



Bible Study—Luke 2: 8–20

Introduction:

Life changing events occur several times in our lifetimes. Our life takes a new direction. We experience new opportunities. We set foot on a path in life.

What might be some of these life changing events?

What would you say was the greatest life changing event in your life?

Did you think of your baptism or the day you heard about and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior?

How many of you were baptized as infants or very young children?

Did anyone come to faith in Christ as a teenager or adult?

For most of us faith in Christ began the day of our baptism. We were probably unaware of what was taking place, or we didn't fully understand what was occurring. But truly we must consider the day of our baptism or the day we confessed faith in the Lord Jesus as the most life altering day in our lives. Our sins were forgiven. We became children of God and heirs of eternal life. Nothing is more important.

Today, let's look at just such life changing event took place some 2,000 years ago.

 Read Luke 2:8–15.

Many of us could probably recite these words by heart. We memorized them in Sunday School or Christian Day School for a children's Christmas service. We have heard them faithfully ever year of our life at Christmas. But did you ever think of the life changing event experienced by the shepherds?

Who were these shepherds? How would you describe them?

The shepherds were common people. They were not wealthy, powerful, or influential. They didn't live in fine houses but they no doubt had tents for shelter against the wind, cold, and rain. Their education level was limited. But they were honest, hard-working people. They were the farmers and blue-collar workers of that time.

Who needs to hear the message of the Savior from sin today?

What a life changing event occurred in the fields outside Bethlehem! It didn't happen in the synagogue, temple, or town square but in a field in the darkness of night.

When or where is the best time to share the life changing message of the Savior?

The experience was frightening at first. It was certainly out of the ordinary. It made the shepherds uncomfortable and afraid. However, an angel had a life changing message to share with them.

Who was this "aggelos", this messenger of the Lord?

Who might be considered the "aggeloi", messengers of today?

Whatever angel this may have been is not important. Rather the message he shares is most important. ***"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."***

It's good news (euaggelizw). It's evangelism in the first century by God's messenger, the angel. The good news of the Savior is the source of greatest joy.

For whom is this "good news" intended?

Why does the angel identify the "town of David" and also call Jesus "Christ the Lord"?

The angel's message was the greatest thing they had heard, but was it true? They could see for themselves as the angel tells them, ***"This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*** The shepherds could check out the good news for themselves.

Where can we and others who hear the "good news," check it out?

If you and I had been among the shepherds, I'm sure that the message of this one angel, appearing out of nowhere, would have had a great impact on us. But the "army" of angels which appeared singing their doxology of praise brought a fitting climax to this life changing event. ***"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."***

Why did the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest?"

What is the "peace to men on whom his favor rests?"

The result of the angel's message and the heavenly choir brought about an immediate response.

What did the shepherds do?

What did they find?

What the shepherds saw in Bethlehem removed all doubt and uncertainty about the message of the angels. They believed the message of "good news" about Christ the Lord. They experienced a life changing event as the Spirit worked a childlike faith in them. Such an event, such "good news" they could not contain.

What reaction did the shepherds have to hearing and seeing the "good news?"

Did these shepherds have special training to do this?

Were the shepherds worried about what others might say or react?

The shepherds sharing of the “good news” required no special training. It came from a heart filled with love for Christ the Lord and for their fellowman. How many people did they contact? Who did they share the “good news” with? How many lives were changed by the shepherds’ message? We don’t know! Only the Spirit of God who worked through their message can answer those questions.

How have you reacted to the “good news” of Christ the Lord?

Has the “good news” been a life changing message?

Do I need an evangelism program, or can I simply share from my heart what I have heard about Christ the Lord?

Evangelism programs and training are good and may help us overcome some of the obstacles we imagine or create for ourselves when it comes to sharing the “good news.” Children who love Jesus are often the best sharers of the “good news” as they mingle and play with their friends and acquaintances. They have no fear. With childlike faith, they share the Savior in the simplest of words and with joy in their hearts.

Like Mary ponder the great things God has done for us in our Savior, Christ the Lord and then like the angel and the shepherds share the “good news” by **Declaring His Praises: Everyday, Everywhere, to Everyone!**