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Advent 2017



“And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.”

—Luke 2:10

—THE SONGS OF LUKE’S GOSPEL—

“THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO” - LUKE 2:13-14

Background

- Luke 2:1-7 describes the historical background and circumstances which led to Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2-3—² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

The _____ of God is shown in that the decree of Caesar served to fulfill the decree of the Lord regarding the birth of Messiah.

The Announcement to the Shepherds — Luke 2:8-12

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Shepherds in Jewish Culture

- * Because of their work, shepherds were considered ritually unclean by many of the Pharisees and other religious leaders.

“The Sages further added the following to the list of those disqualified from bearing witness: The shepherds, who shepherd their animals in the fields of others and are therefore considered like robbers; the collectors of government taxes, who collect more than the amount that people are legally liable to pay; and the customs officials, who collect customs in an illegal manner.” — **Sanhedrin 25b (Talmud)**

The Glory of the Lord

“God’s glorious presence, whether for salvation or destruction, is prominent in the decisive moments and central institutions of Israel’s history: Moses and the Exodus, monarchy and temple, exile and return. In the prophets, divine glory becomes messianic and eschatological.”

— **The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology**

- ⇒ In numerous places in the OT the glory of the Lord is associated with His presence among the people in association with the Tabernacle/Temple (Exod. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:11; Ezek. 3:23). The prophets also anticipated that the glory of the Lord would be revealed to His people in the latter days:

Isaiah 60:1-2—¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. ² For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

The Angel’s Message

“good news”

Isa. 40: 8—Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!”

The content of the “good news” concerned the birth of one who would bear the following titles:

1. _____ → (Isa. 43:11)

2. _____ → (Psa. 18:50)

3. _____ → (Acts 2:36)

The Song of the Angels — Luke 2:13-14

Theme:

⇒ This is one of the few instances where *the praises* of angelic beings are recorded.

OT: Isa. 6:2-3—² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

NT: Rev. 5:11-12—¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

⇒ The sending of Messiah into the world is one of the primary ways that God has chosen to bring *glory* to Himself.

“Glory to God in the highest...”

⇒ The sending of Messiah into the world is the means by which God’s *grace* will be clearly shown to mankind.

“...on the earth peace...”

* This is not generic peace, but is the peace of God which will be experienced by mankind because of the person and work of Messiah (Isa. 9:6-7; Hag. 2:9).

“...among men with whom He is pleased!”

εὐδοκία (*eudokia*) — Good-will, kindly intent, benevolence. Used here to refer to God’s delight that He has taken in mankind in sending them Christ.

Mankind, who are the recipients of His _____,
will also experience His _____ because of Messiah!

Glorifying God along with the Angels

Example: Psalm 148

- The work of God on the earth in unfolding His plans and purposes brings forth the praises of His _____. (1 Pet. 1:10-12)
- The work of God on behalf of His _____ should lead them to glorify and praise Him as well!

Angels

Luke 2:13-14—And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Men

Luke 2:20—And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Questions for Reflection

- How much of a priority to you place on offering praise and glory to God during the Christmas season?
- Which of Christ’s titles from the angel’s announcement (Savior, Messiah, Lord) is most meaningful to you?