

## Christmas changed the shepherds' lives

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In Micah 5 v 2, it refers to Bethlehem and that the Lord Jesus would be born there. The Lord Jesus' birth is recorded in Luke 2 v 8 - 19. The angels appeared to the shepherds and a great light shone around. This was a great light. It was all around them and even penetrated them. It will not help you if this light does not penetrate your whole life. A rock that has been in water for 1000 years will still be bone dry inside when it is cracked open. It is worthless if your life is not penetrated by this light. John the Baptist baptized with water but the Holy Spirit baptizes with fire. If a rock is in fire, it penetrates right through and the inside of the rock will be red hot. In the same way, God's fire needs to penetrate us.

Did you ponder on the message yesterday? Is your heart rock hard like hard ground? When the seed of God's word is sown, the birds of the air come and eat it up. Some say it is a wonderful service but they can't remember what it was about. They lift up their hands in the service but before they get home they have already argued with one another. Mary was not like that. She pondered about all these things that happened at the time of the Lord Jesus' birth. Where are the women who keep the message of God in their hearts?

The angels said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests." God was well pleased with the Lord Jesus. Can Jesus react to me like He reacted to Stephen when he was stoned? He stood to welcome Stephen. Does God rejoice over you and me in the same way as it written in Isaiah 43 v 4: "Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you; therefore I will give men for you, and people for your life."

It is a tragedy if a person was precious to God but then denies Him and God has to say, "I loved you but you let me down." Even if the world beckons, don't turn your back on Him. Isaiah 49 v 1 and Romans 8 v 28,29 says God knew me. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be the First-born among many brothers." Romans 8 goes on to say in verse 32: "Truly He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

God didn't spare His own son and delivered Him up for us. Ponder upon this. Jesus became our brother through His incarnation, death and resurrection. If God did not hold back His only begotten Son how will he hold back anything else? How great is this salvation? No wonder we should make haste, like the Shepherds, to go and "see this thing which God has done"!

The shepherds hurried to go and see what the angels had told them. The angels had told them that the babe would be found wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. They then went and searched for him. Don't take your time. Make haste if God speaks to you. The angels also said that a savior was born. What does that mean? It means firstly that you are saved from your personal sin; secondly, that you are saved from a corrupt nature (sometimes you know that something is sin, but your totally depraved nature still makes you do it) and thirdly He saves you from being defeated by temptation. Remember, you are not what you think you are, you are what you think.

When the shepherds found Mary, Joseph and the baby, it says they saw them. What have you seen? Have you seen the Saviour who will save you from your sin? Many of the forefathers were found in Bethlehem: Jacob (where he saw the ladder reaching into heaven and the angels walking up and down), Rachel's grave, Jesse, David and now the Lord Jesus. The prayers of many saints went up in that place. Go to that place where you will meet with God, the place He has pointed to you, there you will find Him.