



“Praise Him After The Party”

Luke 2:1-20

“As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about Him.” Dr. Luke records one of the most miraculous birthday parties of all time. We have all either planned or attended a party at some time or another. Plans are required if the party is to be a success and the party which celebrated the birth of Jesus was no exception. When we read of the meticulous planning by the host, it is easy to understand why 2,000 years later, the world still remembers what happened that night.

God, the host of the party, felt that the people whom He had created had literally forgotten Him and were not concerned about their relationship with Him. People had begun to worship other gods, believe in other deities, and obey the Roman government. God had, throughout history, sent kings, priests, and prophets to tell His people to come back to Him. For a period of 400 years, God had been silent and because of His redeeming love, He decided to come to earth Himself. He would put on human mortality and live among men and women. To accomplish this task, He had to be born of an earthly mother (Matthew 1:18-2:11; Luke 2:1-21).

God wanted this to be a special moment in time so He personally planned the first Christmas party. He picked the perfect town for the party, which was Bethlehem, and the exact place to accommodate the invited guests (2:4-7). Knowing that for a party of this magnitude He had to have a VIP guest list, He had His angels to personally invite a group of shepherds (2:8-12). Because of the crowds in Bethlehem that night, God had to alter His accommodations to accomplish His goal (2:7). The dress for the party was casual and the guest of honor was clothed in clothes used to wipe down animals (2:7). Recognizing that to have a great party there had to be bright lights, music, and singing, God lit up the sky with stars and sent His angels to sing (2:9, 13-14).

The shepherds accepted the invitation and went to the Christmas party (2:15, 16). As with most parties, one goes with the anticipation of having a good time, but this was a special night. The guests found only two people and an infant surrounded by a few animals. WHAT A LET DOWN!! They quickly realized that the exchange of gifts was their worshipping THE GIFT by giving their lives, as gifts, to God. Then they began to fully comprehend the purpose of why God called the party. It was to present the Good News! What was the Good News? Not that God had sent a soldier, a judge, or a reformer, BUT that He had sent a Savior to meet men/women’s greatest need. IT WAS A MESSAGE (i.e. gift) OF PEACE TO THE WORLD that had known much war.

Usually when the party is over the guests leave and the host cleans up, but this party was so overwhelming that the Bible says, “As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about Him” (2:20). In other words, their lesson to us today is KEEP THE PRAISE ALIVE! (1:64, 2:13, 28; 5:25-26; 7:16, 13:13; 17:15, 18; 18:43; 19:37; 23:47; 24:53).

This year, after the Christmas Day celebration, after the tree has been discarded and the decorations have been tucked away for next year’s party, I am suggesting that you KEEP THE PRAISE ALIVE. Do not let returning to work, paying off bills, or relatives returning home kill your praise. Praise the Savior after the party. Praise Him that you were allowed to spend some time with Him. Praise Him for being with you through another year. Praise Him when others have given up all hope. NEVER STOP PRAISING GOD.

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