

**Behind the Manger: Healing Hidden Wounds**

**Introduction:**

- ✓ Linus explains
- ✓ Stand, prayer, greeting

The reminder of Linus would serve our culture well today.

Setting the Context

**A. The earthly conditions**

*And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. Luke 2:1-5 NKJV*

1. A decree from Caesar Augustus
  - a. A brutal dictator who claimed deity/worship
  - b. There was peace, but peace secured by the brutal bludgeoning of the people
  - c. A decree for all to be enrolled—no appeal—it must be done
2. Two entirely insignificant individuals (no impact on Caesar), Mary and Joseph went up to Bethlehem to be registered
  - a. Even though royal blood flowed in Joseph he could not go by proxy
  - b. He had to go to Bethlehem—the city of his family to enroll
  - c. Two individuals marching under the orders of Caesar
    - Mary: Her womb was the tabernacle for the Son of God
    - Joseph: The one passion of his life is to guard the woman
    - Both: Going because egotistical/psycho Caesar wanted to count his people

**NOTE:** Not really him who was in control!

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting." 3 Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel. 4 And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the Lord, In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth; Micah 5:2-4 NKJV*

NOTE: The real insignificant one is the puppet Caesar August. Mary and Joseph are really the significant ones

#### B. The stupendous event

*So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:6-7 NKJV*

1. The baby was born
2. No room in the inn (kataluma)—just an enclosure, walls into which travelers could place their cattle for the night, sometimes places where they might rest—no food, no host or entertainment—only water. NO ROOM
3. Manger—was a bleak outhouse—outside everything—outside every dwelling
4. She brought forth, she wrapped in swaddling clothes
5. Mary—alone bore Jesus—pitiful, but yet a moment of great joy and importance

#### C. The activity of heaven

1. Angel of the Lord stood by the shepherds—glory of the Lord shone
2. Shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night
3. Heavenly Hosts

*Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" Luke 2:8-14 NKJV*

It is here we will pause and ponder

- Shepherds in their fields
- Receive the announcement of the birth of the Son of God

## **I. The Chosen Recipients of the Grand Announcement**

### A. Royal family announces birth

Town crier announced birth of son to Prince William and Kate outside of Queen Mary's hospital on July 22, 2013

### B. Social media

1. Gender reveal
2. Ultrasounds
3. Pictures

### C. Angels announced birth of Jesus to Shepherds

NOTE: The only announcement of His birth came to them (uneducated, smelly, low class, social and religious outcasts)

## **II. The Hidden Wounds of the Shepherds**

### A. Never felt they could live up to the religious expectations of the pious

1. Jewish law made them unclean
2. Could not participate in feasts, holy days, and sacrifices
3. While everyone else had spiritual experiences, they had to tend sheep

### B. Never felt like they were part of the “in-crowd” (insecurity)-social outcasts

1. Constantly moving—looking for new pasture
2. Ancient gypsies-often suspicioned to be thieves
3. No allowed to give testimony in royal proceeding because they were considered not trustworthy
4. Lived in fields—didn't come home at night—not 40-hour job
5. Slept in the sheep pen to guard the sheep at night

### C. Lived their lives in fear—what might happen?

1. Lonely, dark, cold nights
2. Not much exposure to people
3. Lived their lives alone—easily depressed and discouraged

Who would you announce the birth of Jesus to?

- “And there were shepherds....
- A child is born
- A Savior which is Christ the Lord

### III. The Divine Reason God Chose the Shepherds

Why did he choose them?

Why did he invite them to come see the child?

- Not their holiness
  - Not their influence
  - Not their capabilities or strengths
- A. God wanted us to know that His love does not discriminate on the basis of class, or wealth, or social status
  - B. He does not respect kings and princes more than hourly workers
  - C. He does not value pastors and priests above people in the pews—His love is awarded to all by faith in Jesus Christ—and faith alone

*You will save the humble people; But Your eyes are on the haughty, that You may bring them down. 2 Samuel 22:28 NKJV*

*For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. Psalms 149:4 NKJV*

*Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? 2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the Lord. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word. Isaiah 66:1-2 NKJV*

### IV. Hidden Wounds Healed

- A. Spiritual inferiority
- B. Social outcasts
- C. Fearful insecurity

ALL MET AND HEALED IN BETHELHEM

*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 that 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. Luke 2:15-20 NKJV*

**Conclusion:** Through those healed wounds we see...

### 1. Wonder of the Grace of God

- a. Angels and Shepherds together
- b. The highest realms of heaven came to the lowest parts of earth
- c. God's salvation for all!

### 2. Great offer of God

- a. Salvation has come
- b. Find Him in Bethlehem
- c. Didn't buy them there-an offer was given
- d. The offer has not changed
- e. The offer is still to you

### 3. Choice of Man

- a. Chose to believe
- b. Chose to act
- c. Found healing for their wounds

What will you chose today?