

December 22nd

Mary and Joseph are so far from home and all their loved ones. Yet the Messiah has made His entrance into the world.

Now there is a baby, swaddled tightly and sleeping soundly.

The promised “God with us” is now officially with us.

But not with the hoped for great power or in the form of the expected mighty warrior.

He is a newborn. An infant.

Cute but helpless. Cute but defenseless. Cute but powerless.

And that is not what Israel wanted in the shadow of the mighty and volatile Roman Empire.

But that is how He starts because that is how God arranged His purposes.

So Mary and Joseph are resting up.

Trying to sleep after a long night.

And caring for a newborn.

And they are probably hoping that they can get a few hours’ sleep and start heading for home. Because they want to get back to who and what they know. So they expect just the animals to keep them company.

And then someone shows up.

Is it friend? Is it foe?

No one should know the precious secret they know.

Luke 2:8,16 – Now there were in the same country _____ living out in the _____, keeping watch over their flock by night. ... And they came with _____ and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger

His Son is born.

God does not choose to announce it to any government leader.

God does not choose to announce it to any religious leader.

God does not choose to announce it to anyone with a title or status or importance.

Instead, He approaches one of the most despised and underappreciated professions of that time. These guys are smelly from being out in the fields with the sheep. These guys work more at night to protect the herds from predators, so they do not keep normal socializing hours. Therefore they are not well accepted in town or well received at the temple. But these are the very guys – the common laborers overlooked by most people – to whom God first speaks.

Going Deeper:

1. *Why are the shepherds the first group to be told about the new Christ child?*

2. *How might Mary and Joseph have reacted to having visitors show up at the manger? Why?*

3. *What is an area of your life where you feel like an outcast – are misunderstood, overlooked, or under appreciated? How does it affect you?*

4. *What is something you expected from God that He did not bring in the form, time, or appearance you expected? How did you react?*

5. *What “hope” do babies and children give us?*

6. *What causes you to run “with haste” to God?*
