

## *The Coming of the Great Shepherd*

*Luke 2:8-14, various texts*

### **Why Shepherds?**

- Why did God choose shepherds to first hear the good news about the birth of Jesus?
  - In that day, shepherds were social outcasts
- There is a strong link between shepherds and Israel's history
  - Abel was a shepherd (Gen. 4:2)
  - The Patriarchs of Israel were all shepherds
    - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
  - When the Israelites moved to Egypt under Joseph because of a famine in Canaan, they were given the land of Goshen to live in because it was good land for herding sheep (Gen. 46:34)
    - And the Egyptians detested shepherds
  - Moses served as a shepherd to his father-in-law (Ex. 3:1)
  - David was a shepherd before he was king (1 Sam. 17:34)
- The image of the shepherd became associated with the leaders of Israel (Num. 27:17; 2 Sam. 5:2, 7:7; 1 Kgs. 22:17; 1 Chr. 11:2, 17:6; 2 Chr. 18:16; Ps. 78:71)
  - And was often used as a lament when there was no one godly to lead, especially during the time of the Prophets (Zech. 10:2; see also Jer. 22:22; 49:19; 50:44; 51:23; Ez. 34:5, 8; 11:16-17)
- But God is also described as a shepherd (Isa 40:10-11; see also Gen 49:24; Ps. 23; 28:9; 80:1; Jer. 31:10; Ez. 34:15)
- And the promised Messiah is described as a shepherd (Ez. 34:15-16, 23-24)
- God sent the angels to these shepherds to declare the coming of the promised Shepherd who would:
  - Seek the lost
  - Bind up the injured
  - Strengthen the weak
  - Bring justice to the oppressed
- And who to better recognize a good shepherd than other shepherds

### **The Great Shepherd**

- Jesus claimed to be God's shepherd (John 10:14-15)
  - Sent by the Father
  - Taking care of His sheep
    - Who, in turn, listen to His voice (John 10:4)
    - And follow where He leads

### **So What?**

- We can celebrate because Jesus came to be our Great Shepherd
  - Seeking the lost, binding up the injured, strengthening the weak, and bringing justice to the oppressed
- Are we listening to His voice like good sheep?

*Meditation Verse: John 10:14-15*