

Hartford Bible Students

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To Us a Child is Born

***“Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,
which shall be to all people.” Luke 2:10***



In the story of the birth of Christ lies the hope of the whole world. The humble shepherds to whom the message of the Lord's birth first came were men who hoped in the promise of God. These men were quietly tending their flocks by night when suddenly the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around about them, and they were sore afraid. But their fear was soon overcome by the message of the angel, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

The message by the angel was not only to the shepherds who that night looked for the hope of Israel, but it was for all people, those who then lived and those who would live in the future, as well as to all those in death.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11) Jesus was to be a savior to all people. By the grace of God, he tasted death for every man and gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time – to all. (1 Timothy 2:6) The favor of salvation will not be forced upon any. Salvation has been provided for every man on the condition that he accepts the favor on God's terms, but it is up to him to accept or reject it. This wonderful salvation will be testified in due time to all – those who have heard and accepted salvation and to

those who will be awakened from death and accept it then.

This is further shown by the words of our Lord, "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth; they that have done good [who during the present life have come into judgment and who have passed their trial successfully], unto the resurrection of life [the full reward of the faithful, overcoming church]; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:25-29) That is, the class that has done evil will come forth from the grave to have the truth testified to them then for their acceptance or rejection. And their final judgment of worthiness or unworthiness of life will be based upon their course under trial after the truth has been testified to them in Christ's kingdom on earth. This is the good tidings of the restitution of all things which the angel of the Lord preached to the shepherds on the plain of Bethlehem.

"And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12) The shepherds were told where and how they should find the promised Saviour so that when they would see him, they might feel doubly assured that this was he.

"Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:13,14) This shows how the angels of God are interested in the affairs of men and how they sympathize with us and rejoice over our prosperity. They humbly recognize the right of God the Creator to do what he will with his own, and they cheerfully and joyfully acquiesce in his plan, which they know is made by His unerring wisdom and His fathomless love. What universal joy will be manifest when the whole family of God in heaven and in earth is brought into fullest harmony under God's anointed – Christ.

“And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.” (Luke 2:15-18) The shepherds recognized the angels and their message as from the Lord, and, their fears being allayed, their hopes revived and their faith increased, they felt that they must go at once and see this which had come to pass.

“But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.” (Luke 2:19) Mary doubtless remembered the message of the angel to her in Luke 1:31-33, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.” (Luke 2:20) The shepherds returned to their flocks, fully assured of the wonderful truth that the promised seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent’s head had really come. And they rejoiced and glorified God for all the things that they had heard and seen.

December 25th does not comport well with the account of the shepherds being out with their flocks, as it would be too cold at that time of year. Rather, Bible chronology points to October 1st or 2nd being the date of our Lord’s birth. However, we do not believe the exact date is the most important point to worry about. Instead, we can rejoice with all who want to celebrate our Savior’s birth and turn our minds to the greatest gift that was ever given.

There’s a song in the air! There’s a star in the sky!
There’s a mother’s deep prayer and a baby’s low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

There’s a tumult of joy o’er the wonderful birth,
For the virgin’s sweet Boy is the Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!

In the light of that star lie the ages impearled;
And that song from afar has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King!

We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song
That comes down through the night from the
heavenly throng.
Ay! we shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
And we greet in His cradle our Savior and King!

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