

God's Message to the Shepherds: Prepare for History's Greatest News

God's Christmas Messages to You, Part 4

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Luke 2:8-20

This is the fourth and final message in a series of Christmas messages based on the angelic appearances of the first Christmas. We've learned with Zechariah and Elizabeth to "prepare for the miraculous." We've learned with Mary to "prepare to be God's instrument." We've learned with Joseph to "prepare to meet the Savior." Today, we learn with the shepherds to "prepare for history's greatest news."

More than the others, God's message through the angels to the shepherds represents His universal message to all of humanity. It was the only angelic announcement that involved more than one angel (it involved myriads) and it was the only one to more than one person (Elizabeth was not with Zechariah). It was a group of angels giving God's message to a group of people who were looked at as "common" in Jesus' day.

Christmas is, at least in part, the story of God sending His message to all of humanity, to you and me.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD...

1. God's message is for real people living real life.

Notice that the shepherds were living in the fields with their sheep. That was their life and their livelihood. They were real people with real lives doing real things. I want you to understand that the Christian message is not for perfect people, but for real people. Notice that the angels said that the good news would be for all people.

2. God's message for the world is good news.

There are two elements to be found in the reaction of the shepherds to the message of the angels and these two reactions should be ours today as well.

A. Fear.

Fear because God is holy, because He is great and awesome, and because He will judge sin. Fear because an encounter with the holy God is a reminder that we are ultimately sinful and unable to stand in His presence.

"For our God is a consuming fire." –Hebrews 12:29

*"For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
–Revelation 6:17*

It is very true that the gospel (which means good news) is not such good news until we realize the bad news, that we've sinned against and offended a holy God who will punish us for eternity in hell if we do not repent and come to Christ by faith.

B. Joy.

Joy, sweet relief, peace in the soul. That's what they felt when they realized that the message here on earth was not one of judgment (that will come for the unrepentant in heaven) but rather one of **a Savior**.

3. God's message for the world demands a decision.

The shepherds decided to act on the message and go meet the Savior. Every time we hear the message of the gospel, God's good news, we are called to a crisis of faith, a moment of decision. We must decide what to do with Jesus in this life or perish for eternity.

You see, we are all responsible to respond to the light God gives us. We should know from nature that there is a God and seek Him further. We should hear our conscience telling us that we've sinned and we should seek to repent. We should hear the gospel and respond to the light of God's message, God's revelation.

The Bible and the gospel preached by preachers across the land is God's message of warning and consolation to us today and we must respond.

4. God's message changes lives forever.

Notice the change in the shepherds' lives. Their newfound faith prompted them to do at least two things:

- A. Tell others about Jesus.
- B. Offer praise to God.

Their hearts were changed! They had a new message to give and a new song to sing because things were different for them now. They had met the Savior!

What about you? Have you received His message? Have you met the Savior? Are you different now than before? What have you done with Jesus?