

Some Blessings from Believing God's Words

International Bible Lesson

Luke 2: 8-20

Sunday, December 25, 2016

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“The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told” (Luke 2:20).

The priest Zechariah met an angel in the temple, but Zechariah did not believe his words. When an angel met the shepherds, and announced that the Messiah had been born in Bethlehem and they could find Him as a baby in a manger, they believed him and hurried off to see Jesus. From the Bible, we learn about some of the disappointments that can come from disbelief: Zechariah could not speak for at least nine months. From the Bible, we also learn about the thoughts of astonishment and feelings of awe that can come from believing God and His words. Because they believe in Jesus, believers ponder with wonder when they think about God sending His only begotten Son into the world to save them from their sins, cleanse their conscience, fill them with love, restore their peace with God and peace of mind, and give them eternal life. Some of the shepherds might not have lived long enough to hear Jesus teach, but some of them probably did. After they saw Him as a baby, some who believed in His coming might have died and joined the great cloud of witnesses who watched Jesus' ministry from heaven as in a giant stadium (see Hebrews 12:1). Today, when people hear and believe the good news about Jesus Christ, they respond as the shepherds did after they saw the baby Jesus. They glorify and praise God. They tell others what they experienced after they trusted in Jesus as their Savior. Eventually, they will join the great cloud of witnesses in heaven and continue watching God's saving work.

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Thinking Further

1. What were the shepherds doing when the angels appeared to them?
2. What possible reasons can you think of for God sending angels to these shepherds on the day Jesus was born instead of to others in Bethlehem or in the region?
3. If an angel appeared to you unexpectedly in the quiet of the night, how would you feel?
4. Read Luke 2:10-11 again. What truths did the angel share with them to help them overcome their feelings of terror at seeing him?
5. If you had been one of the shepherds, what would you have done after the angels' appearance? Give some reasons for your answer.