

A Glorious Angelic Announcement for an Unlikely Audience

And in the same area there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And then an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were very afraid. But the angel said to them, "Listen! Do not fear. For I bring you good news of great joy, which will be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find the Baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly there was with the angel a company of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, and good will toward men."*

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us" (Luke 2:8-15).

Have you ever wondered what people thought of shepherds in Jesus' day?

People thought shepherds were odd. They lived by themselves, outside of town, sleeping in the open, and surrounded by animals all the time. Their reputation was less than stellar. Shepherds were stereotyped as crooks and thieves, and they couldn't even testify in court. It didn't help that they couldn't leave their flock without risking their livelihood, which means they couldn't make it to the temple for sacrifices

and feasts and maintain the same religious devotion as the rest of God's people. In short, the shepherds were not highly regarded in their society.

When an army of angels lit up the sky to announce God's birth into history, no one would have ever expected them to break the news to a bunch of shepherds. Upon hearing the big announcement, however, the shepherds outside of Bethlehem hurry off to find the baby boy. Besides Mary and Joseph, these anonymous outcasts are the first people in the world to enjoy an audience with Jesus Christ.

It's curious how God arrives in a humble way to a humble family and announces the event to the humble shepherds. God works with them for His glory, by His grace. Years later, Jesus even described himself as the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (see John 10:11). God redeems an unpopular profession, showing that He is humble and willing to look after us like sheep.

If you were God, would you have entered history in a humble way as Jesus did? If not, how would you have entered history?
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