

I Want Us to Consider...What does the story of the Birth of Christ "Reveal" to You this Morning? Do you see it as a wonderful story about baby Jesus being born? A factual Truth? Or...Do You See Something More?

**TEXT READ LUKE 2:10-18** Our Text says after the Angels had Appeared to the Shepherds they said to each other *Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.*"

Vs 15 Makes an Important Point for Us...*As God Speaks to Us How do We Respond?* **KEY: The Shepherds Responded and It Changed Their Lives!**

- When God Speaks to Us in His Word We Need To Respond...To Act Upon What He Says to Us.
- **If We Fail To Respond...We Will Miss His Amazing Plan for Our Lives!**
- Vs 12 *"This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and... "lying in a manger."*

And When The Shepherds Finally Found the Right Stable...VS 17 says, *When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.* What They Saw caused them to be so Excited that they Ran Out To Tell Everyone what they had seen?

Today, I Want Us to Look Closely in The Manger To See The Three Wonderful Truths that the Shepherds Saw as they Looked into the Manger on that First Christmas Morn.

**First: We Find LIFE in the Manger:** John 1:4 it says *"In Him was life" and that life was the light of men!*

- The Shepherds saw GOD Made Flesh! "EMMANUEL" 100% GOD and 100% Man
- *You Cannot Look at God...and Not be Enlightened!* [Reason to be in the Word]
- When you take a Close look at God...You will be transformed in mind, heart, and soul!
- The Enlightenment we See at the Manger is the Promise of Eternal Life... (Our Messiah)...Because God Put Flesh on His Promise given to Us in Genesis 3...
- The stage had been set for God's Promise to be Carried Out! Jesus Christ took OFF HIS CROWN-Set it Down...and said Father Thy Will be Done! AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH John 1:14

John saw the glory of the Word made flesh. He Begins the Gospel of John, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us."*

- John saw the Glory as of the Eternal God Shining in the Face of the Lord Jesus Christ. John says the Sum Total of the Eternal, Omnipotent, Infinite Glory of God was Reflected in Jesus Christ.

**KEY POINT:** The combined attributes of the living God were reflected in the human person of the only begotten of the Father, the God-Man, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

- That Means: The Eternal Son of God in the person of the Sinless Son of Man was full of God's Grace and Righteousness, which Alone Qualified Him to Become Our Perfect Savior and Sacrifice for Sin.
- The incarnate Word of God, made in the likeness of human flesh, was also full of Truth which Alone Qualifies Him to be the Perfect Source of God's Completed Revelation.

**Secondly, We find LIBERTY in the Manger**

- 1 Timothy 1:15 Apostle Paul writes, *"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost (chief) of all."*
- Jesus came to Free Us from Sin and to Free Us from Self-Absorption and Obsession.
- Galatians 5:1 Paul Further states, *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and Be Not Entangled again with the Yoke of Bondage."*

**KEY: The Terrible Tragedy of Sin is that it is Chains of Our Own Making.**

- We go to the Anvil of Life and use the Metal of Pride, Selfishness, Bitterness, Greed, Lust, Hate, Envy, Anger, Malice, and On and On...
- **We Shape Our Own Shackles...We Form Our Own Fetters.**
- **Romans 6: 22-23 God Provided a Way to Know Life, Liberty & Love**

You See...We can Make the Chains...But We Do Not of Ourselves have the Power to Break the Chains.

- How Thankful We Need to Be that Paul Makes Clear here in Romans that *Jesus Christ and His Once for All Sacrifice, on the Cross, Shattered the Chains of Sin.*
- Jesus has freed us from sin and as we accept Him as our Lord and master...He Gives Us Life Filled With Joy, Peace and All the Manifestations of Fruit of the Holy Spirit!
- ***Sin Drags Us Down to Death and Destruction But...Jesus Delivers Us to Life & Liberty.***
- *Galatians 5:1 Clearly States*, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Today's Culture Believes that if they Can Do Whatever they Want to Do Without Restraint that They are Free...They Mistake License for Liberty... **Saul's demise shows us 4 powerful lessons:**

1. Obedience brings God's presence and favor; Disobedience leaves us on our own to suffer the consequences of our actions.
2. Even one bad choice can bring long lasting consequences. Successive Bad Choices can bring Catastrophic Results.
3. Our Disobedience doesn't just affect Us. There are consequences for everyone around us.
4. Sometimes, We Can't Fix Disobedience Without a Lot of Pain. But Often We Just Can't Fix it At All.

Saul's ego took first place in his heart. When it did, disobedience—doing it his way—became his undoing.

- In the Liberty of the Manger we see a Dethroning of Sin and Self...As We Accept Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords...and the Master of our Souls!!!

**Lastly: We Find LOVE in the Manger John 3.16 1 John 4.8** As we Look into the Manger we See Gods Promise Fulfilled...Jesus Came to Give Us Life Fulfilled...Liberty and True Freedom...and Sacrificial Love!

- **KEY:** God's Love is Not Limited in Scope, it Cannot be Dimmed by Distance, it Cannot be Strangled by Any Sin...BUT...It CAN BE REJECTED BY MEN!
- **God's Love Can Only be Limited by Your Unwillingness to Accept His FREE Gift**

Given this Truth...Look at Verse 17: "*When they had seen him, they Spread the Word concerning what had been told them about this child!*"

***When We Look into the Manger...We See that God's Word (Jesus) was Given to ALL Mankind...And His Heart Is that We Would Tell the World the Good News.***

Verse 18 says, "*And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said*".

**Promise...**When We "*Like the Shepherds*" Share God's Good News that Jesus Came to Give Us an Abundant Life...True Liberty-Freedom and Love for Others We Will Accomplish Gods Plan for Each of Us

Matt 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"

**We Have a Great Opportunity this Week...To Invite Family and Friends this Christmas Eve to Hear How Much God Loves and His FREE GIFT...**

- Lets Be Praying that All Those Who Hear It Will Be Amazed and Receive Gods Free Gift!

**POINT: As We Share This Truth That Christ Came To Save The World, He Will Draw Peoples Unto Himself!**