

Merry Christmas

*Commemorating the
Sequence of Holy Events for
the four weeks of December*

Prophecy Candle

Bethlehem Candle

Shepherd's Candle

Angels' Candle

Christmas Eve -

Christ's Candle



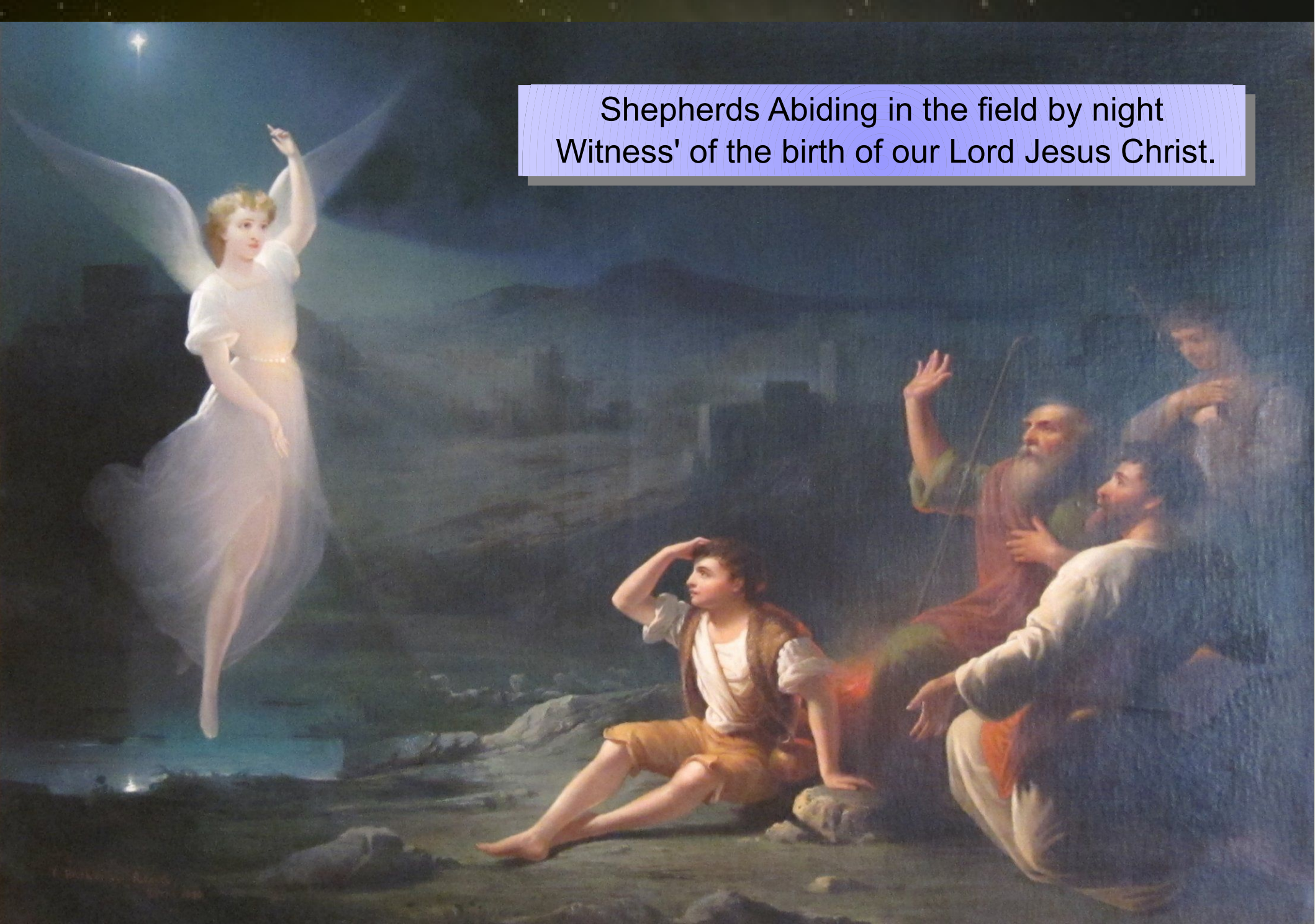
Shepherds

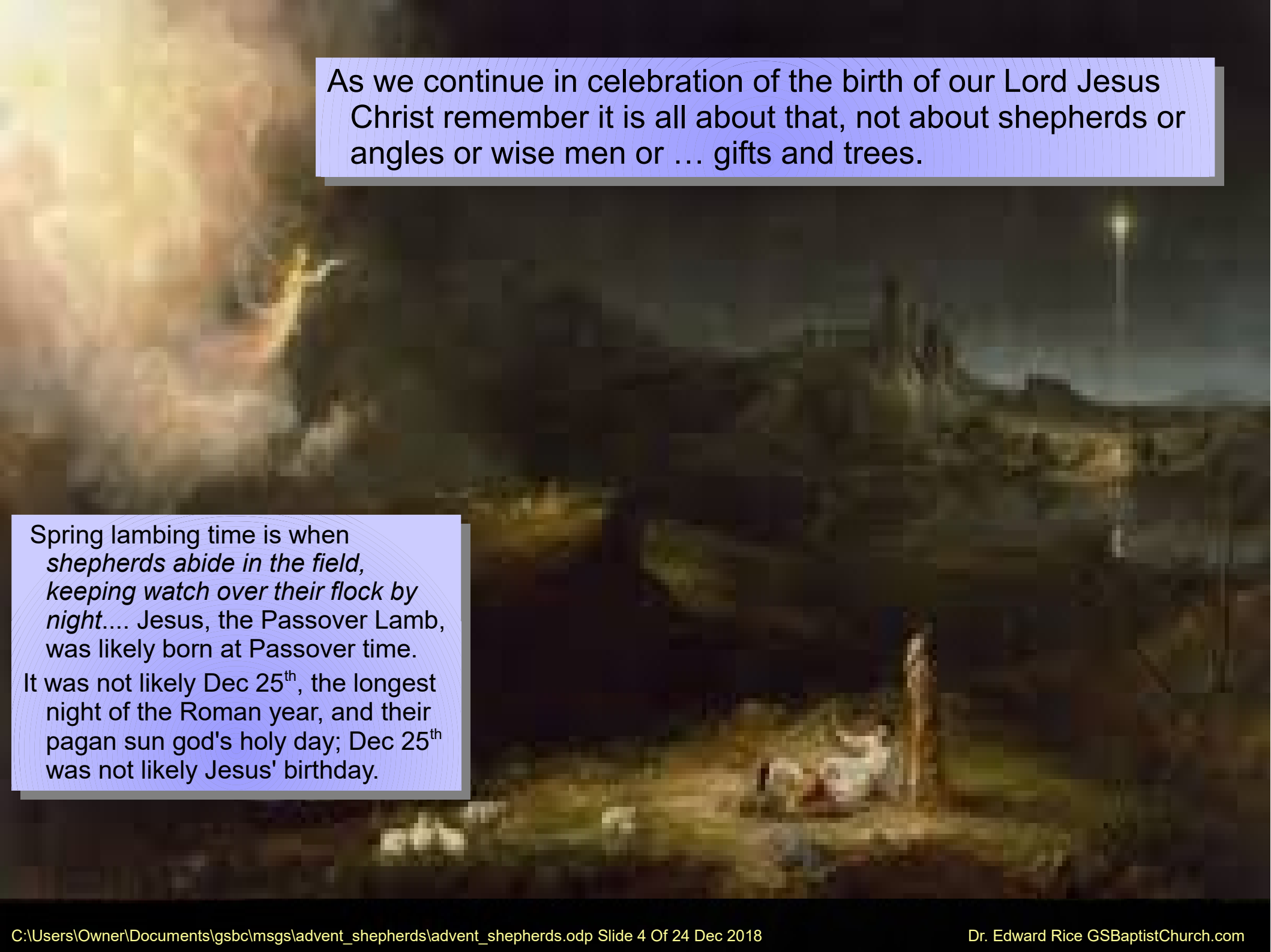




Luke 2:8-14 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Shepherds Abiding in the field by night
'Witness' of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.





As we continue in celebration of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ remember it is all about that, not about shepherds or angles or wise men or ... gifts and trees.

Spring lambing time is when *shepherds abide in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night....* Jesus, the Passover Lamb, was likely born at Passover time.

It was not likely Dec 25th, the longest night of the Roman year, and their pagan sun god's holy day; Dec 25th was not likely Jesus' birthday.

God became flesh. Flesh could not become God (as mythology supposes),

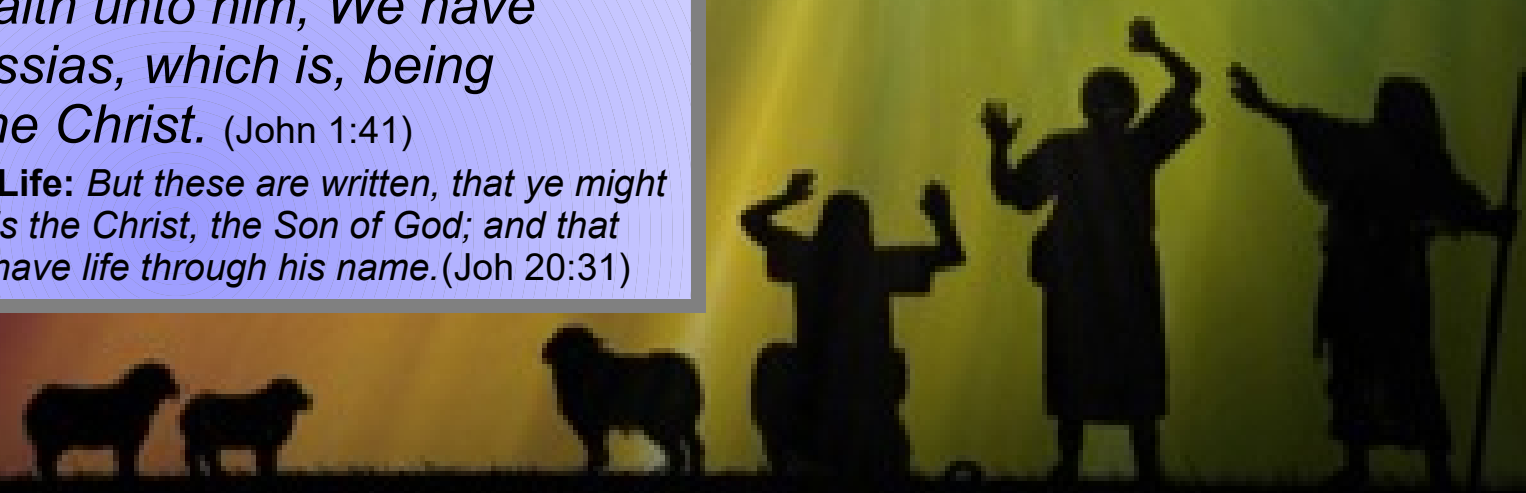
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Mt 1:23)

The Only Begotten Son is Christ (Messiah)

(Andrew) first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. (John 1:41)

Belief in Christ is Life: *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. (Joh 20:31)*



Christmas - is All About Christ

Christ became SIN: 2Cor 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

He became both Lord and Christ Acts 2:36
Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. And again Phil 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

Christ became the Firstfruits” : 1Cor 15:20-22 *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*



Sheep and shepherds hold a high regard in the God's economy.

Christ was the Lamb of God, *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*
(John 1:29,36,cf Rev 5:12)

God first required a lamb for a man -Gen 3:15, 21-23, 4:3-5, 12:3, 22:8.

Then a lamb for a family – A Passover Lamb - Exod 12:3-13, 1Cor 5:4-8

Then a lamb for a nation - Lev 16:3, 5, 16, 24.

Then a lamb for the many - Isa 53:6, 10-12.

Then God provided a Lamb for the World - John 1:29-31, 35-37.



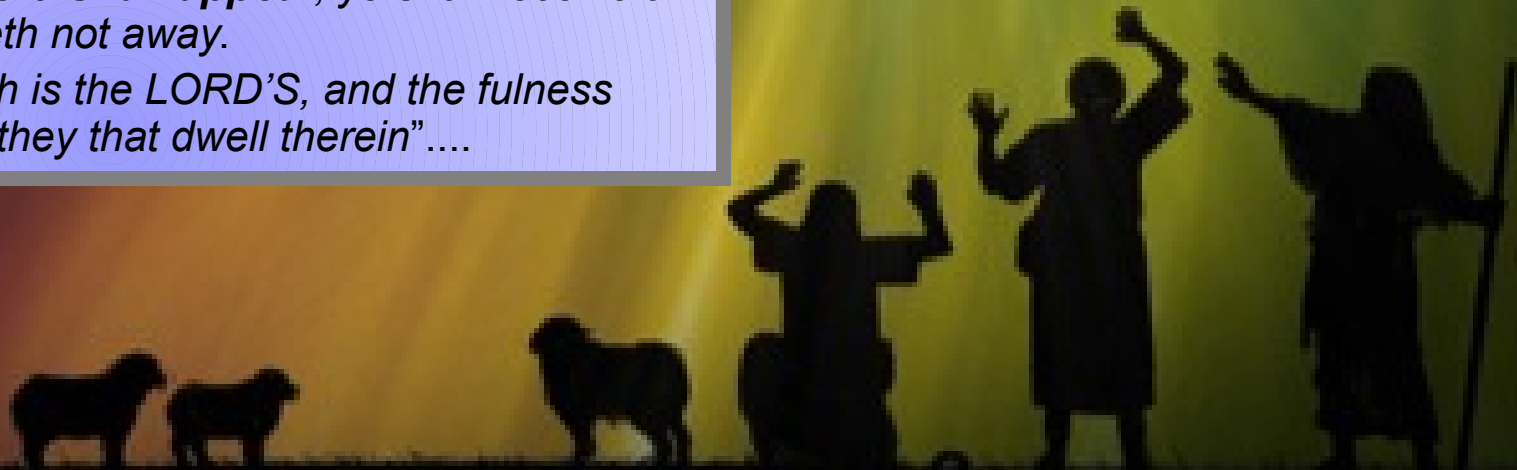
Christ is the Good Shepherd, - John 10:11 *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.... 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep,...*
Psalm 22:1 *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?* Psalm 22 - Christ's crucifixion told 1000 years beforehand.

Christ is the Great Shepherd Heb 13:20-21
Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, ... to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen.

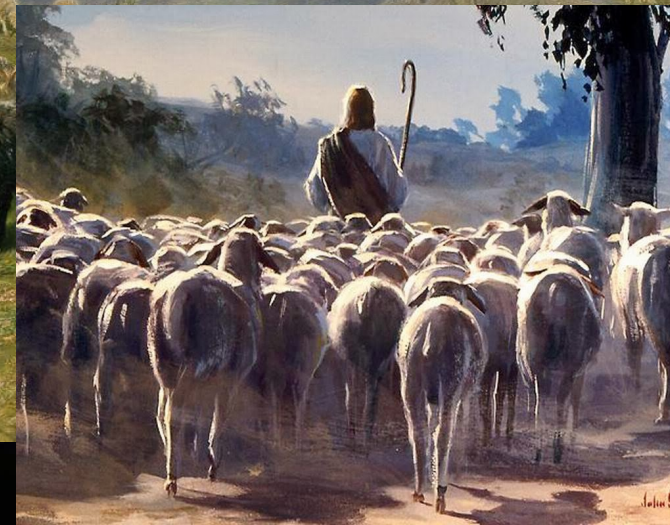
Of course Psalm 23 describes our Great Shepherd...

and **Christ is the Chief Shepherd.** 1 Peter 5:4 *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

Psalm 24 says, *"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein"....*



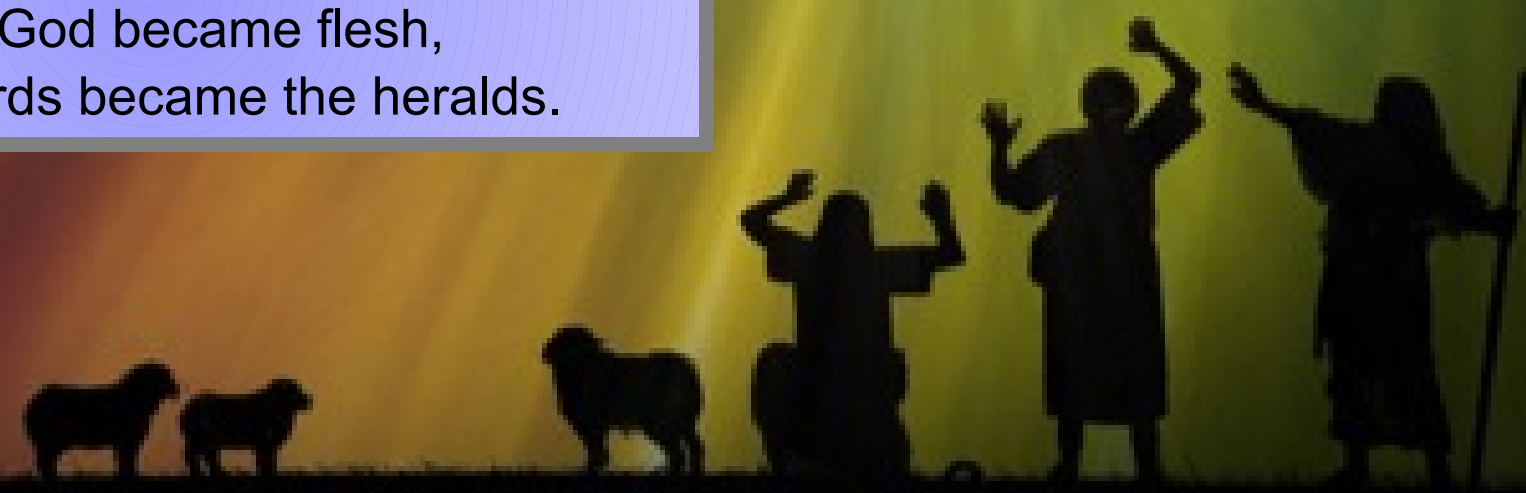
This Christmas learn some things about
Shepherds - Pastors



You Need A Pastor

Luke 2:15-18 *And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*

When God became flesh,
the shepherds became the heralds.



It is no coincidence that God sent angels to notify mere shepherds about his Only Begotten Son, wrapped in swaddling clothes.

He could have sent them to the High-Priest of the Hebrews, the only religion holding his Word and the Truth.

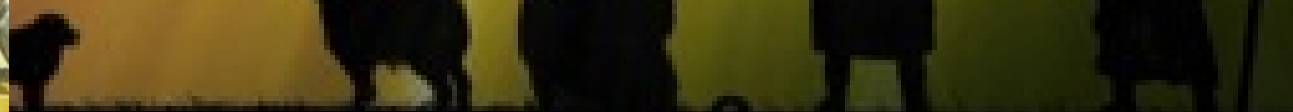
He did not.


He could have sent them to the religious Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes or Lawyers who made themselves spokesmen for his Truth.

He did not.



Sheep and shepherds hold a high regard in God's economy. They became His HERALDS.



A painting depicting a shepherd and his flock in a landscape. The shepherd, wearing a red and white robe and a white head covering, stands in the center, holding a staff and gesturing with his right hand. He is surrounded by several sheep, some of which are wearing head coverings. The background shows a hazy, golden landscape with rolling hills and a bright sky. The overall style is reminiscent of a religious or historical painting.

Shepherds, herdsmen,
keepers of sheep who
led sheep into “pasture”
came to be called
“pastors” and in God's
economy every Christian
needs a good pastor.

From the Hebrew 07462 רעה
ra‘ah raw-aw’ AV-feed 75,
shepherd 63, pastor 8, herdmen
7, keep 3, companion 2, broken
1, company 1, devour 1, eat 1,
entreateth 1, misc 10; 173

Shepherds had

- 1) the time,
- 2) the curiosity and
- 3) the initiative

to investigate Spiritual things

Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Shepherds had 4) the connections and networks to be heralds:

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

A Pastor Needs all these qualities.

Do you have a Pastor?

God's Word says you need one.



God reveals some interesting things about Pastors.

First mention ...Genesis 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And **Abel was a keeper of sheep** <07462 raw-aw> , but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

There is often strife among pastors... Genesis 13:7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: Genesis 26:20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours:...

Israel (Jacob) was a shepherd. Joseph ask his father (Jacob the supplanter – deceiver) to lie about his occupation, but, curiously, the master liar refused.

Gen 46:34 *That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians. ... 47:3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, **Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.***

People change... Jacob had learned some things about lying, cheating, supplanting.



God concerns himself about **sheep with no shepherd.**

First mention: Numbers 27:16-17 *Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD **be not as sheep which have no shepherd.***

(Christian, do you have a pastor? God says you need one.)

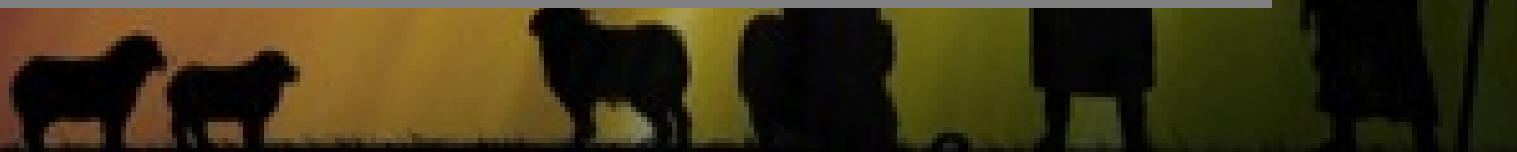
2 Chronicles 18:16 Then he (Micaiah), said (to King Ahab), I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, **as sheep that have no shepherd:** and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace.

Ezekiel 34:5 And they were scattered, because **there is no shepherd:** and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

Ezekiel 34:8 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because **there was no shepherd,** neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

Zechariah 10:2 For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, **because there was no shepherd.**

Matthew 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, **as sheep having no shepherd.**



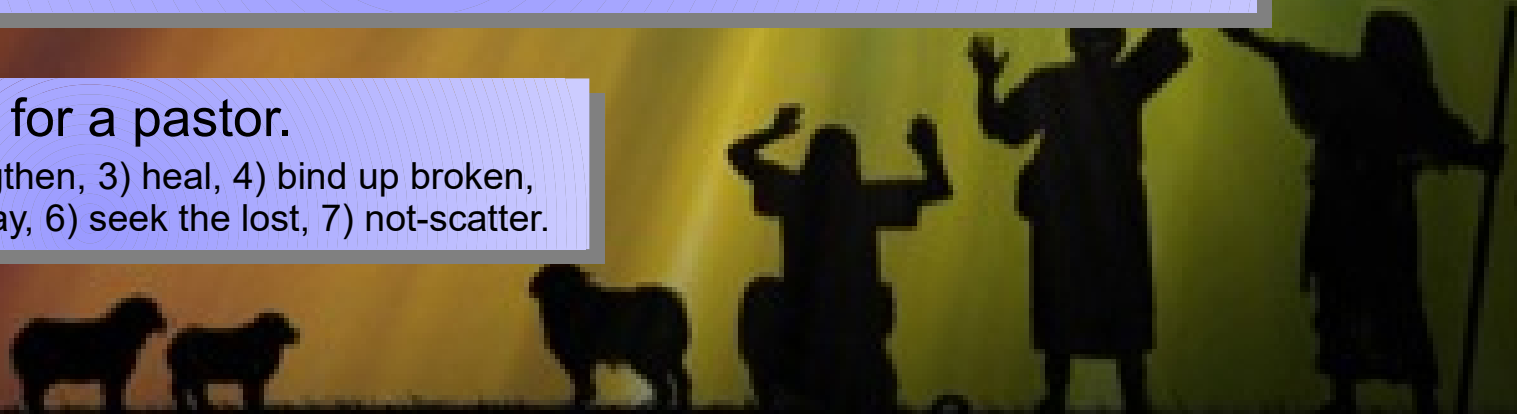
God concerns himself about his shepherds.

Bad Shepherds, in the negative, reveal 7 things that God expects of his shepherds (Pastors):

- 1) Ezek 34:2 - 6 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! **should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ...**
- 2) vr 4 **The diseased have ye not strengthened,**
- 3) **neither have ye healed that which was sick,**
- 4) **neither have ye bound up that which was broken,**
- 5) **neither have ye brought again that which was driven away,**
- 6) **neither have ye sought that which was lost;**
but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.
- 7) vr 6 **yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them**

A good checklist for a pastor.

- 1) feed-flocks, 2) strengthen, 3) heal, 4) bind up broken, 5) bring-in driven-away, 6) seek the lost, 7) not-scatter.



Bad pastors do great harm:

Jeremiah 12:10 **Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard**, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

Jeremiah 50:6 My people hath been lost sheep: **their shepherds have caused them to go astray**, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace.

Ezekiel 34:9-10 Therefore, **O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD**; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more;

A good warning for a pastor.



Bad Pastors will be held accountable:

Jeremiah 23:1 - 2 **Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!** saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 10:21 **For the pastors are become brutish,** and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

A sure admonition for a pastor.

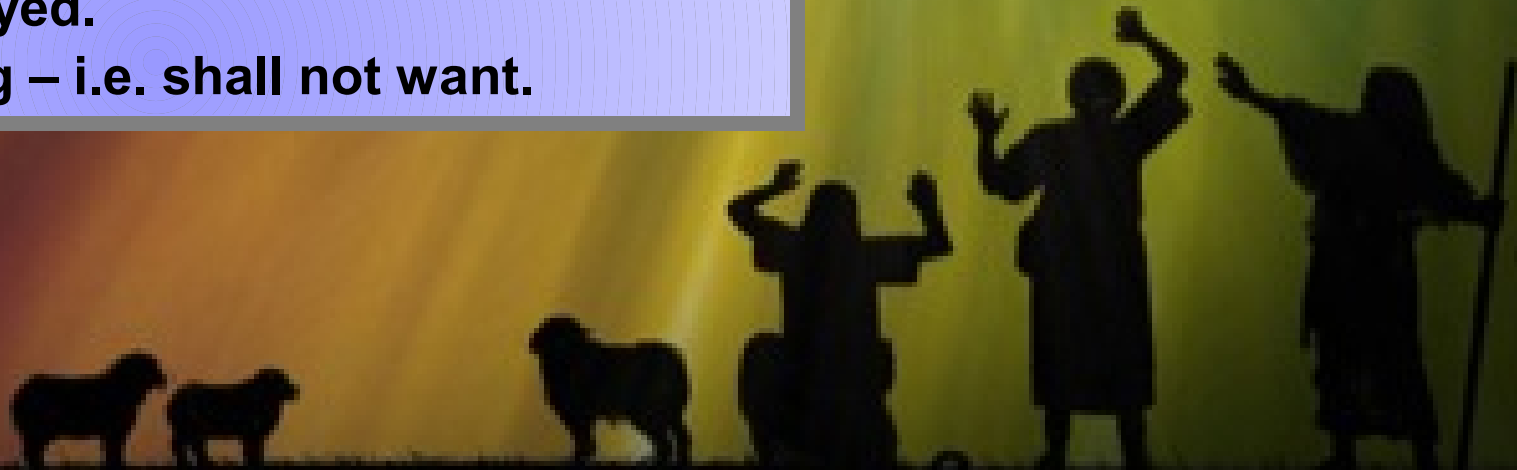


But God Requires that you have a shepherd – pastor.

Jeremiah 23:4 - 6 ***And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.***

Pastors, according to God's heart, have sheep that:

- 1 – **Are well fed.**
- 2 – **Fear no Evil.**
- 3 – **Are not Dismayed.**
- 4 – **Are not lacking – i.e. shall not want.**



Christ is the “One Shepherd:”

And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it (Ezek 34:23-24).

But he wants you under a pastor:

God said to Israel, “*Let the LORD... set a man over the congregation,... that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd*” (Num 27:16-17).

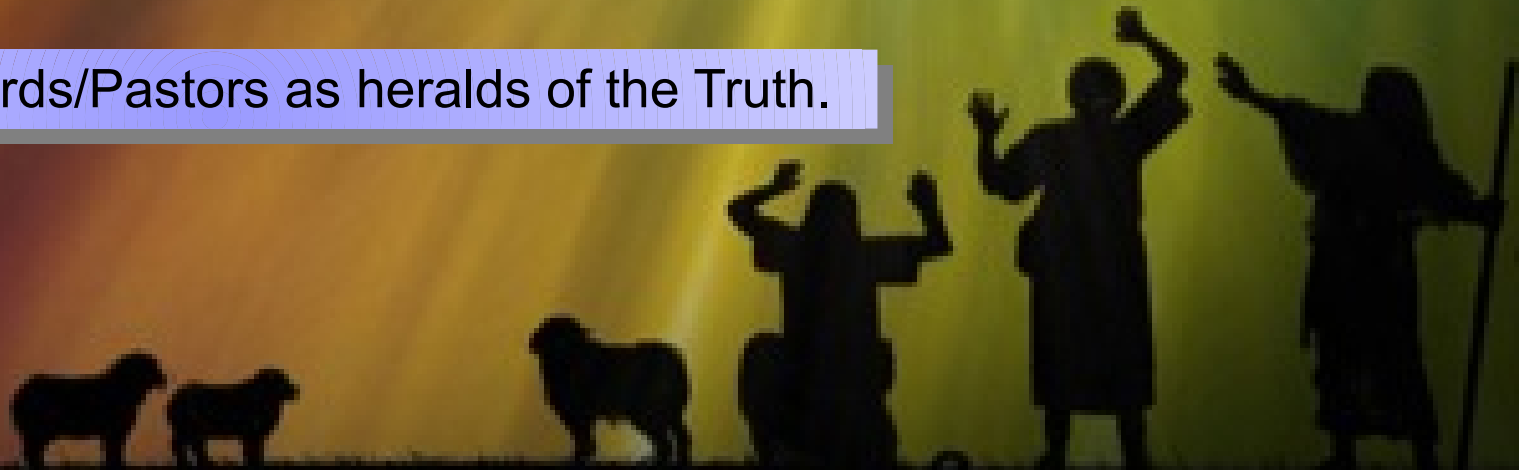


Those shepherds, in the Christmas story, were heralds of the truth. God revealed to them things that he did not reveal to everybody. He gave them time, curiosity, initiative and then insights that he wanted declared to all people.

Every Christian needs a Pastor: Ephesians 4:11 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, **pastors and teachers**;*

And every Pastor needs to take very careful heed to be a shepherd: Jeremiah 3:15 *And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

God uses Shepherds/Pastors as heralds of the Truth.



• Msg #1850 Shepherds-Pastors

What The Bible Says

Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

One can learn a lot from a shepherd. In the Bible a pastor, a shepherd, and a herdsman are all the same word. Able was one. In God's economy pastors-shepherds are the heralds of truth. At Jesus' birth, *"there were shepherds abiding in the fields"* (Luke 2). These heralds of truth were given first insight, special signs, and the time, curiosity, and initiative to pursue holy things. So is your pastor. *"And when they (shepherds-pastors) had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."* So does your pastor. God wants you under a pastor-shepherd. *"Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, ... that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd"* (Num. 27:16). There are bad shepherds destroying God's vineyard (Jer. 12:10), causing sheep to go astray (50:6), brutish, not seeking God (10:21). Move away, God will deal with them (Jer. 23). In Ezekiel 34:2-6 God reveals seven things a good pastor-shepherd will do by showing what the bad didn't do, and in Jeremiah 23:4-6 he reveals that under a good pastor-shepherd sheep will be well fed, fear no evil, be not dismayed, and not be lacking. For the Christian, God is clear, "I will set up shepherds over them." Certainly in Christ we have a Good Shepherd (John 10:11, Psalm22), a Great Shepherd (Heb 13:20, Psalm23), and a soon coming Chief Shepherd (1Peter 5:4, Psalm24), but "the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation." Not a woman, not a brute, not a charismatic miss-leader, you need a pastor-shepherd, and you need to pray for him. In this day of apostasy he is God's herald of truth.

An Essay for week #50 Dec 16, 2018

Msg in audio at www.GSBaptistChurch.com/audio/gs181216.mp3



- **Msg #1949 Shepherds as Heralds**

What The Bible Says

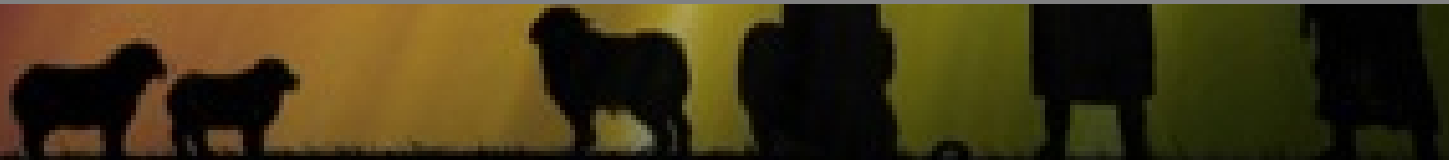
Good Samaritan's Penny Pulpit by Pastor Ed Rice

It is no coincidence that God sent angels to notify mere shepherds about his Only Begotten Son, wrapped in swaddling clothes. He could have sent them to the High-Priest of the Hebrews, the only religion holding his Word and the Truth. He could have sent them to the religious Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes or Lawyers who made themselves spokesmen for his Truth. He did not. Sheep and shepherds hold a high regard in the God's economy. He was sending the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the World (John 1:29,36,Rev 5:12), and that Lamb would be the Good, Great, and Chief Shepherd (John 10:11,Psalm22, Heb13:20,Psalm23, 1Pet5:4,Psalm24). Shepherds, herdsmen, keepers of sheep who led sheep into "pasture" came to be called "pastors" and in God's economy every Christian needs a good pastor. God said to Israel, *"Let the LORD... set a man over the congregation,... that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd"* (Num27:16-17). There are far to many sheep without a good shepherd over them today. Shepherds of Luke 2 were keeping watch over their flock by night (as is done in the spring lambing season) when they said, *"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."* They had time, curiosity, and initiative to investigate Godly things, and they were "networked-in" to become effective heralds of Christ's arrival. Your pastor needs those same qualities, and more. Ezekiel 34:2-6 gives seven things expected of good pastors starting with, "should not the shepherds feed the flocks?" Sheep with a good pastor are well fed, fear no evil, are not dismayed, and can say "I shall not want." Pray for your pastor and/or get yourself under a good pastor.

An Essay for week #49 Dec 8, 2019

Msg in audio at www.GSBaptistChurch.com/audio/gs191208.mp3

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Shepherds

