

A Conversation of Incredulity and Dawning Belief

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Scriptures:

Luke 1: 26-56

Luke 2: 1-20

Matthew 2:1-12

Isaiah 11

Micah 5:2

Have you heard? Have you heard? Really, what are they saying? No, that can't be right. Is it true, honestly, is it true? Do you really think that God would ever do that? Why would God send His Angel, along with the heavenly host, to nobodies, to people who just don't matter? I mean, shepherds, would you trust them to even remember what they had been told, to even remember where to find this baby? Why would God do that?

Have you heard? Have you heard? This baby that is supposed to be a king doesn't even have a proper place to stay, that's not very organised, having to use a manger for a crib. No, God wouldn't do that, He wouldn't let His Son be born in a place where there isn't even a proper bed for Him. And, do you know the worse thing of all. His mum isn't even married to his dad. No, no, God wouldn't do that.

God promised us a King, He promised us someone who would come and save the whole nation, the whole world. Not a baby in a manger. No, no way. But, wait a moment. Did you say Herod is scared, that Herod believes it? Why would he believe God has sent His Son as a baby, and a poor baby at that? Apparently there are some wise men that have arrived in Jerusalem. They've told Herod that they followed a star and that the star has led them to where this King of kings is. And Herod believes them. If it is true, he's not going to be happy is he.

Of course, when you think about it, looking at what God has done in the past, He has used the strangest people to bring the nation messages. He's used people from so many different backgrounds; poor people, cowards, doubters, such a varied collection entrusted to bring His messages. I remember, some of these messages did foretell where this Saviour would be born, even that His mother would be a young girl. So, maybe, after all, it is true.

Do you know, I think I am beginning to believe it because, let's face it, Herod's reaction proved all he wanted to do was to cover up this good news. But poor people who have so little influence or even status to protect, would have no reason to lie about this. It's clear that God has deliberately chosen these lowly shepherds to bring the best news that could ever be, because they have no axe to grind. The Angel said that God had sent His Son as a baby in a manger, with an unmarried mother, and that He was not to be heralded by some great fanfare but visited by them, poor, lowly shepherds. And then they were to proclaim His birth to all they met. To tell the towns people that this babe is going to save the world. Do you know, that's just like God, isn't it? He doesn't do things the way that we expect them to be done. He has His plan to save this world and it won't be a bit like we imagine.

So yes, you know what? I know that those shepherds were telling the truth when they said the angels had given them this good news. That the Saviour had been born to redeem all humankind, to bring Peace on earth. And I know that that baby, lying in the straw with such a young mother and a poor hard working foster father, is the King of kings and the Lord of lords who truly had come to save this world. And, just like the shepherds, I know because I know because I know.

Prayer: God thank You that You have given us Your Son. Thank You that You have brought Him to Earth in a way that we would never have imagined. Thank You for the Good News that He is King of kings and Lord of lords. For the whole of eternity we thank You God. You are amazing. Your Good News is truly wonderful.

(As an aside, the shepherds who were in the fields outside Bethlehem were "special" in that they were tasked with watching over the Passover lambs, the lambs without spot or blemish. These lambs would have been cosseted from the time they were born, they were wrapped in cloths when they were tiny and carefully tended as they grew, so that they could be sacrificed at Passover time. The significance of this symbolism would not have been lost on the heirarchy, and certainly not on the shepherds themselves.)