

## THE INCREDIBLE MESSAGE

Thursday, December 25

Reading: Luke 2:8-20

**Matthew 11:4** Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: **5** The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. **6** Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of Me."

*While shepherds kept their watching  
O'er silent flocks by night  
Behold throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light*

*The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior's birth*

*Down in a lowly manger  
Our humble Christ was born  
And God send us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn*

These three verses, found in most hymn books, focus on the familiar Christmas story of the angels and shepherds. We keep coming back to these verses because they are the heart of the Christmas message. However, they have become so familiar to us that we often miss the awe and wonder of this scene.

These shepherds were just ordinary people doing their job. They did not expect a sky full of angels or an earth-shattering announcement that the Savior had been born. They are a reminder of how Jesus came. He came, not just for the rich and powerful, but for the humble, the outcast, the forgotten of society. He was born in a "lowly manger" so anyone could come worship Him. The shepherds should challenge our notions that someone – anyone – is "not worth" our sharing the gospel. From the billionaire in his mansion to the homeless person on the street – Jesus came to bring salvation for all!

Listen again to the angel's words. The "Savior" had come! The One who will rescue us from our deadliest enemies – sin and death! He is the "Messiah/Christ" – the Anointed One! After centuries of promises and pictures of what the Savior would do, He had finally arrived! Finally, the angel proclaimed He was "the Lord." He was not like any other king or ruler. He was God Himself come in human form! The Creator of the universe became like one of His creations. And how would the shepherds find this Savior, Deliverer, and Deity? They would find a newborn Baby lying in manger!

Imagine the shepherds' awe at the angel's message. The shock as the chorus of angels proclaimed peace and goodwill. The confusion as they realized this was not the way they were taught the Messiah would come. And yet they went, they worshipped, and they rejoiced.

Do we have the wonder of the shepherds? Has the Christmas story become so mundane that we don't even bother to stop and think and about what an incredible and unbelievable thing it is for God the Son to become a Man - to live, love, and die so that we might spend eternity with Him?