

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO

This Christmas we are studying the following five Christmas hymns recorded in Luke 1 And 2. All these hymns have Latin titles.

- Eulogium by Elizabeth (1:42-45)
- Magnificat by Mary (1:46-55)
- Benedictus by Zechariah (1:67-79)
- Gloria in Excelsis Deo by angelic choir (2:14)
- Nunc Dimittis by Simeon (2:29-32)

We will study our lesson text by the following three homiletical points.

- Sermon by the angel Gabriel (2:8-12)
- Song by angelic choir (2:13-14)
- Statement by temple shepherds (2:15-20)

“This brief hymn is called the Gloria in Excelsis Deo, from the first words of the Latin Vulgate (meaning ‘glory to God in the highest’).” (NIV, Luke 2:14)

“*Glory (doxa) to God (theos) in the highest (en hupsistos)*” is the Greek translation of the Latin (Gloria in Excelsis Deo) (Luke 2:14a).

This is a hymn of praise – “*And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising (aineo/ p.a.ptc) God.*” (Luke 2:13)

“*And when He again brings the first-born into the world, He says, ‘And let all the angels of God worship Him.’*” (Heb.1:6)

This was the first Christmas play. It was a heavenly production starring Gabriel and the heavenly angelic choir. This heavenly production was not given to the dignitaries of government or religion in some great cathedral but to the temple shepherds of Bethlehem in the pasture.

- Write what the birth of Christ would bring to heaven_____.
- Write what the birth of Christ would bring to earth_____.
- Write how the birth of Christ would bring peace to the earth_____.

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| This lesson will study FOUR aspects of this great hymn called “Gloria in Excelsis Deo.” |
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1. The grammatical use of the Greek conjunctions (kai and de) give the flow of eight important events surrounding this angelic hymn announcing the birth of Christ to the temple shepherds.

The conjunction (kai) is used as an explanatory, continuative, adjunctive, and inferential

The conjunction (de) is used twice to change the narrative (2:17, 19).

2. Tradition and not Scripture teaches that these were temple shepherds.

Scripture teaches that they were shepherds of Bethlehem of Judea (Micah 4:8; 5:20; Luke 2:4,11).

“Tradition says that the temple sacrificial sheep were raised and kept here and that these shepherds were the temple shepherds on watch over the animals used in temple sacrifice (shadow Christology of the OT covenants).” (Commentary of Luke by Plummer, pg.45)

This is the same region that David as a young shepherd boy fought the bear and lion to protect the sacrificial sheep (1 Sam.17).

It is not surprising that God sent the Shepherd to shepherds.

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| Ruling shepherd | (Micah 5:2; Matt.2:6) |
| Good shepherd | (John 10:10-18) |
| Smitten shepherd | (Zech.13:7; Matt.26:31) |
| Great shepherd | (Heb.13:12) |
| Chief shepherd | (1 Pet.5:4) |
| Guardian shepherd | (1 Pet.2:25) |
| Lamb shepherd | (Rev.7:17) |

3. Gloria in Excelsis Deo was introduced by the sudden and dramatic appearance of a messenger angel and than by the heavenly choir.

“And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood (ephistemi/ a.a.ind/ this is a Homeric Greek word) before them and the glory of the Lord shone around them.” (2:9) This Homeric Greek word was used to introduce a historical event that has heavenly connections.

“And suddenly (exaiphnes/ the addition of the preposition intensifies the act) there appeared (ginomai/ a.a.ind) with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.” (2:13)

This was to the Bethlehem shepherds what the Star from the east was to the Magi.

4. Gloria in Excelsis Deo announced a great truth to the world regarding the birth of Christ (2:14).

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among (en+loc.) men with whom (anthropos) he is pleased (eudokia/ objective genitive/ those upon God’s grace rest).” (2:14)

The great truth of this verse says that GOD IS WELL-PLEASED WITH THOSE HE ACCEPTS IN JESUS CHRIST.

“And the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, ‘Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.’” (Luke 3:22)

“Real peace on earth exist only among those who are the subject of God’s good-will.”
(A.T. Robertson, pg.25)

“For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” (Col.1:19-20) (Eph.1:5-9)

**The plan of God called for the birth of Jesus Christ to affect Heaven and Earth and Mankind.
How has it affected you?**