

Visions and Revelations

Message 5: The Shepherds in the Field

Praise the Lord, brothers and sisters. Now, together, we can cover another message. Now, this message do not have a real high name or title, whatever. First one, Joseph. That's Joseph. Second one, Zechariah. Third one, Mary. Now we come to group of shepherd. Now, Lord unveiled himself, or give visions to, a group of people. Who are they? They are the shepherd in the field. From every angle you would have to say, this really shouldn't mean that much. Why? Because these are uneducated, very little spiritual understanding, even very little desire to gain more of Christ, or whatever, to be developed in Jewish religion. They're just common shepherds. But these shepherds have two things mark them quite special. Number one, they are shepherding at night. Secondly they're shepherding in the wilderness. You know, brother, if you put the three things together. I'm a shepherd. I shepherd my flock at night. I shepherd my flock in the wilderness. That surely shows a virtue of faithfulness. To a group of people, they are not as common as we think. Their human faithfulness to the flock seems encourage the Lord to give them visions. For them to see something marvelous. This is short story, so, but they have a lot of practical secret. If I can read the story to you first.

Number one. Near the time when Mary would give birth. It means she's about due, right? Caesar Augustus sent out a decree for a worldwide census. It's more like a census we're doing now in the United States, but anyway, he want to do one worldwide. The thing, it's different with today. Today just fill it, fill the, fill the whole thing in the website. There you all have to go back to your hometown. To where you belong. So requiring all to be registered in their own city. In their own city means, wherever you are now, go back to your own city. So you can see that with this regulation, whole Roman Empire, all the different kings and high officials were carrying things, eventually the, all the Roman Empire people were travelling around. Trying to go back to their own cities. Same with what, Joseph and Mary. So Joseph and Mary travelled to Bethlehem. Why? Because he's from there. He's from, he's David's descendant. So travelled to Bethlehem. Along the way Mary give birth to Jesus and because there was no room for them in the inn, they wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger.

You know, it's interesting, if you consider a picture. Here is the real God. Conceived in a young girl, in a girl right? Now of course she's married now, that then, Joseph and Mary are going. Mary was very clear, what I have is God. I don't know what kind of psychology she has. She has the feeling, if I have the One, expect the One is from God, and will be the Holy One, will be Son of God, will be the Son of the Most High. When I go there, there got to be something prepared by God for Himself's sake. But surprisingly, they got to Bethlehem, or nearby Bethlehem, that she was due. So eventually the baby was delivered, where? In the wayside. Then here the Bible says, there was no room for them in the inn. A few possibilities right? One possibility is when He

was born, there's no room because there's no inn. It's just in, sort of like, in wilderness. Another possibility is, she was, the baby was delivered and there was inn, but no room. And another possibility is, there was inn and room, but Joseph can't afford it. Because things are, or should be very expensive in these days. Because people coming back all over to Bethlehem. So all the inns must be extremely busy. Whatever of the three reasons or one of the three reasons, the fact is, there's no place the baby can stay. So eventually find a manger. And they wrap up the baby and put the baby, laid Him in the manger. We'll come to that later. At the same time, where Joseph is doing and Mary delivering the baby and so forth, I think it must be a high frustrating experience. But at the same time, the Lord appeared to shepherds who were out in the field during the night. In the field during the night, telling him, don't be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy.

I like this. I bring good news. I bring you joy. But no, I bring, new, good news of great joy which will be to all people! No longer just to the Jews. To all the people. To even, if you develop it, to all the generations and all the people. Now, but anyway, to all the people, for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior. City of David means Bethlehem. In Bethlehem, born this day, born to you a Savior. A Savior is coming. I think the word Savior not as today, today we understand, Jesus you're my Savior. At that time, Savior could be quite a unique word. I don't know how many people use that kind of word, Savior. But I'm happy the shepherds understand it. There's someone who is coming to save us. He is the Savior. Who is this Savior? Who is Messiah? Who is Christ? The Lord. Messiah is Old Testament. New Testament is Christ. Same thing. Same one. Who is Christ, the Messiah, the Lord. Remember? We keep on using His name Jesus. His name Jesus. All of a sudden, Christ was unveiled. Unveiled to him, unveiled to whom? Not those in the temple, not those reading the Bible all the time. Not those scribes. Not those Pharisees. Not those priests. But rather, unveiled to a group of shepherds. Who only know three things. Number one, I have a flock. Number two, I will tend them, whether day or night. Even it's wilderness, I will still tend them, because I like to be faithful to whatever I am committed with. That virtue becomes a virtue for the children of God. God likes to unveil Christ to him. To those who can say, I, even this is night, I still like to serve. More than that, even what? Even the, it is in wilderness, I still like to serve. And thirdly I do have a flock. God appeared to those. Brother, this is very precious to everyone.

Let me ask you, do you have a flock? Number two, are you in day or night? Maybe with the virus, we are somewhat at night. Then, are you in the wilderness or you are in the city, in a tower someplace. Highrise building someplace. No. Here, these shepherds have the three virtues. So eventually, the angels told them, born to you this day, a Savior who is Christ the Lord. Savior. Christ. Christ, Savior. Christ means the anointed one. Christ means the anointed one carry out the economy of God, fulfill God's purpose. Brings in the realization, the mature, the substance of God's eternal purpose. Marvelous. Brothers and sisters, this is marvelous. This declaration is marvelous. Now a Son, now a Savior was given to you. He's related to all the people. Who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you. How, what is the sign? Why don't you go to

look at it. If you go you will find a baby, wrapped in swaddling cloths, laying in a manger. Just wrapped. A cloth wrapped Him, and cloth wrapped Him, He's laying in a manger. Remember, previous says, He was laid in a manger. Firstly, the previous paragraph, they wrapped. Joseph Mary wrapped Him in cloth and laid Him in a manger. Here the shepherd says, now, they find out swaddling cloths laying in a manger. We'll come to that later.

So the shepherds responded by going together in haste to Bethlehem. To see what the Lord has made known to them. There they found Mary and Joseph and the baby laying in the manger. After seeing him they made widely known what had been told to them concerning him. This is a story, very simple story. If I could add a word, a sort of discouraging word: after had been told to them concerning Him, that's Jesus, right? But nobody cares. Right? Isn't that right, nobody cares? In that 30 years, all the way until Jesus began to preach the gospel, who cares? All the things they have seen, they heard, they know – who cares? The problem today, brother, is not “do you see something”? My question is, you see something, do you care? If you care, things will happen, be real to you. However, in the weakness of man, here according to the story, I give you 6-7 points. Which is worthwhile for us to focus on or to study 6 points.

Number 1: born on the side of the road. Jesus was not born in a manger. Jesus was born on the side of the road, and they wrapped Him up and put Him, laid Him, in a manger because there is no hotel, no inn for Him. Right? So, you see whole Christianity treat the Lord much better: He was born in the manger. No, He was not born in a manger. He is not even qualified that well, He was born on the road. Then they wrapped and put Him in the manger. Remember, the Lord testified this, I was not just born there. You know what is My life? The fox has a hole, the birds have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have no place to lay My head. What is that? Roadside. I don't have a residence. I don't have a place that I can shelter here and say, “that's good enough.” No. I want to let you know; I want to let you know. I was born on the roadside, and My life is a roadside experience.

The good part is what? Roadside means you cannot get settled. Nobody is settled on the roadside. So, that's very good. Brother, are you settled? If you are settled, you're not on the roadside. I have a nice house. Now I live in a nice house by the lake. I really enjoy it. But I'm very clear, I cannot be settled here. I belong to the roadside. This house, I enjoy could be an inn for me for some days for my particular needs. But, I still a person, I'm of the roadside. That's number 1 – I'm not settled. Number 2 – by the roadside means, I can go all directions. I can go this way or go that way. I could go East or West. South or North. I could go, because in the road. Which means what? The Lord's commitment since His birth was clear. He's not for Jerusalem. He's not for Bethlehem. He's not for Galilee. He's not for Jew. That roadside shows He is for the whole globe. He's not for this generation. He's for all the coming generations and previous generations. That roadside is very meaning full. You know brother, let me ask you this simple but very interesting question: are you on the roadside? Where are you today? You have a house,

are you happy? Which, there is nothing wrong about it. But psychologically, within you, do you still have a decision, I'm on the roadside.

Many full-timers come to Cleveland. Houses in Cleveland are cheap. So many full-timers come to Cleveland and buy a house. Which you appreciate, right? At the same time, I always ask myself, does this take away the right of this brother from being on the roadside? Are you from now on, in Cleveland? For Cleveland? Or are you still for the Lord's testimony? Are you still able to Eastward, Westward, Northward, Southward? Are you still able to say, Lord wherever You tell me to go, I will GO! Because I'm on the roadside. What a life is this.

More than that, he was, where this roadside beside, where eventually he belong. From the existing status, he belongs to Bethlehem. Then, in reality, He belongs to a manger. It's very interesting. What does Bethlehem mean? Bethlehem means a house of food, a house of supply, food supply. Bethlehem means here, come here we have a warehouse of all the riches to supply all your need. We are the city as a house, as a warehouse of supply of food. We say, wow, that's marvelous. The Lord Jesus is from Bethlehem. So the Lord Jesus is from, Lord Jesus is ready to be our supply with all the riches of all kinds of food.

But Lord says, wait a minute, you know how do you get it? You get it from manger. What is manger for? Not a warehouse. The place you eat, the place we eat, horse eat, cow eats is a manger. So, in the Bible sometimes we see it's a horse manger; sometimes we see cow manger. But it makes no difference. Why? Because remember God says, we're worse than that. God says, Hey, wait a minute, listen. A donkey know the Lord. Right? And a cow know the Lord's manger. But you, Israelites, My people, you don't even care! You're much worse than cows, than donkeys of course, than horse. We say, wow, manger is for animals. No, no, no, you are worse than animal. But, the Lord says, you know, when I was born, I was put in a manger. Just for you to know I am coming here for you to enjoy. Who are you? terrible. Who are you? degraded. Who are you? Apart from God. Who are you? Selfish. Who are you? Self-centered. Who are you? Struggling for interest for yourself. Now, come. Come, come. I am in the manger. I am the real food supply. In location, I am in the warehouse. But in practicality place, I am in the place you can eat all the spiritual food. Aren't you impressed by Bethlehem and manger? Wouldn't you be so happy, Lord Jesus thank You, when I come to You, I come to rich store, warehouse of food supply. But when I enjoy You, bite by bite, bit by bit, I find out You are just in the manger. As a fallen man, degraded man, I am able to come to enjoy You as all the riches for me to have satisfaction.

Hey, don't you see, brother, it's very meaningful, right? Number 1 – born on the roadside. And number 2 – He is in Bethlehem and the manger. Then got to third point. Who God appeared to? The first one in the roadside. I tell you, if you are sober before the Lord, you have to say, Lord, my fate is decided. I don't want to build a house and say, this is my residence, I will die here. No. because I'm on roadside. And more than that, what is my living? What is my existence? I'm in Bethlehem, I enjoy the manger. So eventually, what? I also can become part of a Bethlehem. I

also can become a life supply to many brothers and sisters in the church life. You know what church life need? Short of mangers. We have a lot of talks – this is right, that is wrong. Right?

One person got sick. Which is not really a brother in the church that much. But anyway, then go through another one. The church informed everybody, a certain person was in the meeting, he was sick. So, everyone have to take care of quarantine. But didn't tell those who didn't come. And one person, who didn't come, but he is very zealous, he want to invite somebody to his home to stay. Then he found out, that saint is very simple. You know, I was in the meeting, we were what. Oh, that particular dear saint got mad. All over the elders are wrong, the leading ones are wrong, the church life is wrong. Nobody want to be a real manger. You don't want to be in manger, you don't want to be the manger. All what you care is, I can do something good for God. No, God does not want you to do something good for Him. God wants you to enjoy Christ as in the manger, God wants you to be eventually a life supply. You are not just good man. You are a life-giving man. You are not just a zealous man, do-gooders. You are one that says I want enjoy Christ that much, in turn, I can dispense Christ to others.

And more than that, then the shepherd in the field during the night. I shared that a little bit already. They are faithful men. This is a group of people, not educated. I don't know how many of them can read, even have a thought to read a lot. I believe they are very, very common people. But you know that, because they are so common, they can be very simple. Because they are so simple, they become very faithful. You know brother, many times we are not good shepherds. When night comes, we find our ways. We find the wilderness, we go to another spot. We do not know that when we shepherd the sheep, the time is night. Why's it night? The lord has not come yet. If the lord does not come back, we are at night. We have to wait until the star appears. You know brother, who are we? It's too easy, for us, to forget its night. We fight for so many things that belong to the day. We don't say that, "I fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. Christ goes through death, I go through night. Christ has a hard life, I have a hard life too. Christ has no place to stay, if I do have a house, that's not my eternal place or even a place for my life. Anytime, I'm ready to go with the Lord, even though it is night. I'm ready to go with the Lord, even though the place to me was the wilderness. I'd like to go to Africa. I'd like to go to south America. I'd like to go to some country where people don't even know them. I'd like to go to some country to preach the gospel. I know it's night. I know it's wilderness, but there's a flock I want to shepherd. I want to tend the flock." What a group of faithful men. This kind of faithfulness will cause the Lord to give you visions upon visions. You'll see Christ more and more. How marvelous is that!

And more than that. Another thing, the baby was what? *Wrapped in cloth*. I'll tell you that this part always bothers me. Why does the bible talk about it? Let me ask you, which baby was born that wasn't wrapped in cloth. They may have prepared the piece of cloth. Now the baby comes and they can wrap him. Even the baby comes, not expected. Maybe they'd say when we bath him we can buy a piece of cloth. Joseph can take off a piece of garment to wrap the baby. Yet he repeated and repeated. Firstly, in the birth of Jesus, it looked like he made it very clear when he

wrapped him. And to the shepherds, the angel made it very clear. "You will see a baby wrapped in cloth."

Firstly it was *laid there*. And secondly was what, *lying there*. Now I'll tell you brother. You have to somewhat know how to read the bible. This is something I would not put in the bible, but I would say that he had a baby and then they put him in the manger. That's it. Why did he put *on a wrapped cloth*? Put a cloth was mentioned once. That was with Joseph and twice that was with the shepherd. I think maybe even may have the third time the baby really see the shepherds saw it. Still so if a word is used once, twice, three times there has got to be some meaning. I considered, if you look at it in this way. The Lord was once on this earth. He make himself he said, He's the new wine. Then, He produced the new wine skin. Then he also said his new cloth. He says don't sow this new cloth on the old garment because you'll wrap the whole thing. In other words, the new cloth typifies what the lord is coming for. I'm coming here to produce something new. No longer the old garment, but the new cloth. And with the new cloth He also made it clear that eventually the new cloth through his death and resurrection will become a new garment.

This new garment was mentioned in the New Jerusalem. In the feast, remember? Someone came in without this new garment. In other words, what is this new garment? Christ becomes our righteousness. Christ became our salvation. Christ has a reality within our being. We're covered with the new garment. A new garment dispensing a new element into us causing our being to be a new person. A new person with a new garment. This is why when Jesus was born, he was wrapped. Wrapped with a piece of cloth. That cloth typifies you. Christ come, he will be the new cloth. This new cloth will produce a new garment. This new garment will be the righteousness of all the believers! If you are a believer, you're wrapped with a cloth that will eventually become a new garment. I'm sinful. Terrible, but a new garment. Hallelujah.

We come to the next. Set and laid. That's not good, it should be laid and lied. Right? Firstly, Mary and Joseph wrapped Jesus and laid Him in the manger. Then the angel told the shepherds. They said, "Lying in the manger." It's interesting, laid and lied. Laid means what? I'm under somebody's hand. He laid me there.

Lying means what? I'm very comfortable with that hand. Whatever he laid me, I'm lying there comfortably and enjoying it. You know brother what is your Christian life? We Cleveland, were poor people right? Maybe I'd say that, use Paul's word. To the whole church. If you're in the church life. I tell you not many are wise. Not many are noble. Not one has what what status. We're common people. But what makes us special? We can still live a life fully in the government of God. God lay us. Whenever God lay us we don't protest. Jesus could right? He's God. So when the parents try to wrap him, the baby could begin to talk. "Don't you know I'm the

Son of God. What kind of manager is this that you laid me? You put me where? In the manager?" No. Of course it looked like an interesting story. Eventually we understand now. Jesus knew who he was by his growth manifest when he was 12 years old. But anyway, I still appreciate that I'm laid and I'm lying. If today, you asked me, "Do you do this?" I'd say is that laid by God? I may be challenged. I'd say no no that's my choice. Then if I do have something I'd say, laid by God. God has given me this. Can we say I lied here. I'm so restful. I'm so happy. Hallelujah. God has laid me here. I'm happy and comfortable! Brother, what a life is this. In your whole life. Instance upon instance. Situation upon situation. Leadings upon leadings. You begin to say, "Lord, I'm constantly laid and I'd like to be lying there. I don't fight with God. Whatever God has arranged in his government. I would say Amen. Amen." Oh laid and lying. Brother, if I can tell you the Lord Jesus have mercy on me. In my life could I take you lying. And I can lie there. You do all the arrangements. I do all the trust and enjoyment and be peaceful in your governmental hand and in your governmental leading. What a blessing to your Christian life.

More than that, finally He is a savior. Who is Christ"? The Lord. We shared that in the beginning of the messages. Christ means messiah. Christ means the anointed one. Christ means the one who carries out God's economy according to God's desire because he's one with God. How did he do it? He's a Savior. A savior saves you from sin. Saved from self. Saved from interests. Saved from your own living. Saved you from everything that is not according to God's desire. He's the savior. So he's Christ the Lord. How marvelous. With this, leads into the most hallelujah and glorious. You know the angels and the army of angels were there praising. The praise of the angels and the heavenly hosts. Glory to God in the highest. And then what? On earth, peace and good will toward man. If we can say this. Tell the lord, "Lord, glory to you in the highest and peace and good will come to me." What an existence is this? What a life is this. Comes from what. Comes from Bethlehem manger. Come from a shepherd's faithfulness. Come from *wrapped by cloth*. Come from laid and lying. May the Lord have grace to us. May Christ be our Savior all our lives and everything in our lives. Lord bless us. Lord be with you. Amen.