

Palmetto Baptist Church – December 20, 2020  
Good Tidings of Great Joy – Matthew 2 & Luke 2

**Opening Illustration: Making Big Announcements!** Facebook video of a young couple telling the wife's parent's that they were expecting. They made them put head phones on and guess what they were saying. The grandmother to be picked it up within seconds, the grandpa to be took a couple minutes before he got it... (Hans and Amanda) The video inspired our family to play a game together involving head phones, music, and random topics. 😊

On this Sunday before Christmas, I would like us to consider **THREE RESPONSES TO THE CHRISTMAS STORY.**

- **Reject it. (Matthew 2)**
- **Contemplate it. (Luke 2:18)**
- **Embrace it. (Luke 2:19-20)**

### **Inside the Text:**

#### **I. Option #1 – Reject the Christmas Story. (Matthew 2)**

##### **A. Claim to be king.**

- The key to unlocking this text is to follow the word “king.”
  - Verse 1 – “Herod the king...”
  - Verse 2 – “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews...”
  - Verse 3 – “Herod the king...”
  - Verse 6 – “ruler”
  - Verse 9 – “the king”
  - Verse 11 – the worship fit for a king (gold, frankincense, and myrrh)

##### **B. Protect your throne.**

- Jesus threatened Herod's supremacy.
- The reality of Jesus threatens your supremacy.
  - You must submit to His authority... His rules... His ways.

#### **II. Option #2 – Marvel at the Christmas Story. (Luke 2:18)**

##### **A. The story is intellectually stimulating.**

- Could this be true? Could the prophecy be real? Could it be fulfilled during our time?
- If so, why communicate this glorious news through shepherds?

- Shepherds were a despised class because their duties frequently made them unclean (death and dirtiness of caring for the sheep) and unavailable to worship God on the Sabbath to “get clean.”
- In fact, evidence suggests that most shepherds were not permitted to give testimony in the courts due to their profession.

### **Why reveal His plan to shepherds?**

- Perhaps to fulfill Isaiah 61:10 – “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, to set free the downtrodden, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
- [Teachers’s Commentary] Perhaps because the shepherds would understand. The Savior, now lying in the quiet manger, was to be the Lamb of God. And as the Lamb, He was destined to die for the sins of the world, to die for these very shepherds as their Savior. So perhaps shepherds, who cared for the young lambs, who sat through cold dark nights in the fields to guard and protect their flocks, might understand the shepherd’s heart of God the Father- might glimpse what it meant for Him to give His one Lamb for all.
- Possibly watching over the lambs that would be used for sacrifice in the temple.

### **B. The story is emotionally stirring.**

#### **<sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.**

- All who heard it *wondered* – ethaumasán “to be amazed, to wonder, to be astonished,” and is usually connected to the proclamation of the Messiah...occurring in Luke 1:21 (the people were wondering at Zechariah’s delay),
  - 63 (when Zechariah wrote down the name John they all wondered);
  - 2:18, 33 (his father and mother marveled at what was said about him);
  - 4:22 (and all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph’s son?);
  - 8:25 (the disciples marveled when Jesus rebuke the wind and the waves);
  - 9:43 (the people marveled at the miracles of Jesus);
  - 11:14 (the people marveled when the demon possessed man was healed),
  - 38 (the Pharisees marveled that Jesus did not wash his hands before dinner);
  - 20:26 (the religious leaders tried to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answers they became silent);
  - 24:12 (Peter marveled when he saw the linen cloths and the empty tomb),
  - 41 (the disciples marveled when Jesus appeared to them after his resurrection).

**YOU MUST DO MORE THAN MARVEL... YOU MUST ACCEPT HIM!**

- I. *Reject the Christmas Story. (Matthew 2)*
- II. *Marvel at the Christmas Story. (Luke 2:18)*

### III. Embrace the Christmas Story. (Luke 2:19-20)

<sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

#### A. COLLECT THE FACTS

- **Treasured up** – protect, defend; keep in mind; preserve (imperfect tense denoting a series of events leading up to the present... kept safe in her mind so she could interpret the events later) **[COLLECT THE FACTS]**
  - First visit by the angel Gabriel in Luke 1:26-38 (she was chosen by God to bear Immanuel; (32) He would be great, called the Son of the Most High; receive the throne of David; reign over the house of Jacob forever... no end to His kingdom); (34-37) the miracle of virgin conception (“nothing is impossible with God)
  - Mary’s visit to see her cousin Elizabeth in Luke 1:39-56
    - The greeting she received by Elizabeth in verse 42
    - The way Joseph responded to her pregnancy (Matthew 1:18-24)
    - The long trip to Bethlehem
    - The humble place of the birth
    - The arrival of the Shepherds (listening to them recall the reason why they [complete strangers] came to worship Jesus)

#### B. REFLECT ON THE FACTS

- **Pondering them** – think about seriously; debate; consider *with divine help* (present participle denoting a constant evaluation of the collection of facts) **[REFLECT ON THE FACTS]**
  - **Example:** Luke 1:46-55 (the Magnificat: Mary’s interpretation of the facts...)
    - The baby Jesus would be her Savior (47)
    - God chose me for His own glory not because of my position (48-55 a series of 6 “he has” statements)
      - (48) He has looked on my humble estate
      - (51a) He has shown strength with his arm
      - (51b) He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts
      - (52) He has brought down the mighty
      - (53) He has filled the hungry with good things
      - (54) He has helped his servant in remembrance of his mercy

Genesis 37:11 – And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.  
Psalm 119:11 – I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

### **III. Embrace the Christmas Story. (Luke 2:19-20)**

#### **A. COLLECT THE FACTS**

#### **B. REFLECT ON THE FACTS**

#### **C. BELIEVE THE FACTS**

<sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- They returned to their area of influence as new people.
- They glorified and praised God based on two factors:
  - All they had heard (angels) [OFFERING HOPE]
  - All they had seen (angels and the Christ-child just as they told them) [PROVIDING CONFIDENCE]

**Illustration:** How effective has your witness been in 2020? When was the last time you were AMAZED by the Gospel? When was the last time you MEDITATED on the Gospel? When was the last time you SHARED the Gospel?

**You only have one of three options to consider when it comes to Christmas and the Christmas story:**

#### **I. Reject the Christmas Story. (Matthew 2)**

#### **II. Marvel at the Christmas Story. (Luke 2:18)**

#### **III. Embrace the Christmas Story. (Luke 2:19-20)**