

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Christmas Special: “Tell me the first thing you think when you hear this phrase, The Lord is my shepherd?”

In preparation for this lesson, I ask a member of our church to give me the first- thing she thought when she heard the phrase, The Lord is my shepherd? Without hesitation, she answered “I shall not want.”

She was quoting King David’s famous Psalms 23.

For the Bethlehem shepherds, it was Jesus Christ the Savior of the world - “For today in the city of David there has been born for YOU a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)

One purpose of this lesson is to bring special meaning to the phrase; The Lord is My Shepherd, to YOU personally like the Bethlehem shepherds.

We will study seven aspects of what the Lord is My shepherd meant to the Bethlehem Shepherds and their testimony to us this Christmas.

1. We begin by examining our lesson text by the following five homiletical points.

- Shepherds (Lk.2:8) Living in the fields by night
- Sermon (Lk.2:9-11) Lord your shepherd is born
- Sign (Lk.2:12) Lying in a manger
- Song (Lk.2:13-14) Large heavenly choir (Glory in Excelsis Deo)
- Savior (Lk.2:15) Living by the word of God

Bethlehem of Judea is the birth home of King David and the prophetic birth place of Christ (1 Sam.16; Micah 5:2; Matt.2:5-6). It was also the home of the temple shepherds of shadow Christology.

It was here that David as a young shepherd boy learned to fight the good fight of faith (1 Sam.17:37, 47; 1 Tim.6:12)

David wrote the famous Psalms 23 while reflecting on walking with the Lord by faith as a young shepherd boy.

In today’s lesson, the temple shepherds of Bethlehem will meet their Chief Shepherd in person as, the Lord Jesus Christ. I imagine that this was one work day that a temple shepherds would have not wanted to miss.

2. Two special envoys were deployed from the third heaven to these Bethlehem shepherds with the announcement of the birth of the Only Begotten Son of God.

- An angel of the Lord
- A large Angelic Choir.

We assume from Luke 1:19 and 26 that this Angel of the Lord is Gabriel. The shechinah glory accompanied Gabriel with the announcement (Lk.2:9). This means that some special event in human history was happening.

The shepherds understood it was an unusual angelic visitation from the third heaven. They became paralyzed by fear-panic (phobeo / a.p.ind) [terrified] with (phobos) [fear] (Lk.2:9) (Note the doubling of fear).

3. The doubling of fear shows behavior response of Old Man Cosmos Diabolicus (OMCD) thinking (Rom.12:2; Eph.4:22).

We know this from the way Gabriel immediately addressed it as problem to receiving the truth of the word of God – “Do not be afraid (me phobeo / p.p.impv.2p) [STOP!].” (Lk.2:10a)

They were paralyzed in their mind an unable to think and process the word of God. YOU must stop thinking in fear in order to receive an important word from God. Fear-panic shuts down the faith cycle system (2 Cor.5:7). **Then** Gabriel taught them the word of God (Lk.2:10b-11).

4. This special message from the third heaven was a once-in-a-lifetime experience to the shepherd who are present and receiving it as the word of God.

This teaches the importance of perfect timing in the perfect plan of God (Rom.8:28; Gal.4:4; Rom.5:6).

5. These shepherds were given the global gospel.

(Lk.2:11) “For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

The sign was a baby (brephos) wrapped in cloths (sparganeo / perf.p.ptc) lying in a manger (Lk.2:7, 12, 16; Ezek.16:4).

There is always a place in the Directive Will of God:

- Geographical
- Mental
- Operational.

Along with the global gospel and sign, suddenly there was a new praise song sung by a large heavenly choir (Lk.2:13-14). Later it is called “Glory in Excelsis Deo.”

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

The Bethlehem shepherds went from grazing to praising.

And we sing

“Hark the Harold Angels Sing.”