



CAPITOL COMMISSION®

The Messiah in a Manger: Precious Poverty

APRIL 22-23, 2026

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Luke 2:15-20 *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 which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." 16) And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17) Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18) And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19) But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20) Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. (NKJV)*

**FOR YOU KNOW THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,
THAT THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR YOUR SAKES HE
BECAME POOR, THAT YOU THROUGH HIS
POVERTY MIGHT BECOME RICH.
2 CORINTHIANS 8:9**

Were shepherds in a hurry to find their new-born Messiah? Why did the angels recede into heaven? Did the shepherds consider the message of the angels the same as the Lord? Would it have been natural for Mary and Joseph to be ashamed of such a profound level of poverty? Was the sign of the swaddling cloths and manger the means of their identifying their Messiah? What were the three responses to such extreme poverty of their Messiah as presented by the shepherds? How did everyone unanimously respond to such news? Is Mary the most careful investigator? Was the response of the shepherds the same as the angels? How accurate was the angelic sign?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

➤ APRIL 29-30: LUKE 2:21-24 **THE NAMING OF THE GREATEST SHEPHERD!**

➤ MAY 6-7: LUKE 2:25-35 **GOD'S SEVENTH WITNESS THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH!**

It had been four hundred years since any word or revelation had been received from God as Israel continued in a deplorable state of predominately ignoring the truth of God's Word and its real meaning while still claiming to worship Him in outward formalities. Though their Temple had been re-built and King Herod, in appeasement for his violent atrocities, was continually adding to its splendor, it was never visited by the Shekinah Glory of God as it had been when God was pleased with His people. Then, to the lowliest strata of society in Israel other than the contagious lepers, suddenly there was not only the Shekinah Glory of God radiating from one angel with the message of the birth of their Messiah that very night, but the darkness of night had fled away as the entire sky was filled with a great host, literally an army of angels *"praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,' literally, 'in men well pleasing to God.'*" To these lowly shepherds, with no shelter and sleeping under the stars, the silence of the ages was now broken. They were the first group in Israel to hear an announcement from heaven of new revelation! And they were the only group of men in all history to be overwhelmed by the Shekinah Glory of thousands of angels, illuminating the entire sky, to announce the birth of the Messiah, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! They alone had been privileged to hear the *"good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."* So they believe them.

**WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE
ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED? ... HE IS DESPISED
AND REJECTED BY MEN, A MAN OF SORROWS AND
ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF." ISAIAH 53:1, 3A**

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 8:30 AM – FREDERICKSBURG – PARADISE DINER – 260 WARRENTON RD & NOON – FAIRFAX – DENNY'S, 10473 FAIRFAX BLVD.

THURSDAY @ 8:00 AM – RICHMOND – SHONEY'S, HULL & COURTHOUSE & NOON – LYNCHBURG – PANERA BREAD, 3901 OLD FOREST RD.

Virginia

The Messiah in a Manger: Precious Poverty

I. SEEKING & FINDING

LUKE 2:15-16

After the army of luminous, chanting angels receded into heaven from where they had come, the thrilled shepherds with overwhelming excitement, were all constantly saying the same thing 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.”* The word, *“now”* adds urgency and likely they decided to all go together, probably leaving the care of their sheep to God and some skillfully trained sheep dogs (Job 30:1). Obviously they considered the word from the angels or messengers of God, the same as from God Himself. According to tradition, they were about two miles from Bethlehem. Again, their urgency to find their Messiah is emphasized, *“And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.”* The verb for *“found”* includes the concept of diligent searching, so they would have immediately searched all the stables to find their Messiah. Likely the manger was in the back of a cave, the traditional site of the stable, so they met Mary, then Joseph, then they were allowed to worship their Messiah, *“wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”* Both the many strips of cloth, instead of a blanket or towel, and especially the manger pointed to dire poverty, extreme even to poor shepherds.

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. MATTHEW 5:3

II. SEEING & FULFILLING

LUKE 2:17

The shepherds would have learned from Mary and Joseph that they were the only ones who had been notified that night regarding the birth of the long awaited Messiah of Israel. Though they had not been told by the angels to share the good news with others it was clearly implied, *“for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* So, once they saw the humble birth of their Messiah perfectly fulfilled in

detail, they immediately shared the good news of the Gospel which they had so wondrously received, with everyone they could find. *“Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning the Child.”* So Jesus must have been born right as it turned dark and they must have almost run the two miles to Bethlehem and run to the stables, looking for Him, so that the night was young enough for them to still share this good news with everyone in the town of Bethlehem before they went to bed. They not only believed, they shared the truth of God’s Word urgently with everyone they could find who would listen to them.

GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS ... TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. MATTHEW 28:19-20A

III. SANCTIONING & FOLLOWING LUKE 2:18-20

There were three responses to the shepherds’ *“good tidings.”* First, *“all who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.”* Though everyone expected Him to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), they would have never expected their Messiah to be born in a stable, wrapped with rags, and laid in an animal feeding trough. Neither would they have expected low-life shepherds to be chosen by the angels to receive the announcement of His birth from heaven. So they marveled, without belief. We are not told of a single one of them going to see their Messiah. Second, Mary would have probably felt horrible to have only strips of cloth to wrap the Messiah after He was born and would have felt even worse to only have a manger to lay Him as a crib, but when she discovered that these humbling circumstances had been announced by the angels as a sign, she literally *“treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.”* She began to realize the path of God for His Son. Third, the shepherds fully believed the truth, *“glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.”*

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) How do you respond to the truth of God’s Word when it is presented to you?
- 2) Have you only marveled or believed in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and received Him as your Lord?
- 3) Do you continually glorify God for His truth, sharing it & constantly treasuring it and pondering it in your heart?