

122417 Jesus the Light of the world

How complex is the person of our Lord Jesus Christ! How often we like to make Jesus simple...But he is far more than we can imagine or comprehend...****

Isaiah 9: 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

In one breath the prophet calls him a “child,” and a “counselor,” a “son,” Mighty God and “the everlasting Father and Prince of Peace! .” it is an amazing marvel that he who was an infant should at the same time be infinite and a wonderful counselor, he who was the Man of Sorrows and familiar with grief should also be God over all, and that he who is in the Divine Trinity always called the Son, yet he is the everlasting Father or creator of all there is ... He who came to conquer supernatural forces is the prince of peace to his rebellious humanity...

- **He is the one who fashioned us out nothing...**

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

*******There is no greater blessing than God taking his Humanity from our DNA...coming to us as one of us...a child born to us who will become like a Father to us...for all time..**

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- **It is an amazing and wonderful thing to realize that God devised His plan, created us, and is perfectly executing the plan, so that we could be with him forever...**
- **That God would want his messed up creatures to live for eternity in a relationship with Him as family is beyond comprehension. But it is the way he rolls..**
- **I cannot understand it, and neither can anyone fully comprehend the multiple aspects of Jesus**

Including the God of all creation would first announce his birth to a group of men, who live on the outskirts of society. They live in the margins, working stiffs doing a

necessary but far less than a prestigious job,... the night shift people in a day shift world....Tending flocks, on the hillsides around Bethlehem.

But These are the just the ones God wants to first the news of his birth.

- They are the shepherds night shift people in a day shift world watching over their sheep, **While the people of Jerusalem slept. Make no mistake the people were glad to wear clothing woven from the wool of shepherds sheep and to eat the meat of slaughtered lambs, and to offer the best for the flock for Religious purposes...**
- **but those people who did the shearing and slaughtering lived lives invisible to most, treated most often as second class citizens, and excluded from even their religious services.**
- the shepherds were Low wage workers in low status jobs...some of us in here today would understand how the shepherds were treated, because really not much has changed for those kind of folk.

Yet this night would unfold into the most extraordinary evening of their lives.

Luke2: 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

- **"And" almost sounds like an after thought...but there are no after thoughts with God!**
- A little about Shepherds...Near Eastern shepherding is one of the most demanding and least appreciated and rewarded tasks in that first- century culture. They lived most of the year outside, away from the townspeople. Flocks were kept outdoors from April to November, and, sometimes during the winter in suitable locations.
- Sheep are defenseless and not particularly bright animals. They are easily spooked and will always impulsively react before they think. Sheep are also vulnerable to a wide variety of diseases, ticks, insects and parasitic afflictions.
- Consequently, sheep require constant attention and care. Shepherding is a “hands on” calling. You can’t shepherd from a distance. You have to be with the sheep and they have to know it and feel your presence. In a much too abbreviated way, what follows is just part of a shepherd’s daily life that requires:

- Leading sheep to grasses that are good to eat – many are not. Some grasses are poisonous while others will produce nausea and stomach gas in the sheep. Other grasses look good, but provide no nourishment.
- and there were always bully sheep who would run rough shod over younger sheep to get to the best grass first.
- Insuring that sheep are always on high ground, not in valley floors, when spring rains come. Rains can quickly cause flash floods that drown sheep.
- Knowing how dig and store winter rains in cisterns so sheep will have water to drink during the long, dry, hot summer season.
- Nightly protected encampments were necessary so that the sheep would lie down to sleep, feeling safe and secure –
- **"Keeping watch" to do guard duty.** protecting the sheep from lions, bears, wolves, and thieves scaring off these predators with a sling or when necessary, fighting them with the rod.
- and dealing with the prone to wander difficult sheep...
- So Picture the night scene...some Shepherds gathered around the campfire trying to stay warm... another guarding the sheep pen....just another night in a ceaseless procession of nights.living in the fields...

this particular night these men simply were doing their job like they did every day. completely unaware was up to on the other side of the hills. **They were about to get front row seats to the Hallelujah chorus along with backstage passes to seek the King.**

- **One minute the shepherds are talking quietly in the blackness of the Spring sky. The next moment the hillside is ablaze in light with an angel standing in front of them...**

*Luke 2:9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord **shone** around them, and they were terrified.*

- Appeared actually has the idea of standing before them...
- The Glory of the Lord shone around them...refers to two things
- **One "Glory"** refers to **"the condition of radiating brightness, overwhelmingly bright, burning as fire two...of the Lord..."** The presence of the Lord was physical as in burning bright and emotional the overwhelming feeling of the presence of God...

- **When the shepherds saw this intense bright light and felt the presence of the divine... and someone standing there who was not there a second ago... they were terrified...**

¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."

- the unbearable presence of God... that is humbly compassionate and approachable... Finally, the angel utters the words that Jews had longed for centuries to hear -- " Christ the Lord is born...and for all people///plural!!."
- **So Jesus Making known to those on the night shift of life.. servants and not the Served...because he is the good news for all people! and them personally:**

¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

- He was for them! for the angel said you! and he is close only six miles away!
- Messiah the Lord the word "Messiah" (anointed).. Lord." "Lord" master...

and we can locate him...

¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

- we can identify him...he will look like any new Born...but he will be in a barn like setting... A manager would indicate the location in some kind of stable -- a Second Century legend indicates that this was in a cave. Makes Sense!
- Because A King being born would naturally be expected to be wrapped in the finest purple garments in the finest nursery money could provide for a beautiful crib, many attendants and servants...
- what a sign...but wait there's more...Then we go from one angel ...to a great company...thousands...

^{Luke 2:13} Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

- His favor good news was for all people...not sure how long the angels sang and praised...but when they were done...lets go...the light was lit in them...

^{LK 2:15} When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

- **Whenever God speaks to us there is a what now to do with it... they had a choice..Go back to warming themselves by the fire...or look for the King**
- There is a spiritual truth here...the angels could have given them the address...but there is a role for anyone to play in God's drama...
- ***the light of knowledge God had given them they moved on it.. there is always enough light to take the next step... ..***

*LK 2:16 So they hurried off and **found** Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, **they spread the word** concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

- The shepherds heard the message and acted upon it...can you imagine them running through the town looking in every back yard looking for the right stable .
- ..after they found it.. they told Mary and Joseph what happened....Mary stored this info in her heart...because she could not verify it in her circumstances...she is in a stable..and the first guests are lowly shepherds..but boy are they geeked up!!
Meanwhile while she is worn out from child birth...looks like a hot mess and her babe in a manger!
- **When the shepherds leave ...they tell everyone they see what they saw...they cant help themselves! they had Glory of the Lord and received the light of the knowledge of God became one of us! Immanuel is with us!**
- **They did not possess great theological knowledge, nor had position in society...and lived to a great extent unfulfilling lives...but a light was lit in them tonight!**

They possessed what Jesus said he himself would possess...

*JN 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world(plural). Whoever (singular) follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the **light of life**."*

- **Jesus claimed himself to be light... and his followers will carry the light of life in them**

MT 5:14 "You (singular) are the light of the world. A city us (plural) on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Jesus goes on to explain some things about this lamp that is lit ...

1) ...the lamp is lit by someone else... for the shepherds the angels lit the lamp...2) the light in the lamp is Jesus... 3) ...we are the lamp... 4) the lamp is not lit to be hid... but to be visible to others

the shepherds went back to shepherding...just like Mary nothing changed circumstantially...but her heart received treasure! ...the shepherds returned to shepherding nothing changed circumstantially...**yet everything inside them changed... they have a new light! ...**

***just like these bulbs...before us...they will stay bulbs ...even when lit...nothing changed outwardly but everything changed inwardly...as they were lit from another source...it will shine differently but it will shine...show lights...**

Christmas is the light! Immanuel ..God with us Jesus...receive that light...then let it shine... we are all different lights...Mary, Joseph the shepherds...all different people...but carried the same light...

we are like the group of lights up here...I am not you and you are not me...but we have the same light in us...which will shine through my life as well as yours...

this is the great joy to the world the light has come... *John1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

- His grace extends to all...his truth his glory shines through us...
- everyong take out their lights...don't light them...for the light is lit by another...

we will sing silent night...just as the shepherds ...were that silent night...then when we sing the people at the out most edges...the margins of the church turn and touch the light of the person next to you...then when they do turn on your light ...then turn to the person next to you and do the same...until all our lights are lit!