**EDT talk 17/12/23 by Neil McGovern.**

**Peace with God through the Saviour.**

***“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 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, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”*** **Luke 2v8-22.**

• The place is a field outside Bethlehem, Judea.

• Shepherds

o Ordinary people, just having a normal day, or in their case a normal night. They are at work, on the night shift, probably talking together.

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o Like most of us, they aren’t rich, they aren’t famous, they have no influence, today we might say they aren’t influencers.

o In fact many people look down on them a bit.

o They are not considered to be very interesting, desirable or knowledgeable.

o No one goes to them for advice or thinks much of their opinion.

o Normal people.

• Then the scripture says Lo: Look, take notice, pay attention to this.

• An angel appears to them!

o What is an angel?

o An angel is a messenger from God.

o They were sent at special times, with special messages.

• We don’t see them today, but if you love the Lord Jesus then one day you will join with all the angels in heaven to worship Him.

• What do they look like?

o Well the Bible doesn’t really give us that information.

• What it does say is that there was some kind of bright light.

o Now remember this is 2000 years ago.

o The bright light was not a helicopter, it was not an aircraft.

o Oh well maybe it was some sort of meteor shower or other astronomical event with a scientific explanation.

o No!

• These were men who knew the stars better than any of us probably do.

o It is before light pollution.

o It is a time when stars would be seen and known far more easily.

o I don’t know how many stars or planets you can identify; I know about 4 or 5.

• Anyway, it’s obvious that it wasn’t anything like that.

**3**

• And we have to be careful to believe the Bible.

o Don’t try to give things a natural explanation when the explanation is really supernatural.

• God breaks through into history and sends an angel.

o It’s an amazing event, it is terrifying for the shepherds.

• They are confused and afraid.

• But the Lord does not wish people to be confused or afraid: the first words of this shining angel are famous: fear not.

o In fact often when we read about angels visiting people that’s what they say - don’t be afraid.

• Then the message comes.

• Why has this angel appeared?

o To bring good tidings. Good news.

o How much good news was there yesterday?

o When I read it what did I find?

o War, death, murder, tragedies.

• We do have to be careful how much news we read or watch.

o Is it more satisfying to us to listen to the news than it is to read God’s word?

o Is our newsfeed more interesting than the scriptures?

o Tik Tok, Instagram

• Wouldn’t we rather have good news?

• In fact, it’s not good news is it.

o It is THE good news. It is the gospel.

o It is a message of great joy.

• It is the message that though we are dead in our sins, the Saviour has come to save.

o The message that if you trust Jesus and repent of your sins then He will rescue you.

o The message that all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved.

• He can save you!

• Who is this message for?

o The angel told them it is for all people.

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• You don’t need to have a particular background to become a Christian,

o you don’t need to have Christian parents,

o you don’t need to have been coming to church for a year before you become a Christian.

• You might be sat there now thinking, this is all fine but it’s not for me.

o The message is for you!

o It’s for all people!

o God calls you to believe Him.

• Shepherds were not well thought of, but the message is for them.

o You might be the worst sinner here today, you might have done something so bad that if you stood up and told us about it now, we’d all be shocked.

o But the message is for you.

• You might not be like that.

o One of you might be the biggest hypocrite here today.

• On the outside everyone would think you’re already a Christian.

o But you’re actually not!

o You’ve just learned how to speak like and look like one.

o But you’re unsaved, perhaps you know it too!

• Well is the message for you?

o After all your fake Christian behaviour?

o Yes, the message is for you too.

o Come today to the Saviour, drop the facade, stop faking it.

• Believe what the Saviour has done.

• Repent of your hypocrisy and all your sin.

• The angel tells them that unto you a child is born.

o We might be used to hearing these words.

o But they are strange.

• Imagine my wife and I had a fifth baby.

o Let’s say it was a boy.

o Then when the baby was born I sent you a message.

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o What might it say?

o It would say something like we thank God for the safe arrival of Baby McGovern who was born yesterday weighing 7lb.

o Maybe I’d tell you his name.

o Fairly normal message.

o I wouldn’t say a child is born unto you today.

o It’s my baby! He’s not for you!

o You might be happy for me, but you know he’s not been born for you.

• But when the Lord Jesus Christ was born it was different.

o He was born for us.

• The angel doesn’t even say His name is Jesus.

o He tells them a Saviour is born.

o Now things are becoming clearer.

• How can someone else’s baby be for me?

o Well because He has been born to save people.

• “Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.”

• He came to save by dying on Calvary’s cross.

• The angel tells them place of his birth:

o Bethlehem, just as the prophets had predicted.

• Well Bethlehem wasn’t a huge place but imagine you are trying to find a new born baby in a small village.

o It’s going to be hard to find.

o What if there are two or three newborns?

o How will they know they have the right one?

▪ Well the angels give them a sign.

• A way to know exactly who they are to look for.

o The baby will be in a manger.

• The swaddling clothes are normal.

o You might all have been swaddled when you were a baby.

• But a manger!

o A feeding trough for animals.

• I doubt any of us were put in a feeding trough.

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o Things are pretty desperate when the only place you have for a newborn is an animal feeding trough.

• That is a humble beginning.

o The Saviour of the world was not born into wealth.

• The opposite is true: Mary and Joseph were poor.

o It’s so humble.

• Then suddenly there isn’t just one angel.

o Suddenly many angels appear.

• That word ‘host’ is like the word army.

o A vast army of angels appear.

• Why?

o To praise God.

• The coming of the Saviour is something special.

o It is worth praising God for.

• Have you ever praised God for what He’s done?

• Have you ever praised Him for the message of salvation which He’s sent?

• This is what the angels say: “Glory to God in the highest.”

• Often we think about the angels singing these words.

o It actually says they say them.

• Do you feel a bit disappointed that maybe the angels weren’t singing?

o You shouldn’t be.

• Whether the angels spoke or sang, it’s the message that matters.

o When you sing Christmas carols, is it the message that matters to you?

o Or do you just like singing your favourites?

• God wants you to use your voice, but most of all He wants your heart.

o Heart-worship, not just words.

• My church sign: “Make His praise glorious.” Ps 62?

• You know sometimes it’s useful to just sit and read those hymns before you sing them.

o Do I actually understand what I’m singing about?

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o Or are these empty words to me?

• Well, the angels understood.

o They were in awe at God’s plan.

o They knew that the Saviour had come to bring peace.

• He would enable man to make peace with God.

o You might not think you are at war with God, but if you are sitting there today, and you’ve never given your life to the Saviour then you are.

o You are fighting God.

o You are in a battle with Him.

o That’s crazy!

o How can you win?!

o If you war against God, you are going to lose.

o But Christ has come to end the war between you and God.

• And the terms of peace are generous.

o All you need to is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, ask Him to forgive you for your sin and turn to Jesus.

• He will accept you and His anger will be turned away from you.

• You can be a friend of God.

o Not an enemy.

• The angels go back to heaven.

• The shepherds know they have to act on the message.

o They cannot simply carry on as normal.

o They must go to find the Saviour.

• Have you found him yet?

o How many times do you need to hear this glorious gospel before you stop carrying on as normal.

• The shepherds were stopped in their tracks.

o Their whole direction was changed.

• You’ve heard the message, now go to the Saviour, seek Him, find Him.

o He has come.

• Don’t give up the search until you have found Him.

• Well, were the angels right?

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• Was their sign correct?

• The shepherds go to Bethlehem, they find Mary, they find Joseph, then they find the Saviour.

• Was it the right baby?

• Of course.

• There he was, in a manger of all places.

• Their reaction: tell everyone.

o Tell everyone about the Saviour.

o Tell them about the angel’s message.

o Tell them the truth.

o Tell them the gospel.

• That’s why I’m here today.

o To tell you the gospel.

o He saved me, he can save you.

• I can’t save you.

o Pastor can’t save you.

o Mr South can’t save you.

o But Jesus can save you.

• Come to Jesus, He can do wonderful things in your life.

• If you’re a Christian here today, tell everyone about the Saviour.

o Invite them into a service this Christmas.

• Perhaps the Lord will send revival this Christmas.

• Do think hard about these things.

o Ponder them in your heart like Mary did.