

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Isaiah 9:6-7
- B. Introduction - Advent ('coming' or 'arrival')
  - 1. We look back on and celebrate the birth of Jesus, and
  - 2. We look forward to Christ's return
- C. The problem with familiarity - When something becomes too familiar, it can cease to hold meaning.
- D. Story, but not fable
  - 1. God loves 'story' - Genesis through Revelation is God's unfolding story of salvation and redemption
  - 2. Story ≠ fable or myth
  - 3. In the incarnation, God used normal, unremarkable people to bring about His sovereign plan

## II. TEXT

### A. Luke 2:1-5

- 1. The census - God's sovereignty is demonstrated in his use of corrupt systems and broken individuals to bring about his plans.
- 2. Faith and obedience, resulting in action
  - a) Joseph
    - (1) The trip to Bethlehem, with Mary as his betrothed, showed he believed and trusted God.
  - b) Mary
    - (1) She responded to Gabriel's message in a way that showed she knew and trusted God.
    - (2) She journeyed to Bethlehem because she knew God's word and understood her role.

### B. Luke 2:6-7

- 1. Neither were given details of their assignments, but they trusted God in the unknowing.
- 2. Much of the Advent story focuses not on the baby, but on everyone else and the faith and obedience required for the nativity scene to occur.

### C. Luke 2:8-9

- 1. The shepherds

- a) The role of the shepherd was important — yet somewhat complicated — in ancient Israel

**D. Luke 2:10-12**

1. The angels announced the arrival of the Messiah
2. God chose to first announce the birth, not to the religious leaders, but to the outcast, the nobody
  - a) What is this saying about the nature of God? What did Jesus model for us in his life and ministry?
  - b) Where were the religious leaders at his incarnation? They were — literally and figuratively — asleep.
  - c) The shepherds were awake and watching over their flock.

**E. Luke 2:13-14**

1. This was not a choir, despite the common depiction. A ‘host’ is an army.
  - a) The shepherds were given a glimpse into the unseen realm.
  - b) The incarnation signaled the defeat of the enemy. He didn’t know it yet, but they knew. The King had arrived.

**F. Luke 2:15-20**

1. The shepherds didn’t go and look for the baby to prove what they were told. They believed God first, and it was that belief that spurred action.
2. As a mother, this was just the beginning of Mary’s journey.
3. The shepherds couldn’t help but share what they had been told and, more importantly, what they saw with their own eyes.

**III. CONCLUSION**

- A. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”
  1. The birth of Jesus — and everything that followed — does bring us peace. But there is a stipulation. (Hebrews 11:6)
  2. Christ is returning. And when he returns, it will not be as an infant in the quiet of night.
  3. In this season of Advent, we have peace because we know the Prince of Peace.