

GOD'S HOUSE CALL TO SHEPHERDS

The Sunday Christmas special has been entitled, God's House Call. God sent Gabriel to make house calls to specific spiritual mature believers to announce the coming of His Son into the world.

We are studying the first three house calls recorded in the Book of Luke.

- Dec.7 God's House Call to Zachariah (Lk.1:5-23)
- Dec.14 God's House Call to Mary (Lk.1:26-38)
- **Dec.21 God's House Call to Shepherds (Lk.2:5-20)**

The fact that God sent Gabriel meant that something big was about to happen in the redemptive history of Christ.

We will examine our lesson text by the following six homiletical points.

- Shepherds in field (Lk.2:8) Bivouacked (spring)
- Shepherds in shock (Lk.2:9-12) Big news by Gabriel
- Shepherds serenaded (Lk.2:13-14) Birth story sung by heavenly choir
- Shepherds in stable (Lk.2:15-16) Baby Jesus in manger
- Shepherds in town (Lk.2:17-19) Babbling the good news
- Shepherds back in field (Lk.2:20) Blessed by the word of God

This lesson will study three important doctrinal principles of God's House Call to the Shepherds of Bethlehem.

1. The first important doctrinal principle we learn from this Christmas lesson – “God is in control of human history.”

Good or bad news? “Now it came in those days that a decree went out from **Caesar Augustus**, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while **Quirinius** was governor of Syria.” (Lk.2:1-2) [foreign occupation, taxation and pagan rulers] (Rom.13:1-7)

Good or bad news? “Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of **Herod the king**, behold, **Magi from the East** arrived in Jerusalem.” (Matt.2:1-3) [foreign worshippers and astrologers]

Good or bad news? “And gathering together all the **chief priests and scribes** of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet.’” (Matt.2:4-5) [hypocrites and blind guides] (Matt.23)

- Who actually controls human history and how it relates to the plan of God? Can political machines or religious groups change the plan of God?

“For the Scripture says to **Pharaoh**, ‘for this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.’” (Rom.9:17; Ex.9:16)

2. The second important doctrinal principle we learn from this Christmas lesson:

“When God’s will meets God’s decree in God’s perfect timing, great divine blessings in the redemptive plan of God flow from heaven to the earth.”

“Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**” (Matt.6:10)

“Glory to **God in the highest**, and **on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.**” (Lk.2:14)

God’s will meets God’s decree: “But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born of a woman, born under the Law, **in order that (hina) [divine purpose]** He might redeem those who were under the Law, **that (hina) [divine purpose]** we might receive the adoption as sons.” (Gal.4:4-5)

God’s perfect timing results in divine blessings: “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.” (Rom.5:6) **JESUS** – “Because he will save His people from their sins.” (Matt.1:21)

3. The third important doctrinal principle we learn from this Christmas lesson:

“It is important that none of us miss our opportunity to participate in the plan of God in a positive way in redemptive history.”

“If any man is willing to do His will, he shall **know** of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak of Myself.” (John 7:17)

These participated in a positive way in the unfolding of the plan of God.

- Zachariah and Elizabeth (Lk.1:13-17, 45) barren elderly couple
- Mary and Joseph (Lk.1:31-38; Matt.1:23-25) planning a wedding
- Shepherds and Bethlehemites (Lk.2:17-20) guardians of temple sheep
- Simeon and Anna (Lk.2:25, 34-35, 38) waiting out the end of life
- Magi from the East (Matt.2:2) once in a life time constellation discovery (Star of Jacob)

They all were all “looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” (Lk.2:25)

These Jewish religious and political leaders participated in a negative way in the unfolding of redemptive history **like Pharaoh** (Rom.9:17).

- Chief priests and scribes (Matt.2:4-6) spiritual advisers to the king and citizens of the priest-nation
- Herod the king (Matt.2:12, 16-18) king of the priest-nation of Israel

“You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.” (Acts 7:51) [Stephen]

Notice how all of the believers involved in the birth story of Jesus Christ participated in redemptive history.

- For Zachariah and Elizabeth, the Lord gave them a **miraculous day**.
- For Joseph and Mary, the Lord gave them a **miraculous day**.
- For the shepherds and Bethlehemites, the Lord gave them a **miraculous day**.
- For Simeon and Anna, the Lord gave them a **miraculous day**.
- For the Magi, the Lord gave them a **miraculous day**.

What kind of day do you need this Christmas? Who can bring it? [What should your attitude be?] “**Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.**” (Lk.1:38) [Mary]

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