



12/24/24

Happy Christmas Eve! I can't believe it's already here. Enjoy the celebration as the angels did on that first night, singing glory to God in the highest.

*Blessings,
Jonns*

Luke 2:8-20

"O holy night, the stars are brightly shining. It is the night of our dear Savior's birth." And the angels couldn't wait to tell someone! The Father couldn't wait to tell someone! Who would He tell first? The scribes and Pharisees? No. The people in royalty? No. He told the shepherds... who were out in the fields where the stars were shining so brightly, as they did every night. The shepherds were used to gently and tenderly caring for the flock of sheep that were unblemished lambs... who were sacred to the people of Israel because they would be the offering for the sins of the people. But God had a divine interruption planned for these shepherds.

First, one angel appeared. But this angel came in the glory of God. His brightness was so bright that it filled the sky and overshadowed the stars. The shepherds had never seen anything like this (and they never would again). They were freaked out!

The angel said something he had to say to everyone else who saw him... "Fear not." When God wants me to understand something, I can be sure as His child... I don't have to be afraid. I see His tender affection that is so excited to express His love and hope to us.

The angel said, "Fear not, for behold... check it out... I bring you good news of great joy that will be for ALL the people." For everyone... not just the rich or royal or people in high positions. All people. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." And once He fulfills His purpose on this earth, there will be no more need for unblemished lambs to atone for sin. He is the final sacrifice... and "where there is forgiveness (from Him) there is no longer any offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18). It's like trying to pay a debt that has

already been paid. There's no need.

Jews always love signs... as do all people... and so the angel gave the shepherds a sign. "You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." How often does this happen? Who would choose to give birth to a baby in an unsanitary barn??? The Father in heaven would... so that I could believe... so that the shepherds who were so used to swaddling baby lambs and laying them in a manger would get a glimpse of God's glorious plan for His people.

In that moment, the sky that was already lit up beyond anything the shepherds had ever seen was now even brighter! A multitude of heavenly angels appeared praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth PEACE among those with whom He is pleased!" I don't believe the angels were carrying out a task. They are constantly in the full presence of God. They see Him in all His glory. I'm sure it shocks them that God looks on mankind and wants to give us peace, that He is pleased to send His Son to us. And yet, they probably aren't so shocked... because they know Almighty God and His immeasurable love. They had been worshiping Jesus in heaven for who knows how long, and they were in awe of His willingness to empty Himself and give His life for us.

And then this incredibly illuminated sky suddenly went dark... with only the peaceful stars shining over the shepherds as the angels went back to their home in heaven. So the shepherds went back to their jobs of taking care of the sheep as though nothing had happened. NOPE!!! They hightailed it to Bethlehem so that they could see this baby in a manger!!! And they found Him just as the angel had said they would... because when God says it is so, it is so... it is not a matter of IF, but WHEN.

Well, as anyone who gets excited about news does, they couldn't help but share it! They told EVERYONE about this baby and what the angel had said. They probably left out NO detail. "And all who heard wondered at what the shepherds told them." This is what I wonder... why didn't the people go to see for themselves? O Lord, I pray that my wonder of You will always bring me to You!!! Let me never take for granted that, through Jesus, I have freedom to draw near to Your throne of grace... to abide with You and abide in Your love and in Your truth.

Help me to be like Mary... to always treasure Your word in my heart... "For where my treasure is, there my heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Help me to ponder Your word, to dwell on Your word. As I do, I know that I will be like the shepherds... who started with fear, but after experiencing You, were filled with praise and glorified You. Why? Because "every word of Yours proves true" (Psalm 18:30). EVERY promise is true. Everything You say is true.

Let me never be satisfied with going through the motions. Let me always draw closer to You... the more I do, the more I will treasure You above all. May it be so.