

The Night Of Nights

Luke 2:1-20

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I want to read Luke 2:8 first, and then we'll go back and go through verses 1-20.

Luke says, "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night." So this is the night scene when Jesus was born.

Clarence McCartney said, "This is the record of the greatest night in history." I agree. "This was the night of nights that would conquer darkness and bring in the day, when there shall be night no more." In the book of Revelation, the Bible actually says, "There shall be no night."

There is coming a day when there will be no more night. That will be brought in because of this first night when Christ was born; He came as "the light of the world." God would send His only begotten Son into the world, that "whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." So this was the greatest night in human history.

Seven hundred years before this event, Isaiah the prophet said, in chapter 9, verse 2, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined." Isaiah is talking about Galilee specifically, but it also has an application to the whole world; God brought light into the world. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." So this was the night "the light of the world" was born and would ultimately dispel all darkness.

In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul the Apostle said, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh." He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, born a natural birth in Bethlehem, laid in a manger and "the word became flesh and dwelt among us." He was known as "Emmanuel...God with us."

The historical narrative we are going to cover in Luke 2 is one of the most popular in all the Bible. If you ask anybody, "Do you know anything from the Bible?" they would know this story of Jesus: born in a manger, laid there with the animals, the angels visited the shepherds and said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

But a lot of times we pass over this because we get sentimental and don't think deeply about its meaning and significance. I want to bring up some of the prophecy, history and theology behind our text so we can understand better what it meant that Christ was born.

There are three scenes in this historic account in Luke's Gospel. The first scene is in verses 1-7, the account of Christ's birth. In verses 1-3, we note the time when Christ was born. "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered." This is the first Caesar who took the title of "Augustus." This isn't his last name; it is a title. "Augustus" means "of the gods" or literally "the holy one." So this Caesar was

literally claiming to be god. Once a year all the Roman citizens would have to offer incense on an altar and declare that "Caesar is lord." The Christians wouldn't do that, because they knew Jesus alone was Lord, so the Christians were thrown to the lions. So Caesar Augustus put out a decree that all the world should be taxed.

Verse 2, "This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city." Everyone had to return to the city of their ancestral birth to be enrolled in a census for the purpose of taxation. So the people weren't going to be taxed; they were going to be enrolled in a census so they could be taxed by the Roman government.

So what time was Jesus born? It was in God's perfect time. Prophecy said that God was orchestrating and putting together the birth of His Son, Jesus. In Galatians 4:4, it says, "When the fullness of the time had come..."—which we just read about in verses 1-3—"...God sent forth His Son..."—which speaks of His deity—"...born of a woman..."—which speaks of His humanity—"...born under the law." What time was it? God's time.

There is a divine timetable. It's not in our time; it's in God's time. And God knows everything and has it all mapped out perfectly. God is always right on time; never late, never too early. He never fails and is always perfectly right on time. He may not be in your time—"Well, why didn't He do this?" or "Why didn't He do that?" But it is in His time.

As far as world history goes, when Jesus Christ was born, the stage was perfectly set. As far as prophecy goes, God was going to fulfill His Word that He gave in the Old Testament. So "the fullness of the time" had come.

The first prophecy of Jesus' birth was recorded in Genesis 3:15, right after the fall of Adam and Eve. God said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." "Her Seed" was actually a reference to Jesus, the Savior, the Messiah, the Lord. So this was an early prophecy that the woman would bring forth the Messiah, who would conquer Satan and be the Savior of the world.

That was thousands of years before David and Abraham. God promised them that Messiah would be in their line. God always keeps His promises, and it was fulfilled in God's perfect time. It was not only God's promise prophetically, but it was God's time in history; historically, the stage was set. In verses 1-3, it was the time of Roman rule, which brought the Pax Romana. Rome conquered the known world at that time, and as a result of the iron heel of Rome, there was peace, known as the Pax Romana. This Roman peace was imposed by force on the world.

Then there were the Roman roads that were built at this time, which connected the Roman world. "All roads lead to Rome." If you go to Israel today, you see Roman roads. Our roads are falling apart, but the Roman roads lasted thousands of years. Of course they didn't drive GTOs, Corvettes and trucks over them, as we do today. All the Roman roads brought the world together. When Christ was born, the missionaries at that time could take the Gospel to the

world over those roads.

During this time of Jesus's birth, there also was a common language—Greek. The Greco-Roman world had been Hellenized. Everyone spoke Greek. It was the classic, universal language. The New Testament was written in Greek. How important that was.

But there also was a spiritual vacuum at this time. There was paganism, empty Judaism and eastern mysticism that had left the world in darkness. So the whole world was ripe and ready for the coming of Messiah. And the spiritual vacuum that exists in the world today can only be filled by Jesus Christ returning and setting up His kingdom.

I see a lot of parallels in our culture today. Two of the indications that Jesus Christ is coming back in His Second Advent—we're reading about His First Advent—is globalism and the unification of the world. We have the world-wide web, the Internet, the universal English language, which has brought the world together. It enables everyone in the world to communicate with each other. Most people think in terms of globalism today; we need a one-world government. This will be the condition of the world in the last days.

The point I want to make about verses 1-3 is that God sits on the throne, He keeps His prophetic Word and history is His-story. So when you listen to the news and wonder what is going on in the White House, what is going on in America and in the world, remember that God is in control. God is on the throne. It doesn't matter who is in the White House, because we know who is on the throne in heaven. Every time God is seen in heaven in Revelation or when the heavenly scene is opened, we see the throne, and God is on it. So it is always God's perfect timing.

We also see the place where Christ was born, in verses 4-5. "Joseph also went up from Galilee..."—around the north end of the lake—"...out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea," which was the region in the south near Jerusalem. There was an edict by Caesar Augustus in Rome to the world saying everyone must go to the city of their ancestral birth to be enrolled so they could be taxed. So Joseph went "...to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem..."—which means "house of bread," which was the place where "the bread of life" would come into the world—"...because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child."

I want you to note that this place was Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph lived 85 miles to the north of Bethlehem in Nazareth. In Micah 5:2, five hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it was prophesied that He would be born there. "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." So God says that Jesus Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, and His origin is everlasting; He's the eternal God.

From 85 miles north, with Mary in the last stages of pregnancy, they traveled to Bethlehem.

She was “great with child.” That’s the King James version for she was super-pregnant. She was about to give birth. What husband, in his right mind, would take his wife on an 85-mile donkey ride when she’s about to have a baby?! Some Bible scholars said that she didn’t have to go. There are others who say there are indications that she also needed to enroll. We don’t know. But according to God’s prophetic Word, she needed to be in Bethlehem.

So God moved the heart of Caesar Augustus. He thought he was calling the shots, but he was just a puppet. He sent out this decree that everyone needs to be taxed, so they had to go to their ancestral home. “Everyone needs to be taxed. Aren’t I awesome! Everyone must bow to my decree!” But actually God was the one pulling the strings. God wanted Mary and Joseph, this insignificant couple—other than the fact she was carrying the very Son of God—to take an 85-mile donkey ride in the last stages of pregnancy. So God is in charge, not Caesar.

That donkey ride would induce labor for you, ladies. If that baby isn’t coming, just take an 85-mile donkey ride. You’ll go into labor right away. So Mary was ready to deliver right when they got into Bethlehem.

Now I want you to notice the manner of Christ’s birth in Bethlehem, in verses 6-7. This is the birth of Christ, in its simplicity and majesty. “So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger because...”—this is the reason—“...there was no room for them in the inn.” This birth was humble. What a contrast between Caesar, sitting in a palace in Rome, and the Creator of all the universe, who was born in a humble stable and lying in a manger.

The Scriptures don’t say that He was born in a stable, but we believe that because Jesus was placed in a manger. A manger is an animal feeding trough. The manger isn’t the stable, even though we call it the “manger scene.” So we don’t know if it really was a stable where he was born. It could have been a cave, a grotto, a stable or some enclosed area where the animals are kept. Then after Jesus was born, in this beautiful picture of condescending humility, He is laid in a manger. Jesus, who was the Creator of all the universe, was born humbly:

“Our God contracted to a span,

Incomprehensibly, made man.”

Those little hands actually formed the stars in space. That precious little mouth of the baby Jesus spoke the worlds into existence. He was God in human flesh. The moment the Holy Spirit brought conception to the womb of the Virgin Mary—and the Bible teaches that Jesus was born of a virgin—God and man were fused together. Sinless humanity and full deity came together for all eternity.

Who could ever fathom or comprehend what theologians describe as the “hypostatic union”? It was full God and full man in one person, Jesus Christ. And His humanity did not lessen His deity. And His deity did not lessen His humanity. So Jesus is the only, unique Son of God, the

God-man, who was suited to come to earth to redeem mankind from their sins.

Now a lot of people like to get down on the innkeeper. He could be in heaven, and you'll have to apologize to him. There are a lot of sermons about this mean innkeeper. But there is no mention of an innkeeper in the Bible. Perhaps there was an innkeeper; I don't know. It wasn't that he was mean and he didn't like Mary and Joseph. It's simply that there was "no room for them in the inn," as the Bible says. The decree about the census had caused the swelling of pilgrims in Bethlehem. Everyone showed up to be enroll for taxation, so the inn was full. But God provided a quiet place where Jesus could be born. We imagine it was a stable or a grotto. And there was a manger, or feeding trough, so Mary laid the baby Jesus in the hay in the manger.

Philippians 2 is a great cross-reference to this Christmas story. Verses 5-7 say, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form..."—or "essence"—"...of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal..."—which He was—"...with God..."—because He was God—"...but made Himself of no reputation..."—or "He emptied Himself"; that's where we get the "kenosis" or "the emptying"—"...taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." So Paul, in Philippians 2, describes the humanity of Christ: how He came from heaven, being God, did not hang onto equality with God and took on the form of a servant.

At no time did Jesus ever cease being God. When Jesus became a man, he didn't stop being God. That's why there are the two natures of Jesus: divine and human; sinless human nature and full divine nature. And it says He took on "the form of a bondservant," which means He became a human being. And He "became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

So Jesus Christ came from heaven, took on full humanity in the womb of the Virgin Mary in the form of a servant. This is what we call the Incarnation. "Incarnate" means "becoming flesh." God became flesh. John 1:14 says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," which literally means He "pitched His tent among us." This is the Christmas story: incarnate God born a humble baby. What a humble birth it was.

Why did God become man? There are three r's. First, He came to reveal God to man. The reason for the Incarnation was so we could see God tangibly. God was manifested in the flesh. John 1:18 says, "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son..."—literally in the Greek, it's "the only begotten God"—"...who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." The word "declared" means "to explain." We get our word "exegesis" from it. This is what we call "expositional preaching" or "expository preaching." It means to pull out the meaning of the text or explain the text. So Jesus exegetes the Father; He explains Him.

If you want to know what God is like, read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Read the Gospels. If you want to know about Jesus, read the epistles in the New Testament.

The second reason God became man was to redeem. Jesus came to reveal God to man, and

He came to redeem man back to God. He came as the Redeemer. Man has fallen and he needs to be bought and brought back to the Father.

All the problems in the world today are the result of man having fallen into sin. Jesus came to be the Savior by redeeming us, and He had to become man in order to die to be our Goel, our kinsman-redeemer.

The third reason is to reign. Jesus will come to reign on the throne of David at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ based on the Davidic covenant. It was God's promise to David that through his seed, his son, there would come the Messiah, who would reign on the throne forever.

So why did God leave heaven on this night of nights to become a man? He came to reveal God, He came to redeem man and one day, in His Second Coming, He will come to reign on the throne of David forever.

Now we move to the second scene, in verses 8-14, which is the announcement of Christ's birth. The Advent of Christ's birth moves to the announcement of Christ's birth. First note the men the announcement was made to. Verse 8 says, "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night." They were doing what shepherds do: hanging out with their sheep and watching them.

Sheep are normally in the field from April through November. That's why people freak out and say Jesus wasn't born in December. We don't know for sure the date when Jesus was born, but we do know that Jesus was born. Whether it was July or August or December doesn't matter. But there is indication that shepherds sometimes would keep their sheep all the way through February. So it's possible these shepherds were out in the field by night in December. They were probably shepherds watching sheep that were being used as temple sacrifices in Jerusalem in Jewish rites. They had their own herds that were kept at Bethlehem. So there is a good indication that these were temple shepherds who watched the temple sheep.

But what we need to remember is that the announcement made to these humble shepherds is interesting. These humble shepherds were the lowest of the low on the social ladder. You could not get lower than a shepherd. They were so despised culturally and socially that they were not allowed to testify in a court of law. They were not allowed to be witnesses in a court of law. Whenever you have a witness in a courtroom, the character of the witness is important. So no one would invite a shepherd to testify on their behalf, because they were actually known as thieves. When a crime was committed, the shepherds were always the first ones investigated. The shepherds were lowly, humble and despised. So who does God reveal Himself to? These humble, lowly shepherds.

1 Corinthians 1:26-27 says, "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put

to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things...which are despised." There is your testimony. And there is my testimony: foolish things, weak things, base things, which are despised.

You want to know why God does this? So "no flesh should glory in His presence." When God uses you, He wants all the glory. So He'll use someone about whom someone says, "I don't think anything good can come from that person's life." But God redeems us, transforms us and uses us for His glory. It's so marvelous.

Now note the messenger, in verse 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." They were totally freaked out. If an angel showed up in your home, you would die of a heart attack.

Years ago, as a baby Christian, I was up on a mountaintop praying and reading stories about angels. I said, "Lord, I want to see an angel!" Then I heard a rustling in the bushes behind me. I almost died. I freaked out. Then a lizard ran out of the bushes. "Never mind, Lord! Never mind!" If I'm freaked out by a lizard, I don't need to see an angel.

It's possible that this angel was Gabriel. He appeared to Zacharias. He also appeared to Mary and to Daniel. But here it doesn't name the angel. But it was a powerful angel sent from God.

And in verses 10-12, we have the message. "Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid...'—the birth of Christ means we can live without fear—"...for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

Notice "do not be afraid." Why not? "Good tidings." This is where we get our word "evangelical." He's preaching good news, "which will be to all people." That will bring "great joy." So this good news or "good tidings" is that God has sent His Son, the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

The message the angel brought has three points, in verse 11. "For there is born..."—it speaks of His humanity—"...to you this day in the city of David..."—or "Bethlehem"—"...a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." It says three things: He is the Savior, He is Christ and He is Lord.

His name, Jesus, is not used in the text. The name "Jesus" is not used in Luke 2, verses 1-20. This is the most famous, well-known Christmas narrative, but it doesn't say the word "Jesus."

The name Jesus is the Old Testament name Joshua, which in the New Testament is Jesus, which means "God saves" or "God is salvation." In our text, the angel calls Jesus "the Savior."

All through the Scriptures there is verse after verse on Jesus, our Savior. Acts 5:31 says, "Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior." Philippians 3:20 says, "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

My favorite is Titus 2:13: We are “looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” So Jesus Christ is both our God and our Savior. Jesus said that He came “to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Then notice also that the angel said that He is “Christ.” That is, “the Messiah.” “Christ” is not His last name; it is His title. It means “Messiah” or the “Anointed One.” Jesus is the promised, anointed Messiah.

This verse also says “Lord.” “Lord” is a reference to the fact that He is God. In the Old Testament, it would be translated “Yahweh.” Some say “Jehovah.” In the Old Testament Greek, this “Lord” or “Kurios” would be “Jehovah” or “Yahweh.” So Jesus is Lord God.

Philippians 2:7 says that Jesus took on “the form of a bondservant,” which speaks of His humanity, and then goes to say, in verses 9-11, that “God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...”—there’s the name—“...to the glory of God the Father.” “Jesus” is a beautiful name, but the name He is given is “Lord.” Jesus Christ is Lord. That’s the full title.

Romans 10:9 says, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart that God has risen Him from the dead, you will be saved.” You can’t be saved without believing that Jesus is the Savior and that you are a sinner. You come to Him as a sinner, believe in Him as the Savior and surrender to Him as Lord, because Jesus is Lord.

This is a fantastic description of Jesus. It’s interesting that when the angel preached that Jesus was born, his message centered on Jesus Christ. Good Biblical preaching centers on the person of Jesus Christ and the work that He has done.

Have you trusted Him as your Savior, as your Christ and as the Lord of your life?

Notice the conclusion of the angel’s message in verse 12. He is going to point to something, indicate something. “And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” The sign is not the swaddling cloths. The sign is the baby lying in a manger. Pointing out the swaddling cloths is like saying, “You’ll see the baby. You’ll know Him because He’ll have a diaper on.” A swaddling cloth is a big square piece of cloth. At one corner was a long strip. The baby would be wrapped in the square, and then the strip of cloth was placed around him and tied tight. But this cloth was not the sign; the sign was that He will be “lying in a manger.”

We get the manger and the stable confused. The Bible doesn’t say “stable”; it says “manger.” A manger is actually an animal feeding trough. So they would have to clean it up, put fresh hay in and then lay the baby Jesus in this feeding trough or manger. We assume that there were animals there, because this was their feeding trough, but they could have gotten the trough from somewhere else and brought it there. It became their crib or bassinette to lay the baby Jesus in. That will be the sign to you. God came down to earth in the form of a little baby. How

amazing that is.

Now notice the praising multitude, verses 13-14. “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’” So one angel shows up and gives the shepherds this message. Then immediately the whole sky lights up with a great “multitude” of angels or “heavenly host praising God and saying.” It doesn’t say they were singing, but we assume they were proclaiming it in song.

How many angels were there? “A multitude.” We get our word “myriad” from that. That was the highest number they could come to. There was no more than a myriad. The Bible indicates that there were more angels than could be numbered. They were innumerable; you couldn’t number them there were so many. And I believe they were all sent to the fields of Bethlehem that night.

Can you imagine? You are out there watching your sheep at night and an angel shows up and tells you that the Messiah, the Savior is born. And then the whole sky lights up with the glory of God and a multitude of angels. And they said, “Glory to God in the highest...”—that’s heaven —“...and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

So the angels say three things: First, “Glory to God in the highest.” Jesus would bring glory to God in the highest degree by His life, His death, His Resurrection and His Second Coming. Second, “on earth peace” by dying on the Cross. We would have peace with God, and we would have the peace of God. Christ would come back in His Second Coming, and He would bring the peace on earth, so we could have peace in our heart. The only way to have peace in the world would be to have peace with God and then the peace of God in your heart. And third, “goodwill toward men” is not the best translation of the Greek phrase. It actually should be rendered, “Peace on earth to people who God has favored” or “peace among men with whom God is well pleased.” It isn’t saying that at His first coming, Jesus would bring peace on earth. He would only bring peace to the hearts of those who believed in Him and were saved. And then He would bring peace when He returns in His Second Coming. This was the message. So the angels were then praising God.

Now we move to the third scene in our story of the nativity, in verses 15-20. It is the acceptance of Christ’s birth. We saw the Advent, the enunciation and now the acceptance of or response to Jesus’ birth. I want you to notice five things. There first was the response by the shepherds: prompt faith and obedience. What do we do with this message of Christ’s first coming? We respond in faith and we respond in obedience. Verses 15-16 say, “So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go...”—no waiting, no delay—“...to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.” So they believed and they responded in obedience.

The word “haste” means “to cut through” or “to cut a straight line.” It could indicate that instead

of following the roads to Bethlehem, the shepherds just cut right through the fields. They're jumping over fences, running through the fields, as straight as the crow flies. How they decided which ones stayed behind, who knows. Or maybe they left the sheep and just went to see the Lamb of God. If these were temple shepherds, how fascinating to think that they who were keeping the lambs that would be sacrificed, which were a type of Christ's Cross, would be the first to see the Lamb of God, who would die for the sins of the world. So they went as fast as they could to Bethlehem.

So the shepherds promptly obeyed. And we should promptly obey God's Word.

Secondly, the shepherds proclaimed. And we should tell others. Verse 17, "Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known..."—or they "proclaimed"—"...the saying which was told them concerning this Child." The best thing you can do is to go out and tell others about Jesus.

"Have you heard the good news?" Get people's attention.

"No."

"Jesus died for your sins. The good news is that Christ was born. You don't need to be afraid. You can have peace in your heart and peace in your home. Peace in other relationships. Peace with God." And we proclaim this to others.

Thirdly, they marveled. Verse 18, "And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds." Now remember that shepherds could not testify in a court of law. But they became the first evangelists, the first preachers of the Gospel. They probably were pounding on people's doors and waking them up at night.

"You can't believe what happened! Jesus is born!"

"Everyone's named Jesus."

"It's the Christ, the Savior, the Messiah is here! The One who God promised by the Old Testament prophets! He's come!" The shepherds were wondering with amazement. They wondered at the event of His birth.

Fourthly, Mary pondered. Verse 19, "But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." So we see the shepherds "marveled," verse 18, and Mary "pondered," verse 19.

By the way, this is how to celebrate Christmas. Marvel at the event, be amazed, and then ponder its meaning. The word "ponder" means "to throw together." It means to think more deeply about something. It means to think about the meaning or significance. Why did God become a man? Why the Incarnation? Why did God come down at Christmas?

Mary began to put it all together. Kind of like a mom keeping a baby book. When your first

baby is born, you get a lot of books and put all the pictures in them. When your second baby is born, you get a couple of books and put a couple pictures in them. When your third baby is born, you get one book and only half fill it. When your fourth baby is born, there is no book, only a picture in a box. And you write on the back of the picture, "I'm tired."

So Mary is keeping a baby book. She's got the first picture where Gabriel came to her, told her about Jesus and she said, "How shall this be?" She has a picture of the shepherds. She's writing it all down in her book and is pondering about it.

Then the conclusion is in verse 20. They glorified and praised God. "Then the shepherds returned..."—they went back to work, went back to their sheep—"...glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them."

Thank God that Jesus came into the world! What a dark, dark world this would be without the light of life.