARE GOING THROUGH TRIALS WE SHOULD REALIZE WHAT GOD COULD DO FOR US IF HE CHOSE TO.

He told Peter:

Matthew 26:52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

Matthew 26:53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Matthew 26:54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

Matthew 26:55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

Matthew 26:56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

2. NOTE THE SALUTATION ITSELF:

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

A. GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST.

MOST OF OUR PROBLEMS IN THIS LIFE COME BECAUSE WE ARE NOT REALLY LOOKING TO BRING GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST.

Going to the cross brought glory to God.

Our problem is that we want to bring ourselves glory.

Most of the time we really do not want any part of what brings glory to God. IT WOULD TAKE WORK AND SUFFERING ON OUR PART TO BRING GLORY TO GOD!

It brought glory to God for Jesus to come to earth.

It was a sacrifice on His part to come.

B. ON EARTH PEACE GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN.

WHAT A HEART WARMING MESSAGE.

GOD'S PROGRAM IS THE BEST PROGRAM FOR MANKIND.

Men seek to do their own thing and it only brings heartache and suffering.

CONCLUSION

Why did God choose the lowly shepherds alone to come and worship Jesus in the manger? The reason why is it was a foretaste of things to come.

I Corinthians 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

I Corinthians 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

I Corinthians 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

I Corinthians 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

God wants only our good and best.

Men seeking to get the most and best out of life are only bringing to themselves destruction and heartache.

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF MANKIND'S ENTRANCE INTO THIS WORLD.
MEN HAVE BEEN SEEKING THEIR BETTERMENT THE WRONG WAY.

EVE THOUGHT:

By eating the forbidden fruit she would gain.
Instead she got to herself and her husband a curse.

How many people this Christmas are looking for the better life?

DO THEY HAVE PEACE?
ARE THEY RECEIVING GOOD WILL?
ARE THEY BETTER FOR IT? NO. NO. NO.

Only through Christ can we have what the angels proclaimed.

PEACE.
GOOD WILL.
GREAT JOY.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

We can only have this in Christ:

In this world what do we have: In this world we will have tribulation.

Jesus has won the victory.
Jesus is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.
He's just waiting for that last person to get saved.

Hold on to your hats you have not seen anything yet. The coronavirus is just a warm up for things to come.

This world can't even take a Donald Trump. They have to get rid of him. He is but the most carnal of Christians and they can't stand him. How much more do they reject Jesus the King of kings.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

12-20-20 Evening Service LESSONS FROM THE BIRTH OF JESUS CONTINUED

Imagine the truth of the incarnation. The eternal God of heaven took on flesh and became a man.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

There was a time in Church history that more people had a problem with this truth than the truth that Christ was eternal. It's an antinomy that we can't understand. A mystery how God could add to Himself a body like mortal man.

The idea that God could take a body and become a man was a harder truth to swallow than the fact that Christ was eternal.

Today most people believe that there was a man called Jesus Christ, but they deny His deity, eternity, and equality with God the Father.

Isaiah 9:6 says : For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

His name shall be WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, THE MIGHTY GOD, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

Note: His name shall be called the MIGHTY GOD!

I. LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE INCARNATION.

Basically It Was A Lesson of Faith From Mary The Mother Of Jesus:

Luke 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Luke 1:29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

1. *Mary was troubled by this saying:*

We look back at the virgin birth with awe and wonder.

But when Mary first heard the news it troubled her!

Luke 1:29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

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Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

She was engaged to be married and to be found pregnant during this engagement period would have been a devastating blow to Joseph, and could have led to her death by stoning.

Mary said how would this be since she hadn't consummated the marriage with Joseph yet.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

2. Note Mary's declaration of trust and faith in the Lord:

Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

There is nothing that we do for the Lord that doesn't demand faith and trust on our part.

When we obey the Lord it always works out for a blessing.
But usually we are troubled and challenged to obey His word.

Every major decision and leading of the Lord in my life demanded faith and trust on my part. Later I would see blessings, but at first it demanded faith and trust in His power and leading.

God's ways are not our ways and so it is we need to learn to obey and trust Him.

Even in the miraculous conception of Jesus, there is a lesson to learn for all of us.

3. Mary accepted the challenge of faith and was willing to believe God would take care of everything.

Imagine what she told Joseph.

Luke 1:39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

Mary goes to stay with Elizebeth and Zachariah for three months..

Luke 1:56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

Mary stayed with Elizebeth until she had her child, John.

What do you think she told Joseph when she came back to her home town?

II. THERE WERE LESSONS TO LEARN FROM JOSEPH:

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Matthew 1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

Matthew 1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

1. *After three months it became evident that Mary was with child. Joseph probably did not believe Mary.*

As he was thinking on these things he decided not to make a public example of Mary (he could have had her stoned to death) but he decided to put her away privately.

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Proverbs 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.

People make a public spectacle of sin so often.

Some people also have no shame when it comes to sin.

Certain things should be kept private not to allow wicked minds and wicked men to gossip.

I Corinthians 13:5 (LOVE) Doth not behave itself unseemly,

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Some things are not appropriate. People need to use discretion. Here Mary was with child and Joseph and her were not married yet, so he married her privately so as not to draw attention to that fact. Sometimes, it is better to have a small private wedding rather than create turmoil and strife with traditions and public spectacles.

I believe Joseph did away with the ceremony and just went ahead and married Mary and waited till after she had her first baby to consummate the marriage.

Matthew 1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

This dispels the false doctrine that teaches Mary was a perpetual virgin. Mary also had other children.

Luke 8:19 Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

1. *Joseph was willing to believe God.*

Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

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Matthew 1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

Matthew 1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

2. *Joseph was a sacrificial man:*

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Luke 2:2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

Luke 2:3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Beth-lehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

Luke 2:5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Luke 2:6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Imagine the sacrifice Joseph made to take Mary to Bethlehem.

Why didn't he leave Mary in Galilee and go himself to Bethlehem?

Joseph loved Mary and he was going to take care of her.

It was not customary to have to take the whole family in this official business unless God put in the heart of Caesar Augustus to make this tax also a census and made a special decree that every man woman and child of the lineage of David was to report to Jerusalem.

Application: So Joseph and Mary both being of the lineage of David might have been obliged to go.

NOTE: Jesus would have been declared to be of the lineage of David thru this census. So no man could dispute his qualification and lineage to be qualified to be a son of David.

3. Joseph and Mary were poor and humble people:

Luke 2:6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

There was no room for them because they were not of this world. They were not of the wealthy and famous and renowned.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Imagine the regret of these innkeepers for all eternity they knew that they had opportunity to house Jesus but rejected that opportunity.

Joseph was a loving caring sacrificial husband.

Application: How sad it is to see men today who would not sacrifice for their family and care for them.

III. MORE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN FROM THE SHEPHERDS:

Luke 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luke 2:9 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.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:15 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 Beth-lehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Luke 2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Luke 2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

1. THESE LOWLY SHEPHERDS WERE CHOSEN OF GOD TO COME AND WITNESS THE MIRACULOUS ENTRANCE INTO THIS WORLD OF THE MESSIAH

Luke 2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Note: They were minding their flock by night.

Note: It was not the Pharisees and Saducees or Kings and rulers that were invited to first greet the Lord of Glory into this world.

Application: God has our phone number and as we go about our daily chores and business God can get our attention and let us witness His miraculous works.

Imagine the sight these men were allowed to witness.

Luke 2:9 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.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Meteorite showers could not compare to what they saw.

Hale Bop Comet was a spectacle but nothing to be compared with what they saw!

What these shepherds saw was miraculous and marvelous.

2. *These shepherds were obedient to their invitation.*

Luke 2:15 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 Beth-lehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Luke 2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

So many are not.

The pharisees and Saducees were aware of the prophecies concerning His birth but they didn't show up.

These lowly shepherds came to worship Him.

3. *The Lowly Shepherds Spread the good news concerning Christs birth.*

Luke 2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Luke 2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Lessons to learn:

Mary was a woman of faith.

Joseph was a man of character and Justice.

Lowly shepherds were people of faith.

IV. Lessons We Can Learn from the Wise Men:

Matthew 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Beth-lehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Matthew 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Matthew 2:3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Matthew 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

Matthew 2:5 And they said unto him, In Beth-lehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

Matthew 2:6 And thou Beth-lehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Matthew 2:7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

Matthew 2:8 And he sent them to Beth-lehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Matthew 2:9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

Matthew 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Matthew 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Matthew 2:13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Matthew 2:14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

Matthew 2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Matthew 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Beth-lehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

Matthew 2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

Matthew 2:18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Jeremiah 31:15 Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

The wise men were used of God probably to provide for the Holy family when they journeyed to Egypt.

Here we have wise men from the east probably from ancient Babylon area who had enough respect for the prophecies concerning the Messiah, that they traveled many miles to pay homage to Jesus while the wise scribes of Jerusalem were too busy buttering up to Rome to worry about the Christ child. Everything was prophetic and a prelude to His rejection from the nation and reception by the gentiles. Of course we know how that went and the wise men were indicative of the future gentile church age.

These Magi were no doubt descendants of the Magi who Daniel presided over in Babylon. He saved their lives and his reputation would have made him looked up to by these men who would have read his writings.

Moreover, Daniel, "chief of the Magi," had foretold Messiah's kingdom (Daniel 2:44; Daniel 9:25); naturally the Magi ("wise men") looked for the kingdom and the king among the people of him whose fame as a Magian they had heard of. Zoroaster's predictions led them to look for Zosiosh, the Head of the kingdom who should conquer Ahriman and raise the dead. Their presents, "gold, frankincense, and myrrh," were the usual gifts of subject nations (Psalm 72:15; 1 Kings 10:2; 1 Kings 10:10; 2 Chronicles 9:24; Song of Solomon 3:6; Song of Solomon 4:14). They came to the infant Jesus some considerable time after the shepherds in Luke 2, for now He is no longer in an inn but in the "house" (Matthew 2:11). (For details, see JESUS CHRIST, BETHLEHEM, and HEROD.) The star remained stationary while they were at Jerusalem, where they had turned aside; but when they left it the star again guided them until they reached Christ's birthplace.

These Magi would have been learned in astronomy and astrology. They saw an unusual star from where they lived and studied the ancient writings and would have learned and read that a star and scepter would arise out of Jacob. Even Balaam predicted this

NUM 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh:
there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out
of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the
children of Sheth.

Daniel actually gave the time table for the coming of the Messiah and these students of Daniel would have read his writings.

DNL 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

DNL 9:25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

DNL 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Here we have a prediction that the Messiah would appear 483 years after the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. It would make sense that these Magi would have looked to the writings of Daniel who was a Jew and wrote of the coming of the star out of Jacob. He certainly of all the Magi would have known about his coming.

What is sad is that the Pharisees and Scribes had these same writings but could not even be concerned to look into the matter.

The caravan of these men had to be great enough to stir the whole city and trouble even King Herod. These were probably not just three men, there was probably a great caravan of nobles and a sizable army with these magi.

MAT 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Beth-lehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

MAT 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

MAT 2:3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

I doubt all Jerusalem would have been troubled by the appearance of three lone nobles from Persia. I think they would have been troubled with a large entourage of soldiers and camels and nobles.

What are the lessons we learn from the wise men?

1. THOSE WHO WERE THE LEAST LIKELY TO COME LOOK FOR JESUS WERE THE ONES WHO CAME.
2. THOSE WHO WERE THE FARTHEST AWAY FROM BETHLEHEM WERE THE ONES WHO WERE WILLING TO MAKE THE LONG TRIP TO FIND HIM.
3. THESE BECAME A REBUKE TO THE LEADERS OF THE NATION WHO WERE CONTENT PLAYING FOOTSIES WITH ROME.
4. THESE MEN WERE RIGHTLY CALLED WISE MEN, FOR ALL WISDOM IS EMBODIED IN JESUS CHRIST AND WISE MEN WILL SEEK HIM!
5. OH COME LET US ADORE HIM.