



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V23 N52 December 26, 2021

WONDER

“Do You Ever Wonder?”

Luke 2:15-20

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Worship

I worship God for who he is and what he has done for me.

“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.”

Psalm 95:6-7



Why wonder and worship?

We worship God for who he is and what he has done. During Advent, we worship him for the incarnation, that is, for sending the eternal Word, who was with God in the beginning and was God, namely, the Second Person of the Godhead, to become flesh and dwell with us (Jn 1:1-2, 14). God did this so that his incarnate Son, Jesus, the Messiah and the Lord, might be the Savior of the world (Lk 2:11). Lowly shepherds are the first to receive the breaking news regarding Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. Luke tells us: “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 that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger’” (2:9-12).

On this angelic announcement, one writer comments: “Creation has no more mysterious and exalted beings than angels, who represent the testimony of the heavens to what is occurring. Moreover, there are no more ‘normal Joes’ in the ancient culture than shepherds. They represent the lowly and humble who respond to God’s message, for their vocation is seen positively in Scripture (Matt. 18:12; Mark 6:34; Luke 15:4; John 10; Eph. 4:11; Heb. 13:2; 1 Peter 2:25). Thus, heaven meets and greets the average person through the angelic announcement to these pastoral figures. Jesus’ birth is more than a family affair. The announcement of ‘good news of great joy that will be for all the people’ (v. 10) indicates that God desires to speak to every person about the coming of Jesus, since all humanity is impacted by his coming” (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 84).

That Jesus is born “a Savior” (Lk 2:11; cf. 1:68-75) lies at the heart of the angel’s an-

nouncement. As the Messiah and the Lord, Jesus came to be both the Good Shepherd (Jn 10) and the lamb of God sacrificed for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29). Flocks reserved for temple sacrifice were kept in the fields near Bethlehem through the year. How ironic, if perhaps these shepherds were caring for these flocks. If so, it is especially fitting that the good news about God’s Shepherd and Lamb first be given to them and then be given to others by them (v. 17). What’s more, David was himself a shepherd (1Sa 16:1), and in some of the psalms that are attributed to him, he refers to God as a shepherd and to God’s people as sheep (Ps 23:1; 28:9; 100:3), thereby strengthening the link between Jesus, the Messiah, and King David. Generally speaking, Jesus’ career would follow the pattern of his ancestor.

Immediately following the angel’s announcement, “a great company of the heavenly host,” join in singing a two-line hymn of praise and worship we now call *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. How amazed they must have been to see the Creator born as a creature; the eternal Word incarnate in a speechless baby! “Glory to God in the highest heaven,” they sang with gusto. “And on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Lk 2:14). The words of the heavenly chorus suggest that peace is made available to all people through the Christ child, but not all people will obtain it. Only those who receive him like the shepherds will enjoy God’s favor. Peace, the *Pax Romana*, was enjoyed throughout the Roman Empire at this time. However, the absence of war does not guarantee the experience of peace, as the Stoic philosopher, Epictetus, recognized. “While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart for which man yearns more than even for outward peace.” That peace is found in Jesus alone .



1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Luke 2:15-20

15 *When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*

16 *So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.* 17 *When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,* 18 *and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.* 19 *But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.* 20 *The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

Read in another Translation

15 *When the angels left them and went back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, that the Lord has made known to us."* 16 *So they hurried off and located Mary and Joseph, and found the baby lying in a manger.* 17 *When they saw him, they related what they had been told about this child,* 18 *and all who heard it were astonished at what the shepherds said.* 19 *But Mary treasured up all these words, pondering in her heart what they might mean.* 20 *So the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; everything was just as they had been told. (NET)*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "into heaven" in v. 15.
- Circle "this thing" in v. 15.
- Box "So" indicating *result* in v. 16.
- Bracket "spread the word" in v. 17.
- Circle "amazed" in v. 18.
- Box "But" indicating *contrast* in v. 19.
- Circle "treasured up" in v. 19.
- Circle "pondered" in v. 19.
- Box "just as" indicating *comparison* in v. 20.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. *Who* “hurried off” to *where* and *why*?
2. How old was the Christ child when the shepherds first saw him, and how do you know?
3. After seeing the child, they told others what they had been told about him. What had they been told?
4. Who could these others have been?
5. Explain the response of those who heard their testimony.
6. Put what “treasured up” means in your own words.
7. To what does “all these things” refer?
8. Put what “pondered” means in your own words.
9. According to verse 20, what the shepherds saw confirmed what they had been told. Explain why this is significant.
10. The shepherds’ response to what they saw is exemplary. How so?

Commentary On The Text

Luke 2:8-20 contains the breaking news delivered to the shepherds tending their flocks outside of Bethlehem and their immediate response to it. Verses 16-20, one scene in the larger episode, records what the shepherds did immediately after hearing the news of the Christ child's birth (vv. 10-11). On its context, one commentator writes: "In 2:8-14 we have a third annunciation scene, which follows the same pattern as the previous two: the appearance of an angel, a response of fear, the command not to fear, the announcement of a birth that brings joy. In this case, however, the announcement is not to a parent of the child to be born, for this birth is not just a family affair. Indeed, the angel stresses that he brings a message of 'great joy which shall be for all the people' (2:10)" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1:38). The "good news that will cause great joy" delivered to the shepherds boils down to this: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (v. 11). The shepherds' response to these words in the scene that follows serves to confirm what the angel told them and to provide an example for Luke's readers to follow. Verse 15 reads: "When the angels had left and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'" And verse 20 reads: "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."

Apparently, the angelic host disappeared into heaven as abruptly as it had first appeared. And when it did, the shepherds quickly decided to go to Bethlehem to find the Christ child, in order to see for themselves what had happened. "So they hurried off" (v. 16) into the darkness. Not being far from the city, it didn't take them long to locate Joseph, Mary, and the baby Jesus—who was just hours old when they found him. Remember, the angel had told them that the child was born that very day and in fact, was still lying in a manger (vv. 11, 12). When they saw him, they could not help but "spread the word concerning what had been told them about [him]" (v. 17). Who they "spread the word" to is unclear. Were others with the holy family when they arrived? Did they speak to guests of the inn? Perhaps they ventured into the city of Bethlehem to spread the word. No one knows for sure. In any case, all those who heard their testimony were "amazed" (v. 18)—a word that connotes both *astonishment* and *reflection*.

On the shepherds' response, one commentator writes: "The shepherds share their story. They respond with obedience and cannot contain themselves from testifying to what God has done in making Jesus' presence evident to them. Luke's reader is supposed to identify with their response to God's first revelation of this birth to the human race" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 85).

Mary's response to the shepherds' testimony stands in *contrast* to that of the others who heard it. Luke records, "But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart" (v. 19). How did Luke know that? Many commentators suggest that these words imply that Mary herself was the source of this information. According to one, "This 19th verse is a clear indication that it was Mary herself who in later years related this story . . . Luke received from Mary, directly or indirectly, practically all the data related by him in the first two chapters of the Gospel" (Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, NICNT, 114).

In contrast to the shepherds, Mary kept the things that they had been told to herself. They spread the word of *these things*; she treasured up *these things*, not only the breaking news received by the shepherds, but also all of the other events recorded in 1:5-2:18. And she meditated on them, trying to make sense of their relationship and significance. The term translated "pondered" (*sumballousa*) suggests more than remembering. She is trying to put things together here (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.5.3 [2.72]). The words 'what they might mean' have been supplied in the NET to make this clear" (*The NET Bible*, 53^{tn} on Lk 2:19).

Afterward, the shepherds returned to their flocks changed by the events of that remarkable night—a night they would never forget and never stop rehearsing. Luke records, "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told" (v. 20). And so should we glorify and praise God. "For some reason, shepherds were not permitted to testify in court, but God used some humble shepherds to be the first human witnesses that prophecy had been fulfilled and the Messiah had been born. The angels have never experienced the grace of God, so they can't bear witness as we can. Telling others about the Saviour is a solemn obligation as well as a great privilege, and we who are believers must be faithful" (Warren W. Wiersbe, "Luke," in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:177).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 15 *into heaven* “Heaven is regarded as the dwelling place of God and the angels, to which they now return” (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC, 112).

v. 15 *see this thing* Cf. “see what has happened” (HCSB, NLV). “‘This thing’ is literally *this word* as in Luke 2:17, 19, but ‘this word’ can refer to an event as it does here” (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 109).

v. 17 *spread the word* “It is not absolutely clear to whom the shepherds made known the saying about the child. The wording ‘this child’ may imply that other people were already present with Mary and Joseph and the child (cf. Easton, 25), but the analogy of 1:66 may suggest that the shepherds went and told other people in the neighbourhood” (Marshall, 113). “Just as these simple shepherds are the first persons to whom the glad tidings concerning the birth of Christ are communicated, so in turn they are the first proclaimers of the event to others. It is probable that their flock was intended for offerings in the temple, as flocks for this purpose were kept in the vicinity of Bethlehem (cf. Edersheim, *Life and Time of Jesus*, i, p. 189). In this case they would ere long have gone to Jerusalem and would there also have told the whole story to the pious people who were awaiting the coming of the promised Messiah. In this manner they would have prepared persons like Simeon and Anna (verses 25-40) for their welcoming of the Christ-child” (Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, NICNT, 113-14). “These shepherds are good examples for us to imitate today. They received by faith the message God sent them and then responded with immediate obedience. After finding the Baby, they reported the good news to others, ‘glorifying and praising God.’ They took the place of the angels! (Luke 2:13-14) Then they humbly returned to their duties, new men going back to the same old job” (Warren W. Wiersbe, “Luke,” in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:177).

v. 18 *amazed* Cf. “wondered” (KJV); “marveled” (NKJV); “astonished” (NET). “Grk ‘marveled.’ It is a hard word to translate with one term in this context. There is a mixture of amazement and pondering at work in considering the surprising events here. See Luke 1:21, 63; 2:33” (*The NET Bible*, 52tn, on Lk 2:18).

v. 19 *treasured up* See v. 51. Cf. “But Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them” (GNT); “But Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often” (NLT); “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart” (NKJV). “The sense here is that Mary continued to think and ponder over the events as a whole so that she was able to discern their meaning (see van Unnik*, who shows that the verb means ‘to get at the right meaning’)” (Marshall, 114).

v. 19 *all these things* “This includes not just the immediate encounter with the shepherds but all that preceded from 1:5ff” (Stein, 110).

v. 19 *pondered* “Pondering (*sunballousa*). An old Greek word. Placing together for comparison. Mary would go over each detail in the words of Gabriel and of the shepherds and compare the saying with the facts so far developed and brood over it all with a mother’s high hopes and joy” (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. II, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 26). “Luke intended his readers to think of all that had happened in Luke 1:5ff., i.e., how God had visited his people through the miraculous conception of John the Baptist and Jesus and the significance of all of this . . . It would have been remarkable indeed for Mary not to have been confused about the significance of all that had happened to her. No doubt she recognized her child’s divine calling and destiny; but exactly what that entailed was not known to her, and she may at times have had the same kinds of questions that John the Baptist had in Luke 7:18-23). Earlier commentators held that this reference to Mary’s inner thoughts (cf. also 2:51) indicated that Mary was the source for this account” (Stein, 110).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Glorify and praise God as you meditate on the fact that Jesus, the Messiah and the Lord, was born to be our Savior, just as the angels told the shepherds.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Do you have a list of your top verses? Maybe just a few favorites you call on in a 9-1-1 emergency situation? These are the verses that quickly come to mind and lead you right into the arms of our Savior. I have several - Isaiah 43:1-4 when I'm going through a tough time, Psalm 31:3 when I need His guidance, and Luke 2:19 when the world is full and I crave stillness. The beautiful picture of Mary resting in her thoughts, filling the space in her head with the marvel of what God has done, unravels me every time. Mary spent time thinking on things of the Lord. I want to be like that. This season has filled me with so many wonderful things, yet what I crave most is the silent moment to abide in the Lord. On my own, I have a tendency to be reactionary and led by my emotions. What I desire to be is thoughtful. I want to think before acting out when my kids frustrate me. I want to take a deep breath and focus on the grace of God before speaking harshly because the darlings didn't follow the agenda I created. I want to ponder what God has done and rejoice in all circumstances, even the situations with teenagers that threaten to cripple me. Mary's unwavering obedience is certainly an example to all, but I think the way she abides humbles me most. What dominates your thoughts? What are you treasuring in your heart right now? If it's anything outside of the Lord, let's pause and abide, settling our hearts and minds on things above.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Luke 2:1-20.

1. Who appeared to the shepherds in the fields?
2. What news did the angel bring to the shepherds?
3. How did Mary react to the news from the shepherds?

What Do You Think?

Put yourself in Mary's shoes. How do you think you would react if you were Mary?

What Do You Do?

Ponder means to think about something. Play a game of 20 questions where your family tries to guess what you're thinking.

CORE COMPETENCY: Worship

I celebrate God for who He is and what He has done for me.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 9:6

"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."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org