

Angels and Shepherds **Luke 2:8-16**

You probably never thought about the relationship between the angels and the shepherds on the night when Christ was born. As you read Luke 2:8-16, I want you to see what these two groups share on that night. It is amazing that angels and shepherds are interacting here.

They are interacting because of the “message”— “a Savior has been born.” Most importantly, it is the greatest message ever to be shared— with the lowliest of people.”

Why did God send His message to the lowly shepherds? Because God has a special place in his heart for the lowly and the despised and the sin-sick hearts of the world.

1. Who the Angels and Shepherds Are

Our English word *angels* from the Greek word *Angelos*. Basically, *angelos* means “one who brings a message.” The chief task of these supernatural creatures is to bring a message from God. They have other tasks like protecting and defending, but delivering messages was their primary job. They are holy— “set apart.”

Shepherds, of course, are individuals who tend sheep. Their primary job is to protect and defend the sheep in their custody. Shepherds at the time of Christ’s birth were not well liked. They were the scum of the earth people; they dwelled near the bottom of Jewish society. The shepherds were regarded as robbers and cheats. It was common knowledge that they often stole newborns from their employer’s flocks. Perhaps honest shepherds existed, but if you wanted to buy some goat’s milk, wool, or a lamb or kid, the rabbis would forbid you from buying directly from a shepherd for you would probably be buying stolen goods. In fact, their reputation was so bad, that they were not permitted to act as witnesses in Jewish law courts. You could not trust them.

So the messengers, the angels, deliver the message— “a Savior has been born,” to lowly, sin-sick outcasts, the shepherds, who are doing what shepherds do, tending their flocks.

So, who is this, Savior? He is Christ the Lord; the Messiah—the Promised One who would save His people from the punishment of their sins. His earthly name would be Jesus.

2. Jesus As Messenger and Message

While Jesus was not an angel, he was a messenger from heaven. He said of himself that a part of his purpose was to be a messenger of the good news. What was the good news? Shortly after He started His early ministry, *Jesus declared that the good news was Himself*. Luke 4:16-22.

Jesus preached the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God in the hearts of people. Jesus called for repentance and belief in Him. Mark 1:14-15

Jesus did not come to deliver a set of rules but to reveal the heart of God. He emphasized love, mercy, and justice, often reaching out to those marginalized by society.

Jesus remained faithful in His mission. He knew that His purpose was to fulfill the will of the Father. John 6:38 He did so with humility and grace. He exemplified what it means to be a servant leader. Mark 10:45

3. Jesus As a Shepherd

Now Jesus was not a literal shepherd. He, however, described Himself as a shepherd of and for His people. He was their spiritual shepherd. He would explain that He was not just *a* shepherd, but He was “the good shepherd.” John 10:11-15 Jesus promised that He would never abandon His “sheep.”

Just as the shepherds did not have a glamorous life, so Jesus would not have a glamorous life. Matthew 8:20

Just as a shepherd lives life with the sheep, Jesus lived life with the people. He went where they were to “tend” them. This shows us the sacrificial nature of His leadership.

Just as a shepherd knows each sheep by name, Jesus knows His people intimately. He understands our fears, our struggles, and our deepest needs.

Just as a good shepherd lays down their life for their sheep, Jesus would lay down His life for His people.

Psalm 23 describes the heart of a good shepherd of people.

The Holy Became Lowly

On that holy, ordained night, heaven came down and mingled among us. John 1:1-3, 14

Jesus, who was and is God, chose to humble himself being made in human likeness.

He would live here on earth, loving others and “tending” those the Father gave him. But this good shepherd, this holy messenger, would not only do that, but he would also follow through on his promise and bring his message to fruition. Philippians 2:8-11

In other words, while the holy became lowly, he would not stay there. For the Father exalted him, not only to heaven, but the highest place and gave him the name above all names. *There is always a reward for obedience.*

One last thing—did you notice the phrase that began the holy angels’ proclamation to the lowly shepherds? *Do not be afraid.* The King of the universe has come to us, to be with us; to live in us by His grace through our faith to give hope, and joy, and love and mercy and peace, to your ravaged, sin-sick soul. Matthew 11:28

Do not be afraid of Jesus. Do not be afraid of surrendering to Him. Your reward for surrendering to Him is heaven—being in His presence for all of eternity. Where there will be no pain, no sickness, no broken dreams, no broken hearts, no hopelessness, no death, no sin, but only love joy, peace, and contentment for all eternity.

This is why the lowly shepherds gathered on bended knees to worship Jesus at his birth. We, too, bend our knees... in worship. And just like those heavenly angels lifted their voices to proclaim Him, We, too, lift our voices, to proclaim Him the Lord and King of our lives.