

Luke 2 vs 8-15: Keep Watch!

⁸ In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock at night.

David had fed his sheep in those same fields around Bethlehem, and today, 3,000 years later, there are still shepherds feeding flocks in those fields. Shepherds typically kept watch over their fields by night from April to November. Shepherds were singled out in the Talmud as an untrustworthy group, and not qualified to bear witness in trials. The nature of their calling kept them from observing the ceremonial law. God sent the message of Jesus's birth to the same people that Jesus would focus His ministry on—the outcasts and sinners that He came to save, who knew that they needed a savior. They were open to what He had to say, and available and willing to share the good news of Jesus' birth. And they were alert they were keeping watch. We are to keep watch and stay alert. See Mark 13Lvs 33-37

And what flocks were they watching? Many of the sheep raised in the area would have been used for the sacrificial offerings at the Temple in Jerusalem. These guardians of the temple sacrifices, these unworthy, sinful men who saw so many sacrificial lambs born, would get to be present at the birth of the “**lamb who takes away the sin of the world**” (John 1:29).

⁹ And an angel of the Lord *suddenly* stood near them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

In this dark of night--suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared near them, with the Glory of God shining all around them. They were terribly afraid.

¹⁰ And so the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;

The angel proclaims the good news, the Gospel. When Jesus comes, it's always good news. It's good news to you and me. We celebrate Christmas because we rejoice at the coming of our Savior and Lord. It is Jesus Who illuminates God for us, and helps us understand who He is. In 2 Cor 4:4b Paul says that believers **see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God**. We are able to see God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Do you want joy, peace, contentedness, wisdom and knowledge? Make God the source of your Joy and follow Him completely. Those shepherds couldn't even imagine the joy that those angels were really talking about. Jesus' birth pointed to this joy in God that was now possible.

Jesus brought Joy wherever He went--In John 17:13, we read **13 “But now I am coming to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.** Jesus' mission was to preach hope to the downtrodden, the lost sheep of the house of Israel. We see this when Isaiah describes Jesus' mission in Isaiah 61:1–2a **1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD anointed me To bring good news to the humble; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim release to captives And freedom to prisoners; 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD** He said in John 15:11 **11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.** Jesus' ministry brought hope to so many who were shut out of the Pharisees religious system, and brought Joy that they too were children of Abraham, and God had a plan for their lives.

To know Jesus Christ brings great joy --Do you want to live your life in Joy, despite adversity here on earth? Do you want to look forward in rock-solid hope, grounded in the promises of God, toward a joyous future? Then decide to begin a relationship with Jesus today. No matter what you have done, or how far off-course you've wandered, Jesus came to seek and to save those that are lost. And it's a day of rejoicing when anyone decides that they want to turn away from their sin, and turn toward Jesus. The angel's birth announcement of the long-awaited Messiah is good news of great joy to all people. Jesus is the Savior of the World. That's why, even at His birth, this good news was declared to be “for all people”. That's why John 3:16 says “For God so Love the World”, or why 1st John 4:14 calls Him “the Savior of the World”, and as we've read why John the Baptist says Jesus is the “lamb who takes away

the sin of the world” in John 1:29. Jesus is our savior, and He is the long-awaited Jewish Messiah. As we continue in Luke 2:11

¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is ^[h]Christ the Lord.

The angel tells them that today—this very day—Jesus has been born. Jesus is first described as Savior—which was His prominent role as Messiah during His first coming, and second, as Christ the Lord, which is his prominent role in His Second Coming.

¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

The angel’s sign to them is that they will find the baby, not wrapped in a fine receiving blanket, but in these strips of cloth, and lying in an animal feed trough.

¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army of angels praising God and saying,

And then, suddenly, the heavens burst open, and there appeared a portion of the heavenly host, the army of angels that serves God praising Him.

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased.”

So, they are encouraging the shepherds to join with them in praising God to the greatest extent possible. The Peace that Jesus makes available between God and man. It’s letting the shepherds know that Jesus is bringing this opportunity to have a harmonious relationship with God.

15 When the angels had departed from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem, then, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” So, why did God choose the shepherds? He chose the shepherds because they would respond to Him. God chose them because they weren’t too busy for God. God has sent His son Jesus into the world to be born in a manger, but also so that He could be born in our hearts. God wants you to accept His free gift of His Son, so that you will have the peace that the angels spoke of, then end of the conflict with God. Respond to Him today. Begin the most Joyful relationship of your life. And if you’re already a Christian—Stay Alert, look up, for your redemption draws near!