

ONE
Extraordinary
NIGHT



study number seven



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ONE *Extraordinary* NIGHT



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A Study of Luke 2:8-14

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

*Note: Bible references are from the New International Version (NIV),
unless otherwise noted.*

- Lesson One - The Shepherds
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Note: Bible references are from the New International Version (NIV), unless otherwise noted.

Lesson One

The Shepherds

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night (Luke 2:8).

It started out as just another ordinary night.

Nothing special.

The usual routine.

Shepherds watching over their flocks. They were humbly and industriously going about the business of their calling not realizing they had a divine appointment that night. They were involved in the mundane, the routine. Shepherding had a lowly place and shepherds were generally considered to be the social outcasts. However, those were no ordinary shepherds – and that was no ordinary night.

These shepherds were Temple shepherds, making sure there would be unblemished lambs to sacrifice to God during the morning and evening sacrifices in the Jerusalem Temple not far away. The shepherds lived outside in the fields with their flocks just outside of Bethlehem. There were no thieves or predatory animals about, so they settled down to keep watch. All was as it should be that night.

The night was divided into four watches: the evening, midnight, cock crowing, and morning. The shepherds worked in shifts, some watched the flock while others rested. Being the social outcasts of the day, the rabbi despised them as “next door heathens”. Shepherds had a reputation of not being able to differentiate between mine and thine, and were seen as so untrustworthy that they were not allowed to give testimony in court. So why would God choose them as witnesses?

Because God knew better.

God passed over the self-important, the High Priest, Herod the Great, the Jewish religious leaders, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the politicians, Rome and Jerusalem.

These shepherds didn't realize they were about to hear the heavenly announcement that would change the course of all eternity. They didn't realize that this night would be unlike any other in all of Creation. This night would change the history of the world and they would be privileged to share in a moment and become bearers of a story full of wonder.

This one remarkable, stunning, amazing, astonishing, life-changing, God-saving, extraordinary night.

Take a moment to write out Luke 2:11. Read verses 8-14.

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Now read those verses aloud. This represents our memory verses for our study. I encourage you to write them on index cards and place them in various locations where you spend the most time.

In this first lesson, we dive into Luke 2:8, which states And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

The laborious life of the shepherd and its characteristic features remain much the same today as they did in Jesus' day. The dress of a shepherd consisted of a shirt of unbleached cotton, a leather girdle, and a large cloak of sheepskin, wool, or hair, which also served for a blanket at night. He carried a scribe or provision-pouch of kidskin, a gourd for holding water or milk, an oak staff six-feet long, and weapons in the form of a sling (as in sling shot, remember David and Goliath?) and an oak club two-feet long, the thick end of which was studded with sharp objects.

The shepherd stayed with his sheep night and day. The sheep trusted the shepherds wholeheartedly to take care of their every need. Consequently, they followed the shepherds wherever they led the flock. Shepherds lived a simple, uncomplicated life, not worried about material possessions, social status or wealth.

Ever since Jesus' time on earth, He has been known as our Good Shepherd. And although He deserved the greatest treasures ever known, He lived a simple life with singular focus. He focused on people. Loving them. Instructing them. Guiding them. Healing them. Until the second coming, He will continue to watch over us as His flock:

Psalm 100:3

Psalm 23:1-2

Isaiah 40:11

John 10:11

One of the main duties of a shepherd is to guard the flock at all costs. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, is the ultimate Guardian of His flock. Who is His flock? All believers. Jesus guards us around the clock our entire lives – we are never alone.

Buckminster Fuller once wrote: "Sometimes I think we are alone. Sometimes I think we are not. In either case, the thought is staggering." As part of Jesus' flock, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that we are

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never without His watchful presence. Just as the sheep trusted the shepherds wholeheartedly to take care of their every need, we can trust Jesus the same way.

Take a moment to read and record these Scripture passages that confirm and affirm this wonderful, rock solid truth:

2 Thessalonians 3:3

2 Timothy 1:12

Jude 24

Biblical history points to many prominent shepherds, among them our Patriarchs and David. What do you find about these shepherds?

Moses: Exodus 3:1 Jacob: Genesis 30:25-43 David: 1 Samuel 16:10-11

We see throughout Scripture that God refers to sinners as lost sheep. Friends, that includes you and me. Whether we are aware of it or not, our sinful thoughts run rampant. We are better adept at filtering sinful words and deeds, but our thoughts prove much more difficult. Pride, jealousy, envy, and covetousness are just a few. We need our Shepherd monitoring the gate of our minds. Indeed, without our Shepherd at the gate, we wander aimlessly and far from Him.

Read the following verses and fill in the appropriate blanks:

Jeremiah 50:6a – “My People have been _____.”

Ezekiel 34:6 – “My _____ over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were _____ over the whole earth, and no one _____ or looked for them.”

Matthew 9:36 – When He saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were _____ and _____, like _____ without a _____.

Matthew 18:12 – “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred _____, and one of them _____ away, will he not _____ the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that _____ off?”

What reassurance! Even if the rest of mankind stood secure behind Jesus’ divine, protective gates and I was to wander off, He would seek me until He found me. Humbling and awe-inspiring!

Let’s review our Bible memory verses for this month.

Write out only Luke 2:11 once more:

There is a short, one sentence poem that I love, which we will close with today. It is written by Christian author Monty Lysme: “God went out and womped us with the water and Word, we’re branded and now we’re part of the herd.”

Being branded never felt so good. Hallelujah and Hallelujah!

Life Application: What does being part of God’s herd mean to you?

Close with prayer:

Father, all we like sheep have gone astray, each of us turning our own separate way. We have sinned and fallen short of Your glory. But what wonders await us as they did the shepherds on that extraordinary night over 2,000 years ago - the glory of seeing Your Son face-to-face. Father, as I humbly and industriously go about Your business, I ask that You allow Your light to shine in me in such a way as to point others to You. In Jesus’ name, Amen

Lesson One

The Shekinah Glory

*An angel of the Lord appeared to them,
and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they
were terrified. But the angel said to them,
“Do not be afraid” (Luke 2:9-10a).*

Imagine for a moment the scene that night from the shepherds’ point of view. They were just going about their ordinary duties and suddenly, night was brighter than it was supposed to be.

What in the world was happening? What was that extraordinary bright light? Fear began to creep in. To top it off, an angel of the Lord showed up and began talking to them. They were terrified! Why? I would suggest that they thought it was a day of judgment, not of redemption. After all, they were simple, lowly shepherds. Why would God choose to talk to them when the religious scholars of their day lived only a few miles away in Jerusalem?

I imagine the shepherds were so terrified that they could not properly listen. Have you ever been in a situation like that? So ruled by fear that you were immobilized? Ineffective? The angel had to reassure the shepherds and calm them down, so that they could hear the true meaning of Christmas. It was not a day of judgment, but a day of redemption! They had no idea that this night would be anything but ordinary. They had no idea that they would behold God's face reflected in that of a baby. God's Son, the Lamb of God, who would not only take away their sin, but the sin of the world.

Take a moment to write out Luke 2:11.

In this second lesson, we are studying Luke 2:9-10a, which states, An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid."

The word glory referenced here represents the splendor and brilliance that radiates from God's presence and is associated with His acts of power – the Shekinah glory. It is, quite literally, the visible manifestation of God's presence.

There are numerous occurrences of the Shekinah glory in Scripture:

Pillars of cloud and fire that led the Israelites (Exodus 13:21-22)

Moses before the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-5)

The Transfiguration and the brightness of the cloud (Matthew 17:5)

The Ascension where a cloud hid Him from their sight (Acts 1:9)

The cloud, meant to symbolize the Shekinah, hovered above the Tabernacle in the wilderness, as well (Exodus 40:34). The expression where the cloud settled contains the significant verb shakan, which gives us the basis for the Shekinah glory. The English rendering Shekinah is built on the verb meaning, to dwell and the shortened form of the divine name Yahweh.

That may seem technical, but there is an important truth to grasp here: the cloud symbolizes both God's nearness and His remoteness. He is present as a cloud, but hovers above; He is near as a fire, but one cannot draw very close.

In Joshua 3:4b, we see God's instructions to Joshua: "But keep a distance of about a thousand yards between you and the ark; do not go near it."

In Acts 1:9, the cloud that hid Jesus from sight undoubtedly symbolized the Shekinah. Such a cloud enveloped Jesus and three of his disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration as a visible sign of God's presence and His approval of His Son. Jesus, as the ascended Lord, is enveloped by the Shekinah cloud.

The shepherds in Luke 2 were completely encompassed by the Shekinah glory. For over 400 years the people of Israel had not seen the visible manifestation of God's presence with them. Now, He revealed Himself to these lowly shepherds of all people. Jesus' birth sparks surprise, joy and wonder in the shepherds as they witness in amazement heaven confessing the child's identity.

As you read those passages above, did you notice something? The glory of the Lord generates fear in those who behold it. Why do you believe that is true?

God's glory makes us very aware of how much our sin separates us from His holiness. We also see God's first words to those who tremble – "Do not be afraid." The shepherds were afraid at such an unusual light and glory about them – the heavenly brightness of God's presence and power.

The English translated word terrified in verse 9 and afraid in verse 10 are the same Greek word phobeo meaning, to fear, to be alarmed. In some contexts, phobeo represents an impediment to faith and love.

Do we at times allow our fear to get in the way of our faith? Why?

In the earlier Greek, phobeo meant, to put to flight. That just made me laugh out loud when I read it! I bet the shepherds would have taken off in the opposite direction had fear not kept them rooted to the spot. Can you picture it with me? The shepherds' hands hit the air with blood curdling screams, the oak staffs go one way, the shepherds haul the other way with only their hairy knees visible as they run at top speed. That just got me giggling, friends!

Sometimes our fears are needless and not based on fact. We see many examples of needless fear in Scripture:

Matthew 14:30

Mark 4:38

Mark 5:33

Luke 1:12

Let's not forget the angel of the Lord. Angels are recorded many times in Scripture for our study and contemplation:

Luke 1:11-12

Acts 5:19

Matthew 14:27

When God sends an angel to deliver a message, you can bet it's an important message. In a pasture outside of Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago, the shepherds discovered the vital importance of God's message of love to each of us.

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Let's review our Bible memory verses for this month. Write out Luke 2:8-14 once more: _

Fear tends to hinder our work in God's name because it takes our eyes off of our Protector and onto the object/person of our fear. The enemy just loves that. But as long as we keep our eyes on the Author and Perfecter of our faith and trust in His love, provision and protection for us, we will not miss the wonder that He has for us on this incredible journey of faith.

Life Application: In your daily life and routine, how do you keep your eyes focused on God?

Close with prayer:

Father, thank You so much for Your love. Your love was put into action and took on flesh through the birth of Your Son. I confess that sometimes I let fear and its ineffectiveness hinder my way. Fear of failure. Fear of rejection. But Father, You promise to lead us and guide us. I ask that You remind me to rely fully on those truths, so that my fear does not rob Your plan of its full potential in my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Lesson Three

Good News of Great Joy

“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10b).

Everyone needs good news. Whether it’s a good health report, a good report card, a good job, a good day, or a good challenge, good news makes us feel good.

The good news told to the shepherds on that night long ago proved to be the best news ever - and remains so to this day. Good news of GREAT joy. Nehemiah 8:10b tells us that the joy of the LORD is our strength. But this joy was GREAT. Why? Because it was for all people. Not just a selected few, not just the pious religious leaders, not just Mary and Joseph as new parents.

GREAT news.

The kind of news that causes Christians to risk their lives to share the Gospel every day around the world. The kind of news that changes hearts, lives, and the world through the power of the Holy Spirit. GREAT joy. The goodwill and amazing love of God displayed in the most unexpected place and in the most unexpected form.

Take a moment to write out Luke 2: 11

In this third lesson, we turn our attention to Luke 2:10b, which states, *“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people”*.

The Greek word for bring (euangelizo) is the origin of our word evangelize. It refers to preaching (bringing) the good news of the Gospel.

Literally the angel said to the shepherds, “I evangelize to you a great joy.” And it was not just for one, but for all people. The implication is – now you go and tell what you know. Euangelizo is almost always used of “the good news” concerning the Son of God as proclaimed in the Gospel. And GREAT joy is promised. What do these passages say about promised joy:

John 15:11 _____

Psalm 16:11 _____

Psalm 30:5 _____

Psalm 126:5 _____

Psalm 132:16 _____

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Isaiah 12:3 _____

Isaiah 35:10 _____

John 16:24 _____

Romans 14:17 _____

Numerous passages tell us of God's promised joy. It's humbling to see how God seeks to give us so much joy. Receiving and taking hold of joy in our Christian walk as we live that out contagiously encourages the body of Christ. When we walk with joy, the world sees God in us – His goodness and His love. This joy is so appealing and so wonderful that people are drawn to it like flies drawn to honey. Joylessness is a thief of faith. I don't know about you, but not one sourpuss Christian has ever made a lasting impact on my life.

Another key word in this verse is all. All people - not just those who are good for goodness sake. All people - regardless of race, gender, age, or educational level. All in this text refers to, the whole; the entirety in the Greek. It denotes teamwork - not individualism. In other words, we're not expected to get this message out all by ourselves.

We bind together to use the spiritual gifts and strengths of many for the work of spreading the Gospel. Through our teamwork in the Gospel, we learn so much from one another about God and His goodness. We see the old mentoring the young, the young giving vigor to the old, mothers nurturing new mothers, and men guiding their sons to be the future heads of their households. That heritage of faith is crucial. When we serve and love all people, not just those we get along with, we see God's love in amazing ways. How do you show God's love to others?

The Great Commandment is about love. Write those words from Matthew 22:37-39 here:

What are God's instructions to us regarding love in the following passages?

Leviticus 19:18 _____

Leviticus 19:34 _____

Proverbs 10:12 _____

We need love in order to effectively spread God's good news of great joy. In love, we have compassion for our fellow man to serve and help him in the name of Jesus -- to be the hands and feet of Christ. Some days, that's a more challenging task than others. With some people, it's a more challenging task than others.

What situations and/or people might be a challenge for you to show love?

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Being a music-oriented person, I am reminded of the lyrics to the Christmas song “Joy To The World” where it says, “let heaven and nature sing.” Just imagine heaven and nature singing on that wonderful night. That night especially, heaven and nature surely sang because the long awaited salvation of God’s children was at hand.

God’s plan was being put into action on earth at long last. JOY TO THE WORLD!

Let’s review our Bible memory verse for this study. Write out Luke 2:11 once more:

St. Francis De Sales, a sixteenth century bishop, once said: “You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working; in just the same way, you learn to love by loving.”

Love serves as an integral part and vital ingredient in spreading and proclaiming God’s good news of great joy. A wise mentor of mine once said, “we have to keep on loving them until they ask why.” And when they ask why, the door is opened to plant the seed that the Holy Spirit will cultivate and grow.

Life Application: This Christmas, how can you show God’s love to those around you?

Close with prayer:

Father, I pray that You work Your message of love in our hearts and lives this week. You have given us good news of GREAT joy! I pray that we live that out loud until those whom You’ve placed around us ask us “why?” Then give us the courage to tell them about Your love for them. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Lesson Four

A Savior - Christ the Lord

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:11-12).

Once the shepherds retrieved their dropped jaws from the ground after being visited by an angel surrounded by the shekinah glory, can you imagine the dialogue that was racing through their minds at this amazing proclamation?

It might have sounded something like this: “Did he say that a savior had been born lying in a manger? Did I misunderstand? Surely I didn’t hear that part right. The night air parched my wide open mouth. Surely I missed something important when I swallowed!”

Although there are no records of the shepherds saying any of this, I’d say it’s a pretty good bet that a similar dialogue ran through their heads. I mean, they were shepherds. They were very familiar with what a manger was. A smelly, dirty, wooden livestock feeding trough. Not a place for a baby.

And certainly not a place for a Savior.

But today having God’s Word at our fingertips, we know better. That’s exactly where our Savior meets us. He meets us in our smelly, dirty lives. Our mangers of pride, arrogance, self-indulgence and sin. He reaches down into our filth to redeem us and set us free.

I wonder if the Shepherds remained alive long enough to understand that incredible truth.

Take a moment to write out Luke 2:8-14.

In this fourth lesson, we dig into Luke 2:11-12, which states, *“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”*

The story of Jesus’ birth mixes simplicity with awe. As humble as the setting is, His birth is accompanied by the attention of the heavenly host.

When we contrast the birth of Jesus with the birth of John the Baptist, it’s remarkable. The birth of John the Baptist was announced in the capital, at the temple, and in the center of the Jewish nation. His father was a

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priest rendered speechless when his lack of faith doubted Gabriel's message from God.

But Jesus arrived in rural anonymity. John is the child of a priest and his righteous wife. Jesus belongs to Jews of average social status. But why did such an epic moment happen in such simplicity?

The simple imagery shows God's concern for people regardless of their social status or vocation. Look at these other instances in Scripture where God shows His concern and care for His people:

Psalm 115:12 _____

Luke 12:7 _____

1 Peter 5:6, 7 _____

The angels gave the shepherds very specific direction because the shepherds would never have thought to look for and find Jesus in such a place. Though there might have been many other babies that night, none else was in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. That would distinguish the new born Savior from all others.

As we learned earlier, the manger was basically a wooden feeding trough. Think about that for a moment. Jesus, born in a wooden manger, would die nailed to a wooden cross.

And He did it all to give us LIFE eternal.

The major offices of Jesus are confirmed in one sentence: He is Savior, Lord, and Christ – that is, Deliverer, Master and Anointed King. THE Savior, whom God had long promised and appointed from all eternity, had finally arrived. Christ the Lord, the Messiah spoken of by the prophets, the anointed of the Lord. He is a prophet, priest, and king in his church, true Jehovah, the Lord of our righteousness, the Lord of all creation, the Lord of angels, Lord of all men as Creator, Lord of lords, and King of kings.

The story is not told so that hearers can identify with happy parents or a hopeful story of a touching birth in humble surroundings. This birth has value because of Whose birth it is.

Every word in Luke 2:11-12 exudes great truth. The city of David, the city of Bethlehem, the one that the prophet Micah spoke of, serves as the location of this marvelous event (Micah 5:2). The Messiah, the Anointed One, has come from David's city. He could not have been born anywhere else and be the Messiah, or every Jewish scholar would have declared Him an imposter and rightfully so.

The combination of "Christ the Lord" occurs only here in the New Testament. Taken in its fullest meaning, He is clearly the longed-for expected Christ from the Old Testament – the Anointed of the Lord. The Christ (Greek) and the Messiah (Hebrew) both mean the Anointed One. This is key because it creates continuity between the Old Testament Messiah and the New Testament Christ.

Over and over throughout Scripture, we see the confirmation of Jesus' identity as Christ. Take a moment to look up and write down the following passages:

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Matthew 1:16 _____

Matthew 1:21 _____

Matthew 16:16 _____

John 11:27 _____

Acts 2:36 _____

Acts 13:23 _____

According to John 18:37, why did God send His Son to us?

And what does John 8:32 tell us will happen when we hear and believe?

God also sent His Son for the purpose set forth in John 3:17:

As we read Luke 2:12, the angels declare that this birth will be a sign. Once again, we see that the Old Testament confirms this truth in Isaiah 7:14 _____

Let's review our Bible memory verses for our study. Write out Luke 2:11 once more:

God keeps His promises no matter how many years have passed. God's promises to us are true and rock solid! Our Savior has been born to us to testify to the truth and save us from the death of sin. I believe that these are the most powerful words of hope given to us.

Life Application: Do you live your life with the steadfast hope that God will keep His promises to you?

Close with prayer:

Father, the truth and love of Your promises pour into my soul with an indescribable joy. Nothing can separate us from Your love!! Just as the shepherds sought out the new born Savior, may I continue to search Him out

daily. Through Jesus, You give me the keys to everlasting life with You. Thank you so much for reaching down into the smelly manger of my life to redeem me. Thank you for not leaving me in the same condition that You found me. May I never take that for granted. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Lesson Five

Glory to God in the Highest

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:13-14).

I am a very visual person. Consequently, I'm torn between laughter and wonder as I read this lesson's verses.

In my mind's eye, I see the shepherds clearly. Peacefully going about their work – ordinary and routine. Then a bright light and an angel of the Lord appear. If the appearance of the shekinah glory and an angel of the Lord was not enough to get those shepherds a tad freaked out, suddenly a great army of heaven appears and begins praising God and giving Him honor and glory for what is taking place. You know that God must have rooted those shepherds' feet to the top soil of earth for them to stay put!

Now imagine with me for a moment what they witnessed that night. They saw a great company of the heavenly host. Scripture does not mention the number of angels present, but when God's Word tell us it was great, it must have been an unbelievable sight! I've got chill bumps on my arms.

That great company of the heavenly host were caught in the pull of divine fascination as they gave glory and worship to God for what He was causing to happen on the earth. God's promise of eternity for all those who believe in His Son was set into motion in a wooden manger of human anonymity before a most unlikely earthly audience.

But the heavenly host knew that the baby in that manger was no ordinary baby. It was the Son of the living God sent to earth to make straight the path of all those who, through faith, will one day be gathered into the bliss of life in heaven.

Take a moment to write out Luke 2:13-14.

In this last lesson, we wrap up our five-week study with Luke 2:13-14, which states, Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests".

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I have long been curious as to why the angels on this particular night were called the heavenly host. Webster's Dictionary defines host as, "one who receives or entertains guests; one that furnishes facilities and resources for an event." Putting that definition in context with our study, the angels were entertaining THE most honored Guest of any event to ever take place among us!!

The Greek word for host in this verse (stratia) refers to, "the heavenly bodies, stars of heaven, so called on account of their number and order". Read that definition again and let it soak in. Friends, that just blew me away!

Who can count the stars (much less number and order them) other than God? The heavenly host present at Jesus' birth were so numerous that they are compared to the stars. Stratia also refers to, "an army or band of soldiers". So all of a sudden an entire army of angels descended around those shepherds!

The King James Version translates Luke 2:13 to say a multitude of the heavenly host. Let's do the math. If one heavenly host is as numerous as the stars, how many is a multitude of heavenly host? Don't you just love the vastness of our God?

We cannot put Him in a box to fit our comfort zone because there will simply never be a box big enough to contain Him. Praise!

Take a moment to be amazed through these passages at the vastness of our God:

Genesis 2:1 _____

Job 9:3-5 _____

Psalm 139:16-18 _____

Colossians 1:16 _____

Throughout Scripture, we behold God being given glory. But why at Jesus' birth does God receive glory in the highest?

God's goodwill to men resounds to His praise. Other works of God are for His glory, but the redemption of the world is for His glory in the highest. Over and over throughout the Bible, we see where God is given glory to the highest because of Christ and His saving work. For example:

Luke 19:38 _____

Matthew 21:9 _____

(Interestingly, in Matthew 21:9 Hosanna was a Hebrew expression meaning Save! which became an exclamation of praise.)

In Luke 2:14, we also see that God wishes for His children to live in peace.

What is peace? The absence of conflict and hostility – harmony. Our sin renders that nearly impossible. However, fellow believers, we all have the same opportunity to live God's peace to the fullest. We all have the

same God and we all have the same resurrection power inside us through the power of the Holy Spirit. Peace is not impossible! Only the peace we have through God through His working in our lives is possible. Because of sin we will never enjoy perfect peace this side of heaven.

What does Scripture say about peace? Savor these wondrous passages about our Savior's birth and His peace:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end (Isaiah 9:6-7a).

Let's review our Bible memory verse one final time for our study. Can you recite it from memory? Write out Luke 2:11 once more:

No event exists in all of human history that even comes close to the relevance, importance, reality and grace of our Savior's birth. The Christmas story tells us salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). It should cause our hearts to sing out the "Gloria in excelsis Deo." It is a hymn of praise to the LORD God. The birth of the Savior gives glory to God. God, held in the highest opinion and esteem, deserves all praise, honor and glory.

He alone receives the most exalted place in the universe. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The shepherds weren't excited about meeting angels, but experiencing the glory of God's holy presence. I pray that we all revel in His incredible presence as we celebrate our Savior's birth. Abundant Christmas blessings to you all.

Life Application: As you have worked through this study, what has God revealed to you about Him and how you are to live out Christmas (and every day) as one of His redeemed children?

Close with prayer:

✠Father, a simple "thank you" does not seem nearly adequate for the life-changing, soul-saving gift of Your Son. As I celebrate His birth, I ask that You work peace in my heart. The peace that surpasses all understanding. I am amazed by Your vastness and the lengths You go to keep reaching out to me in love. Help me share Your love to make a difference that will enlarge and expand Your kingdom. Thank You, Jesus! In His name, I humbly pray, Amen. ✠

Notes

Prayers

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About the Author

Donna Pyle



An engaging speaker, author, Bible teacher and worship leader, Donna has a passion for studying and teaching God's Word. She has authored 18 Bible studies, several Bible studies published in the *Lutheran Women's Quarterly*, numerous devotions, and magazine articles. Donna's DVD-based Bible study series, *Your Strong Suit*, launched nationwide through LWML in November 2011. Her new full-length, small-group based Bible study, *The God of All Comfort*, is available from Concordia Publishing House. Her next DVD-based Bible study series for the LWML, *Overflowing Abundance*, is scheduled for release at the Pittsburgh LWML Convention.

Donna attends Salem Lutheran Church in Tomball, Texas, where she loves serving in the worship ministry. She is passionate about partnering with the Lutheran Women's Missionary League in mission work and providing new avenues for women to get into God's hydrating Word.



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