

The First and the Last Witnesses - Christmas Eve 2020

Luke 2: 4— 14

INTRODUCTION — One Christmas season, a woman was teaching a group of first graders in public school. They were studying Christmas customs from around the world, and it seemed a great opportunity to share the Christmas story. She explained that Mary and Joseph had gone to Bethlehem to pay taxes. It was time for the baby Jesus to be born and they needed somewhere to spend the night. She said that when they went to the inn, there were no empty rooms. She compared the inn to a modern-day hotel or motel. Leading up to the stable, she asked, “What do you suppose they had behind the inn?” One little guy, who had been listening intently, began to frantically wave his hand. His face was alight with knowledge. “A swimming pool.” We have been thinking this December about “WITNESSES of CHRISTMAS and the INCARNATION.” WELL — WHO WERE THE FIRST and the LAST WITNESSES ? ?

I. The SON of GOD KNEW FIRST —

1. That He would one day come to earth. The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians (4:4), “When the time had fully come, God sent His son, born of a woman, born under Law, to redeem those under Law....”

2. And the apostle wrote to the Philippian Christians (read 2: 5—8)

3. MAX LUCADO is a pastor and WRITER down in Texas — he once wrote, “AS soon as the CRUNCH from the APPLE was heard in the Garden of Eden, the Son of God began to pack his bags for Bethlehem.”

I. The SHEPHERDS — Were ALMOST the LAST — They had a variety of reactions. There was FIRST:

1. FEAR — The Bible tells us that the first REACTION of most people to ANGELS is — FEAR! They are UNUSUAL, very likely FLYING, and SHINE with BRIGHT LIGHT! WHO WOULDN'T BE AFRAID ! ! !

Then, there was:

2. GREAT JOY ! !

— THE SHEPHERDS HAD: GREAT JOY!!

— God had spoken to them!!

-- The PROMISED SAVIOR had come !!

Then came:

3. QUICK OBEDIENCE ! !

— The shepherds MOVED !! QUICKLY! THEY OBEYED !!

WHY??? It was as we saw a couple of weeks ago, with Mary and Joseph —

— THEY MOVED, BECAUSE— THEY TRUSTED GOD! They BELIEVED— what ANGELS said.

— Often: A lack of OBEDIENCE to GOD==

== lack of TRUST in GOD!

— Ask God to show you how to TRUST HIM — THEN ACT !!

— AND: OBEY GOD— in whatever area you are having difficulty.

Finally, there was:

4. EAGER TESTIMONY ! !

— THEY TOLD OF WHAT GOD HAD DONE FOR THEM!

— WE CAN ALL DO THAT— EACH ONE OF US—

—>> CAN TELL OTHERS what CHRIST HAS DONE for YOU!!

— HE has brought LOVE, and the assurance of ETERNAL SALVATION;

— HE has brought DIRECTION, and GUIDANCE, and PURPOSE in LIFE

CONCLUSION — Someone once said: All we could ever imagine, could ever hope for, JESUS is. ... He is the Prince of Peace whose first coming has already transformed society but whose Second Coming will forever establish justice and righteousness. All this, and infinitely more, alive in an impoverished baby in a barn. That is what Christmas means— to find in a place where you would LEAST EXPECT to find anything you want, [YOU TRULY FIND] everything you could ever want.