

## **“CELEBRATE THE LIGHT”**

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**TEXT: LUKE 2:8-20**

### **I – TEXT:**

On Christmas Eve, and some of the other times of Christmas, we tend to high light the nativity story concerning Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. I am in no way suggesting this is wrong. They would certainly be considered to be at the front and center of the story. The whole story is about that baby isn't it? Today I'd like to high light some of the others...

### **Luke 2:8-20 (NLT)**

The Shepherds and Angels

<sup>8</sup>That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, <sup>10</sup>but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. <sup>11</sup>The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! <sup>12</sup>And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

<sup>16</sup> They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. <sup>18</sup> All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, <sup>19</sup> but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

## **II – SHEPHERDS AND ANGELS:**

This section of the narrative brings out the actions of the angels and the shepherds. It’s in this part of the nativity that I see celebration. I see it in:

- The stars and campfires weren’t enough. It says God’s Radiance showed up and lit the skies.
- It wasn’t enough that the one angel just told them about the birth, he was soon joined by a whole choir of angels praising God and singing of the birth and what it meant to the earth.
- The shepherds ran to the city and saw with their own eyes what the angels were singing about.
- Then the shepherds went back to their flocks glorifying and praising God...singing!

## **III – SINGING:**

It would appear to me that the proper response to the birth of Jesus is to sing out our joy. To celebrate the birth singing God’s praises and giving him all the Glory for the birth of His Son. If we truly recognize the gift that has been given then there should be little other choice!

## **IV – I AM:**

A little known poet by the name of Karen Leet wrote a poem called “I AM.” I want to use that poem as a guide to our celebration this morning:

I am the shepherds,  
Dozing in a field,  
Huddled by a fire,  
Watching over the sheep  
This dark and silent night.

Sing – THE FIRST NOEL - #245 – Verses 1&2

I am the angels,  
Singing with great joy,  
Wonderful good news  
To bring for all  
Who can hear our voices.

Sing - ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH - #238 – Verses 1, 3, 4)

I am the curious cattle,  
Hearing a baby cry  
In our stable.  
He's cradled in straw  
And swaddling clothes.

Sing – INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY - #229

I am Joseph  
Standing watch over  
My small family-  
My beloved Mary  
And this precious baby.

Sing – What Child Is This - #219 – Verse 1

I am Mary  
With this child  
In my arms,  
This amazing baby,  
This gift from God.

Sing – Away in a Manger – God’s Little Angel Choir

I am the star,  
Bright-lighting the sky,  
Leading the way  
To a quiet stable  
And one small baby there

Sing – There’s a Song in the Air - # 249 – Verses 1 & 2

I am this night of nights,  
This miracle moment,  
This wonder of wonder, this time when God  
Sends his Son to a stable

Sing – Silent Night, Holy Night - #239 – Verses 1, 2, 3

I am me, and I am filled  
With joy and praise and  
Hope and thankfulness  
To think of Jesus, born in Bethlehem – a gift for me!

Sing – Joy to the World - # 246 (God’s little angel choir with their bells as we sing)

**V – BE FILLED:**

I pray that all of you have found the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christmas and leave here with them imbedded in your heart forever!