

## **GABRIEL'S MESSAGE TO THE SHEPHERDS**

This is the fourth Christmas message given by the archangel Gabriel regarding the historical birth of God's Only Begotten Son – "And I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news." (Lk.1:19; 2:10-11) [Euangelizo, Good News]

It has been 15 months since Gabriel gave his first Christmas message to Zachariah. (Elizabeth / 6mo. + Mary / 9mo. = 15 months) (Lk.1:26, 35-36, 56-57; 2:7).

The fourth message was given by Gabriel to Bethlehem temple shepherds:

(Lk.2:8) "And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over the flock by night."

What were the shepherds doing when Gabriel appeared to them? (Zachariah, Mary, Joseph, and shepherds).

Tradition says that these shepherds were caring for the animals used in temple sacrifice (Commentary on Luke by Plummer, pg.54)

Many Bible scholars draw this same conclusion because of King David. As a young boy, David was a shepherd for his father's business in this region. In fact, it was during this training that David learned the important of the faith cycle for everyday living (1 Sam.17:34-35) [lion, bear, and later Goliath]. David great desire was to build the temple for shadow Christology (q1 Kings 5; Lk.1:32; Col.2:17).

<b>This lesson will study FIVE aspects of Gabriel's message to the Bethlehem shepherds.</b>
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**1. When you combine the four visit by Gabriel, you become aware of this important doctrinal principle:** (Col.1:15-19) "God is in control of human history and God's perfect timing in the plan of God"

**Let mention five aspects of this doctrinal principle from our lesson text.**

- a. A divine decree went out from the throne room of God to the world regarding historical birth of His Son (Lk 2:8-20).
- b. A Roman decree went out from Rome to their conquered world (Lk 2:1-2).
- c. A couple went out from Nazareth to Bethlehem because of this Roman census decree (Lk 2:3-7).
- d. An angel of Lord (Gabriel) went out from heaven to shepherd fields in Bethlehem (Lk 2:8, 15).
- e. A 700-year old prophecy went out of spiritual moth balls to be fulfilled in a small village of Judah (Micah 5:1-5; Matt.2:5-6).

"The Lord is not slow about His promises, as some count slowness, but is patient towards you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Pet.3:9; 1:3-4)

**Doctrine:** When divine will meets divine decree in perfect timing of the plan of God, it brings special divine blessings to mankind – "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." (Lk 2:14)

**[How can we apply this doctrine to our situation in life and nation?]**

**2. The historical birth of Jesus Christ also teaches another important doctrinal principle:**

Spiritually mature believers who have reached and maintained super-grace status will be involved in the historical unfolding of this divine decree.

These spiritually mature believers are referred to as the “remnant” or “pivot” within a nation. They are the spiritual salt and light to that nation (Matt.5:13-14).

Here are a few of them from the recorded birth story of Jesus Christ.

- Zachariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1).
- Mary and Joseph (Luke 1 and Matt.2).
- Simeon and Anna (Luke 2).
- Bethlehem shepherds (Luke 2).
- Magi from East (Matt.2).

There were no signs or warnings for their SG2 opportunities or blessings. Super-grace believers must live in a state of readiness – “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.” (Eph.4:1; 2 Cor.5:7; Gal.5:16)

**3. Because of their prophetic opportunity and spiritual readiness in the Plan of God, Gabriel and the heavenly angelic army choir will visit these Bethlehem shepherds (Lk 2:9-14a) [once in life time].**

The angelic army choir will sing a new song designed by God for this very special occasion. We refer to it by the Latin title, “**Gloria in Excelsis Deo.**” (Lk 2:13-14) [**Glory to God in the highest**] (Heb.1:6)

It is the only recorded heavenly hymn written for the birth of Son of God. Many biblical hymns will be later written to celebrate the birth of our Savior such as “Hark the Harold the Angels Sing.”

**4. Jesus Christ will be born in these Bethlehem shepherd’s stable as the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36).**

“And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Lk 2:7, 12, 16) [Sign]

It was a fitting place for the Savior of the world to be born as the perfect Lamb of God who will take away the sin of the world (1 Pet.1:19; 2:24; Heb.10:5; Lk 1:35).

**5. Messianic prophecy taught that Christ would be born the Ruling Shepherd in Bethlehem of Judah like his covenant father, King David (Micah 5:2-4; Isa.40:10-11; Lk 2:10-11, 15, 20; Matt.1:1-17; 2:1-6).**

“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.” (Lk 1:32)

**“Ruling Shepherd” is 1 of 6 messianic shepherd titles given to Jesus Christ.**

- Smitten shepherd (Zech.13:7; Isa.53:4-7)
- Good shepherd (John 10:11, 14-18)
- Great shepherd (Heb.13:20)
- Chief shepherd (1 Pet.5:4)
- Guardian shepherd (1 Pet.2:25)

It is fitting that the Ruling Shepherd was welcomed to earth by the temple shepherds of Bethlehem.

**2010 Prayer:**

**“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”**