

## **Advent Week 4 – Luke 2:4-7; and 8-14 (ESV)**

Ask the Lord to give you an understanding of His word today and to show you how you might apply it to your faith walk.

Read the first passage noted above for it sets the stage for the birth of Jesus.

Why did Joseph and Mary go up to Bethlehem according to verse 1-5?

Read Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1-6, why else did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem?

Now read the second passage.

In verse eight, it is stated “in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.”

Shepherding sheep was often a very mundane job that including working at night but for these shepherds it was going to be anything but routine and dull. What happened and how did they react (v. 9)?

Blue Letter Bible App states this concerning this “glory” used in the phrase “glory of the Lord,”

*Splendour, brightness*

*A. of the moon, sun, stars*

*B. magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace*

*C. majesty*

What did the angel of the Lord say to them first (v. 10)?

Look at Zechariah’s encounter with Gabriel, what was his reaction and what did the angel say to him first (Luke 1:11-13)?

Read Mary's encounter with Gabriel, what was her reaction and what did the angel say to her first (Luke 28-30)?

There is no explanation as to why in each of these accounts that fear was the reaction to the appearance of the angel of the Lord. It is probably that fear would be a normal reaction to something extraordinary such as what is recorded in verse nine.

Read verses 10-12 and note what else the angel said.

Strong's defines "joy" as *cheerfulness, i.e. calm delight:--gladness, <sup>x</sup> greatly, (X be exceeding) joy(-ful, -fully, -fulness, -ous)*

Since the good news was announced to the shepherds, those who believe in Jesus are experiencing this "great joy." Joy is not based on circumstances rather it is the relationship that the believer has been gifted by God, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)

Note what you observe about joy in the following verses.

Psalm 4:7

Psalm 16:11

John 16:22

Psalm 19:8

Psalm 32:11

Isaiah 61:10

Jeremiah 15:16

Habakkuk 3:17-18

Philippians 4:4

Hebrews 12:2

James 1:2

Are you struggling to have joy, ask the Lord for his grace to do so.

What suddenly happened next, verse 13?

Multitude of the heavenly hosts which according to several commentaries is “thousands of angels.” Can you imagine? Do you wish you could have been there for the worship and praise and to hear the words of verse 14,

“Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Each week the church community primarily gathers together for a time of worship and praise to God, and to hear the preaching of His word. The Hebrew writer knew how essential community was to the faith walk of believers. Read Hebrews 10:23-25 and note what he says.

Those whom he is pleased with points to those who had faith in God before the birth of His son, those who believed in Jesus while he was on earth and those who hear the gospel, repent and believe in Jesus after his resurrection.

How has this study impacted you today? Tell it to the Lord, he wants to hear from you. Praise him, perhaps with a favorite Christmas hymn. Christmas is in just a few days. Ask him to do a fresh work in you. Ask him to give you the opportunity to share something from this study with someone.

Mediate on the passage this week.

There will be one more reading on Christmas Eve and a few closing thoughts.