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The Sunday School Lesson

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

GOOD NEWS IN THE BIBLE
Golden Text—Be ye not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will come to all the people. Luke 2: 1-14.

Lesson Text—Luke 2: 1-14.
Exposition—1. The New Born King Despised by Men, 1-7.

The abundantly proven fact of the Virgin Birth of our Lord is not a matter of controversy among any who have any real right to call themselves Christians. Both Matthew and Luke are thoroughly well-accredited as perfectly reliable historians and every new discovery tends to still further strengthen faith in their historical reliability. Those who question their historical reliability are not 'scholarly'; they rather reveal their dense ignorance of up-to-date conclusions. Seven hundred years before, Micah had prophesied that He that was to be "ruler of Israel", whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting, was to come out of Bethlehem (Mic. 5: 2). Note how many decrees and deeds of men, unconscious of God's purpose and prophecy worked together to fulfill God's word and carry out His eternal plan. The Saviour of the world the Christ, the Lord, began in a stable the life He was to close upon the cross. There was "no room" for Him in the Inn. There is "no room" for Him today in the hearts of men.

II. The New-Born King Honored by the Heavenly Host and Welcomed by the Believing Few, 8-14. The announcement of the advent of the King was made to shepherds. The shepherds proved their fitness to receive the announcement (v. 15). They were men of faith, with a deep appreciation of spiritual truth, in spite of their lowly position. They seem to have been waiting, longing, looking for the coming of Christ (v. 16). They were faithfully attending to their lowly duties when the revelation came. It was not pleasant work, but it was their work and while at it the angels met them (Ex. 3: 1, 2; Jud. 6: 11, 12; 1 Ki. 19: 19; Luke 1: 8, 11). The shepherds were "sore afraid" when they beheld his glory; the supernatural, by bringing God near, always fills the heart of sinful men with fear (Rev. 1: 17; Luke 5: 8; Isa. 6: 5). But the angelic message at once dispelled all fear. They came to announce salvation, not judgment. They began with one of God's most frequent messages to men, "fear not." They brought forward the only real cure for fear, the Gospel. They brought "good tidings of great joy." The coming of Jesus the Saviour Christ and Lord is the best news this old, sin-cursed and Satan-governed world ever heard.

It was a strange place to be sent to seek a king—a barn. And it was a strange sign to mark "a Saviour" which is Christ the Lord—"a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." The world receives this wonderful proclamation to this day with indifference, but the heavenly army received it with exultant shouts of praise to God. Well they might! The word "suddenly" shows that they could hardly restrain themselves until the message was fully delivered; they all but interrupted their spokesman's proclamation with their glad chorus. There was to be a twofold result of the Saviour's birth—"glory to God in the highest," on earth peace among men of His good pleasure." Study from the Bible who the men in whom God is well pleased are, and in what sense Jesus brings them peace (Jno. 6: 29; Rom. 5: 1; Eph. 1: 6, 7; Col. 1: 20; 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19; Rom. 5: 10; Jno. 14: 27; Phil. 4: 6, 7).

The shepherds, though humble and illiterate, were wise men. They showed it by believing God's Word and going to see for themselves the glorious truth that had been proclaimed to them. Of the truth of what had been told them they had not a doubt. They spoke of it as "this thing (or words) that has come to pass." Wise and happy the man who, when God tells him anything, counts it done (Luke 1: 45; Jno. 20: 29). They knew it was so because the Lord had made it known, that is faith (Heb. 11: 1; R. V. See context). They did not go to test the truth of the Word of God, but to see what they already fully believed. When God makes any great fact or truth known to us we should at once believe it and then "go and see the word that God hath made known to us." Let us enter into it experimentally. Note the eagerness and wholeheartedness of these shepherd-saints, "they come with haste." But today men will scarce come at all; and if they do come, it is with such reluctance that they must be urged and reasoned with and plead with and almost pulled to the Saviour's feet. These shepherds were rare souls. They found it all just as God said it would be (v. 16; comp. v. 20, R. V.; ch. 19: 32; Ac. 27: 25). They told it out to others (v. 17). Highly privileged though they had been, they went right back to their humble occupation. They glorified and

praised God as they went. What they glorified and praised God for is worthy of note.

They did not keep to themselves the good news. They told only that "which was spoken to them." Christ was the whole subject of their testimony. Their testimony awakened little besides wonder with most. Mary "kept" in her heart and pondered all these wonderful revelations. That is the way to deal with God's Word. The shepherds were true and wise men. They did not lose their heads. They went back to their humble toll. But they went back in a new spirit, "glorifying and praising God!"

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MORE CUTOFFS?

The End of the Power Cutoffs
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All Consumers must continue
their efforts to cut down on electricity

While improved water conditions resulting from recent rainfall in the right places, have enabled The Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario to increase quotas to municipalities, water flow conditions are still not normal. Therefore, it is vitally important that all consumers—industrial, commercial, domestic and rural—be constantly on the alert to avoid all unnecessary use of electricity.

Your co-operation in the past has helped. Here are a few suggestions as to how you can continue to help.

- Turn off all unnecessary lights. Do not leave lights burning in empty rooms, halls, basement, attic, porch and garage.
- At the evening study or reading hours, group the family around the reading lamp and turn off other lights.
- Replace large light bulbs with smaller ones.
- Where water is electrically heated, use hot water sparingly.
- Watch the switches on your range, your iron and other appliances. Turn them off as quickly as possible. Often the stored heat will finish the jobs. Use "High" heat for as short a time as possible for cooking or for boiling water.
- Don't let motors on motor-driven equipment run needlessly in home or factory.
- In factory, store or office, don't light a row or cluster of overhead lights when a single light nearby will do.

Do your part to cut down on electricity and keep pay envelopes full.

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