

# THE DOCTOR'S REPORT

## The Shepherds – Joining God in His Work

TEXT: Luke 2:1-20

INTRODUCTION: As we study the gospel sent by the Holy Spirit through good Dr. Luke, we have seen His account of Zacharias coming to believe the promise of God and of Mary not only believing God's Word but following her Lord. This morning we come to my favorite part of the Christmas story, the birth of the Christ child and the angelic announcement to the shepherds.

Let us read this passage together.

Luke 2:1-20 <sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

<sup>15</sup> So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup> And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. <sup>19</sup> But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. <sup>20</sup> Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

During our Christmas Eve service, I am going to try to take you back in time to what it was like to be one of those shepherds through the character of Adonijah. But this morning, I want to do just the opposite. I want to take the story of the shepherds and go forward to today. What is the Holy Spirit showing us through Dr. Luke's report? Through Zacharias he showed us the necessity of believing God's Word. Through Mary, He showed us how to follow God. Through the shepherds I believe He wants us to see how to join God in His work.

## **I. THE FIRST STEP OF JOINING GOD IN HIS WORK IS RECOGNIZING WHAT GOD IS DOING.**

### **A. God is not part of everything religious.**

### **B. God is not part of everything supernatural.**

1. Evangelist and the gold teeth and a cross of gold on the palm.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

So, how do you know whether something that seems good is a part of what God is doing?

### **C. God declares His work in advance.**

Amos 3:7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.

### **D. God reveals His work through His Word.**

1. The shepherds knew this was God at work because He had long before, through the prophets, declared what He was going to do.
2. What the angel said was happening was what the prophets had foretold.

Luke 2:11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

#### **a. Born to you –**

Is. 9:6a For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given;

#### **b. In the city of David –**

Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting."

#### **c. A Savior –**

Isaiah 19:20b ... He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them.

**d. Who is Christ (Messiah) –**

Dan. 9:25 “Know therefore and understand, *That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.*

**e. The Lord (God) –**

Is. 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

**3. How did Jesus prove that what He was doing was part of the plan and work of God?**

**He proved it by the word of God.**

Luke 4:16-21 <sup>16</sup> So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: <sup>18</sup> “*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;* <sup>19</sup> *To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.*” <sup>20</sup> Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. <sup>21</sup> And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

**E. What is God’s work today?**

1. Did Jesus tell us? I believe He did.

Mt. 28:19-20 <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*” Amen.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

2. That is why we are an Acts 1:8 church today.
3. That is why I am an Acts 1:8 Christian today.

**THE FIRST STEP OF JOINING GOD IN HIS WORK IS RECOGNIZING WHAT GOD IS DOING.**

## **II. THE SECOND STEP OF JOINING GOD IN HIS WORK IS DISCERNING OUR PART IN GOD’S PLAN.**

- A. How did the shepherds know their part in this work of God?
- B. God told them through the angel.

Luke 2:10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

1. The good news is for all people.
2. They were to go and see God’s great work for themselves.  
God wanted them to be eyewitnesses.

Luke 2:12 And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

- C. What is our part in God’s work today?

Mt. 28:19-20 <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**THE SECOND STEP OF JOINING GOD IN HIS WORK IS DISCERNING OUR PART IN GOD’S PLAN.**

Students, young adults, learn this early in life. The only major regret I have in my ministry as pastor of 3 churches is that I did not discern my role as a Christian or as a pastor early enough. I saw it concerning Jerusalem, but only 9 or 10 years ago did I

discern my role in God's plan, my church's role in God's plan for Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

### **III. THE THIRD STEP OF JOINING GOD IN HIS WORK IS QUICK OBEDIENCE.**

#### **A. When they discerned, they obeyed.**

Luke 2:15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

#### **B. They obeyed immediately.**

Luke 2:16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

#### **C. They began to spread the good news.**

Luke 2:17 Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

#### **D. They told the whole story which caused people to be amazed.**

Luke 2:18 And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

#### **E. They kept on telling.**

Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart.

#### **F. Have you been quickly obedient to join God in His work?**

- 1. Where have you been a witness of Christ?**
- 2. Whom have you had a part in making them to be a disciple of Jesus?**

### **THE THIRD STEP OF JOINING GOD IN HIS WORK IS QUICK OBEDIENCE.**

CONCLUSION: Will anything be different tomorrow than it was last week? Tomorrow, will you still be doing just your own work, or will you join God in His work?