



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #017
Jesus’ 30 Years of Preparation for Ministry
The Birth of Jesus

Shepherds Confirm the Good News of Jesus’ Birth
LK 2.15-20

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15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds were exclaiming to one another, "Yes, let's go to Bethlehem to see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

16 So they rushed off and found Mary, and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 Once they had seen him, they made known the message (2.10-11) that had been spoken to them about this child, 18 and all who heard it marveled at what was spoken by the shepherds to them.

19 Mary was treasuring up all these things and continued to ponder them in her heart.

20 The shepherds returned, as they continued glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Fields Surrounding Bethlehem
Time	The Night Jesus was Born
Stage of Jesus’ Life	His 30 Years of Preparation for Ministry
Chapter 3	The Birth of Jesus
Section #017	Shepherds Confirm the Good News of Jesus’ Birth

Today’s reading reminds us of the importance of multiple witnesses in confirming truth claims. The law prescribed that “EVERYTHING MUST BE CONFIRMED BY TWO OR THREE WITNESSES” (Duet. 19.15).

Corroboration of evidence by multiple witnesses is an important legal principle for confirming the truth. The Trinity has been careful to provide much evidence to confirm their respective claims regarding Jesus. The truth is important to the God of Truth, because the Trinity is love. We see this Divine concern for corroboration of testimony in the abundance of testimony about Jesus' conception and birth.

In addition to the testimony of the angel Gabriel, we saw that three human witnesses confirmed the truths about Jesus' miraculous conception *before* he was born (Elizabeth, Mary, and Zechariah). Likewise, in addition to the testimony of the angels, three witnesses confirmed the significance of Jesus' birth *after* it happened (the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna). This reading begins this second sequence of three witnesses.

The shepherds were the first people to receive the honor of confirming the angelic announcement of Jesus' birth. The herdsmen had found the baby Savior wrapped in baby cloths, lying in the manger-- just as they had been told. As soon as they had made this confirmation, this unlikely shepherd-choir began to continually praise and glorify God. Their lives would never be the same.

This led in turn to witnessing about what they had seen and heard from the angels, and what they had personally experienced as well. It was the first proclamation of the "good news about Jesus" after his birth-- by shepherds. Don't miss this.

God's willingness to entrust the good news of the birth of His Son to shepherds is another indication of pure grace. It is far from what we would anticipate. The second and third witnesses (Simeon and Anna) are of the caliber that we would expect for such an important event. But shepherds?-- no one would have thought that God would choose them to be the first heralds of this news.

God's ways are not our ways, because His love and grace abound in dimensions that defy our tiny, hard hearts and minds. Since God entrusted the good news to shepherds, it makes sense that He has also entrusted it to the likes of you and me. Every believer is a crucial witness to the life and work of Jesus. This privilege is God's grace poured out upon us all.

APPLICATION:

When we are focused on constantly praising the goodness and grace of God, we also naturally witness to people. Praise is extolling the greatness of God's person and works to Him. Witnessing is extolling the greatness of God's person and works to people, in the presence of God. It is telling the truth about the Jesus, as we have personally experienced it. This is what the shepherds did.

When is the last time you personally witnessed? Has it been too long?

Will everyone in the world be reached with the good news if every christian witnesses at your pace? What can you do today to become a more active witness?

Remember...your witness is a product of His grace, just like the shepherds.